ZOOMING IN ON AFRICA IN THE INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS

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Climate change is considered as one of the major challenges of the 21st century, posing threats to humankind, and undermining efforts to achieve key development goals including poverty eradication. For many countries it is one of the severe obstacles towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2016, and their aspirations towards a sustainable development on a global, regional and national level. There is now sufficient scientific evidence and consensus that climate change is caused and particularly exacerbated by human activities. This is mainly through the burning of fossil fuels and changes in land use patterns due to rapid economic growth, related changes in lifestyles, rapid increases in human population, and the growing fuel and resource needs to meet these development imperatives.

Climate change has and will have profound impacts on peoples' livelihoods, economic growth, and ecosystems. However, the effects and impacts of climate change on economies and societies vary greatly over the world. Each country's specific circumstances, such as initial climate, socio- economic situation and growth prospects, will define and shape the impact of climate change on societies, both in economic and environmental terms.[1] The global average (land and ocean) surface temperature shows a warming of 0.85 [0.65 to 1.06] °C in the period 1880 to 2012, based on multiple independently produced datasets.[2] The global average temperature increase exceeded 0.7°C in eleven of the last twelve years (1995 – 2006) ranking among the twelve warmest years of global surface temperature since 1850.[3]
Developing countries are most vulnerable, particularly those in Africa, largely because of their geographic exposure, relatively small economies (meaning low adaptive capacity to climate change impacts), prevailing low levels of household incomes, and greater reliance on climate sensitive sectors such as rain-fed agriculture and ecosystems or nature-based economic activities (e.g. tourism).

The African continent is particularly exposed and vulnerable to adverse shifts in climatic patterns, with a dry climate in many areas and populations highly dependent on agriculture and natural resources. Africa is likely to experience faster warming than the rest of the globe during this century, although the future effects of climate change in any given region are highly uncertain and there might be significant variations across regions of the continent—notably for agro-climatic conditions, which could deteriorate in some regions but improve in others.[4] Some effects are already visible in some countries (reduced and irregular rainfall, soil degradation and degradation of other environmental assets).

Considering the generally high levels of vulnerability of many African countries (notably with regards to agriculture, food security, water security and social cohesion), Africa has a major interest in an international regime that curbs Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.

The first section of this paper will provide a background on international climate negotiations. The section thereafter will summarise how the African continent has positioned itself in these deliberations in recent years and the asymmetries of power that characterize negotiations. Section four of this paper offers insight into how a vast continent with diverse countries facing a variety of different challenges is making progress to unite and speak with one voice on the international climate change negotiation floor. The last section of this paper provides a snapshot of the Namibian climate policy making processes that have resulted in international recognition.

Background

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international environmental treaty (also known as a multilateral environmental agreement) that was opened for signature at the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and came into force in 1994.

The ultimate objective of the Convention is to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system. It states that such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened, and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner. To date, the UNFCCC has 196 parties, showing near universal agreement that there is a problem and that action is required against climate change.[5]

Countries normally negotiate as blocks in order to strengthen their positions. It is challenging, however, to obtain a single view among the developing nations given the vast differences in circumstance, resources and potential impacts of climate change. All decisions resulting from the negotiation process, such as the Kyoto Protocol, are consensual decisions. In other words, every single word, sentence and table in the documents that constitute the Convention has been agreed by all 196 Parties. This goes some way to explaining why these decisions take years to negotiate as each country pushes its national interests.

The climate negotiations are a superb example of the way international relations are at work. Many aspects of the negotiations highlight how power is distributed and negotiated in the world. By analysing the way in which the international discussions were conducted in the past it becomes quite clear what kind of interests and alliances different participating parties have. At times it even appears that economic and political self-interests are at the forefront of negotiations, pushing aside the common global goal of reaching a consensus for a clean environment that would benefit everyone. Numerous climate policy analysts are of the thinking that more than three decades of climate negotiations show that narratives of present costs and future benefits of climate policy simply do not produce the political will for serious emissions reductions.[6]

The world is split. On the one hand there are countries that are industrialised, taken here to mean mainly Western nations such as European countries, the US as well as Australia. These have been and still are heavily polluting the planet in the course of their industrialisation. Their advantage is that it is easier for them to adapt to changes in the atmosphere because of their technological and economic strengths.

On the other hand there are industrializing countries of the global South. Some of these countries have the means to adapt to climate change, while others are extremely vulnerable. African countries contribute marginally towards climate change while at the same time carry the biggest burden. This is why African negotiators emphasize their right to industrialize in negotiations. African nations do not want the issue of climate

change to hamper their own economies to emerge.[7] This points to one of the fundamental issues within the negotiations, which is that political tensions persist between economic growth and development on the one hand, and environmental sustainability on the other.[8]

These tensions highlight that more than technical solutions are required. Reaching an effective international agreement requires trade-offs between competing policy objectives.[9] In formulating climate policies, countries face trade-offs between short-term economic objectives and long-term social and environmental sustainability goals. Developing countries in particular face such trade-offs, although in their case economic development and poverty reduction remain paramount objectives.

The international community faces trade-offs between investing in mitigation and adaptation. On the basis of historical responsibilities for GHG emissions and current capabilities, countries have to determine their respective contributions to climate change mitigation, the amount of resources transferred from developed to developing countries, and the role that emerging economies should play in reducing GHG emissions and assisting poorer countries. In other words, international climate policy hinges on trade-offs and has distributional consequences that have to be negotiated.

Rapidly evolving geopolitical and economic circumstances pose challenges to the negotiating parties. The steady re-balancing of economic activity from the West towards Asia and the financial and economic crises that have affected both the US and EU economies have altered the landscape of the international climate negotiations and somewhat diminished the capabilities of many developed countries to lead a global green growth policy agenda. In these circumstances, to make ambitious commitments to reduce GHG emissions, parties have to be confident that other nations will act upon their commitments and assume their fair shares of the burden. Strong, consensus-based institutions are needed to establish mutual confidence.

Parallels and asymmetries: Africa in global discussions

An important aspect to consider when assessing the African position in the international climate negotiations is the international framework itself that the different states are operating in. The internal makeup of the negotiations has an effect on the way the negotiations take place and what impact negotiations may have. Often the negotiations process has been completely ignored, as well as "...significant characteristics like information asymmetry, countries' heterogeneity, or even the possibilities of renegotiation."[10] International negotiations, especially climate change negotiations, take a great deal of time to conclude and these delays have often been used to take advantage and to gain better knowledge of the characteristics of the opponent.[11]

The initial situation many African countries find themselves in is an asymmetrical one. As already pointed out, while many African countries are still industrializing, their contribution to climate change is as a matter of fact marginal compared to industrialized countries. At the same time African nations carry the biggest burden when it comes to climate change because African nations are particularly vulnerable to rising temperatures. Another asymmetry pointed out by Caparros, Pereau and Tazdait that characterizes the negotiations is furthermore the presence of asymmetry of information in a dynamic framework leading to a greater bargaining power of the global North.[12]

An unanswered question for many African nations is one of financial compensation for natural, economic and social resources lost. Furthermore, the historical responsibility of developed countries with regard to climate

change has been emphasized by the African Union (AU) in particular.[13] According to Caparros *et al*, it is fortunate that the Global North, led by the European Union, "has recognized its historical responsibility … and should be ready to compensate the South in some way for accepting limitations to their urgently needed development."[14] According to Klinsky, fairness is essential in climate policy, as "parties' ideas of fairness are likely to be rooted in political and economic desires and concerns, historical narratives, and experiences of both interdependence with and independence from others."[15]

Another important factor depicting asymmetries and parallels is the way negotiating delegations from African countries are composed. According to Deressa, Africa needs to invest in increasing the number and capacity of its delegates involved in the negotiations to effectively address and represent African priorities. He suggests that African governments should organize a training and capacity-building forum for the current and potential future delegates/negotiators of the Africa Group of Negotiators (AGN).[16]

At the negotiations African nations are often prone to international pressures on them that are tied to foreign aid. These tensions between domestic and collective interests at international climate negotiations are not only common to African parties but are especially reflected in African nations that focus more on their own national and regional political and economic agendas rather than on the content of negotiations themselves. Hoste and Anderson exposed that "leaked diplomatic documents show American and European political and financial pressure on Africa."[17] The way in which this is done is by linking the agreement of the Accord to development efforts. As a response to international pressures the African position at COP 15 was to make sure that funds would be made available for Africa to deal with the consequences of climate change largely caused by Western nations.[18]

Furthermore, Africa's voice on the whole has been very limited in international negotiations.[19] The continent has struggled thus far to actually influence global policies in order to tackle challenges particular to the continent.[20] One of the main reasons for this is an internal fragmentation that becomes apparent at the negotiations. Due to differentiated implications of climate change within the continent, and a lack of solidarity, consolidation becomes more difficult. Fragmentation can be dealt with in various ways. The principle of subsidiarity could potentially be a way forward. Yet, it is always a challenge to allocate environmental issues to the correct level of governance.

There is, furthermore, a direct link between poverty and the ability to respond to climate change. When populations are extremely poor they lack the capacities to shield themselves from powerful effects of climate change such as extreme drought and flooding. The groups of people that are generally most marginalized in all societies are children, the elderly and women. Social safety nets and a greater empowerment of the poor could serve as a basis for these members of society to reduce their vulnerability to climate change. One way forward, as proposed by Deressa, is the integration of the poor into national or regional commodity value chains.[21]

In addition to the crippling impact of poverty on the continent, there is a strong link between addressing climate change on the one hand and possessing the existing economic development and innovation to do so on the other. That is why the other great need for Africa is to strengthen adaptation efforts by the Convention. Madziwa calls for Africa to lobby much harder for "enhanced support for adaptation finance, technology support and including the issue of establishing mechanisms to address the current loss and damage from extreme climatic events."[22] It is therefore imperative for African countries to turn available economic

pathways into sustainable ones with the assistance of developed countries.

Consolidating the 'African voice' and other challenges

The Africa Group of Negotiators (AGN), also known as the 'Africa Group', is a coalition of African states that works through the G77[23] in order to negotiate the best possible decisions for the continent. It is the only active regional group that participates in international environmental negotiations. Experts have highlighted that developing country negotiators often enter meetings and forums without clear political directives from their relevant governments.[24] This was a challenge until recently when the continent strengthened its climate change architecture with positive results for the Africa group.[25] So in the current set up, countries first develop their national positions in cross-sectoral consultations and then feed these positions into the AGN, who then consolidate positions from African parties to all Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements.

The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) is the current structure that guides the group and is a permanent forum where African Ministers of Environment discuss matters of relevance to the environmental affairs of the continent. The conference is convened every second year. The mandate and priorities of AMCEN are translated into a continental position, which is presented to international environmental meetings by the AGN.[26] This group of people is tasked with representing their own country positions, the continental position, and of course that of the G77. The position known as the African Common position on environment and Development (Common position) was initially adopted in 1989 and focused on poverty eradication and environment as two intertwined issues. More recently, the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) was formed. It is important to note that 2009 was the first time the AU presented a clear signal to the continent and to the world that it had reached an African consensus (the Africa Common position and the formation of CAHOSCC) on the issues of climate change, an important step given that the mandate to all representatives was now clear.[27]

To deal with a wide range of technical matters, the Chair of the AGN (which rotates every two years) relies on "lead coordinators" who represent the AGN in the various work streams of the UNFCCC (mitigation, adaptation, climate finance, technology, and so forth).[28] These coordinators provide guidance to the country delegations and try to harmonise their views so as to reach clear, common positions, which is a challenging task given the diversity of African countries in terms of exposure to climate change, vulnerability, culture and achieving developmental objectives.[29] The task of reviewing the many submissions of parties in all work streams and obtaining input from AGN members is particularly burdensome for the Chair and the lead coordinators. High staff turnover in country delegations, the lack of available experts, and language barriers further complicate the work of the AGN.[30]

As mentioned, having to reach consensus with all the stakeholders present can pose a serious challenge in the speed and efficiency of the negotiations themselves. It can be very difficult to get consensus from all 196 Parties. This leads to further fragmentation in negotiations groups, in which certain states again gain a greater leverage by being part of many sub negotiations.

Another challenge towards successful negotiations is the absence of an international enforcement body. According to Madziwa: "The absence of an international enforcement body has left promises made in most of these international agreements largely unfulfilled."[31] Equally the absence of binding targets for developing countries was one of the main arguments used by Presi-

dent Bush to reject the Kyoto Protocol.[32] "The US was not supportive of Ethiopia's proposal for a panel to monitor financial pledges regarding climate change." as Hoste and Anderson point out. [33]

Another issue when it comes to the international framework is that the negotiations are led by states only. Yet there are other transnational polluters such as transnational corporations (TNCs), which have to be taken into account in any serious effort towards a cleaner environment. Carlo Jaeger suggests the establishment of green growth clubs, which includes a formal status for transnational clusters of heterogeneous agents (governments, businesses, trade unions, NGOs, universities etc.) jointly pursuing non-climate goals in such a way as to reduce GHG emissions.[34]

Projects of the HSF

Environmental awareness-raising as a catalyst for behavioural change

This legislative and policy backdrop for environmental protection and sustainable resource management in Namibia is telling of a country with an economy that is highly dependent on natural resources including diverse rangelands, arable land, mineral deposits, ecosystems and biodiversity. Economic and social development will be negatively affected by the challenges posed by climate change; especially with regard to water availability, food and livelihood security.

As such, there has been progress towards public awareness on climate change in Namibia, which empowers stakeholders to participate and make informed decisions for the sustainable use of limited natural resources. However, key stakeholders have identified the need to further stimulate public awareness in Namibia on the risks, impacts and responses to climate change. As such, the Environmental Awareness and Climate Change Project was conceived in 2014 by the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) and its main implementing partner the Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DRFN).

The Environmental Awareness and Climate Change Project complements the public awareness efforts of government and civil society to promote environmental awareness and empowers stakeholders to participate in climate change responses by changing their every day behaviours to contribute to environmental sustainability. The project's main objective is to promote environmental sustainability in Namibia through awareness-raising on environmental protection and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Key target groups of the project's work include decision makers in the public and private sectors, youth, educators, media and entrepreneurs.
This three-year project, to run from 2015 to 2017, is in support of the guiding principles of the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) particularly in terms of awareness generation, education, training and capacity building as key building-blocks for the national response to climate change. The project was officially launched in April 2015 and has the objectives to: (i) Increase knowledge and skills on environmental issues; (ii) Promote knowledge transfer in the environmental sector; (iii) Promote social entrepreneurship in the environmental sector; and (iv) Support journalistic work in the environmental sector.

The Environmental Awareness and Climate Change Project implements these objectives through a dynamic approach including information and educational material development, a national information campaign, public dialogue platforms and training of multipliers.
Through its national information campaign, the Project further aims to create the supportive platform for other stakeholders to showcase research, achievements and knowledge products related to environmental sustainability in Namibia. The Project is geared to take pioneering steps toward cultivating systems-thinking approaches, with a more holistic view on the dynamic relationships of the environment, economy and society in Namibia. Furthermore, twenty years since the country ratified the UNFCCC in 1995, the ThinkNamibia national Information Campaign is a timely initiative to consolidate and complement the various efforts of the diversity of stakeholders actively engaged in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Following research and public consultations among key target groups, the following topics were inclusively developed to address the information needs on environmental protection and climate change related topics:

- The science of climate change: definitions, causes, impacts and responses
- Climate smart agriculture
- Forests, rangelands and climate change in Namibia
- Land degradation: implications for food security in Namibia
- The green economy in Namibia
- Innovative approaches to addressing Namibia's water insecurity
- Practical options for conserving water at home
- Water pollution in the upper swakop basin: implications in the face of climate change
- Renewable energy: shifting energy systems in Namibia towards a more sustainable path
- Practical options for conserving energy at home

THINK NAMIBIA

For more information visit: www.enviro-awareness.org.na

The Environmental Awareness Project supported the Namibian Youth Conference on Climate Change, which took place from 30-31 October, 2015. The Conference brought together young people from all across Namibia to discuss the most pressing concerns of the youth related to climate change, which formed the youth Position Paper for the Government and youth delegates to take forward to the COP 21 negotiations in Paris. Source: HSF Namibia.

Namibia's National Climate Change Policy and Strategy

The Namibian government ratified the UNFCCC in 1995, and as a party to the UNFCCC, Namibia is carrying out a wide range of activities to fulfill its commitment for both climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, even though it is, as a non-Annex 1 country, not bound to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Among Namibia's key achievements since ratifying the UNFCCC where: the submission to the UNFCCC of the Initial National Communication in 2002, the Second National Communication in 2011, the Namibian Policy on Climate Change (NPCC) and the National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (NCCSAP).

As one of the first in Africa, Namibia's 2011 Policy on Climate Change is the national vision on addressing climate change. It seeks to outline a coherent, transparent and inclusive framework on climate risk management in accordance with Namibia's national development agenda, legal framework, and recognize environmental constraints and vulnerabilities. The policy further recognizes Namibia's comparative advantages with regards to the abundant potential for renewable energy exploration, especially in terms of solar, wind and hydropower potential. The NPCC is implemented through the National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (NCCSAP) in order to deal with the threats associated with climate change. The goal of the NPCC is to contribute to the attainment of sustainable development in line with Namibia's vision 2030 through strengthening of national capacities to reduce climate change risk and build resilience for any climate change shocks.[35] At the time it was finalised, the policy was one of the first to be developed in the southern African region and was used as an example for other African states.[36]

The government of Namibia recognizes climate change is a complex and cross-cutting concern. Thus there is a need for a holistic and integrated approach to developing a multi-sectoral NCCSAP in order to implement the NPCC, which was promulgated in Namibia in 2011. Climate change impacts directly on the entire process of Namibia's national development, and according to the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), is likely to have negative impacts on efforts to achieve development objectives, including the long-term objectives and targets of Namibia's Vision 2030.[37]

The NCCSAP had been developed as a result of the growing global and national concern and discourse focusing on climate variability, and climate change risks and impacts affecting Namibia's social, environmental and economic developmental potential. The Strategy and Action Plan is a key instrument to operationalise the NPCC over a longer-term period of eight years from 2013-2020 as a first comprehensive and practical tool which offers guidance on the mechanisms, means and manner in which implementation can happen. Furthermore, it is clear that climate change awareness, knowledge and understanding, both in terms of the risks, impacts and responses is rapidly developing so a review will be needed after the first four years of its implementation to assess how to continue to bolster awareness efforts.[38]

The development of the NCCSAP was done in an inclusive manner since it started in 2011

and intensive interactive consultations took place over a period of two years with a great variety and number of stakeholders in the country. According to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, those consulted included government ministries, agencies, Members of Parliament, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), International NGOs, private sector representatives, regional councils, local authorities, Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and other civil/civic society organisations. The inputs gathered during those consultations form the basis of the Strategy and Action Plan, which demonstrates the participatory approach, which informs the direction of climate-policy in the country.

In order to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system and limit global warming to below two degrees Celsius, Namibia has made it's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) in compliance with the UNFCCC decisions.[39] This demonstrates the country's stead-fast approach to addressing climate change as Namibia is a Non-Annex I country with only 0.059 percent contribution in Global emissions (in 2010), it's per capita emissions decreased from 0.0146 Gg CO_2-eq to 0.0130 Gg CO_2-eq from 2000 to 2010 while its GDP production increased from around US$ 200 to 300 per unit emission. Namibia aims at a reduction of about 89 percent of its GHG emissions at the 2030 time horizon compared to the Business As Usual (BAU) scenario. The projected GHG emissions to be avoided in 2030 is of the order of 20,000 Gg CO_2-eq inclusive of sequestration in the Agriculture, Forest and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector and compared to the BAU scenario. The cost of implementation of the INDC components of Namibia will require about US$ 33 billion at 2015 prices.

Conclusion

Given the complexities of international climate negotiations and the interacting continental dynamics in Africa, this paper argues for a multi-level focus that incorporates national level analysis of the policy context within which climate change responses are enacted. Further, the case of the Namibian Climate Change Policy offers an example of dynamic policies for addressing the multiple developmental challenges posed by climate change in a country with a natural resource based economy and low adaptive capacity to climate change. Challenges remain to coordinate the efforts of multiple actors and implement the cross-sectoral interventions needed. In this case, the Environmental Awareness and Climate Change Project of the Hanns Seidel Foundation Namibia and the Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DRFN) offers information, public dialogue platforms and training opportunities to support the development of adaptive capacity. Furthermore, the information campaign is a coordination platform for various actors engaged in climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts, as well as environmental educators, entrepreneurs, media and policy-makers.

Such coordination efforts are relevant and essential for developing the national position on climate change as well as communicating feedback on the outcomes of negotiations to key stakeholders in the Namibian population. Taking an integrated approach such as this offers African states policy coherence. In light of the interconnected policy-making processes African countries engage in to negotiate multilateral environmental agreements, including the convention on climate change.

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