

The Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee is a network of 155 community based organisations in 22 countries. IPACC is accredited with the UN ECOSOC, UNCBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD and UNESCO. IPACC has observer status at the African Commission on Human Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and is a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).



Recommendations on African National Adaptation Policy Processes

- A. IPACC recommends that the African Group of Negotiators (AGN), in cooperation with the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) support an African Regional advisory body on synergies between Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and atmospheric science to inform national adaptation policy making;
- B. IPACC recommends that African State parties work with the World Meteorological Organisation, the African Centre of Meteorological Application in Development (ACMAD) and the IUCN's Global Drylands Programme to elaborate guidelines on sustainable pastoralism, meteorological User Interface Platforms, national adaptation policy making and effective national adaptation platforms. The focus should be on bringing together different systems of forecasting, risk reduction and elaborating a communication strategy between national ministries, meteorological services and indigenous pastoralists in rural areas.
- C. The African Union should mandate the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) to study the issue of nomadic peoples' land tenure regimes in Africa, and submit recommendations to AMCEN and the AU on how to improve land tenure legislation and practices which enhance adaptation, reduce conflict and promote effective stewardship of natural resources, with specific reference to transhumance corridors;
- D. AMCEN, in cooperation with the UNFCCC and the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) should review the existing African NAPAs in cooperation with civil society and indigenous peoples' representatives – identify leading concepts and processes for strengthening community – science – policy interface. New efforts should be made by the Africa Group of Negotiators to fund the NAPAs with attention to the principles of local stewardship, traditional knowledge and geo-spatial planning. There should be an advisory group within the African Union and AMCEN to help share best practices of NAPAs, NAPs and national adaptation platforms.
- E. IPACC recommends that AMCEN and the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) adopt a strategy and policy framework on the role of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) as important platforms for bridging the gap between Traditional Ecological Knowledge and scientific knowledge systems required for Adaptation. IPACC highlights the value of Participatory 3 Dimensional Modelling, Participatory GIS, and Cybertracker technologies as ways in which sophisticated indigenous knowledge can be transformed into scientific data. ICT applications should be empowering for rural communities as well as contribute substantially to national research, science and policy making.
- F. IPACC notes the importance of maintaining indigenous plant and livestock varieties as a contribution to adaptation and ecosystem resilience. IPACC notes with concern that a number of African countries do not recognise wild plants as food and medicines used by millions of African indigenous and rural communities. Legal exclusion of such plants means that indigenous peoples who are stewards in the conservation of such biodiversity and valuable wild resources are also not recognised or legally empowered. IPACC calls on African States to adopt appropriate legislation that recognises the importance of wild plants, in line with the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, and the CBD's Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines on the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity as a central element of National Adaptation Policy making. Similarly, more attention should be given to supporting indigenous livestock breeds and protecting the intellectual property rights and equitable benefit sharing with the peoples who have developed these breeds over centuries;
- G. IPACC notes the importance of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), as a new instrument to help connect climate science, with biodiversity conservation, ecosystems-based adaptation and the relationship between national authorities and indigenous stewards of biodiversity. IPBES will be enhanced by having a continued presence of African Indigenous Peoples representatives and a mandate to look at the interface of Traditional Ecological Knowledge, legal support to limited access regimes for use and extraction of natural resources, and the interface between technology and diverse knowledge systems.



Recommendations on the importance of African Traditional Ecological Knowledge as a foundation for appropriate and effective National Adaptation Policies

17th Conference of Parties – UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
November 2011

This briefing note sets out IPACC's recommendations to the African Group of Negotiators at 17th Conference of Parties (COP-17) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), taking place in Durban, South Africa, 28 November – 10 December 2011. These recommendations were developed by members of the IPACC Executive and delegates at a three-day conference of indigenous pastoralists, meteorological scientists and government representatives in N'Djamena, Chad. This document is complemented by the IPACC-AFPAT N'Djamena Declaration of 7-9 November 2011 (all documents are available on www.ipacc.org.za).

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Summary of Key Elements

- Africa needs to give urgent attention to effective and participatory adaptation policies and actions. Adaptation policy needs local, national and regional scales, with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities.
- Adaptation needs a two-way flow of information, to provide science and early-warning to rural communities, and for rural communities to guide government and partner agencies on appropriate responses according to local knowledge, values, rights and stewardship.
- Traditional Ecological Knowledge and science (biological and atmospheric) are important knowledge streams for informing adaptation policy, practice, monitoring and assessment. African States need to ensure that National Adaptation Platforms are established which include indigenous and local holders of traditional ecological knowledge relevant to their territories, livelihoods and ecosystems;
- Africa needs to ensure that national governments sustainable fund their national adaptation platforms before approaching international donors for support. National adaptation platforms, informed by the Cancun Adaptation Framework and National Adaptation Programmes of Action, need to be learning institutions, supporting innovations and balancing different interests and needs.
- Climate change threatens social peace and harmony. Adaptation must be founded on good governance, transparency, human rights and non-discrimination. Indigenous peoples of Africa assert the importance of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a global standard of rights and norms.

Adaptation is a complex process, which involves working biologically and socially at different scales. IPACC's emphasis is on the importance of involving rural communities who hold advanced traditional knowledge of biodiversity and ecosystem functions as the foundation for national adaptation policy making – i.e. building national processes from the bottom-up, with interlocking scales of governance and coordination. The emphasis from the N'Djamena conference is on the appropriate design, methodologies and financing of the National Adaptation Platforms, the institutional agencies which must facilitate the interface of science and traditional knowledge with policy making and decision-making.



COP-7 in Marrakech initiated the design of the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) for LDC states, most of which are in Africa. IPACC found these to be uneven in quality, with only Uganda making reference to local knowledge systems. The NAPA initiative had certain inherent flaws, most notably the top-down assumption in its mandate. The NAPAs have not resulted in greater capacity of African states to develop their national adaptation policies or secure financial and technical support for implementation of adaptation at national scale.

COP16 adopted the Cancun Adaptation Framework which invites all Parties to enhance action to enable and support the implementation of adaptation actions.

Decision 1/CP.16; ref: FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1) notes among other things:

that enhanced action on adaptation should be undertaken in accordance with the Convention, should follow a country-driven, gender-sensitive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional and indigenous knowledge, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant social, economic and environmental policies and actions, where appropriate; (§12)

This framework creates a fresh opportunity for African State Parties to develop a Regional approach to capacity building, adaptation actions, policies and procedures. As such, it is an opportunity for African State Parties to ensure that certain principles are defined in order to guide and facilitate effective adaptation action commensurate with human rights and science. It is possible for African State parties to review the mechanisms of the NAPAs, the Cancun Adaptation Framework, and the proposed National Adaptation Plans, and design effective, interactive and responsive National Adaptation Platforms which involve different stakeholders and are inter-sectoral and innovative in nature.

IPACC affirms two key approaches for an African Regional approach to Adaptation capacity building:

1 Adaptation requires attention to existing social and cultural systems at the local scale, and using these as building blocks for a national policy formulation, including an inclusive and effective national adaptation platform. Traditional knowledge is an indispensable resource in adaptation. Traditional Knowledge and science need to be used in a complementary manner, with each system of knowledge brought into the policy process in an intelligible manner.

Adaptation happens at different scales. The foundation of any national policy requires getting the local scale right, involving indigenous and local communities, their knowledge systems and supporting their governance institutions which ensure successful compliance to conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity.

IPACC is promoting a **process approach**, whereby African States help bridge **traditional knowledge** holders, **scientists** and **policy makers**. African traditional pastoralist knowledge evolved in specific ecosystems over centuries of variable rainfall. This knowledge is linked to complex bodies of information, beliefs, values and governance systems. Adaptation is specific to the particularity of ecosystems and biomes, and is informed by local livelihoods, including natural resource regimes, which have emerged over the centuries *in situ*. Pastoralists and other local communities have a wealth of knowledge and experience that is invaluable to the adaptation process in Africa.

An overly science-based approach to adaptation risks undermining social systems that have endured over centuries. Africa needs to draw on its experience of HIV / AIDS. Though the AIDS epidemic can be seen as a medical and scientific phenomenon, it is mediated through culture and psycho-social processes. Similarly, adaptation needs to be a marriage of sociology and science, understood and facilitated by the State.

IPACC recommends bringing **meteorologists, biologists** together with local **pastoralists** to explore how their knowledge systems can be complementary. The focus is on developing predictive systems in a geo-spatial context and how these inform adaptation planning at different scales. The knowledge systems also need to provide information and data that is meaningful for decision-makers at different scales, i.e. local, national and regional. This may require use of information communication technologies (such as participatory GIS, Cybertracker technology, mobile phone technology), to monitor, assess and report on changes to biodiversity, ecosystems and climate.

By combining Africa rural knowledge systems with meteorological and biological science, African states can help predict climate instability, monitor biodiversity, and promote adaptive behavior, boosting ecosystem and social system resilience, while sustaining cultural diversity and community well-being. (See COP16 decision 1/CP.16§12). A critical element is anticipating conflict over resource uses, and helping communities mediate potential conflicts.

2 Adaptation requires good governance, equity, transparency and secure rights and responsibilities

Climate change amplifies existing social, economic and environmental problems. Part of adaptation policy making requires addressing issues of rights, equity, fiscal integrity and good governance. Widespread problems of corruption, discrimination and marginalisation aggravate the risk of conflicts and vulnerability. Climate change places greater pressure on all Africans to ensure compliance with principles of human rights, good governance and inclusion in decision making.

Delegates at the N'Djamena Conference noted that discrimination against pastoralists finds its roots in colonialism and European legal biases imported into Africa. This is most evident in the problems of land tenure and resource rights of mobile peoples in Africa today. Traditionally, hunters, herders, farmers and fishing peoples had complementary land and natural resource use and tenure systems. There was coherence between rights to resources and the responsibility of communities for stewardship and conservation. This coherence of rights and responsibilities has been damaged and has not been adequately addressed in the post-colonial context. The current marginalisation of indigenous pastoralists can only be resolved by reforms to land rights, land tenure and access to natural resources legislation and practices.

Land tenure and resources rights need to be reviewed in relation to ecosystem capacity and achieving harmonious and equitable coexistence of communities with different land use requirements.

As resources become more scarce and natural disasters more frequent, there is a risk of conflict at different scales. Adaptation policy needs take into account land tenure security and recognise how some land use systems, such as mobile pastoralism, are well suited to protecting drylands biodiversity and systems resilience.

IPACC's members have attested that they are not treated as equal citizens and experience systemic discrimination. This has been confirmed by the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (2003). Adaptation is only going to be successful if there is a serious engagement by African governments to understand how African cultural diversity is closely associated with sustainable exploitation of niches in biological diversity. Adaptation policy work will require attention to reviewing land tenure, based on fairness, equity and a scientific understanding of sustainable land use. Empowerment of local stewardship institutions will be necessary to have successful national strategies on both conflict management and ecosystem resilience.