

Climate Change: managing the unavoidable and avoiding the unmanageable

Is Africa ready to seize the opportunities generated by climate change?

The impact of climate change is already obvious: less predictable seasons, more droughts and floods, higher air and water temperatures. The social and economic impacts are deepening, including on agricultural productivity, health including vector borne diseases and malaria, water supply, and natural resources like forests and dry lands.

Planning is difficult; we are in 'terra incognita'. People, rural and urban communities and countries will be affected in different ways, depending upon their wealth, capacity and location.

The good news is that efforts are well advanced to develop a common African position on climate change prior to the Copenhagen Summit this December to negotiate a post-Kyoto Treaty. The objective should be to binding agreements whereby Africa can access additional financial and technical support to adapt to climate change and pursue low carbon growth.

Africa needs and deserves this not just because it is the victim of climate change but because, with the right policies and investments in place, it can contribute significantly to global solutions. The problem is that in many countries the policies and conditions are not yet in place to encourage investment in hydro, solar, wind, biomass and thermal energy and infrastructure projects, and to allow independent power producers to supply national grids.

National Adaptation Plans of Action abound but many are not being vigorously implemented. And many governments still seem to approach climate change as just an environmental issue, and not as a central determinant of economic growth and MDG achievement.

Ideally, African Heads of State should instruct their cabinets to integrate climate change into growth and development strategies, and identify the capacities required to manage the unavoidable (i.e. adaptation) and avoid the unmanageable (mitigation).

News Overview

After another round of unsuccessful discussion with the most active rebel groups, analysts say [peace in Darfur is - one step forward, two steps back](#). Although the rebels in the region are showing signs of unity, it has not yet brought a comprehensive peace.

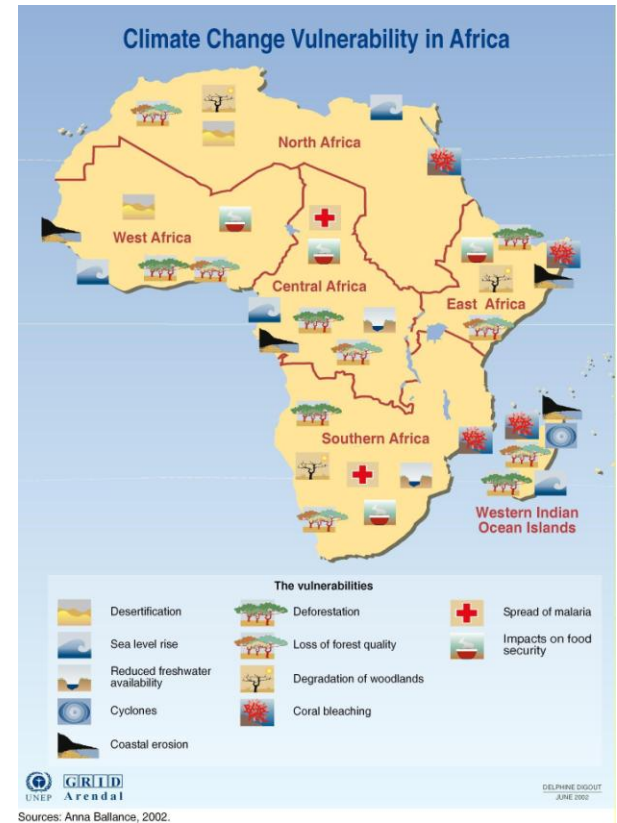
Despite a strong military campaign underway to loosen militant control in the Niger-Delta region, [the execution of a popular MEND militant leader](#) is likely to lead to new escalations of tension; Also, activists are trying to prove oil-giant Shell was complicit in the executions of anti-oil campaigners in the 90s, including Ken- Saro Wiwa.

[The US recently sought a seat and was elected by the UNGA for a three-year term on the Human Rights Council](#). This underscores its renewed commitment to support international efforts with nations seeking to make the council a body that fulfills its promise.

In conjunction with Africa Day on May 25, the [Afrobarometer](#) has recently released results from its 4th round of surveys on critical trends on the continent with respect to democracy and regime consolidation and poverty reduction.

Following Malawi's recent poll which has been internationally criticized for imbalanced media coverage during its campaign, [John Tempo, who was defeated by Bingu wa Mutharika, claims the election was fraudulent](#) and plans to contest the results in court.

It was announced that the long awaited [elections in Côte d'Ivoire will be held on 29 November 2009](#). Although previous election dates have lapsed, this is a positive step to help end years of crisis.



Sources: Anna Ballance, 2002.

Source: UNEP/GRID-Arendal, 2002

On the blogs

[COP 15 UN Climate Change Copenhagen Blog: Thinking about Climate Change - don't keep it yourself, 19 May 2009](#)

This web-based initiative allows people from the entire world to share their thoughts on climate change up to COP15.

[World Bank Shanta Devarajan's Blog: Why aid to Africa must increase, 25 May 2009](#)

This blog outlines how aid has brought about a decline in poverty, rise in the rate of primary school completion, improvement in health care, especially with respect to the spread of HIV/AIDS; he makes a case for why aid to Africa must increase.

[The New York Times Blog- On the Ground: Your comments on maternal mortality, 16 May 2009](#)

This column by Nicholas Kristof tries to shine light on the issue of maternal mortality in Africa with the aim of drawing more attention to the great scourge.



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Kham as featured in [The Standard, Kenya: 20 May 2009](#)

“Despite the importance of the environment to our livelihoods, issues concerning its protection have tended to be relegated to the confines of small groups of specialists and external support.”

Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda

Multilateral Organizations

AU

[Celebrations of the 46th Anniversary of the Africa Day on 25 May reaffirmed the determination of Africans to unite for peace and prosperity](#)

AC

The Africa Commission launched its report: “[Realizing the Potential of Africa’s Youth](#)” and the [Copenhagen Statement](#) at the 3rd meeting of the commission.

AfDB/ECA/DFID

[Final Communiqué of the 3rd edition of the African Ministerial Conference on Financing for Development: Climate Change: Financing Opportunities and Challenges to achieve the MDGs in Africa](#)

OECD

While presenting a new publication on trade policy: [International Trade: Free, Fair and Open?](#) OECD states: “[world trade set to fall 13% in 2009 from 2008 levels](#)” and [urges governments to avoid protectionist measures and keep markets open in order to allow economies to benefit from the recovery when it comes.](#)

EU

[On 25 May, to mark Africa Day, the European Commission reaffirmed its commitment to strengthen the EU-Africa Partnership in order to address common challenges](#)

[The European Commission is providing a total of €54 million in humanitarian aid to vulnerable people in Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Uganda](#)

IMF

[The IMF intends to step up its help to Africa to combat fallout from the global economic crisis by boosting lending, expanding technical assistance, and offering policy advice](#)

[In celebration of Africa Week 2009, IMF Managing Director urged further action by African countries, as well as the international community, to combat the effects of the global economic and financial crisis.](#)

UN

[Environment-led green revolution is key to future food security in Africa, says UNEP](#)

World Bank

[The WB has approved \\$540 million in International Development Association \(IDA\) funding to protect and enhance basic service delivery in Ethiopia](#)

[The Little Green Data Book 2009: an annual compilation of statistics on environment-related issues has been released by the WB on the occasion of the 17th Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development](#)

Opinions

[Pambazuka News \(South Africa\): Should Aid to Africa come to an end? 21 May 2009](#)

Ronald Elly Wanda, a political scientist based in London argues against Dambisa Moyo’s argument of aid being detrimental to Africa’s development and stated further that the “real problem is not aid itself but the way in which it is structured and delivered.”

[Guardian \(UK\): Preparing for Africa’s boom, 25 May 2009](#)

African societies are said to have blown their 1st and possibly 2nd commodity booms, this “must ‘never again’ happen”- says, Paul Collier. His advice to African societies is to get prepared, he further outlines what being prepared actually means.

[Business Day \(South Africa\): Leadership would give Africans something to celebrate at last, 22 May 2009](#)

A senior researcher at the Gauteng Legislature, Tinyiko Makondo states that Africans will really have something to celebrate when they acknowledge that “the driver of Africa’s problems today is leadership” and realize that more proactive and collective leadership is what is needed to address issues of development, governance and justice

[Daily Nation \(Kenya\) How poor countries can take advantage of climate change, 20 May 2009](#)

Ahead of the African Ministers meeting on climate change in Rwanda, Kofi Annan and Lord Nicholas Stern urge African leaders to take the lead in forging green deals and point to schemes that offer the opportunity for them to benefit from global payments for the preservation of forests, or long-term climate change strategies that offer a chance for them to ‘leap frog’ towards efficient renewable technologies.

[Daily Trust \(Nigeria\) Nigeria: of national pride and the Obama Snub, 24 May 2009](#)

Obama’s visit to Ghana rather than Kenya or Nigeria for his first trip to Africa signals that political values come first. The author argues that this should serve as a wake-up call for African leaders to improve their governance deficits.

APP Activities

On 21 May, the APP released a short briefing paper prepared in collaboration with UNEP on “[Climate Change: A Call to Action for African Leaders](#)” at the 2009 3rd edition of African Ministers Conference on Financing for Development Meeting ◊ The APP Director, **Michael Keating** attended the 3rd Special Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) on Climate Change ◊ **Kofi Annan** and Lord Nicholas Stern issued an opinion piece on Wednesday 20 May, on how climate change doesn’t have to be “all bad news for Africa” ◊ Last week, **Tony Blair** held talks with Kenyan Prime Minister Odinga over the performance and challenges facing the grand coalition government ◊ On 17 May, **Muhammed Yunus** spoke about his successes, challenges and upcoming initiatives on “[lifting people worldwide out of poverty](#)” while speaking at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania’s MBA commencement ceremony ◊ **Michel Camdessus** delivered a speech [denouncing wars as the “mother of all poverty”](#) at the Charlemagne Prize which rewards services aimed towards European unity.

G20 Update

CANADA- [The Government of Canada has announced its support for health care in war-affected Sudan](#)

[Government of Canada has announced new funding that will help promote investment opportunities between countries in North Africa and the rest of the world](#)

CHINA- [pledged continued aid to Sierra Leone amid the global economic downturn](#)

[In addressing a reception to mark the 46th anniversary of Africa Day in Beijing, Chinese State Councilor vowed to advance Sino-African strategic partnership](#)

FRANCE- [PM François Fillon reiterates his governments’ interest to help Africa’s development and their battle to have Africa represented among the permanent members of the UN Security Council](#)

GERMANY- [German Defense Minister stated that the EU may significantly expand the range of its anti-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia](#)

RUSSIA- [pledged continued aid, security assistance for Africa](#)

USA- [The US administration states its intention to develop a comprehensive and sustainable strategy toward Somalia](#)

Calendar

25-29 May	AMCEN’s 3 rd Special Session on Climate Change: Nairobi Kenya
29 May	Global Humanitarian Forum launches its Climate Change report
29 May	International Day of UN Peacekeepers
1 June	International Children’s Day
1-3 June	UN Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development: New York, U.S.A
2-18 June	11 th Session, Human Rights Council: Geneva, Switzerland
5 June	9 th OECD/AfDB International Economic Forum on Africa: Paris, France
5 June	World Environment Day
10 June	12 th meeting of the Africa Partnership Forum: Rome, Italy
10-12 June	World Economic Forum on Africa 2009: Cape town, South Africa

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