

## Uganda: The global Climate Agreement

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The livelihood of the people of Uganda is highly dependent on the exploitation of climate sensitive natural resources. This fact was recognized in Uganda's national pledge made through its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) towards the UN global climate talks which were held in Paris in December 2015. It gives priority to reducing vulnerability and addressing the adaptation needs of the country, while at the same time fulfilling the country's obligations to contribute to the emission reductions. This is in spite of Uganda's very low share of global emissions as a least developed country.

The actions reflected in the INDC were derived through a consultative process and reflect a national resolve to respond to the call by the global community to initiate domestic preparations for nationally determined contributions towards restricting temperature rise to below 2<sup>0</sup>C.

Uganda's INDC was developed through an extensive national consultation process from the local to the national level, involving all sectors of society, to ensure it reflected the priorities and true commitment of the country towards the global climate change agenda.

In the long-term, Uganda intends to follow a climate-resilient and low-carbon development path linked to green growth and broader sustainable development goals. The mitigation and adaptation intentions affirmed in the INDC are fully linked to national priorities as outlined in the country's National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) (2015), which is aligned to the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and the Uganda Vision 2040 (2012). The priorities in the National Climate Change Policy have also been integrated in the Second National Development Plan (NDP II) 2015/16 – 2019/2020 (2015).

The estimated potential cumulative impact of the policies and measures could result in approximately a 22% reduction of national greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 compared to business-as-usual.

Uganda is already experiencing significant impacts of climate change. Since 1960, mean annual temperatures have risen by 1.3°C and annual and seasonal rainfall has decreased significantly across Uganda. Rainfall has also become more unpredictable and evenly distributed over the years. Extreme events such as droughts, floods and landslides are increasing in frequency and intensity. Climate change is affecting a wide variety of sectors and agriculture, water, health and human settlements have been particularly affected. In the 2007-08 fiscal year, climatic change damages were equivalent to 4.4% of the national budget, exceeding the budget allocation for the environment and natural resource sector.

The findings of a CDKN-supported study on the economic assessment of the impacts of climate change in Uganda estimated that the cost of the impacts of climate variability and change in Uganda would range between USD 270 and 332 billion over the 40 year period (2010-2050) for the agriculture, water, infrastructure and energy sectors. Annual costs could be in the range of USD 3.2 billion to 5.6 billion within a decade in these four sectors alone.

For adaptation, the priority sectors for action identified by Uganda through its INDC pledge were agriculture and livestock, forestry, infrastructure (with an emphasis on human settlements, social infrastructure and transport), water, energy, health and disaster risk management. Sustainable land management and climate smart agriculture will be scaled up to increase resilience at the grassroots level.

For mitigation, Uganda pledged through its INDC to focus on implementation of a series of policies and measures in the energy supply, forestry and wetland sectors. Uganda's contribution to emission reduction is multidimensional, through tree planting, afforestation and reforestation programmes, and all these contribute to emission reduction through carbon sequestration, and other benefits, such as biodiversity conservation (as reflected in goal 15 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals).

Uganda's intended Involvement and contribution in the Paris agreement has various benefits across sectors. In the energy sector, the deficit experienced in the past decade drove the country into using unsustainable, expensive and polluting thermal generators (diesel and heavy-fuel oil). This will open Uganda's door to affordable and modern energy, as inscribed in goal seven of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Uganda aims to build on the existing pipeline for Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects and programmes of activities, such as *Bujagali Hydropower Project* and *Improved Cook Stove* for East Africa. The country also commits to undertaking a number of policies and measures to support low-carbon development in key priority sectors. The implementation of these policies and measures necessarily assumes the continuation of ongoing and planned international financial, technology transfer and capacity building support to complement domestic efforts as set out in the 2015 National Climate Change Policy.

Through its INDC, which was developed with the support of Baastel and CDKN, the Government of Uganda reaffirmed that it will continue to commit resources to climate change-relevant strategies. However, the full implementation of these actions is conditional on the support of the international community coming from both climate finance instruments and international market mechanisms, given the national circumstances of Uganda.

There is no single blueprint, applicable everywhere and for all time, to the challenge of climate compatible development. Climate change is a threat everywhere, and hopefully action on climate change is an opportunity for most. Mitigation, adaptation, resilience and transformation are key as countries strive to attain the climate goals and targets. The challenge for leaders, and indeed for all those engaged in climate compatible development, is to prepare for such a process of change. Uganda's experience is and will be watched closely.

Therefore with the Paris agreement just around the corner, to be signed in April 2016, Uganda has pledged towards more sustainable development goals and actions with an aim to support the restriction of temperature rise to below 2<sup>0</sup>C and continue with the effort to attain the sustainable development goals.

*By Gerald Sekiti, Uganda East Africa // March 2016*