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EC ACP MEAs PROGRAMME NEWSLETTER



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Africa faces numerous environmental challenges, including drought, floods, desertification and coastal erosion. As most of Africa's rural populations are dependent on climate sensitive sectors such as agriculture for their livelihood, these challenges largely contribute to undermining Africa's efforts to achieve sustainable development and poverty reduction, which are among the development priorities for Africa. The rural economy suffers from poor productivity, a low level of diversification and environmental degradation and is subjected to unpredictable climatic changes. The resulting decline in agricultural productivity, food security and diseases negatively impact on economic development. Africa is among the poorest regions of the world, and suffers the hardest because of its low incomes and low capacity to deal with disasters and other environmental risks.

Africa's Environmental challenges

Africa faces environmental challenges related to climate change, biodiversity loss, unsustainable management of water resources, depletion of coastal and marine resources, pollution and waste. Africa accounts for roughly 27 percent of global land degradation with 500 million hectares of moderately to severely degraded land. While agriculture is the economic mainstay accounting for about 20–30 percent of GDP in sub-Saharan Africa, and representing up to 55 percent of African exports, urban areas account for 38 percent of the total population and are credited with 60 percent of the region's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). African cities are undergoing rapid population growth accompanied by rapid development pressures with high demand for housing and infrastructure, straining an already fragile environment.

Impacts of environmental hazards create additional demands on fragile economies, and drain limited resources. Many countries in Africa will not meet their national poverty reduction targets and MDG goals, as benefits are eroded by extreme environmental events.

One of the most important challenges facing Africa is to reconcile its development needs and poverty reduction with the sustainable management of its natural resources. In Africa, food security, environment and poverty are closely inter-linked. Despite these linkages and despite commitments by African Governments, environmental concerns are not still sufficiently mainstreamed into national development policies and plans. Environment is often still not considered as a political and financial priority in many countries, and implementation of multilateral environmental agreement (MEAs) is sidelined. In addition, it is often difficult to ensure appropriate coordination between national and international efforts. The capacity to negotiate MEAs is also a major concern. For Africa to benefit from MEAs, its negotiating position must be strengthened and the capacity of its negotiators should be built. The absence of adequate legal and legislative frameworks at national and regional levels, coupled with inadequate exchange or lack of information grossly hampers the implementation of MEAs in Africa. This situation is aggravated by the low level of awareness of environmental issues within African.

Capacity Support

The Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of NEPAD was endorsed by the African Heads of State in 2003 and contains strategies and programmes which serve as the framework upon which AU Member States are encouraged to build their own environmental programs. Under this framework and in response to the above challenges, the African Union Commission has launched several important initiatives and programmes, led by the Department

HIGHLIGHT

First Meeting of the Programme Steering Committee (PSC)

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of Rural Economy and Agriculture's (DREA) Division of Environment and Natural Resources. Key among these are its disaster risk reduction (DRR) programme with the objective to strengthen national capacities to address disasters, established jointly with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). DRR has been established with the support of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). In response to policy makers' need to make more informed decisions on climate change issues the AUC, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank launched the Clim/Dev initiative to enhance African policy-making capacity. Together with the Program on African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD), the Clim/Dev Initiative has the potential to mainstream climate information into development planning and practices in Africa. To combat land degradation, African Heads of adopted the Great Green Wall for the Sahel and Sahara Initiative (GWSSI), which is coordinated by DREA. It's objectives are to enhance environmental stability, control land degradation, arrest desert advancement, conserve biological diversity and improve the livelihoods of the poor.

EC ACP MEAs Programme

Most recently, the African Union Commission (AUC) was designated by the European Commission and ACP Secretariat as the Africa Hub of Capacity Building related to MEAs in ACP countries. The Project was established by the European Commission under the framework of the 9th EDF and was endorsed by AMCEN in Johannesburg in June 2008. The main objective of the African Hub is to strengthen and enhance the capacity of African ACP countries, the AUC and RECs to effectively execute their mandates with regard to environmental management in Africa. The African Hub will build African capacity to negotiate, implement and enforce MEAs.

During the Inception Phase of the project, the Africa Hub conducted needs assessment workshops providing African ACP countries the opportunity to review and prioritise their capacity building needs related to MEAs. This review was undertaken on the basis of National Capacity Self Assessment and other reports prepared by countries. Capacity needs were identified in the fields of development and harmonisation of legal and regulatory instruments, enforcement, awareness creation, institutional strengthening, information

exchange, negotiation and south-south cooperation. The AUC in collaboration with UNEP has developed a detailed work plan based on the identified needs. The AUC will work in very close collaboration with partners to implement activities in the work plan and will coordinate the implementation of activities at national and regional levels. Monitoring and evaluation will assess progress made and readjust project activities to ensure current priorities are addressed.

The MEAs project will forge synergies and links with NEPAD in the implementation of its activities. In executing its mandate as coordinating agency on environmental programmes on the continent, the AUC also works in close collaboration with AMCEN, AMCOW and NEPAD, as well as the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP).

Under the ACP MEAs project, funding is also channelled through various partners such as the UNEP Risoe Centre, the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD, the SAICM Secretariat and the FAO. The African Hub will work closely with these partners to avoid duplication of activities and ensure complementarities.

Parting thoughts

The African Union Commission endeavours to work closely with all its partners to ensure that the state of the African environment is improved. The achievement of this objective will lead to a sound environment and poverty reduction which are the basis for sustainable development. The successful implementation of the ACP MEAs project will be a clear demonstration of Africa's readiness to play a meaningful role in the global efforts to address environmental issues. It is in this spirit that the AUC is also looking forward to a strong, fair and effective global climate deal at COP-15 in Copenhagen, without which the continent faces a bleak future.

Ms Fatoumata Ndoye

Mr. Livingstone Sindayigaya

African Hub Project Coordinators

African Union Commission

Recent Developments under the EC ACP MEAs Programme

African Hub (AUC)

Based on an initial synthesis report on existing African MEA-implementation related needs, the African Hub held regional Needs workshops in Nairobi in July and Addis Ababa in August and September to consult African ACP countries on their priority needs. The workshops, which brought together 27 countries, defined the scope and nature of the specific project activities to be undertaken in African ACP countries. The participating countries endorsed the activities and identified further capacity needs. Thirty African countries have nominated focal points. With the recruitment of two project coordinators, Ms. Fatoumata Ndoye and Mr. Livingston Sindayigaya, and one accounts assistant, Mr. Patrick Aplogan, the African Hub is now fully operational. For more information contact Ms. Fatoumata Ndoye (NDOYEF@africa-union.org, fnjal-low@yahoo.com) or Livingston Sindayigaya (sindanyigaya@yahoo.com).

Caribbean Hub (CARICOM)

Through a Needs study the Caribbean Hub identified gaps affecting the implementation of MEAs in the region and provided a baseline assessment of technical, legal and policy related capacity needs for the implementation of the MEAs. The study provided background for the Caribbean Needs workshop held on 8 to 10 September 2009 in Georgetown, Guyana, which gathered eleven countries to review and prioritize Caribbean Needs. Workshop participants reviewed and endorsed a regional work plan highlighting the character of and outlining the project activities to enhance capacity building throughout the Caribbean region. Caribbean countries have endorsed the project and the Caribbean ACP Member States have selected and communicated their focal points to the Caribbean Hub. A Project Coordinator for the Caribbean Hub has been selected. For more information contact Mr. Garfield Barnwell (gbarnwell@caricom.org).

Pacific Hub (SPREP)

To define the Pacific Hub priority activities the Pacific Hub has reviewed SPREP Member State communiqués and National Capacity Self Assessments (NCSA) and consulted Pacific ACP Coun-

try representatives to assess Pacific capacity needs for MEA implementation. Having developed their work plan, the Pacific Hub is hosting a Pacific MEA Conference on 9-12 November in Apia, Samoa, to identify and agree on means to enhance collaboration, coordination and capacity for effective and sustained MEA implementation at the national level and for effective support by inter-governmental organizations in the Pacific Region. Mainstreaming MEAs will also be discussed. For more information contact Mr. Frank Wickham (frankw@sprep.org).

UNEP Risøe Centre (URC)

The UNEP Risøe Centre (URC) undertook specific regional and country needs assessments to assess ACP countries' CDM needs and capacities. URC selected for priority action Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Sao Tome and Principe in Africa, Belize, Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean and Fiji and Papua New Guinea in the Pacific. Regional activities will also be conducted in the Caribbean and Pacific.

A concrete set of activities and the expected modalities for their implementation has been established to enable the host countries to identify, design, finance, implement and monitor Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects. These projects will address both sustainable development priorities as well as offer a cost-effective option for carbon credit buyers to comply with their obligations under the Kyoto Protocol. For more information contact Ms. Miriam Hinostrza (Miriam.Hinostrza@risoe.dk).

Global Mechanism

Building on its African workshops (see first issue of this Newsletter) GM organized a capacity enhancement and knowledge exchange workshop on DIFS (Designing Integrated Financing Strategies) in Nadi, Fiji, on 27 to 31 July. The workshop brought together 25 participants from 14 countries. As a result a common understanding was reached on the main components of the Integrated Financing Strategies in the framework of the 10-Year Strategy of the UNCCD adopted by COP9 in September 2007 in Madrid. It paved the way for the forthcoming support of the project to the elaboration of a Regional Integrated Financing Strategy adapted with these SIDS country specificities.

Thanks to the strong cooperation built under the scope-accp project with UNDP (GM-UNDP-UNEP MoU) the GM, together with UNDP and SPREP agreed on set-

ting up of a sub-regional technical assistance facility managed by SPREP and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

A similar a capacity enhancement and knowledge exchange workshop on DIFS for the Caribbean is planned for November. For more information contact Mr. Youssef Brahim (y.brahimi@global-mechanism.org) or Ms. Inès Chaâlala (i.chaalala@global-mechanism.org)

SAICM

The seventh meeting of the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund Implementation Committee in Geneva on 16-17 April approved a project submitted by Djibouti to strengthen its capacity to control the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes and chemicals. The SAICM Secretariat is currently entering into legal arrangements with the executing agency. The eighth meeting of the QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee met on 15-16 October to consider eligible applications. The meeting outcomes are being finalized. For more information contact Ms. Tatiana Terakhova (tterakhova@chemicals.unep.ch).

African Hub Team



From left, Mr. Patrick Aplogan, Ms. Fatoumata Ndoye and Mr. Livingstone Sindayigaya.

FAO

The FAO held consultations with major stakeholders and partners in the ACP regions to define regional and national priorities. A series of missions was undertaken in the regions to engage regional and national partners. Detailed work plans have been elaborated and countries with similar needs have been grouped together to allow individual country projects to benefit from neighboring countries' experiences. In each ACP region, priority countries where specific activities will be undertaken have been identified. For more information contact Mr. Mark Davis (Mark.Davis@fao.org).

The EC ACP MEAs Programme Newsletter

The EC ACP MEAs Programme Newsletter is published quarterly during the EC ACP MEAs Programme. It will include opinion pieces by the programme partners as well as an update of latest developments. For more information on the EC ACP MEAs Programme

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Please also visit:

www.unep.org/AfricanCaribbeanPacific/MEAs/



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