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African Pavilion Daily

This Summary Brief is intended for media representatives. Published by the Joint Communication Sub-committee (AU, AfDB and UNECA) in partnership with Dalberg, the Brief summarizes the daily discussion sessions taking place in the African Pavilion, capturing key discussion points, key implications, and key action items from selected sessions.

The Africa Pavilion, located within the precincts of the UNFCCC, is serving as a platform to have Africa's voice heard. To demonstrate Africa's ability to be part of the solution to the challenges of climate change on the continent, the Pavilion is hosting a full program of roundtables and events during the UN climate conference.

All the events organized in the Africa Pavilion are open to media representatives, who can ask questions to the panelists (interpretation English / French available).

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: REDD+ in Africa: Policies and Perspectives Desert Room (13.20-15.20)

- The African Development Bank (AfDB) in collaboration with United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Union Commission (AUC) organized a roundtable discussion titled "REDD+ in Africa: Policies and Perspectives". The roundtable discussion took place in the Desert Room in the African Pavilion.
- The roundtable discussion was moderated by H.E. Ms. Mary Robinson, President, Mary Robinson Foundation
- The following panelists participated in the event:
 - Dr. Armin Sandhoevel, Allianz Climate Solutions GmbH
 - Ms. Clotilde Mollo Ngomo, Congo Basin Forest Fund
 - Mr. Raymond Mbitikon, COMIFAC
 - Dr. Richard Eba'a Atyi, CIFOR Regional Coordinator Central Africa
 - Prof. Godwin- Kowero, Coordinator Africa Forest Forum

Key Takeaways from the Roundtable:

- The REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) mechanism was designed to offer governments the possibility of financially benefitting

from maintaining their standard forests and to help developing countries move from dialogue to actions, aimed at reducing deforestation and forest degradation.

- Currently, the REDD+ financing mechanism is at different stages of advancement in different countries and regions and a number of issues regarding its design and implementation are yet to be resolved.
- There is much skepticism surrounding the REDD+ program as some feel that the initiative is impossible to succeed as it takes decades for the local communities to benefit from REDD+ projects. This raises the question amongst communities if it is worth investing in the initiative. This opinion is further supported by the fact that there is a large gap between the initiatives and the implementation, which is displayed by the current pilot projects in Africa that give a sense that not much is happening.
- The above opinion can be argued when looking at the current projects taking place in the Congo Basin. According to Ms. Clotilde Mollo Ngomo (Congo Basin Forest Fund), the Congo Basin's level of preparedness is at a very high level which will enable them to implement projects as soon as the funding is secured. This leads to the topic of securing private sector funding, which was discussed by Dr. Armin Sandhoevel (Allianz Climate Solutions GmbH).
- There is a desperate need for securing funds for implementing these projects, however, according to Dr. Armin Sandhoevel; the uncertainties of REDD+ are a concern for investors. He suggested that communities should attract investors by having a close cooperation with investors, having the same self-interests as investors as well as having an open and transparent perspective. It must also be emphasized that Africa is in competition with other continents (e.g. Asia) in terms of securing funds.
- How the communities are benefitting from this initiative and how these communities are utilizing their funds is of major concern. The speakers in the panel all agreed that the funds that a community receives should be used towards the drivers of forest degradation (e.g. agriculture) and not for other means.
- For this initiative to succeed, community participation needs to be increased. The capacity is there, but the will is not.

Discussion on Geo Engineering Desert Room (9.00-11.00)

- In the morning of December 2nd, participants gathered to discuss geoengineering in the Desert Room in the African Pavilion. The session was arranged by the Center for International Governance Innovation.

Key Takeaways from the Session

- The controversial concept of geoengineering (or climate engineering) refers to the deliberate large-scale engineering and manipulation of the planetary environment to combat or counteract anthropogenic changes in atmospheric chemistry. It is an option that is being discussed to combat the effects of climate change. However, it addresses the symptoms and not the causes of climate change. It is a technology to buy time, not to substitute adaptation and mitigation.

- The topic generated a heated debate amongst the panel and audience on whether geoengineering (specifically solar radiation management known as SRM) should be researched and what the boundaries should be.
- There are many risks associated with SRM as very little is known on the impacts it may cause on biodiversity. It is difficult to estimate the impacts, as predictive models are imperfect. Small-scale field experiments have been done but many argue that even this is too risky and that experimentation and research should be constrained to laboratory scale.
- Currently, there is no regulatory framework governing geoengineering research, development, test, and deployment. This creates much room for concern as there are many implications resulting from geoengineering. To address this issue the Solar Radiation Management and Governance Initiative (SRMGI) was launched by EDF, TWAS and the Royal Society.
- SRMGI aims to develop ideas and explore options of effective governance, ensuring it takes place in a transparent, moral and sound manner. It also tries to expand governance conversations to a wider range of organizations (not only scientists in developed countries). It does this by releasing reports (e.g. The UNESCO Policy Brief released today) as well as holding informative workshops.

Agriculture and Climate Change in Africa – Experience, Challenges and Opportunities

Desert Room (11.30-13.00)

- Just before lunch, participants of the African Pavilion’s extensive event program on climate change assembled in the Desert Room to take part in the session “Agriculture and Climate Changes in Africa – Experience, Challenges and Opportunities”.

Key takeaways from the Session

- The AU-NEPAD Agriculture Climate Change Adaptation-Mitigation Framework was formulated by AU-NEPAD Agency to coordinate and oversee implementation of CAADP (Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme) as a delivery mechanism for agricultural development and achievement of food security in Africa. Representatives from COMESA, NEPAD Agency, SACAU and UNEP presented a discussion on the topics of Climate Smart Agriculture (specifically linking Climate Finance to Agriculture Finance) as well as incorporating the farmers’ perspectives in policy decision-making. Experiences exposing what have been happening regarding the AU-NEPAD Agency Adaptation Mitigation Framework (A framework to support initiatives) was discussed.
- It was emphasized that a stage has been reached where initiatives need to be moved forward into the implementation phase. Adaptation practices (Climate Smart Agriculture) as well as mitigation need to take place.
- It was raised that Africa’s voice needs to be heard as small scale rural farmers will be the most affected by climate change. A representative from SECAU believes that the perspectives of the farmers must be considered and that the discussions should be

centered on the farmers/producers, thereby incorporating the farmers from the first stage.

Hidden Lands: Ensuring Transparency in Acquisition and Allocation Rainforest Room (11.30-13.00)

- Prior to lunch, the African Development Bank invited participants to gather in the Rainforest Room for a discussion on ensuring transparency in acquisition and allocation of land in Africa. Amongst others, the focus was on local communities and their role in management of land acquisition.

Key takeaways from the Session

- Large-scale land acquisition has historically been an issue in Africa and continues to be one to this day. This is a serious issue as it is not just land that's being given away; there are water resources, forests and some social attachments.
- Foreign direct investors (FDIs) are the key players acquiring land in Africa. Africa needs FDI but there has to be some alterations in the terms and conditions of every contract. This will help to ensure that the contracts are of benefit for everybody.
- Current government policies favor FDIs more than African investors. And the government fails to land protection for the people.
- As a result, there has been continuous environmental degradation due to the weak regulations given to the FDIs.
- The African Union has been active in producing guidelines and frameworks for land lease and tenure system. Countries must make use of such guidelines. The Pan African Parliament has also played a role in putting pressure on governments, institutions, and academics to develop frameworks that are community inclusive.
- A solution would be to change policies and make them favorable to all the parties involved, reduce the size of the land that is being given to FDIs, allow more room for African investors and invest in capacity building for decision making. A joint venture (governments, communities, private sector etc.) is also needed if Africa is to move forward.

Lessons Learned in Agriculture and Climate Rainforest Room (13.20-14.40)

- This afternoon, eager participants gathered in the Rainforest Room to observe a discussion session arranged by the Mali Ministers of Environment and Agriculture. The session focused on the experiences with agricultural production and small farmers.

Key takeaways from the Session

- Climate change has detrimental effects on agriculture in the continent. The poor have been the most vulnerable to the impacts due to decreased food security.
- The main challenge is to help the poor adapt into the new climatic trends.

- Mali, as a country that has its economy reliant on the primary sector (80% contribution to the economy), is under constant threat from climate change.
- Much of this agricultural production is rain fed. With changing rainfall patterns, the agricultural industry is under threat. However, Mali has put significant efforts in saving and sustaining the agricultural industry.
- Certain initiatives have been implemented, relevant councils have been established, new policies have been put in place and climate change has been incorporated into the policy making process.
- Also, relevant training has been provided for the rural communities about agriculture and adaptation measures and more focus has been put on the most vulnerable communities.
- Mali has taken strides into adaptation measures and more effort is still needed, as there aren't enough resources, while there are many lives to reach out for.
- In Africa, generally, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has to be compulsory in order to avoid detrimental impacts to the environment; information and experiences have to be shared across the continent.

Vanishing Forests: Can the Trend be Reversed through Sustainable Management

Rainforest Room (15.00-16.30)

- At 3pm in the afternoon people assembled in the African Pavilion to watch a discussion on vanishing forests and sustainable management. The session was arranged by the African Development Bank.

Key takeaways from the Session

- Forests are very important as they have environmental, social and economic value
- There is a need for sustainable forest management (SFM) which ensures that the goods and services of these forests meet the needs of the current generation while also valuing the needs of future generations
- There has been a significant loss of forests over the past years, especially in the largest forests in Africa (Congo basin and upper Guinea)
- The blame for this loss can be put on the weak forestry institutions, lack of awareness programmes for the public and resource based conflicts
- \$200 million is invested in forestry every year
- Private sector contribution is needed as public funding is not enough to deal with the problem and currently, there are few investments by the private sector in SFM
- The African Development Bank (ADB) has been very active in supporting SFM.
- There is a need for more technology and information systems intervention in SFM (e.g. Remote Sensing)
- Africa must look to the emerging economies (China, India etc.) for funding rather than traditional funders (America and Europe)

- Africa must also develop locally managed projects, which will represent the people better.

Interview Requests:

A wide array of senior officials from the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the UN Economic Commission for Africa are attending the COP17/CMP7 discussions in Durban.

Interview requests can be sought from the communications officers listed below by mail or telephone.

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The African Union Commission (AUC), South Africa and African Development Bank (AfDB) have formed a Steering Committee supported by an Advisory Committee, which is supported by three sub-committees:

1. The Technical Sub-Committee chaired by the Coordinator of the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC),
2. A Media and Communications Sub-Committee chaired by the AU Director of Communications for the AUC, and
3. A Logistics Sub-Committee chaired by South Africa