ADAPTATION FUND NGO NEWSLETTER

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSLETTER ON THE ADAPTATION FUND NO. 10 • MAY 2016

1. COP 21 & the Adaptation Fund

(By Alpha Oumar Kaloga, Lead Analyst of the Adaptation Fund NGO Network)

COP 21 was a turning point in shifting the global economy towards a path that is decarbonized and resilient to the adverse effects of climate change. And this, through a new, universal deal: The Paris Agreement.

With regard to the climate finance architecture, the new Agreement is meant to reorganise the climate landscape so as to make it effective and responsive to the growing challenge of climate change. It was clear that funds or mechanisms that would not be selected to serve the new agreement would be condemned to become obsolete under the new regime, even before the entry into force of the new agreement in 2020.

Prior to Paris, parties shared a common understanding on the role of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in the new regime. However, there was a divergence of views as to how to integrate the Adaptation Fund (AF) This is because, unlike the GEF and the GCF, which serve as Operating Entities (OE) of the Convention, the AF was established under the Kyoto Protocol.

First, this implies that for the AF to serve the new Agreement, there are legal and political issues with which to contend. Second, the AF is financed primarily through the monetization of a share of proceeds from Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), in addition to donor contributions. There is no regular replenishment processes for the AF, unlike the GCF and the GEF that are regularly capitalized. Third, compared to the other funds that support adaptation among the international dedicated climate funds today, the AF is relatively small, considering the scale and size of projects it finances.

One of the main drivers of the negotiations concerning the AF was its value added to developing countries to address their increasing adaptation requirements, bearing in mind the need for coherence and rationalization of the different funds under the new regime. Parties were, therefore, requested to, among other things, clarify the institutional future of the AF in the post-2020 climate regime, its role vis-à-vis other climate finance institutions, and the fulfilment of its immediate fundraising needs of USD 80 millions by the end of 2015.

Meanwhile, all Parties acknowledged the good track record of the AF Board over the years, even without a common understanding of how concretely this can best support the implementation of the new Agreement. In fact, the AF has been occupying a clear role in the climate finance landscape in providing funding for concrete, small-scale adaptation projects in the most vulnerable communities of developing countries, through its direct access modality.

The AF has allocated USD 331 million to 51 concrete adaptation projects in 45 countries, benefiting over 3.5 million people across a range of sectors, including coastal zone management, sustainable agriculture, water security, and disaster risk reduction. And demand for projects is high, with a record 40 projects – 17 individual and 13 regional – submitted last period.

At the same time, the AF has successfully accredited 20 national implementing entities (NIEs) and built local capacity while improving its modalities to match the realities in recipient countries. For example, the AF has approved a streamlined accreditation process for small-size entities that have limited experience in managing projects worth more than USD 1 million.

Last year the Fund launched its pilot programme on regional projects, through which the Board intends to channel at least USD 30 million to regional projects. The AF also continues its

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work on readiness support, to increase the number of accredited NIEs and the number of quality projects proposed and implemented.

Notwithstanding the Fund's track record, developed countries – for different reasons – were reluctant to take the AF up in the new Agreement, because they have doubts about the added value of the Fund. Though "direct access" as an innovative feature piloted and implemented by the AF, it has become a standard procedure for the two OEs of the Convention. At the same time, wealthy nations were not clear as to how the AF would be sustained, given the collapse of the carbon market. Any link between the AF and the new Agreement could, therefore, imply additional financial obligations through regular pledges of resources into the AF. Further, some countries not Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, such as the US, had no interest in rescuing a fund from a Protocol they are not part of.

On the other hand, developing countries argued that enhanced actions on adaptation would require contributions from all funds, particularly the AF. This is particularly important, given the adaptation finance gaps compared to mitigation flows. In addition, besides the GCF, the AF is the only fund under the Convention, in which all developing countries are eligible for funding.

Developing countries were also of the view that building on its current mandate, the AF could play a key role in helping recipient countries not only implement their NAPAs or NAPs, but also in financing Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC). And last, but not the least, some countries indicated that despite the scarcity of its resources, the AF has been experiencing growing funding requests by poor countries. For instance, at the October 2015 meeting, 34 (17 single proposals and seven regional pre-concepts) proposals were submitted to the AF Secretariat for review[1]. From the recipient countries' perspective, this clearly confirms the increasing relevance of the Adaptation Fund.

Both the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF) and the AF made recommendations to the COP on the AF prior to COP21. In the course of the last year, the SCF has led a process to further work on future institutional linkages of the AF and other finance institutions under the UNFCCC. In its recommendation to the COP, the SCF requested guidance on whether it can assist the CMP by providing guidance to the Adaptation Fund Board (AFB). The SCF also invited the COP to consider with the CMP designating the AFB as an operating entity of the Financial Mechanism (FM) of the Convention[2].

On the hand, the AFB considered a technical paper in 2015 on addressing the diversification of the Fund revenue streams, in accordance with the mandate of the Fund. The AFB concluded the discussion by recommending to the CMP inter alia; (a) the application of voluntary levies on developed country Parties, applied to national and regional emission trading schemes such as the European Union Emissions Trading System; (b) the allocation of 10 per cent of the carry-over units; (c) the consideration of a set of measures to stabilize the price of CERs[3].

However, the options proposed by the AF in terms of the diversifications of revenue streams were not considered in Paris, because of several operational reasons. For instance, the application of voluntary levies on emissions trading was rejected by the EU, because it would interfere with the sovereign right of Parties by imposing an international levy on national systems. The allocation of 10 per cent of the carry-over units from the first commitment period of the KP to the AF was also not considered, as the opportunity cost in terms of operationalisation of the mechanism could exceed the potential amount to be generated through an allocation of carry over.

The remaining options on the table were those recommended by the SCF, which suggested, on the one hand, designating the AFB as an OE of the Financial Mechanism (FM) of the Convention in addition to the option that suggested mandating the SCF to provide guidance to the AFB.

Until the very last moments of the Paris meeting, it was not clear which role the AF will play in the agreement. This was mainly due to the fact that more clarity on the future of the AF in the new Agreement was needed, in order to conclude all other decisions on the AF. In decision 1/CP.21 and the accompanying COP decisions, two specific paragraphs refer directly to the AF. Paragraph 59 of the draft decision stipulates that "the AF may serve the new agreement, subject to relevant decisions by the CMP and the Conference of Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA)."

The language in the above quoted paragraph speaks to the possibility of providing an additional mandate to the AF, so that it can serve the new agreement. To operationalize this decision, a process needs to be initiated by the CMP that will formally request the CMA to explore the possibility of how the AF can best serve the new agreement. Before making the request to the CMA, the CMP – subject to its decision – would also first need to consider how the AF could serve the new agreement (paragraph 59 of the COP decision) in order to make recommendations to the CMA at its first session paragraph 60 Decision 1/CP.21.

At a first glance, it appears that the future of the AF is more or less clarified in the new Agreement and will be sorted out before 2020. However, several technical and political questions need to be spelled out before the Agreement enters into effect. For instance, it is not yet clear when the CMA will first meet. Though, the Paris Agreement enters into force in 2020 according to article 21, the Conference of Parties to the Agreement (CMA) could start its work earlier, provided that

[1] Report of the secretariat on initial screening/technical review of project and programme proposals (AFB/PPRC.17/4); https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/AFB.PPRC _ .17.4-Report-of-the-secretariat-on-initial-screening-technical-review.pdf

[2] Some countries strongly expressed their opinion that the AF – for the sake of effectiveness – would be rendered redundant as a consequence of the new climate finance landscape.

[3] Strategic Discussion on Objectives and Further Steps of the Fund: Potential Linkages between the Fund and the Green Climate Fund (AFB/B.26/5). https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/strategic-discussion-on-objectives-and-further-steps-of-the-fund-potential-linkages-between-the-fund-and-the-green-climate-fund/

55 Parties to the Convention accounting in total for at least an estimated 55 per cent of the total global greenhouse gas emissions have deposited their instruments of ratification. Once the Agreement is effective, Parties will then flesh out the modalities under which the AF may serve the Agreement.

On the other hand, the agreement text speaks of a possibility for the AF to serve the new agreement, subject to additional decisions by the CMP, COP and CMA. This provision has been also included in the report of the AF to the CMP. However, the underlying process how the AF could serve the Agreement also needs to be framed and outlined. Nevertheless, despite these provisions in the agreement and the report to work out the modalities for the AF, in depth discussions on the modalities how the AF can best serve the new agreement need to be considered and agreed to by the Parties.

The factor that will drive this process will be to find predictable and sustainable funding sources for the AF. This question is also interlinked with the financial prospect of the AF. Due to the collapse of the carbon market, the AF has shifted from a market-financed institution to a donor pledged fund. In fact, for a couple of years, donor contributions have surpassed revenue generated from the monetization of share of proceeds from CDM project activities. The AF has experienced a financial impasse over the last year and was forced to set a fundraising target for 2014 and 2015 of USD 80 million per year. The AF needed USD 100 million (USD 80 million as goal for 2015 in addition to the USD 20 million left over from the 2014 fund raising goal), in order to meet its fundraising goal, otherwise the AFB would be unable to make funding commitments and would end up queuing approved projects in a pipeline, while awaiting funding to be imp.

Sweden	USD 17 million
Germany	USD 54.5 million
Italy	USD 2.2 million
Belgian region of Wallonia	USD 1.1 million
Total	**USD 74.8 million**

Own made table

The Paris Agreement offers a unique opportunity to link the AF with the Sustainable Development Mechanisms (SDM) of the new Agreement under Art. 6. This mechanism shall contribute to the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and support sustainable development at the same time. It will allow Parties to use internationally transferred mitigation outcomes to achieve nationally determined contributions under the new Agreement. The participation will be voluntary. Under the SDM, the agreement foresees that a share of the proceeds from activities under the mechanism referred to in paragraph 4 of this Article will be used to cover administrative expenses as well as to assist developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change to meet the costs of adaptation. Similar provision was also made under the CDM that enabled the AF to receive 2% of the share of proceeds of CDM activities.

How the AF could serve the new Agreement will also highly depend on its linkages with other OE of the FM such as the GCF and the GEF. In the course of the 2015, several discussions and exchanges have taken place to figure out the best optional link between the AF and the GCF. Parties, in decision 7/CP.21 on the Report of the GCF to the COP and guidance to the GCF, decided to encourage "the Board of the GCF to improve complementarity and coherence with other institutions, per paragraphs 33 and 34 of the governing instrument of the Green Climate Fund, including by engaging with relevant bodies of the Convention, such as the Standing Committee on Finance". This is an important decision as it gives a specific mandate to the GCF Board to explore the option of linking the Fund to the AF. The outcome of this process will be included in the report of the GCF to the COP and surely one of the critical input into the debate how the AF could serve the new agreement.

In summary, Paris has neither provided clarity with regard to the future of the AF, nor was the fundraising goal of the Fund reached. Nevertheless, Paris did offer an opportunity to the AF to serve the new Agreement as well as a chance for the AF to be linked to Sustainable Development Mechanism (SDM). Once the SDM is operationalized and linked with the AF, there is a great prospect for the AF – through the share of the proceeds from activities under the mechanism – to have more predicable sources of finance than it has today. These, however, are long-term actions. In the short term, the AF will need resources to finance urgent projects in developing countries. One of the options that have been considered in-depth by the AF and the SCF are the potential linkages between the AF and the GCF. This discussion needs to continue and should be concluded this year, in order to ensure higher predictability and assurance to the vulnerable countries so that they can receive further resources for their immediate needs.

2. The Paris Agreement: A perspective from Kenya

(By Sam Owilli, Practical Action)

After 21 years of negotiations, history was finally made on Saturday the 13th December 2015, with the adoption of the Paris Agreement. While all Parties were not able to have all their demands met, overall, the Agreement is a good balance between the different positions of the negotiating groups and a commendable outcome of the ADP Work Stream 1 process. The dual structure of the outcome — the Agreement and the COP decisions — is indeed a good consensus that suits the diverse legal structures of the Parties, especially the US, thus guaranteeing even a probable speedy ratification.

Indeed, there is going to be a lot to be done to make the document perfect but even more so to implement the various provisions of the legal instrument and the decisions. One of the most exciting to me is the recognition of adaptation as a global priority and the commission of all countries to communicate their adaptation actions, thus making adaptation a global priority and responsibility.

This presents a balanced priority on mitigation and adaptation, augmented by the decision for all countries to communicate their adaptation actions while also reporting on their mitigation activities and support, both given and received. The further commitment towards putting global warming below 1.5°C to accompany the current hard limit of 2°C is another big plus, particularly for the African group which stood firmly on this warming ambition target, benchmarking on the domestic climate commitments set out in the submitted INDCs. The fact that Africa set and drove this agenda successfully is indeed a great achievement in demonstrating the influence and value of focused and well-informed collective action. It is worth noting that all but one of the 54 African countries already submitted their INDCs, demonstrating their willingness and readiness to meet and live the global commitments. Most of these countries, including their regional economic blocks, have committed to setting up domestic legal frameworks to ensure the global Agreement is smoothly implemented. Kenya, for example, is at the forefront, having put in place all the requisite frameworks and legal instruments – NCCRS, NCCAP, NAP, INDCs and the National Climate Change Bill already passed by the National Assembly.

Despite the favourable outcomes, the agreement nevertheless leaves a lot of gaps on Loss and Damage (L&D). Even though it directs countries to create a special process to address L&D following the procedures laid out in the Warsaw Mechanism, it leaves out liability or compensation for L&D. A similar dilemma is in the climate finance element where despite the pledge of an annual minimum $100b from developed countries by 2020, it remains unclear which finance mechanism will be used. It is also not yet clear the determinants of the $100b-floor target as it is not backed by any scientific or technical ground. So whether it will be enough or less is hard to say at this stage.

Going forward, the INDCs, despite being ambitious and broad as they were especially for the African countries that submitted individual targets, will inform to a great extent the national development agenda of the countries in order to be consistent with the Agreement. The pledge by the international community, donor institutions and supporting countries to support climate proof development agenda, further reinforces the need and urgency of integrating Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Development pathways as mechanisms of operationalizing the Agreement and meeting the global commitments.

The transformative agenda of the GCF, espoused in their pledge to work on improving their efficiency, expand opportunities for direct access, and review their strategy to clarify the process will be a good benchmark. It is also a call for a shift of momentum towards 'guided' implementation of the provisions of the Agreement coupled with robust MRV systems to achieve the expected global environmental rejuvenation and desired sustainable development.

AF Members; Photo by Bettina Koelle

3. Benin and the Adaptation Fund

(By HOUNTONDJI KODJO E. Mawusé (JVE Togo))

2016 is a critical year for Benin. Four years after the submission of the concept note to the Adaptation Fund, this year may be the last opportunity Benin has to develop a full proposal.

Like other least developed countries (LDCs), Benin is experiencing multiple stressors from environmental and climate change factors: a rapidly growing population, strong reliance on natural resources, weak infrastructure and poor institutions. Benin's NIE, the FNE (Fonds National pour l'Environment), was created to help improve and empower investors in Benin, particularly in the environment field, as a consequence of the 2008 revised investment code[4].

It is responsible for financing and managing environment and climate change projects to ensure a better life for Benin's population and a healthy ecosystem. FNE is a state-owned autonomous institution, endowed with legal capacities and financial authority under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment, Housing and Urban Planning (MEHU)[5]. MEHU holds responsibility for the elaboration and implementation of national environmental policies, projects and programmes in compliance with national laws and commitments towards the Rio-Convention.

The FNE of Benin was accredited as NIE of Benin by the AFB at its 14th meeting. Through the accreditation, the FNE became eligible to submit on behalf of Benin, adaptation projects up to USD 10 million. In early 2012, the FNE submitted a project titled "Adaptation of Cotonou Lagoon Ecosystems and Human Communities to Sea Level Rise and Extreme Weather Events Impacts" worth of USD 9,080,000. The project was first submitted in early 2012.

At this meeting, the AF endorsed the project concept and approved the project formulation grant request of USD 29,000. In endorsing the concept, the AF made a series of technical observations and comments on issues to be further considered when developing the full proposal. Since then, Benin has submitted two fully developed proposals that were not approved by the AFB.

Each time the AF failed to approve the fully developed proposals, it provided a series of questionnaires and observations to the proponent to be addressed, when further developing the proposal. Beyond the technical shortcoming identified by the AF in the screening process, some institutional issues have emerged throughout the project preparation.

According to our partner in Benin, the project development has suffered from the lack of leadership and commitment among the different stakeholders involved in the project development. Also, the language barrier has been perceived as a significant impediment in responding to the comments and observations made by the AF on the proposal. Last, but not least, several concerns have been raised by different stakeholders with regard to the consultation process, particularly with the fishers in Cottoned. There have also been some concerns on how best to integrate the findings of the different feasibility studies undertaken in the preparation of the project proposal.

On January 22, 2016, a meeting with a wide range of partners took place in Cotonou (Benin) on the way forward with the development of the project proposal. From the discussions, there has been a firm commitment by the project proponents and the climate change unit to successfully submit the revised version of the proposal. A new consultant has been hired in order to rewrite the project, for the fourth time, taking into account the AFB's comments.

4. The Honduras Diary

(By Edas Muñoz Galeano, Fundacion Vida)

I traveled to Paris with the aim to participate in the COP21 as a representative of both the Honduran Government and my institution, Fundacion Vida. In order to comply with those goals, we developed some months prior to COP21, the different activities to perform.

To us, it was important to be a part of the government delegation of "negotiators" so as to allow us to have full access to the different negotiation rooms. The accreditation as member of the official delegation of Honduras was settled at the sideline training received from the CEPAL/MiAMBIENTE during the month of November 2015.

On the other hand, Foundacion Vida was also invited to the seminar "Civil Society of Mexico and Central America, Moving to COP21" under the auspices of the European Union (EU) and the French Embassy, held in the city of Mexico. As a result of this summit, the consensus was to support the joint position of the region to the COP21 called "Central America Vulnerable" as a regional strategic approach endorsed by all sectors of civil society, asking at the same time the official sectors to hold the same position politically.

I arrived in Paris at midnight on December 7, after a very long trip. For more than 24 hours, I had to go all the way down trough El Salvador, Colombia, Spain and finally Paris, "the City Light". After resting for a while trying to give my body a regenerative treatment and yet not recovered from the jet lag, on the afternoon of the following day, I went to the COP21 headquarters for registration.

On December 9, early in the morning, I was ready to get fully involved in the dynamic process that was COP21. I was focused not only on getting aware of the programmatic approach of the COP, but also touring the physical facilities in order to get familiar with that rambling environment and prioritizing all the moves I had to make in order to make the best of my time.

4 US Department of State 2012: Diplomacy in action; Benin's Investment Climate Statement

5 The legal capacity conferred by the GoB on the NFEC is important, as it allows the NFEC to enter into legal agreement with a third party such as the AF or the GCF. Through that legal capacity, it was possible for the NFEC to be accredited as NIE

The next day, I attended the first negotiation round as well as an event by the Mesoamerican region chaired by the Madam Minister of El Salvador Dr. Joya on the expectation of the region to the COP. Later in the afternoon, I was invited to the launch of the project "Adaptation to climate change based on Ecosystem Management: A Holistic Approach", organized and directed by the IUCN. This project is developed in pilot sites in the Mesoamerica region being the Bi-national basin of Goascorán River, between Honduras and El Salvador, one of them. Fundacion Vida is one of the implementing agencies for this bi-national area.

On the December 10, I participated in the side event organized by ACTION through CONNECTION, CICERO: "Building Capacities, Bridging Scales: Supporting Adaptation in Africa through Climate Services". On this occasion the Deputy Minister of Honduras, Mr. Carlos Pineda, spoke about Climate Adapted Villages (CAV), the case of Honduras in the context of the global initiative. Later during the same day I was observing the 5th Meeting of the Parties, at La Seine lounge. The same day I had an Interview with representatives of the Green Climate Fund in order to learn a bit more about the characteristics of the accreditation process beyond the Gap Assessment for any interested entity; and during that same day, last but not least, I had the great pleasure to join the colleagues of the Adaptation Fund Network (AFN) for "a catch up meeting" and be aware of the plans ahead of us as a net.

Finally, between the 13th and 16th of December, we all travelled to a wonderful place named Chartres in order to participate in the annual strategy meeting to figure out our annual working plans for the year 2016. This was a very interesting and productive meeting where we not only had the chance to focus on the objectives of the network, but also share lessons learned and experiences gathered at each side.

As a result of my presence on this COP21, I can conclude that attendance at these events allowed Fundacion Vida and myself to experience some angles of a negotiation process carried out on these summits. Additionally, making contacts and interviews with people representing civil society organizations of the world bring to us the possibilities of cooperation and exchange. Moreover, be part of expressed support given to a shared regional strategy for prevention, reduction and strengthening of institutional capacities for the promotion of measures and policies against environmental fragility caused by environmental variability and climate change (global warming) in the region, disseminated prior to the summit constitutes another added value to this experience.

5. A first assessment of the Paris Agreement: Tanzania

(By Fazal Issa, ForumCC)

On December 12, 2015, the most awaited Climate Conference was finally over when COP21 President (Laurent Fabius) knocked the gavel that was welcomed by a standing ovation and applause by representatives from more than 190 country Parties. There was no doubt that this was an achievement in twenty one years of climate negotiations and this was readily evident on people's joyous faces at the conference.

Closing ceremony of COP21. Photo by Fazal Issa

Different opinions have thereafter surfaced since adoption of the Paris Agreement on what actually it will mean to communities. This article provides CSO perspectives of the Agreement and its implications for developing countries.

Mitigation and Global Average Temperature:

Parties agreed to hold increase of global average temperatures to well below 2°C and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. This gets basis from the submitted INDCs; but assessment reports from UNFCCC Secretariat and 'Coalition' of CSOs show that the submitted INDCs will only bring global average emissions per capita down by as much as 8% in 2025 and 9% in 2030. This means that INDCs may have capability to limit forecasted temperature rise to around 2.7°C and at or above 3°C. Therefore, more needs to be done beyond the current submitted INDCs in order to achieve the Agreement objective.

Adaptation and Finance:

Parties agreed to establish the global goal on adaptation to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change. Also, developed country Parties are obliged to provide financial resources to assist developing country Parties with the aim of achieving a balance between adaptation and mitigation. The Agreement clearly commits provision of climate finance to developing countries by 2025; but does make it clear beyond that period and specific amount to be mobilized. Also, finance seems to align more on mitigation (especially on REDD+) than on adaptation. Moreover, the Adaptation Fund, which has been vital for most developing countries, was merely recognized and may not be part of financial mechanism to serve the Agreement. This calls for further strengthening of capacity to strategically tap into international climate funds and, importantly, also enhance domestic resource mobilization for climate change adaptation.

Loss and Damage:

Parties agreed that the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage shall be subject to authority and guidance under the Agreement, which was achieved on one side. However, 'para 52' of the Decision part of the Agreement clearly stipulates that loss and damage does not involve or provide a basis for any liability or compensation. If the two elements are eliminated, it may damage the essence of the inclusion of loss and damage in the Agreement.

Technology Development and Transfer & Capacity Building:

A technology framework was established to support implementation of the Agreement. Parties also agreed that capacity and ability of developing country Parties (especially LDCs and SIDS) should be enhanced to implement adaptation and mitigation actions. Effectiveness of and adequacy of such support to be provided to developing countries will be assessed over time. This will help in tracking progress and assessing the impacts made and whether it is effective and adequate. Though the Agreement did not provide which actions of the initiatives will be undertaken to enhance such support if such support is not adequate.

6. Rehabilitation of the anti-salt dike for rice growing in Joal, Senegal

(By Emmanuel Seck, ENDA Energie)

The salinization of lands due to coastal erosion, particularly in Joal, has reduced the agricultural lands and degraded rice fields. Indeed, for over a decade, women in this locality coped with salinity that affected paddy fields. The loss of function of lands affects agricultural productivity, and consequently, the food security and the way of life of populations.

The Anti-Salt Dike of Joal. Photo by Emmanuel Seck

20,000 Ha arable field gained as result of the Ati-Salt-Dike. Photo by Emmanuel Seck

Because of these impacts from climate change in particular, the decline in rainfall and subsidence of the anti-salt dike, the locality of Joal-Fadiouth benefited from the program of adaptation for areas vulnerable to coastal erosion in Senegal. This is materialized by many infrastructures, including the rehabilitation of the anti-salt dike of 3,300 meters. It allowed the reclamation of more than 20 ha of rice fields and 1,500 ha of arable land, enhancing the food security of more than 5,000 producers.

The dike allowed the retention of rainwater upstream for rice growing and, downstream, prevented the salt rise. This action has reduced the salt content of the arable land of the valley of Joal. In 2012, rice cultivation tests were carried out in this area and have had mixed results, given the still noticeable salinity, unavailability of early varieties and the absence of development for rice cultivation.

The anti-salt dike of Joal which polarizes more than ten villages, is now a symbol of hope for these communities to regain a lost tradition, that of rice cultivation; and increase their resilience for food security. It is in this context that a program has been developed for the extension of the anti-salt dike of more than 2 km, thus ensuring complete protection of threatened areas and significantly increasing the potential of arable land, now abandoned and estimated at 20,000 ha.

Examples of these small initiatives with large effects that strengthen the resilience of community livelihoods to climate change for food security are to be promoted at the national level and, in the process, the adaptation Fund.

In the area of Joal-Fadiouth, land reclamation has started as well as the protection of thousands of hectares previously threatened by salt and left fallow. These initial results breeds hope among the populations of the project area. This land can potentially be recovered and the project strengthened by employment-generating activities to realise the sustainability sought by all stakeholders. It is in this context that the high demand for extension of the dike by upstream populations situated in Fadial and Palmarin should be considered.

7. Learning from the Adaptation Fund while steering the direction of the Green Climate Fund?

(By Bettina Koelle, Indigo Development & Change)

The COP21 in Paris towards the end of 2015 took place in a charged environment. Following the terrible attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015, it appeared there was a new awareness of vulnerability that also contributed to a growing sense of urgency to finally come to a legally binding agreement. In the wake of the Paris Agreement, we will now have to address a number of crucial issues, and ensure that we reach the ambitious objectives.

Small farmer in project region South Africa. Photo by Bettina Koelle

Financing adaptation strategies for vulnerable countries is a challenge we are already facing, and the Adaptation Fund has made sound progress over the past years. In this process, many lessons have been learnt, and processes and methods have been adjusted in response to learning from successes and challenges encountered. This has been a dynamic and challenging process, especially when considering that the Adaptation Fund deals with projects that are located in an oftentimes-complex political, social, economic, and environmental context. These challenges are often underestimated, and yet we need to actively learn from them in supporting implementation of national adaptation projects. The Adaptation Fund has taken some very important first steps on this long pathway of learning for adaptation.

The international community has appreciated this learning process. It was encouraging to see that some countries committed funds to the Adaptation Fund in the new cycle. This also expresses support and appreciation for the contribution the Adaptation Fund is making, by ensuring that self-determined adaptation of vulnerable groups is firmly placed on the global agenda.

However, the global focus has shifted to the Green Climate Fund, and this is also expressed by the magnitude of commitments that partner countries have pledged to the GCF in Paris. This raises the concern that it is often easier to start something new, than to engage in a deeper learning process that explores the at times uncomfortable challenges of effective direct access adaptation. It is now time to pause and have an honest process of reflection on successes and challenges encountered in financing urgently needed adaptation for the most vulnerable groups on our planet. We need to ensure that these Adaptation Options are driven by the national interests and desires while still contributing towards the global adaptation agenda. While these processes need to be supported by appropriate mitigation measures, it is also crucial to bear in mind that adaptation is urgently needed now.

It is pleasing to see that the Green Climate Fund is adopting some of the lessons learnt from the Adaptation Fund. Especially when the new co-chairs of the Green Climate Fund board emphasised at a GCF side event in Paris that they are also committed to support funding through a direct access modality, and that they would like the Green Climate Fund to go "where no other fund has been before". We trust that this will be in support of concrete and self-determined adaptation implemented on the ground – and would like to call on civil society partners to actively support the engagement of the GCF in country in this endeavour. The GCF is a promising vehicle to support local adaptation through direct access, but we need to ensure an active civil society process on national and global level to make it happen!

8. The Paris Agreement: A clarion call to civil society actors

(By Petre Williams-Raynor, Panos Caribbean)

THE signing of the Paris Agreement by countries in New York on Earth Day validates the work of civil society actors – including those of the Adaptation Fund NGO Network (AFN) – who have long laboured for action to stymie the changing climate and its impacts.

AFN members, as other civil society actors, were, in fact, active participants at the climate talks in Le Bourget where the new international climate deal was brokered last December.

Young civil society agents in action at the International Climate Talks in December. Photo by Petre Williams-Raynor

However, in as much as the recent signing of the hard-fought for Agreement by 170-plus countries validates the work of such actors, it is also a clarion call for the work to continue.

For starters, the Earth Day signing, while significant, is but a signal of intent. Countries must now contend with national socio-economic and political realities on the road to ratification.

But ratify they must for the Agreement comes into effect only on the "thirtieth day after the date on which at least 55 Parties to the Convention [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change] accounting in total for at least an estimated 55 per cent of the total global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance and approval or accession".

And even then, we still have a climb as we look to ensure the realisation of the goal of "holding the increase in the global average temperatures to well below two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels" while we "pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, recognising that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change".

With an Agreement that does not set binding targets for GHG cuts and given prevailing national and international socio-economic and political realities affecting countries – large and small; developed, developing and least developed – it is critical that civil society actors, the likes of those of the AFN, continue their work.

This work includes ensuring accountability and transparency concerning the various national and international political actors, pursuant to the provisions of the Agreement while continuing the advocacy for AMBITION by all Parties.

Caribbean singers/songwriters Aaron Silk (left) and Adrian 'The Doc' Martinez perform at COP21 at the Wider Caribbean Pavilion. Their performance is lauded for its impact on spotlighting the 1.5 degrees Celsius target advanced by small-island developing states at the December talks. Photo by Petre Williams-Raynor

More information about the AF NGO Network on:

www.af-network.org

This website also contains resources such as the Germanwatch Adaptation Fund Project Tracker, briefings and reports on the meetings of the Adaptation Fund Board and other reports.

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Supported by:

This project is part of the International Climate Initiative.

Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety

based on a decision of the Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany