



- Workshop Report -

Advocacy and Africa's New Climate Economy: Evidence-Based Action

**Cape Town, South Africa
03 February 2020**

Introduction

In Sub-Saharan Africa, bold climate action is required if the region is to successfully transition to the new climate economy, grounded in sustainable development practices and policies. The new climate economy has the transformative potential to boost rates of employment throughout Africa and create new green sectors vital to growth and development at a national, regional, and continental level. Given that sub-Saharan Africa is substantially endowed with mineral resources integral to the production and development of established and emerging green technologies, it is important that Africa looks to its own capabilities and resources in an attempt to carve out a unique developmental pathway that satisfies the three pillars of sustainability (social, environmental and economic), embracing the transformative potential of the new climate economy.

Considering the above trends and issues, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), in partnership with the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), hosted a workshop on 3 February 2020 in Cape Town, South Africa on the theme of Africa's new climate economy. The workshop was targeted at policymakers, experts, and academics and aimed to generate ideas and recommendations that will result in concrete actions towards a more resilient and prosperous Africa. The workshop was attended by 31 participants representing industry, civil society, governments and academic stakeholder networks in Europe and Africa (see Annex 1: Participants).

Structure and Approach

The workshop's design allowed for significant discussion amongst participants in order to extract key insights from the assembled stakeholders. Welcome remarks were followed by two panel discussions, after which participants self-selected into two world café discussion groups, namely, *Impact Pathways to Policy Influence: What works?* and *Rethinking Climate Advocacy: What are the key opportunities?* The meeting concluded with a plenary feedback on the world café discussions, a brief synthesis discussion, and closing remarks (see Annex 2: Workshop Programme).

Welcome remarks were provided by Mr. Benno Mühler, KAS Country Director for the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ms. Romy Chevallier, Climate and Biodiversity Lead at SAIIA, and Annelize van der Merwe, Director for Green Economy Industries at InvestSA, Department of Trade and Industry, South Africa. Their remarks highlighted the objectives of the event in light of the strategic vision of the host organisations and addressed the incorporation of the event findings into the work programme and ongoing policy engagement activities of the host organisations to support sustainability and impact.

Discussion and Key Themes

The first panel addressed the theme of *Balancing Crisis and Opportunity: Policy engagement around the new climate economy* and consisted of Linus Mofor (African Climate Policy Centre at the UN Economic Commission for Africa), Mao Amis (African Centre for a Green Economy – South Africa), Haileselassie Medhin (World Resources Institute – Ethiopia country office), and Saliem Fakir (African Climate Foundation – South Africa). The second panel addressed the theme *More Effective Advocacy: Perspectives from African think tanks* and was presented by Adedeji Adeniran (Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa – Nigeria), Emmanuel Ndimubanzi (Pole Institute – DRC), Onesmus Mugenyi (ACODE – Uganda), and Mwikamba Mwambi (Natural Resource Alliance of Kenya).

Realising the New Climate Economy: Bottom-up approaches and mobilisation

The workshop participants emphasised the need for African governments and other stakeholders to focus on how to operationalise the green economy through dialogues, knowledge sharing, and collaboration—both ideationally and in practice. It was emphasised that the new climate economy needs to be interpreted and framed within the African context. Most African countries face significant development challenges, which is a significant obstacle to successful transitions such as that required by the embracing of the new climate economy. In this regard, limited “change capacity” is one of the major challenges for the continent, that is, the capacity of public and private sector stakeholders to develop new competencies that enable them to survive and prosper (i.e. build resilience) during transitional periods. This is central to ensuring that people don’t get left behind. Climate change is already having significant impacts on industries and communities in Africa. The poor and other vulnerable groups bear the brunt of these impacts, as they have the lowest capacity to adapt, and must therefore be an important focus of policy interventions.

Participants highlighted that Africa needs to undergo a complex transition, which will require stakeholders to follow a highly deliberative and participatory bottom-up approach to decision-making and policy development. Stakeholders need to be proactive and should remain well informed about the situation on the ground in their respective localities. Resources and networks need to be mobilised to collectively ensure that innovative approaches gain traction. If the existing economic model is to be changed, stakeholders need to test innovative business models and social innovations in real-world settings to assess their resilience and sustainability. This can only be achieved through radical experimentation. Policymakers who predominantly use a top-down approach—attempting to force reality to conform to policy instead of building policy from reality—quickly run into difficulties when it comes to policy implementation. Policymakers must therefore be informed by the social, economic and environmental realities that communities are faced with on a day to day basis, ensuring that governance responses are relevant and responsive. The changes required to

embrace the new climate economy are not purely technical in nature – poor governance, a lack of political will, authoritarian or kleptocratic tendencies, and bureaucratic ineptitude also need to be addressed. Local civil society plays a crucial role in supporting these changes.

Transitional Approaches

A climate change-induced transition is occurring in both developed and developing countries. Participants highlighted that countries are still grappling with questions around developmental models – is there a formula for growth and development, and which steps need to be followed to achieve development? Participants argued that stakeholders should focus on facilitating open dialogues, encouraging knowledge sharing, and implementing pragmatic action plans. It is important to consider how developing countries, particularly in Africa, can develop sustainably in the context of climate change, rather than duplicating unsustainable development pathways of many industrialized states. In this regard, inclusive development models are vital at a local, national, regional, and continental levels. African countries need to contextualise what the new climate economy means to them – rather than passively adopting external narratives. It is necessary to identify and leverage synergies between developmental goals and climate action, rather than viewing these priorities as mutually exclusive.

SDGs & Resource Governance

The implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 and its associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provides opportunities not only for socio-economic development but also for broader socio-ecological and techno-political transformations. In this respect, states can radically reframe their development trajectories. Consider, for example, the opportunities for Nigeria, which has long been dependent on fossil fuel revenues, to restructure its economy towards green technologies and renewable energy sources. Participants emphasised that political leaders may balk at the scale of changes required to restructure economies and societies and therefore there is a critical role for communities, civil society and the research community to inform and promote the adoption of more sustainable development pathways, while also holding political leadership accountable in the context of intergeneration justice. Indeed, the youth will be central to the innovation and accountability processes required to drive the transition to a new climate economy.

The successful implementation of the SDGs and the broader transition to a new climate economy requires not only technological innovations, but also the use of comprehensive monitoring and the application of information technologies, engaging with the potential of big data to assess and shape development choices. Inclusive, multi-stakeholder partnerships, as reflected in SDG17, are required for effective action. In this regard, more action is required

to transcend traditional boundaries between such binary framings as state/non-state, for profit / non-profit, government / civil society, etc.

Advocacy Opportunities

As outlined above, think tanks and the broader civil society and research community have a key role to play in informing policy debates, promoting innovation and reframing opportunities and challenges related to the new climate economy. It was observed that there has been insufficient investment in systems for innovation, incubation and learning. Such investment is important to ensure that policy interventions are evidence-based and grounded in the socio-political and economic realities that business and communities contend with. Emphasis should also be placed on community-driven, decentralised knowledge generation and information sharing systems, reflecting that many of the impacts of climate change, as well as potential responses, are being developed at the micro-level on small farms, businesses and within community settings. Central governments and the broader state architecture retain a key role in formalising and directing economic policy and shaping the allocation of resources. In this regard, there is a need to consider the potential for economic incentives for climate-smart investments. Again, research and analysis will be central to ensuring that such interventions are well informed, while think tanks also have an important role in ongoing monitoring and evaluation of policy effectiveness.

Civil Society, Think Tanks, and Evidence-Based Approaches

Climate change responses have both a political and a scientific dimension. These facets should inform the content of the new programmes being developed to implement key aspects of the new climate economy. Technical experts and analysts need to be closely involved in informing governance responses to climate change. The green growth agenda emerging from the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) highlights the need to strengthen the institutional framework undergirding climate responses and enhance the involvement of the private sector in climate action. Think tanks must engage national governments at several levels to support such processes.

Conclusion and Next Steps

While numerous challenges to a successful transition to the new climate economy were highlighted during the course of deliberations, the primary focus remained on important opportunities for innovation, encompassing economic, social and governance aspects. The assembled stakeholders emphasised the central role of civil society in continuing advocacy and the generation of an evidence-base to support policy innovation. Continuing gaps in understanding the scale and scope of climate change impacts was emphasised, which

underscores the need for education and broader information programmes at all levels of society and state institutions.

In closing, the costs thanked all participants for their high level of engagement and again emphasised that the networks and insights generated by the workshop event will feed into ongoing research, dialogue, and policy engagement efforts.