

**ACTION PLAN OF TUNIS : FOR ADAPTATION  
TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFRICA AND  
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION,  
IN A CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY**

## **FOREWORD**

The present Action Plan has been prepared to be submitted to the International Conference on 'International Solidarity for a Strategy on Climate Change in Africa and in the Mediterranean Region' (Tunis, 18-20 November 2007).

This Action Plan is the result of a wish to enhance international solidarity to enable the countries of the region to put into effect their national climate change adaptation plans and strategies. That is why it only goes into issues that are seen as having priority that can be dealt with through international solidarity and cooperation.

After it has been reviewed and adopted by the Tunis Conference, the Action Plan will be presented to the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Climate Change (COP-13) in Bali.

## **Introduction**

1. Inter-state solidarity is one of the principles promoted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) regarding the developing countries' adaptation to the impact of climate change. Thus, Article 4.4 of the Convention clearly stipulates that "*The developed country Parties and other developed Parties included in Annex II shall also assist the developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in meeting costs of adaptation to those adverse effects*".
2. Africa is one of the regions in the world most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. This vulnerability is made worse by the difficult social and economic situation experienced by most of the people in Africa. In the Mediterranean region, the countries on the southern shore are also vulnerable, and, as is the case for the African countries, will only be able to withstand the impacts of climate change and adapt to this if they receive technical and financial help.
3. As part of the Present Action Plan, adaptation is defined as a set of steps taken and as changes made in the systems of governance to withstand the already visible climate change and which is probable in the future.
4. Adaptation to climate change has for several years been the subject of much analysis, mostly in the context of the UNFCCC and with the help of the Secretariat and its groups of experts. Some African countries have crafted national adaptation plans. These usually aim at mitigating the harmful effects of climate change and preparing to withstand the inevitable impacts of such change. Some also aim at exploiting the opportunities offered by climate change.

### **1. Objectives of the Action Plan**

5. Its main objective is helping the countries of Africa and the Mediterranean Region take the appropriate steps regarding adaptation to climate change in a context of international solidarity.
6. This Action Plan in no way replaces the NAPAs that have been crafted and implemented at national level, or the programmes of the concerned international organisations, but rather acts as back-up to these Action Plans, to give them a better chance of success, by focusing on the priority issues of adaptation to climate change that can be solved through international solidarity, coordination and mutual exchange and assistance between countries.
7. It was designed to take into account both the priorities selected within the UNFCCC context and the recommended approaches to adaptation, and the special features of the African and Mediterranean regions, that include many of the less developed countries. It focuses on priority aspects to help, through a set of actions, the countries of Africa and the Mediterranean Region attain their Millennium Development Goals.

### **2. Recommended actions**

#### **2.1 Assistance for the elaboration and implementation of national adaptation plans**

8. Given that many of the least developed countries do not have the capacities to identify their most pressing needs regarding adapting to the harmful effects of climate change, the Seventh Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (COP7) has adopted guidelines to prepare national climate change adaptation

plans (NAPAs) (Decision 28/CP.7). The NAPAs identify the most urgent and immediate needs regarding adaptation.

9. Several African countries have already crafted their national adaptation plans with the help, especially, of the GEF. It is important to continue this effort so that all countries will have such a national plan, making sure that the crafting of such plans is done in a way that complies with the said guidelines. To this end, financial and human means should be guaranteed.

10. Crafting NAPAs is a field where international solidarity could play an important part, especially via technical assistance and the exchange of experience.

11. The NAPAs are not ends in themselves. They are of interest only if they are followed up by actions that enable identified needs to be satisfied. It is, thus, crucial for the African and Mediterranean regions that multilateral or bilateral cooperation projects be developed and funded to ensure rapid implementation of the actions advocated by the NAPAs.

**2.2. Integration of Climate Change adaptation in development strategies and plans, in order to facilitate the integration of adaptation to climate change into development strategies and plans, some actions should be urgently taken:**

12. At the local and national scale, it will be important to improve knowledges of the most vulnerable communities, to improve downscaling of climate models, early warning systems to smaller scales, to integrate of climate change issues into social networks respecting social and cultural values and to strengthen cooperation between national authorities in order to transfer best practises, clean technologies and lessons learnt related to national adaptation programmes and projects.

13. At the regional scale, it will be important to inventory and improve policies and institutions relevant to climate change, to identify transboundary issues and economies of scale for natural resources and energy management.

14. At the international scale, it is essential to integrate the CCA with the MDG's and to ensure that resources, including international development cooperation funds, are well targeted to help developing countries in integrating CCA in their national development strategies as well their Action Plans at national and regional levels. The international community has to make a commitment to help the neediest and most vulnerable countries to cope with the implications of climate change

**2.3 Strengthening participation by stakeholders**

15. The natural and geographical distribution of the impacts of climate change requires, from us to fight them, an approach based on the participation of all involved parties, particularly the local population. However, in many African and Mediterranean countries these involved parties are not sufficiently aware of the stakes of climate change. Furthermore, even when they are aware, these parties will only be able to act effectively if they have the necessary capacities, in terms of skills and means. Moreover, in many countries the political, institutional and statutory systems are not sufficiently well adapted for the concerned parties to be effectively involved.

**- Local capacity-building**

16. For all involved parties to be able to make an effective contribution to crafting and implementing climate change adaptation strategies, information and training programmes should urgently be

developed on the organizational and technical aspects. These programmes should also improve the ability of the involved parties to communicate, network and formulate their requirements by targeting the appropriate funding sources.

17. Special attention should be paid to NGOs, particularly those that are active at local level. These can play an extremely important part.

**- Enhancing the women's role and making it easier for them to implement adaptation measures**

18. In many African and Mediterranean countries, women, in addition to their social role at family and other levels, play a particularly important part in the daily pursuit of several activities that are pertinent to the management of natural resources (working the soil, irrigation, collecting wood for burning, carrying drinking water etc.). This means that women are actors who are necessary for the implementation of many climate change adaptation measures. Women, as mothers, can also act to educate their children, teaching them the ideas and correct practices needed for optimum adaptation to climate change.

19. It is true that many programmes in the region are devoted to consolidating the role of women in several fields. But it has proved necessary, within the present Action Plan, to act to increase the ability of African and Mediterranean women to withstand the impacts of climate change and master practices and alternatives that will enable the community to better adapt to such impacts.

20. To enhance women's role, it is necessary to carry out awareness raising campaigns and hold information days at local levels, designed to catch the attention and arouse the interest of women. In places where tradition does not allow women to have a voice in group reflection and problem-solving, one should, while showing respect for local tradition, organise information and consultation meetings with women on the subject of climate change impacts, and what adaptation steps and practices should be put into effect.

**- Promoting good governance in adaptation to climate change**

21. Crafting and implementing adaptation strategies requires suitable institutional and statutory systems. It is important that these systems should be suited to each country's special features while still securing minimum harmonization at regional level. Institutional and statutory adjustments are obviously the province of each state, but many of the countries in the region do not possess sufficient means to produce effective action by the institutional structures and for the effective application of the regulations in force. Here bilateral and multilateral cooperation should be directed towards strengthening the institutional systems in the countries concerned by climate change adaptation, so that in their operations these integrate greater openness and decentralization as well as access to information and the active participation of actors in designing and implementing development strategies.

22. Reinforce the information, sensibilization programmes and lessons learnt dissemination by the implementation of small projects.

23. Strengthen the implication and the participation of civil society in the elaboration of adaptation strategies and plans, and the implementation of adaptation projects.

24. Integrate the civil society priorities and local knowledges in the planning of adaptation projects.

## **2.4. Adaptation to climate change in agriculture and the management of natural ecosystems**

25. The rational management of agriculture and natural ecosystems is one of the main challenges both as regards the environment and food security. Several examples throughout the world show that the social and political implications of failed agricultural strategies and failed ecosystem management can prove disastrous. Today any policy in this field has to take into account the expected impacts of climate change. People's improved living conditions and the food security of the peoples of the region require the development of more efficient farming systems that respect natural resources and the environment. Now, agriculture and the natural ecosystems in Africa and the Mediterranean Region are extremely vulnerable to climate change. This vulnerability is made worse by several factors, such as poverty, repeated drought and the great dependence on rain-fed agriculture. Predictions about the impacts of climate change for the region indicate that agriculture will be increasingly vulnerable and that therefore it is necessary to prepare this sector to withstand the effects of climate change. The following actions will make it easier for the countries in the region to implement their programmes of adaptation to climate change as regards agriculture and the management of natural ecosystems.

### **- Promoting the most suitable practices**

26. It is necessary to inventory and analyse the practices which render agriculture and the natural ecosystems more vulnerable, in order to eliminate these or to make what improvements can be made. Similarly, the gains made, of good experiences and local know-how regarding adaptation to climate change in agriculture and managing natural ecosystems, should be inventoried, capitalized and circulated. Particular attention should be given to Agro-ecology and Water Economy systems.

27. This can only be done through both the transfer of technologies and the exchange of experience, and the introduction of institutional and statutory adjustments.

### **- Raising awareness among actors of the real stakes of climate change**

28. Moreover, the concerned actors, including decision-makers, should be made more aware so that they are sufficiently conscious of the real stakes represented by climate change impacts on agriculture and the natural ecosystems. Awareness programmes and training and information courses should be implemented.

### **- Preparing for harmful natural phenomena and disasters**

29. Among the consequences of climate change will be a growing frequency and duration of certain natural phenomena, such as drought. It is also probable that invasions of destructive pests such as the desert locust and crop parasites will get worse, as the temperatures rise and consequently changes take place in these species' areas of distribution.

30. The present warning and action coordination systems will, thus, increasingly be called upon and should, therefore, be strengthened by watchfulness and the rapid circulation of information.

### **- Strengthen the genetic resources conservation**

31. Efficient effort should be made in the most sensitive areas for Climate change, in order to protect animal and vegetal genetic resources to ensure supplementary protection measures against number and specific reduction or extinction.

**- Strengthen synergies for the adaptation plans in different fields**

32. The impacts of climate changes and climate provisions should be taken into consideration for the establishment and implementation of combating desertification and sustainable development plans at local, regional and international levels.

**- Making access to funding sources easier**

33. Governments and donors should mobilize the necessary funds for the sustainable management of natural ecosystems and agricultural development, as part of adaptation to climate change. The various donors are called to ensure the coordination, harmonization and simplification of the procedures applied when granting funds. Similarly, the national governments should ensure that there is transparency in the access to and use of the financial resources set aside for adaptation.

**2.5. Adaptation to climate change for better management of water resources**

34. Water is a crucial and a strategic natural resource. Climate change forces changes in methods of managing this resource and adopting new approaches and practices of water use. These have not yet been perfected and will depend on each country's special institutional, social and political features. The following actions are necessary to facilitate the successful management of water resources in the countries of the region.

**- Improving data collection and monitoring systems**

35. Suitable management of water resources can only be guaranteed if a body of reliable data is available. With a few exceptions, there is a lack of reliable national systems of data collection and modelling for water resources; these should be strengthened as regards skills, and technical and financial means. This concerns not only the hydrological features of water resources but also parameters and indicators of how these are used.

**- Promote the transfer of technologies for analysis, risk assessment and adaptation of the infrastructure needed for managing water resources**

36. For African countries to be able to successfully adapt their infrastructure for managing water resources to climate change, they have to benefit from a transfer of the appropriate technologies for risk analysis and to develop tools to help decision-making.

**- Develop programmes for water saving and re-use**

37. Many countries in Africa and the Mediterranean Region suffer from water shortages. Efforts to mobilize water only partially solve this problem, which will certainly worsen in the region under the effect of climate change. Some countries have already committed themselves to programmes of water saving and re-use of treated wastewater. Extending such programmes to all the countries in the region is the only way of satisfying the growing water requirements of the people and of the various sectors of the economy.

**2.6. Adaptation to climate change as regards infrastructure**

38. The expected increase in the frequency and scale of climate phenomena (such as floods, heat waves, dust storms and sandstorms, etc.) will severely tax the African and Mediterranean infrastructure. Also, the expected rise in sea level will cause serious problems for a great many

facilities and infrastructures located in the coastal areas, especially since the 'climate change' factor was not taken into account when almost the entire infrastructure in Africa and the Mediterranean was designed. In several countries, the impact of the harm that will be caused to the infrastructure will affect their economies, to such an extent, perhaps, that social, even political, disturbances may arise.

39. The following actions are especially necessary to help Africa and the Mediterranean Region adapt their infrastructures to the impacts of climate change.

**- Enhance the countries' ability to assess the vulnerability of their infrastructures**

40. Projects should urgently be developed and implemented to train executives in the concerned national institutions and organisations in techniques for assessing the infrastructure's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, and also to provide the said institutions and organisations with the necessary technical, human and financial means to make vulnerability assessments.

**- Integrate the 'climate change' factor when planning and designing facilities and other infrastructure elements**

41. In this context, support from the developed countries is particularly necessary both financially and as regards technical assistance and the transfer of technologies.

**- Promote technology transfer to combat coastal erosion**

42. Coastal erosion is an issue of concern for almost countries in Africa and Mediterranean countries and it generates significant ecological damages through natural habitat losses. It generates also damages to infrastructure, agriculture lands and settlement areas. The sea level rise will increase this phenomenon and its impacts at ecological, economic and social levels.

43. In this field, cooperation and technology-transfer projects are needed to help the region's countries master the required technologies for monitoring and modelling coastal erosion. The priority should be to areas with high human settlement density, islands and natural habitats that are particularly sensitive such as mangroves and coastal wetlands.

## **2.7 Preparedness for health impacts and natural disasters**

44. Human Diseases, Natural disasters and catastrophes are recurrent phenomena, some of which will become more frequent and violent with the impact of climate change. Already Africa is suffering from the effects of several kinds of natural disaster, like drought, violent flooding, etc. The ability of most of the countries in the region to withstand such phenomena is very limited, and thus there is an extremely high social and economic cost (loss of human life, worsening of poverty, deterioration of health, etc.) that will be even higher when these phenomena increase in frequency and scale under the effect of climate change. Inter-state solidarity is one means of mitigating the effects such disasters have on the affected populations. To this end, the following actions should be undertaken:

**- Support development for health.**

45. Decisions taken outside of the health sector have important effects, both negative and positive, on human health and wellbeing. It is therefore recommended to support the integration of health vulnerability reduction measures into development programming in other relevant sectors. This should include both climate change adaptation measures in sectors such as agriculture and water

resources; and mitigation measures, for example through promoting the health "co-benefits" of minimizing, as far as possible, the use of energy sources that contribute both to greenhouse gas emissions and local air pollution.

**- Strengthen existing health protection systems to protect from the additional threats of climate change.**

46. Existing capacities and programmes already provide some protection against climate related health risks, but protection is incomplete, and they are not yet equipped to deal with the additional risks of climate change. There is a need to assess the most important current and likely future climate stresses on health within the local context; strengthen existing infrastructure, technical capacity, and interventions designed to monitor and address climate-sensitive health determinants and outcomes, and evaluate the effectiveness of current and new public health interventions.

**- Improve early warning and forecasting systems**

47. In Africa and the Mediterranean Region, efficient early warning and forecasting systems for the main kinds of natural disasters will make preparation and action easier. These systems could consist of a network of sub-regional systems each covering a set of countries and functioning according to standard protocols. It is important that these systems possess technologies and means of data collection and processing and for rapid communication and circulation of information.

**- Set up regional mechanisms to organise action in times of natural disaster :**

48. Given that natural disasters are expected to become more intense under the effect of climate change, the means of action needed will be more sizeable and could often be beyond the reach of the country affected. The effectiveness of the action will be improved by setting up regional mechanisms that will be activated when there is a natural disaster to intervene in the country/ies affected. Such mechanisms will be based on emergency plans, groups of experts and means of action that are suited to the concerned country/ies. They should be harmonized with the national emergency plans.

**- Enhance Awareness of the threat of Climate Change on Health Security**

49. Health threats are among the clearest human dimensions of climate change. There is therefore a need to build wider awareness of the need for adaptation and mitigation to protect and enhance health security, and to empower the health and humanitarian community to take responsibility for guiding policies to protect human life and wellbeing.

### **3. Means of implementation**

50. Implementing this Action Plan requires a major effort on the part of the countries of the region themselves and also the international community, to implement the Rio Principles, in particular that of common but differentiated responsibilities according to which *“States shall cooperate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth’s ecosystem. In view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have common but differentiated responsibilities. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command.”*

51. The present Action Plan offers, for its implementation, an important opportunity for enhancing international solidarity, exchanging experience and mutual assistance. The actions recommended by this Action Plan could be implemented as part of a bilateral cooperation project of the north-south or south-south type, or a multilateral south-north-south type.

52. International and regional organisations concerned by the environment and development should play an important part in implementing this Action Plan through direct technical assistance, facilitation of trade and coordination of regional range actions.

53. At the level of funding programmes to mitigate climate change and adapt to its impacts, adjustments are needed to further adapt and strengthen current funding systems and devices. In this respect, it is important to :

- Extend international carbon deals to include projects that are at present not covered, such as those intended to prevent deforestation, and extend the funds allocated to climate change by donor countries
- Explore alternative funding sources for projects to mitigate the impacts of climate change, such as taxes on greenhouse gas emissions
- Facilitate procedures for access to funding sources for actively involved local parties, and shorten the time needed for projects to be approved by the GEF and other donors
- Increase the amounts of financial aid that are allocated to the African countries, particularly, given their high vulnerability and their low ability to withstand the impacts of change and carry out the necessary adaptation actions.