



Climate Change and the Copenhagen deal

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Fluctuating temperatures in Africa have always made reliable agriculture production difficult and global warming could make it even worse. Africa remains a vulnerable continent due to dependence on climate sensitive sectors. The key point is taking into consideration that climate change is becoming central to many sectors in Africa.

This means that the Africa-EU Partnership has a critical role to play in addressing various challenges related to climate change in Africa. It also provides an opportunity for both continents to address the challenges differently from the usual development path that at times does not recognise the threats related to climate change.

The Copenhagen Climate Summit is approaching fast, and delegates must consider various issues while developing frameworks and mechanisms for a deal.

The debate on adaptation is critical, and time must be spent on engaging the various stakeholders. Women and Youths remain central to the debate. Outreach must be a continuous activity, and use of timelines remains critical in issues of adaptation.

Using CSO experiences in Africa remain a central player in coming up with a good deal for Copenhagen. For instance, taking a case of community-level adaptation issues related to financing local knowledge that exist within the community remains central to the experiences of CSOs. To emphasise this point, by focusing on experiences around local knowledge (LK) and local innovations (LI), gender in the context of communities remains a solid boost to improving community adaptation capacities sometimes best referred to as resilience.

Ideally, some of the good suggestions above depend entirely on good working relations between CSOs and governments. Historically, this has been seen as competition and a threat, or a question of power relations and not seen as a means to achieving greater good for vulnerable communities. A good case is the existing challenge in transferring responsibility to communities` approaches of which there are many in Africa, although they continue to be tricky in application. The real powers in such experiments remain within the governments, making it very challenging for communities to offer services or become champions of their own innovations. Such challenges must be addressed to have an effective framework that will guide adaptation implementation in Africa. Hence, understanding these remains very useful in building trust, not only for North–South but also between South–South partners, and enhances effective negotiations between

political parties and CSOs towards Copenhagen and beyond. This will be a useful aspect of sustainability of adaptation towards and beyond Copenhagen.

And lastly, adaptation and technology debates should be considered close when discussing Africa and specifically when talking about existing local innovations in the communities and local knowledge. Most of the technologies fit the descriptions of low carbon technologies – all the more need to finance adaptation activities. This has not been well understood by various actors interested in developing one-fits-all technologies towards adaptation of communities. This debate must go hand in hand with the one on technology co-operation.

In conclusion:

Climate negotiations remain critical in delivering a good agreement in Denmark at the end of the year. The above contributions that I consolidate from the experiences in ACTS and interactions with various ACTS partners, specifically relations with Germanwatch, cannot be enough for a proper agreement but they are essential ingredients in reaching a win-win deal in Copenhagen. As delegates move closer to a drafting a deal they must keep in mind why and for whom they are negotiating and remember interesting but innovative ideas that can accelerate and reach a fair deal. They must also think of establishing a multi-disciplinary team that will focus on synergising issues related to impacts of climate change on society and response measures that can be sustainable in addressing the challenge.

Delegates must know that a good deal is a win for vulnerable communities in Africa and is a global win to humanity at large.

For further details and more insights on adaptation and further contacts at ACTS' role in the region and contact persons, feel free to use the email address below to make enquiries via email:

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