

## Paris Agreement on climate change places Africa at the fulcrum of renewable energy deployment, experts agree

**ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia, 20 March 2016** – The Paris Agreement on climate change of December 2015 has placed Africa at the pivot of renewable energy deployment, but Africa countries have to take the responsibility for taking stock for a long-term development strategy, said international climate and energy experts at a recent meeting in Addis Ababa.

The meeting on climate change and enhanced renewable energy deployment in East and Southern Africa was jointly convened by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Regional Collaboration Centres in Kampala.

The Addis Ababa meeting, the second of two such regional meetings that started in Dakar, Senegal, two weeks ago, brought together experts from energy and environment ministries in the region as well as experts from UN and intergovernmental agencies. It created the much needed space for countries of East and Southern Africa to promote dialogue and coherence between policy makers, the private sector and civil society on unleashing the potential of renewables in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to climate action under the framework of the Paris Agreement, and to showcase strategies underway, including opportunities for regional collaboration as countries prepare to move into a post-Paris implementation phase of climate actions.

Representatives of partner institutions and agencies as well participants from seven countries of the region emphasized the high potential and opportunities for enhanced renewable energy deployment in Africa and its contribution to climate change mitigation, as well as the various co-benefits of renewables for social and economic development.

Dr. Abdalla Hamdok, Chief Economist and Deputy Executive Secretary of the ECA recalled that low-carbon energy systems are an integral part of the development paradigm for Africa because it chimes with Africa's long term development vision as defined by Agenda 2063.

“Fifty-three out of fifty-four African countries have now submitted their INDCs, and all of these countries include renewable energy in one way or the other for their mitigation ambitions, and indeed adaptation in some cases”, he said before adding that “as far as renewable energy is



concerned, the Paris agreement could indeed be the catalyst for a new investment engine to drive Africa's structural transformation along a low-carbon pathway.”

He called on the experts to seek adequate responses to some of Africa's key concerns such as: How can Africa benefit the most from the framework of the Paris agreement to unleash the huge potential of its renewable energy resources? What do countries need to do now, and in the years ahead to ensure that their NDCs translate to transformative actions that spur inclusive and sustainable development?

Dr. Fatima Denton, Director of the Special Initiatives Division of the ECA and Acting Coordinator of the Commission's African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) praised the Paris Agreement as a triumph for multilateralism, with 196 Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change uniting and committing through NDCs to take corrective action to ensure that our interlinked development stays within our planetary boundaries and on a low-carbon trajectory.

“The contextual realities of countries are different and should provide the motivation to operationalize NDCs aligned with national priorities for development. As such, countries have the opportunity to turn NDCs into national planning tools for low-carbon development”, Dr Denton added.

Ms Angela Churie Kallhauge, Senior Programme Office, Climate Change of IRENA said that the focus now should be on moving forward with implementation. She underscored the need to strengthen the dialogue and cooperation between energy and climate change experts to examine and consider how to chart out the implementation of renewable energy elements of the INDCs in a manner consistent with national priorities, policies and programmes. She noted that renewables hold promise for ambitious climate action, noting their contribution to both low carbon and climate resilient development.

Mr. Vikrant Badve, technical Officer at the UNFCCC Regional Collaboration Centre, Kampala echoed similar sentiment, saying the workshop provided an exceptional occasion for information sharing on potential financing tools for renewable energy in the region, including opportunities for renewable energy investments in climate finance.

He recalled that UNFCCC, in line with its overarching objective to ensure higher levels of ambitions, also looks forward to support the Parties in the process of implementing their NDCs



through a series of activities aimed at needs assessment, building of relevant capacity and catalysing investment for funding purposes.

“These activities will be carried out in different manners including through the Regional Collaboration Centre and in partnership with other UN agencies and international organisations”, he explained.

Speaking on behalf of the AfDB, Mr Gareth Phillips, Chief Climate and Green Growth Officer at the African Development Bank said: “This is a critical time to understand the significance of the Paris Agreement and for Parties to review and flesh out their INDCs. This meeting, following on from the event in Dakar, presents the opportunity to share and improve our understanding and lay foundations for further development and implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions”, he explained.

Ms. Jasandra Nyker, Chief Executive Officer of the South African-based BioTherm Energy provided a private sector perspective, saying, the private sector has a critical role to play if accelerated and transformative deployment of renewables is to happen on the continent. But for this to happen and to attract investments, she said “the private sector requires clear signals and commitment from governments, market size, and bankable and standardised power purchase agreements. Project developers need to also take a long term view and develop good community relations and partnerships”, she cautioned.

Most of the countries invited presented key aspects of their NDCs, focusing on the need for a judicious deployment of renewable energy.

For two days, participants took an intense look at the future outlook of climate change and renewable energy in East and Southern Africa; advancing climate action and low-carbon development through renewables in the region; and held panel discussions on renewable energy measures included in INDCs and undertook an analysis of INDCs in the Paris Agreement.

They also elaborated on enhancing ambition of renewable energy objectives; financing the energy transition in the region and sought strategies for unlocking opportunities for renewable energy investments. Role of the private sector and domestic resource mobilisation in accelerating renewable energy deployment also came under scrutiny.





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