

Is Africa Ready for NDCs Implementation?

An Assessment of NDCs Implementation Preparedness in Eight African Countries

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Key Messages

- ➔ African countries do not invest enough on data collection hence posing a huge challenge to effective tracking and reporting NDC implementation.
- ➔ Currently, most well-functioning climate action MRV frameworks in Africa are sector-based and inclined to mitigation actions. This inclination to mitigation actions is not progressive considering African countries are already addressing the negative impacts of climate change.
- ➔ African countries lack clarity on the amount of current and future funding, capacity building and technical support required to implement their NDCs. This vagueness undermines the transparency of support framework under the Paris Agreement.
- ➔ Currently, the supply side of the climate finance landscape in Africa seems to be dominated by third-party international donors. This might not be the true position because of the failure by African governments to track current domestic expenditure related to adaptation.
- ➔ Tracking climate finance flows in Africa continues to be a major challenge due to misalignment of international sources of finance with national development objectives, fragmented policies and procedures on climate change management, oversight in the national budget processes, politically-driven development initiatives, among other factors
- ➔ Given the inherent synergies between mitigation, adaptation and the SDGs, African countries have an opportunity to achieve a good number of their SDGs through NDC implementation.

Overview

The Paris Agreement, a hallmark accord, was a major milestone in international climate politics bringing years of near deadlock negotiations to a conclusion. The

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are voluntary contributions that highlight countries' climate ambitions to stabilise global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and limit

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temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. These ambitions are within the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) overarching objective to combat climate change. The NDCs comprise both mitigation and adaptation aspirations and are unique to each country's capacity and circumstances. Remarkably, as at February 2020, 189 out of the 197 parties to the convention had ratified the Paris Agreement, with 93 percent (50/54) of African countries amongst them. Despite the majority of African countries ratifying the Agreement, there have been serious concerns about the capacity of African countries to deliver on their commitments, and much more importantly on whether the commitments they submitted are realistic, considering their national circumstances. The study from which this policy brief is based, reviewed the readiness of African countries for NDCs implementation by 2021, using a five-point component lens i.e Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV), Finance, Governance, Mitigation and Adaptation.

Introduction

Despite the success of parties to the UNFCCC having reached a global legally binding agreement i.e. the Paris Agreement in 2015, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2018 special report on 1.5 degrees Celsius, having reviewed the NDC submissions made by countries, exhorts that these voluntary commitments cannot limit warming to even 2 degrees Celsius, and that global warming is likely to reach 1.5 degrees Celsius between 2030 and 2052.² The IPCC further advises that in order to limit this warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius, global carbon dioxide emissions will have to be reduced by 45 percent by 2030 from 2010 levels and reach net-zero by 2050. This means that to overcome this 'adversity of our time', climate change, will depend on countries to not only honour their NDC commitments, but also keep raising the bar on their commitments over time.

From this perspective, various studies have been done around the world to examine countries' abilities and preparedness plans to honour their NDC commitments. This policy brief is based on a study done to assess the preparedness of select eight African countries to implement their NDC commitments. The countries are: Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia. The study sought to explore the preparedness of the African countries to implement their NDCs using a five-point component

lens comprising of MRV on climate action, climate finance, climate governance and climate adaptation and mitigation.

The five-component lens used to gauge African countries' preparedness can be justified as follows:

- 1). **MRV**, because the MRV process is mandatory in tracking the progress of countries in their GHG emissions inventory;
- 2). **Finance**, because both direct and indirect funding is required for operationalisation of climate-related policies, strategies, programmes, plans, and legislation.
- 3). **Governance**; because the potency of NDCs implementation is a function of first and foremost the strong institutional, regulatory, and legal frameworks. Climate investors for instance, cannot be attracted to invest in various projects in any country in the absence of legal and regulatory frameworks to back and protect their investments and other associated interests;
- 4). **Mitigation**, since reducing emissions is one of the yardsticks of adherence to NDCs and,
- 5). **Adaptation** because the measures for coping with the adverse effects of the vagaries of climate change are key to the sustainability of climate resilience systems.

a Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV)



MRV systems are vital for tracking progress while ensuring transparency, accountability, and credibility of results, hence the backbone of the collective global action for reducing GHG emissions. Parties to the Paris Agreement committed to communicating enhanced climate ambitions every five years.³ Other provisions and reporting requirements in the Paris Agreement, particularly for non-Annex 1 countries, were that countries should report on the following components at least every two years beginning 2020:

- i. A national greenhouse gas inventory (GHGI);
- ii. Information that enhances understanding on the progress countries are making towards their NDC targets. This is generally interpreted as information on the implementation and impacts of mitigation and adaptation actions, if the NDCs included adaptation targets;

- iii. Information on support (climate finance, capacity building and technology transfer) received as well as support required in order to achieve the commitments in the NDCs.

While the Paris Agreement specifies at a very general level which information should be reported regularly, the detailed reporting requirements are yet to be agreed upon. At the national level, there are no specific definitions for either what constitutes 'MRV' or what specific provisions or parameters should be included within an MRV system or framework. This lack of a strict definition allows a great deal of flexibility in the way countries develop their MRV systems, enabling them to construct them so as to include tracking mechanisms and datasets that best suit their individual circumstances and culture of political decision-making.

In the eight countries, the availability of primary data is still a challenge and current GHG reporting is hinged on secondary data. Most of the countries have not put in place GHGI. However, in some of the countries, there are notable efforts being made to generate primary data and host it in accessible online platforms hosted by government institutions, as well as setting up policies addressing data inventory issues (as is the case in Nigeria, Tanzania and Kenya). In addition, in some of the countries, there exists successful MRV frameworks based on programmes in sectors such as the REDD+ programme in Forestry and Agriculture sectors (Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, and Botswana). Despite the programmes not being run directly by government institutions, tremendous successes have been recorded.

From the analysis, it is evident that most of the existing MRV frameworks or processes, albeit minimal in Africa, are inclined towards mitigation actions. Despite this, it is interesting to note that Kenya has put in place an MRV conceptual framework in the country's Climate Change Action Plan that is based on Adaptation and Measuring Development (AMD) developed.

In light of the above and the minimal efforts towards MRVs to address climate change in Africa, African countries need to develop functioning national MRV frameworks that will set out the overarching standard structure, governance framework and the associated roles and responsibilities of organisations involved, as well as reporting, data and information flows between them. The global NDCs MRV framework currently being developed will then align with and be able to operate within this high-level national structure. This

is because NDCs are based on each country's unique circumstances.

At the regional scale, the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) in partnership with other key organisations in Africa, is currently working on a pilot project in the eight countries to develop an NDC implementation index comparable at the regional level as part of a wider project to develop the various countries Biennial Update Reports (BURs) and National Communications (NCs). For instance, at the time of this study, of the eight countries, only Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire had submitted their BUR to the UNFCCC. Nigeria's second BUR is nearing conclusion. Similarly, all the eight pilot countries have submitted their First and Second NCs, with the exception of Cote D'Ivoire, Botswana and Nigeria submitting the First, Second and Third NCs even though Nigeria's submitted Third NC is yet to be uploaded onto the UNFCCC website.

The most critical aspects of this national MRV framework, comparable at the regional level in Africa will be to identify: how this will be done; what data will be collated; how the data will be collated, stored, managed and analysed to enable reporting; when the data is to be presented and in what reporting frequency; who is to be involved; and how this national MRV framework aligns with UNFCCC's climate change reporting commitments. Establishing such a clear framework and ensuring ownership of the process is a key task towards implementation of an effective MRV framework.

b Finance



Financial support is critical for the implementation of NDCs. For African countries, the NDCs seemed like the ideal platform for communicating their international support requirements (Finance, capacity building and technology transfer) in order to meet both their adaptation aspirations and mitigation targets. However, a significant number of African countries failed to give details of the funds and support they would require to achieve the financial and technical obligations of their NDCs. Moreover, the few who provided specific figures required to finance either mitigation, adaptation or both, opted to merely provide rough estimates of the amount of domestic and/or international funding required with some countries attaching caveats that the proposed figures were still subject to further research and justification.

It is common knowledge that the global climate finance architecture is complex, as finance is channelled through different sources, actors and instruments. However, this lack of clarity on the amount of funding and technical support required for the implementation of African countries' NDCs is perturbing. The scenario is even more so astonishing considering how long the continent has been championing the need for a global climate finance framework to help African countries deal with the negative impacts of climate change, hinged on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and the polluter pays principle.⁴

Currently, most African countries are assessing their financing needs and resources required to implement their NDCs. Assessing the financing needs would need to include identifying the cost for components within each action committed, including upfront capital costs (e.g. infrastructure), ongoing maintenance costs, capacity building, and human resources needed to implement the action. It is also important to note that the costs for some actions may change over time and it is prudent that cost estimates are revised as new information comes to light. For example, technology costs may decrease over time (a recent example is the rapid cost reduction and efficiency improvement of Solar Photovoltaic (PV) and wind turbine technology), or the barriers to uptake of climate-friendly practices may be removed by relevant policies.

Besides financial needs assessments, African governments with support from various intergovernmental, non-governmental organisations and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are developing their climate finance mechanisms, setting up regional devolvement plans for climate finance as well as enabling institutional frameworks. For example, the Côte d'Ivoire Government through the Ministry of Environment is reported to be conducting stakeholder-inclusive workshops on climate finance. They have also put in place mechanisms to improve climate-related national investments with the initiation of climate insurance.

In Kenya, mainstreaming of climate finance at the county level is also underway in some of the counties. Examples of best practice can be drawn from Makueni and Wajir counties which enacted legislation on a county climate fund in 2015 and 2016 respectively. In Makueni, the county climate fund legislation mandates the county government to invest one percent of its annual development budget in climate change interventions. Whereas in Wajir County in Kenya, the climate fund legislation mandates the government to allocate a minimum of two percent of revenue from the national government to climate change. Investment projects supported by the county climate funds are identified and prioritised by ward-level committees consisting of elected

In Zambia, a number of studies have indicated that the country has been successful in accessing some of the dedicated climate finance available from the public and the private sector portfolios. Ethiopia has made great strides – the country has established an innovative single national funding mechanism to support its Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy (CRGE). The CRGE facility is managed by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry as well as, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation,⁵ it is intended to manage and coordinate international climate funds, donor funds and domestic funds. In 2016, the CRGE Facility was accredited as a National Designated Authority (NDA) for the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and as a National Implementing Entity (NIE) of the Adaptation Fund.⁶

Overall, all the eight countries seem to experience similar challenges with climate finance. This is despite all these countries qualifying for access to the GCF and most of them having established a focal point to the GCF and developed strategic frameworks for engagement with the fund, including the preparation of country programmes. Moreover, despite the non-existence of properly functioning climate finance roadmaps, the countries are benefiting from climate finance that finds its way to the countries indirectly through third party international donor agencies. In light of this, it is envisioned that national budgetary allocations of these countries may be directed towards the adaptation goals as these are immediate challenges which pose current high risks to the countries.

The IPCC further advises that in order to limit this warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius,



reduced by
45%
by 2030

Finally, tracking climate finance inflows is still very complicated in all these countries for various reasons, which include poor alignment of international sources of finance with national development objectives, fragmented policies and procedures on climate change management, knowledge management challenges and oversights in the national budget process. The other feature which makes climate finance tracking complicated are politically-driven development initiatives, rationalised within the premise of the significance of locally-based development but which are not objectively defined development priorities.

c Governance



As with the implementation of any policy plan that affects multiple economic sectors and stakeholder groups across different governance levels, the implementation of the NDCs can be mainstreamed in sectoral development plans. The appeal of such mechanisms lies in their ability to increase both the efficiency and the effectiveness with which implementation takes place. Mainstreaming NDCs in the development plans of African countries can be done by setting clear roles and responsibilities for all relevant ministries, agencies and sectors, and laying out the procedures that should guide these agencies in their work.

Findings from our study on governance frameworks for successful NDCs implementation in Africa indicate that public sector institutions across the eight study countries still have an uphill task of aligning and streamlining their development and sectoral policies to spearhead Climate Compatible Development (CCD). Furthermore, in most of these countries, more efforts are needed on inter-agency and institutional collaborations, information sharing among different agencies, as well as stakeholders' participation in the planning for NDCs integration. More of the analysis on this governance aspect can be found in the policy brief assessing the political economy⁷ of countries in respect to the implementation of NDCs.

d Mitigation and Adaptation



African NDCs highlight a number of cross-cutting strategies and action plans to address both their mitigation commitments

and adaptation ambitions. Some of these strategies overlap between mitigation and adaptation, as well as, sectors and regions. This is expected as climate change risks are complex in nature. The African Development Bank (AfDB) implores that mitigation and adaptation activities need to be carried out in tandem, and not in isolation, such that synergies and dual benefits are capitalised upon including those of sustainable development.⁸

Adaptation is the process of adjusting to the impacts of the changing climate, seeking to moderate or avoid harm, or exploit beneficial opportunities. Adaptation to the adverse impacts of climate change is urgent and indispensable to safeguard development gains and to address the needs of the poor and vulnerable. Healthy systems that are resilient to disruptions, shocks and stressors are critical in achieving not only environmental benefits but also serve as a foundation for economic and human development.

For many African countries, adaptation stands out as a priority in their NDCs because they are already experiencing devastating climate impacts. It is also evident that countries have prioritised the agriculture, energy and forestry sectors in both mitigation and adaptation achievement in the NDCs of the eight countries with 88 percent (7/8) and 75 percent (6/8) of African countries positing agriculture as a key adaptation sector and a key emission-reduction sector respectively. This is no surprise, considering Africa's agriculture has long been considered unsustainable due to practices such as "slash and burn" and other unsustainable land use change activities.

Given the inherent synergies between adaptation and other development goals, NDCs implementation can contribute to nearly all of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially those on health and well-being (SDG 3), clean water and sanitation (SDG 6) and ecosystems and biodiversity (SDG 15). Gender-sensitive approaches to adaptation can redress inequalities and ensure that women are engaged at all levels, as well as, involvement of the youth and indigenous people (SDGs 5 and 10 respectively).

On the other hand, mitigation refers to efforts aimed at reducing or preventing GHG emissions to the atmosphere. Mitigation actions can also positively contribute to achieving a number of SDGs, in particular those on affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11) and responsible consumption and production (SDG 12).

African NDCs have quantified goals to reduce GHGs (outcome-based goals), while others qualitatively set out specific mitigation actions (action-based goals). In some NDCs, both outcome-based and action-based goals are included. Outcome-based reduction goals can cover discrete sectors or be economy-wide, and can take a range of forms, including: absolute reduction targets; reductions in relation to a base year

or future projected business-as-usual emissions; and GHG intensity targets, for example emissions relative to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Additionally, many African NDCs contain not only an unconditional contribution but also a conditional contribution, which is contingent on the receipt of international support (or other conditions).

Policy Recommendations

For countries to be on a path to successful implementation of their NDCs, governments need to:

- i.** Revise and submit NDCs in 2020; We however note that this might be a tall order for most countries as they are currently grappling to contain the spread and impact of the coronavirus (COVID -19) pandemic which has casted shadows on the global climate change discourse calendar. As such, we foresee many countries failing to submit updated NDCs in 2020.
- ii.** Develop or adopt existing and beneficial MRV tools, frameworks and systems such as: the Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Review (CPEIR) system for ease of tracking climate finance expenditure; the PACJA tool on monitoring NDCs implementation; and the UNFCCC's National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) framework. The NAPs are flexible and non-prescriptive and therefore countries are able to tailor-make beneficial country-driven, comprehensive approaches to adaptation planning and implementation.
- iii.** Develop similar national MRV frameworks that are comparable regionally to maximise on trans-boundary synergies in all the five components;
- iv.** Critical stakeholders in Africa working on NDCs implementation initiatives should sit down together under the auspices of the Africa Union and leverage on the milestones recorded by PACJA and its partners and adopt a harmonised NDCs implementation index.
- v.** In view of the prevailing world situation, African countries should make concerted efforts to domestic resources mobilisation towards NDCs and SDGs projects.
- vi.** Come up with mechanisms for sharing best practices within Africa since countries in close proximity to each other seem to share similar circumstances and/or contexts.

Conclusion

African countries are currently engaged in various activities and processes aimed towards preparedness for NDCs implementation. These can be clustered into six sub-groups namely: engagement in strategic partnerships; building capacity and knowledge sharing platforms; setting up and strengthening existing enabling legal, institutional and policy frameworks; designing MRVs; mainstreaming and updating national policies including, revising submitted NDCs; and creating awareness and advocating for social and political buy in. This is good progress. However, countries still need to do more as they work towards revising their NDCs and honour their NDC commitments.

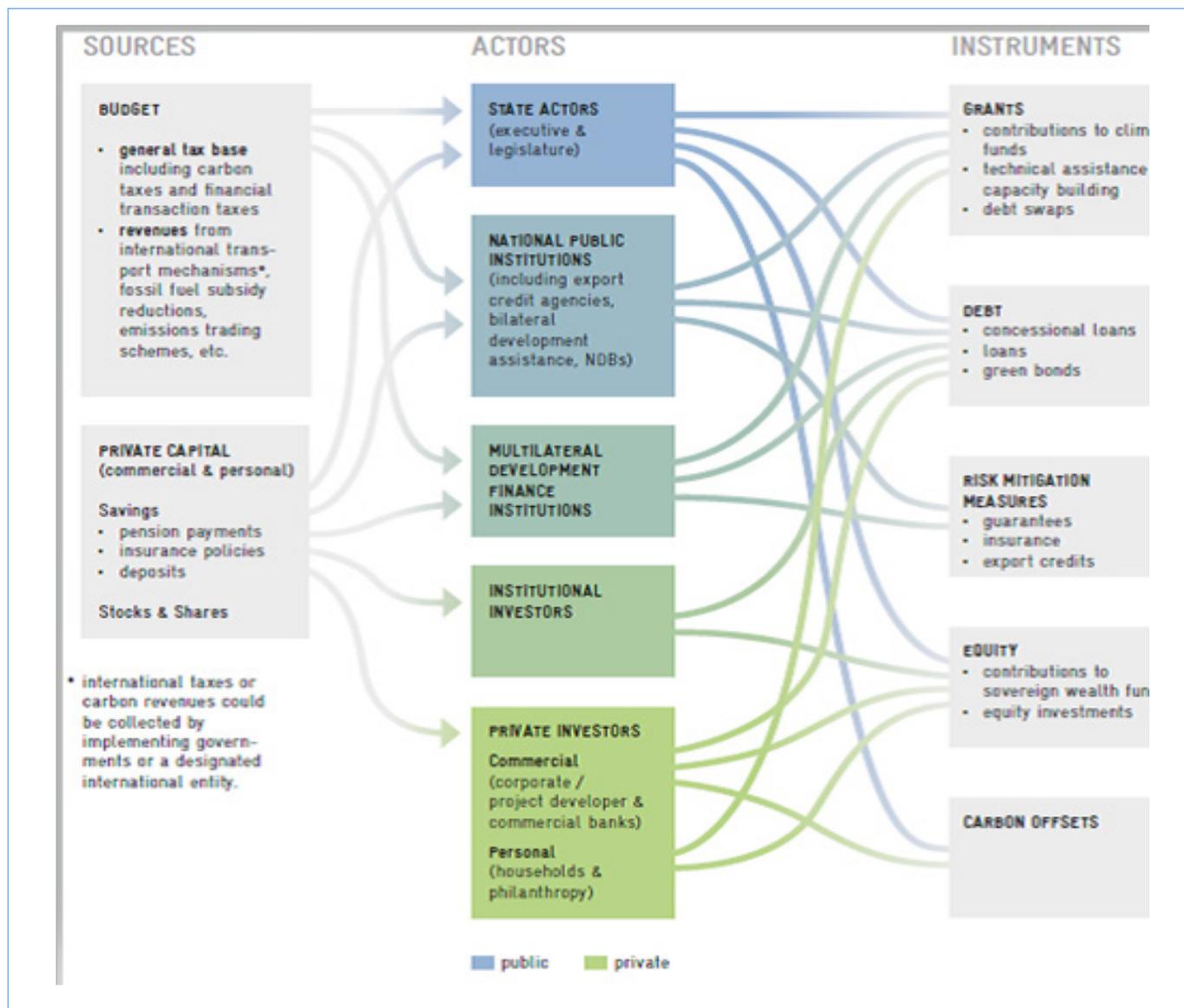
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