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UNU-INRA

Institute for Natural Resources in Africa

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Africa at Katowice



COP24 - KATOWICE
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COP 24 and beyond



Can Africa expect more than hollow pledges at Katowice?

Three years since the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP) watershed Paris Climate Agreement, world leaders gathered in Katowice to discuss the way forward in ensuring the world thermostat is contained below 2°C increase threshold. IPCC's 1.5°C report, released by the United Nations, shows that the world is not on course. The stakes are high for Africa in this COP, as with previous COP processes, given its established vulnerability as the region with the least capacity to withstand the negative impacts of climate change. The 1.5°C report gives us an indicative entry point, but further steps are required: an affirmation of pledges, calibration of goals, a stocktaking of how far we have travelled and how much still needs to be done. Will countries be able to deliver based on the scale of their ambitions rehearsed some three years ago in Paris?

The United Nations University's Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA), a thinker and shaper of complex problems on natural resource management in Africa, is asking the continent's experts and lead influencers of natural resources in the region to reflect on whether Africa was able to trigger greater climate action in Katowice and whether some of the gains and momentum achieved in Paris can be sustained.

UNU-INRA has organized a series of interviews to air African voices in connection with the climate talks in Katowice, Poland. This unique platform features prominent African climate experts and leading figures on climate change issues in Africa, including Dr. Youba Sokona, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Vice-Chair and Special Advisor for sustainable development to the South Center, Dr. Linus Mofor, Senior Climate and Energy Specialist at the African Climate Policy Centre, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Mr. Moses Jura, member of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN), Mr. Gareth Phillips, Manager of Climate Finance, African Development Bank (AfDB), and Mr. Mithika Mwenda, Executive Director of the PanAfrican Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA).

COP 24 is referred to as a distinctive COP that will trigger the Talanoa Dialogue as a series of discussions on the rulebook to operationalize the Paris Agreement. Key questions abound, such as: 'How are African countries preparing themselves for the road ahead towards the implementation of the Paris Agreement?' Will African negotiators witness renewed faith in climate diplomacy to unleash new sources of funding aimed at greater climate action? Have we made significant progress towards addressing climate change since Paris, and have we severed ties with business as usual processes? Will the famous Paris Rulebook address Africa's concerns on the means of implementation – finance, technology transfer, and other capacity related deficits? Are African leaders setting out their stalls for independent action on embracing new avenues of green and blue economic processes as part of their renewed pledge to get it right the first time?

Tune into UNU-INRA's URL on <https://inra.unu.edu> to read about insights and views about CoP24 from an African perspective.

1. Global Climate Processes

Q: Katowice - How different from previous Conference of Parties (CoPs)?

Dr. Youba Sokona



Following the adoption of the Paris Agreement at CoP 21, governments tasked the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to produce a report to compare 1.5°C and 2°C global warming by the end of the century. The IPCC's report was released in October 2018 in South Korea and the findings were presented at CoP 24. That made CoP 24 somehow different from previous ones because the report's findings will inform the Talanoa Dialogue and the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Mr. Gareth Brydon Phillips



I think there are a number of things that are different. One is that we had a very clear goal that the parties need to deliver - the Paris Rulebook - and there was a lot of momentum since the Paris Agreement. This is the biggest CoP we have had since 2015, and that has already made a difference. Another aspect is that there has been very good engagement from the public sector. Particularly, the publication of the 1.5° Report added a lot of momentum in the run-up to CoP 24. Otherwise, it is much the same as previous CoPs.



2. African-Specific Climate Priorities, Climate Vulnerability

Q: In your view, what is Africa's top priority at Katowice?

Dr. Linus Mofor



COP21 and the Paris Agreement have brought with them broad responsibilities on all actors - the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. In terms of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) that all countries, including African countries, have signed up to, based on their respective capabilities, there is communion across the board. Now, it is time for developed countries to recognize and support the efforts that African countries are making. They are already suffering from the adverse impacts of climate change, which they contributed very little to. So commitments from their NDC actions must be supported by means of implementation from developed countries, which imply predictable, adequate, effective climate finance, capacity building and technology transfer. These are the key things that should be delivered for Africa to recognize and appreciate the commitments that African countries have put in place with their NDCs, some of which I must say, are very, very ambitious.

Mr. Gareth Brydon Phillips



Africa is a climate change taker. We didn't make climate change, we don't make the greenhouse gas emissions that are causing it, but we are taking the results. And what that translates into is that, whilst of course we look at Paris alignment - Africa will do its bit to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions - it is adaptation that is really important. We have 600 million small-holder farmers, who don't get paid if it doesn't rain. And as we move forward with Paris alignment and taking our actions forward, we need to take steps to help those farmers adapt to the changing climate. I think it is very disappointing that four parties - the United States, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait - were not willing to welcome the IPCC 1.5° Report. It has not been given the full weight of recognition that it deserves because it is an incredibly sobering report, in terms of the impact of climate change, how much more severe things are going to be, the timescale that we have to respond and so on. It is particularly important for Africa because when they talk about 1.5° that means 2, 3 or maybe 4° already on the African continent because we seem to be more susceptible to temperature rise, and so we need to take it seriously.

3. Climate Processes, Climate Action, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

Q: How ready is Africa to roll out domestic climate processes and actions?

Dr. Linus Mofor



Looking at the readiness of African member states for NDC implementation, it was very clear that NDCs were done in a rush. Member states need strong support to review their NDCs, and see how they can capitalize on them as mechanisms for mainstreaming climate change in their development planning. Member states also realized that they have overcommitted on their NDCs. The provisions of the Paris Agreement does not allow parties to revise emissions downwards. You can only stay where you are or revise upwards. But all is not lost. Member states can review their NDCs and identify new opportunities that could arise in Blue Economy or other areas, provided they get the support they need to help them meet their ambitions and achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063.

Mr. Omedi Moses Jura



Mitigation and adaptation are the major actions. But they have to be supported. And that's why we have technology, capacity building, and finance instruments to support these actions. If, without isolating any of them, we have something that will ensure that we are moving forward with all of these, in terms of the preparedness that we have worked on to produce the Paris Agreement, then we are ready to go. We will also look - and this is my personal view - at how countries are doing and what they can do through their own bilateral initiatives. That's where maybe the issue of initiatives may come in. In a spirit of ensuring that we are working towards a common goal, whether we are from a developed or a developing country, building resilience is a matter of utmost importance to grow in a low-emission development pathway that will address the mitigation aspects, especially in developing countries that still have to develop and still have to emit. But if we keep those emissions at a level where removal by sinks takes care of it, then we will have struck the balance we are looking for.



4. Climate Equity, Climate Finance, Common but Differentiated Responsibilities

Q: What is at stake for Africa in these climate negotiations?

Dr. Linus Mofor



Well, the new rulebook - the Paris Rulebook - should be firm enough to ensure the implementation of the Paris Agreement, but should also recognize the efforts that African countries are making by ensuring there is transparency and equity in the way countries are making commitments. Many African countries are making huge commitments in their NDCs, all Parties should do the same and the rule book should make that very clear. But equally, the rulebook should recognize that countries have different capabilities, and provide some flexibility in what is expected from African countries and how more advanced economies, which have been responsible for climate change, also implement their NDCs. So the rule book should be firm, transparent, and ensure that there is equity in ambition, equity in commitment, and equity in support.

Mr. Mithika Mwenda



The African position is very clear. We need a global goal for finance, which is actually quantified. We also need to look at the issues of adaptation. So if these are not integrated into the framework and we are not seeing very strong commitment on these, then we are worried that we are not going to get a good outcome for Africa. We will continue putting pressure on policy makers and on the North to honour their climate debts and their commitments, either in finance, increased ambition and reduced emissions at source level. Because even if we turn the whole of Africa green without taking action at domestic level in the industrialized countries, then we are not going to be doing anything in addressing the urgency of climate change. And so the other issue for us is to continue building momentum and working at the local level to mobilize and create awareness, because we want this discourse to be more bottom-up than top-down. The issue of justice is really about giving voice to the people who are vulnerable, people who are in the frontline of the climate crisis. That's why we want to ensure that we do that at local level, because we want them to talk for themselves.

Mr. Omedi Moses Jura



I don't know whether to talk about shortchanging but taking responsibility - not asking who has the responsibility and who would like to take it - under the Convention; this is something that we are all aware about. But, when all is said and done, we have local action, we have global action. It is also important as we seek for intervention from elsewhere, that we also undertake domestic activities that prepare us well for implementation. We expect that every country will be responsible and will take responsibility and play its part so that we have collective action. As negotiators for and from Africa, we encourage our governments to carry out what they are supposed to do and seek international collaboration and, in that way, we can work together and be able to address climate change, locally and globally.

The Paris Rulebook - should be firm to ensure the implementation of the Paris agreement

Dr. Linus Mofor, ECA

5. Climate-Resilient Infrastructure, Climate-Smart Energy, Agriculture, Urban Systems, and Adaptation

Q: What do you consider as opportunities for Africa in the area of climate change?

Dr. Youba Sokona



I think one of the key priorities for Africa is development, in particular to make development more sustainable and inclusive and to eradicate poverty. And climate is both a constraint and an opportunity to redefine the continent's development agenda. What is important for Africa is to look at the report of 1.5 and then to see what that means for the continent and the opportunity it may seize to be able to take advantage of the report's findings. One huge area where Africa may stand to benefit is the fact that the continent is at an early stage of developing its infrastructure, energy and urbanization systems, all of the areas for which the report has provided pointers as to which route to take. As I already indicated, most countries are developing their energy infrastructure and a variety of cheaper options - as opposed to the combustion systems - are available. We can also develop a policy for the agriculture sector, and particularly for small-scale farming systems that is climate-compatible. Another area we can look at is our urban systems and mobility to propose alternatives that will improve the lives of people. An additional area is the housing sector. It is strange that many African countries continue to build cement factories when we have a huge diversity of building materials that can serve as passive cooling systems - you don't need air conditioning in those kinds of housing. These are areas in which I think the research community, in collaboration with practitioners, should invest in the coming days, weeks, months and years in order to better inform policies at various levels.

Mr. Gareth Brydon Phillips



Well I think from Africa's point of view, the Paris Rulebook, and particularly Article 6 will provide opportunities for climate financing around mitigation outcomes and inputs. And African countries need to exploit the text that says LDCs have the right to develop or prepare additional rules or regulations. Because, if African countries have to meet the same standards, as, you know, Brazil, and China and India, and so on, then we will continue to find it very difficult to access carbon markets because of the capacity constraints that we have. The area that again interests me most is Article 6.8 and we have been working hard to develop a mechanism called the Adaptation Benefit Mechanism, which is a way of paying project developers to deliver adaptation. What we have come to realize is that the instruments that we are developing and we are used to - the Kyoto instrument, and Articles 6.2 and 6.4 - are mechanisms that enable us to pay project developers to deliver mitigation outcomes. But what's interesting is that when you start to talk to climate finance about adaptation, the instruments we have for adaptation encourage us to lend money for mitigation and that's to Africa's disadvantage. So we have been pushing for Adaptation mechanisms, as a means by which we can pay project developers to deliver adaptation benefits for all, and that's what we need in Africa.

6. Climate Information, National Consultative Process On Climate Change, Long-Term Emission Strategy

Q: What do you foresee as challenges for Africa going forward?



Dr. Youba Sokona

It was important that African countries came to the CoP with clear objectives and clear guidance. They should also have a dialogue between the three communities that should be working closely together – the policy, practice and science communities. In the context of Africa, the three communities are not talking to each other and I think this is one of the big gaps that needs to be filled. And negotiations cannot be efficient if they are not based on clear, scientific, technical and economic arguments, which the research community is supposed to provide. The practice community too is fundamental because they are the ones responsible for implementing policies.



Mr. Gareth Brydon Phillips

We have seen very good progress and commitments from some countries on long-term emission strategies. That is what we are lacking here in Africa. Not many countries, as far as I am aware, have developed long-term emission strategies to get to net-zero by 2050, by 2060, or even by 2070. For example, the negotiation group for the high-level of ambition group, including the EU, has made very serious commitments, including some companies. And what has been interesting is some of those companies that have been putting forward commitments, shipping companies like Mersk and oil companies such as Shell, have committed to significantly decarbonize but they have acknowledged that they don't know how they are going to do that. And so they are taking a leap into the dark. And that's the kind of ambition we need to see coming forward. There is always scope for more but I think we have had a good start. Although we have seen some very good progress, we are lacking this in Africa.



Short bios of interviewees

Dr. Youba Sokona



Prof. Youba Sokona is Vice-Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) since October 2015, and the Special Advisor for sustainable development for the South Center, based in Geneva. Prior to this, he was Co-Chair of IPCC Working Group III on the mitigation of climate change for the Fifth Assessment Report after serving as a Lead Author since 1990. With over 35 years of experience addressing energy, environment and sustainable development in Africa, Prof. Sokona is a well-known, leading global figure. Furthermore, he has a proven track record of organizational leadership and management as Coordinator of the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) and as Executive Secretary of the Sahara and the Sahel Observatory (OSS). He is affiliated with numerous boards and organizations - Member of the Board for the Institute of Development Studies, Honorary Professor at the University College London (UCL), and Special Advisor to the African Energy Leaders Group. Prof. Youba Sokona is a global figure, with deep technical knowledge, extensive policy experience and an unreserved personal commitment to African-led development.

Dr. Linus Mofor



Dr. Linus Mofor is a Senior Environmental Affairs Officer in charge of energy, infrastructure and climate change at the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. His work portfolio at the ACPC includes leading work on energy, infrastructure and climate change nexus as well as the Africa Climate Resilient Investment Facility (AFRI-RES) – a joint initiative of the ECA, World Bank, African Development, African Union Commission and the Nordic Development Fund aimed at strengthening the capacity of African institutions and policy makers and supporting project developers to plan, design and implement infrastructure investments that are resilient to climate variability and change in selected sectors. He joined the Commission from the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) where he worked as a renewable energy innovation and technology analyst. Before joining IRENA, Linus was an industrial development expert with the Energy and Climate Change Branch of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in Vienna. Prior to working with UNIDO, he was a senior lecturer and consultant at the Centre for Engineering Research and Environmental Applications at the University of Glamorgan (now the University of South Wales) in UK.

Mr. Omedi Moses Jura



Engineer Omedi Moses Jura is Deputy Director, Climate Change and Mitigation, at the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Kenya. He has 35 years of experience at various levels in the Government of Kenya working at National Headquarters in the Ministries of Water and Environment and in various other capacities at provincial and district levels since 1981. He carried out assorted official international assignments, including leading the Kenyan delegation in climate change negotiations, heading the National Climate Change Response Secretariat, spearheading various initiatives including the establishment of the Climate Change Directorate; development of the climate change framework policy and bill, the National Climate Change Response Strategy 2010 and related Action Plan 2013-17. Eng. Jura was also involved in the implementation of the Climate Change Act 2016 and other programmes including the Water Towers Restoration and Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM), Climate and Clean Air Coalition initiatives and Low Emissions Capacity Building Programme.



Mr. Gareth Brydon Phillips

Mr. Gareth Brydon Phillips is Chief Climate and Green Growth Officer at the African Development Bank, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, with leading experience in both forestry and climate change and a strong commitment to the concept of sustainability. Prior to joining the Africa Development Bank, he was Chief Climate Change Officer at Sindicatum Sustainable Resources, and previously worked at SGS where he was responsible for obtaining and maintaining accreditation for, inter alia, CDM, EU ETS, UK ETS validation and verification services. Whilst at SGS, he was a Lead Assessor for Forest Stewardship Council certification and evaluation of carbon sequestration in forest ecosystems. Mr. Phillips is a Member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters.



Mr. Mithika Mwenda

Mr. Mithika Mwenda is Secretary General of the PanAfrican Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), Nairobi, Kenya. Before he joined the climate justice movement in 2006, he was actively involved in Kenya's community mobilization for expanded democratic and constitutional transformation, where he rose from a provincial Youth Coordinator to a Co-Convenor of the National Convention Executive Council which spearheaded constitutional reforms in the country. He began his career in climate change as a Program Officer with Climate Network Africa before moving to the All Africa Conference of Churches where he served as Climate Change Officer, helping Churches and 10 Church Leaders to understand the nexus between religion and climate change, and the moral aspect of the climate crisis. PACJA has emerged as a formidable environmental platform, bringing together around 1,000 Civil Society Organizations from diverse backgrounds in 45 African countries.



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