



# 20 years of African CSO involvement in Climate Change Negotiations

Priorities, Strategies and Actions





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Priorities, Strategies and Actions



**HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG**  
**SOUTHERN AFRICA**

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# Contents

<b>ACRONYMS</b>	1
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	3
<b>CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS - WHAT IS AT STAKE FOR AFRICA?</b>	5
CSOs participating in climate negotiations	7
African CSOs at the COPs	11
Impact of African CSOs on climate negotiations	17
CSOs and the Pan-African position at COP	20
Views from Africa: CSO perspectives of climate negotiations	24
<b>CASE STUDIES</b>	26
Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONECC)	27
Climate Change Network	31
Environment Management For Livelihood Improvement (EMLI)	33
Environmental and Development Action in the Third World (ENDA)	37
Project 90 by 2030	39
Mauritius Council for Development, Environmental Studies and Conservation (MAUDESCO)	43
International Centre for Energy Environment and Development (ICEED)	45
Centre for Environment and Development (CED)	47
Earthlife	49
<b>WHAT NEXT FOR AFRICAN CLIMATE CSOS?</b>	51
<b>REFERENCES</b>	53

# ACRONYMS

AGN	African Group of Negotiators
AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AU	African Union
BINGO	Business and Industry Non-Governmental Organisation
CAN	Climate Action Network
CED	Centre for Environment and Development
CCN	Climate Change Network (Kenya)
CISONECC	Civil Society Network on Climate Change
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EMLI	Environment Management for Livelihood Improvement (Bwaisese Facility)
ENDA	Environmental and Development Action network
ENGO	Environmental Non-Governmental Organisation
G77	Group of 77
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GHG	Green House Gases
HBS	Heinrich Böll Stiftung
ICEED	International Centre for Energy, Environment and Development

INDCs	Intended Nationally Determined Contributions
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPO	Indigenous Peoples Organisation
LGMA	Local Government and Municipal Authorities
MAUDESCO	Mauritius Council for Development, Environmental Studies and Conservation
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NDRM	National Disaster Risk Management policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIE	National Implementing Entity
PACJA	Pan African Climate Justice Alliance
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RINGO	Research and Independent Non-Governmental Organisation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SIDS	Small Island Developing State
TUNGO	Trade Union Non-Governmental Organisation
UNESCO	United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
YOUNGO	Youth Non-Governmental Organisation

## INTRODUCTION

The history of climate change negotiations has spanned over two decades, beginning with Rio in 1992. It was clear from the start that those geographical regions least responsible for climate change would be the ones worst affected and the evidence continues to grow. For the continent of Africa, these have included droughts, intermittent rainfall, flooding and the reduced crop yields and grazing that are associated with these weather patterns. Shifting disease patterns, especially in terms of crop diseases, animal diseases, and malaria zones have had a significant impact on development. Many simmering internal conflicts are climate related, growing from a greater demand for land by farmers for household and commercial crops conflicting with a growing demand for grazing by pastoralists in parts of East and West Africa.

CSOs in Africa have been involved from the start, pushing an agenda to reduce these impacts and calling for developed countries to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The UNFCCC's ultimate goal is to stabilise global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions at a level that does not cause dangerous human induced interference with the global climate systems. The progress towards achievement of this goal has been met with numerous obstacles and setbacks for African negotiators and civil society organisations, primarily due to the power and resource imbalances with their counterparts from the developed world. However, there has also been some progress as African CSOs continually re-assess their strategies and re-engage towards a better deal for the continent's long-term future.

This publication explores African CSO engagement in the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COPs) process. It looks into the strategies CSOs have employed and how these have shifted over the years, the successes and challenges encountered along the way, growing government recognition of the role and value of CSOs to their engagement as negotiators and as a link between affected communities and African government positions at the negotiating table. It also seeks to identify whether there is a common African CSO position and if African CSOs that have been engaged in the UNFCCC COPs believe they are making a difference.

The publication draws from a questionnaire survey of 35 CSOs from sub-Saharan Africa, desk research and case studies based on direct interviews with representatives of selected organisations. The CSOs range from networks and think tanks to local community based organisations and span a broad geographical scope.

Through these cases many lessons are learnt about what has worked for African CSOs and the methods they have employed. The publication also explores the challenges and strategies to overcome these towards reaching agreement on the responsibilities of the different parties toward mitigating climate change and adapting to its impacts for the continent.



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## CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS - WHAT IS AT STAKE FOR AFRICA?

Climate change poses a serious threat to Africa – one of the continents most vulnerable to the adverse effects of changing climatic conditions. Africa as a whole is not only highly exposed to climate extremes, but also has low capacity to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change (Niang et al., 2014). Climate change imposes high stakes for Africa because the continent depends on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture and forestry for economic growth. Other factors such as poverty and high inequalities tend to undermine socio-economic development and limit the continent's adaptive capacity, which further compounds Africa's vulnerability.

In the past, these high stakes have been inadequately expressed because the African Group of Negotiators (AGN), an arm of the African Union (AU) which represents the continent in international climate change negotiations (also commonly referred to as climate negotiations) with a common and unified voice, had played a comparatively limited role in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It was only at the 12th Conference of the Parties (COP 12) in Nairobi in 2006<sup>1</sup> that the AGN started to engage more actively in the climate negotiations. Since then, the AU has repositioned the AGN to enable its role to advance common African interests on the issue of climate change, successfully putting adaptation on the agenda in Nairobi, and also serving as broker in the negotiations on climate finance at COP15 in Copenhagen as well as in the negotiations for the Durban Platform at COP17 in Durban (Roger and Belliethathan, 2014). However, much more needs to be done because any global increase in average temperatures

is expected to be experienced 1.5 times more in Africa. This means that even if the international community manages to keep the average global temperature increase to a maximum of 2°C (the global temperature rise from pre-industrial levels which UNFCCC Parties have agreed is the highest rise we can afford if we want a 50 percent chance of avoiding the worst effects of climate change), Africa will still face an average temperature increase of 3°C, with catastrophic impacts for its people.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the leading international body for the assessment of climate change, warming over land regions of Africa has increased due to climate change. With a high level of confidence, the IPCC has assessed that African ecosystems are already being affected by climate change, with future impacts such as shifting ranges for plant and animal species and ecosystems as well as ocean acidification and ocean warming expected to be substantial. The IPCC also predicts that climate change will amplify existing stresses on water availability on the continent and increasing temperatures and changes in precipitation will have adverse effects on food security. Climate-related risks for Africa “relating to shifts in biome distribution, loss of coral reefs, reduced crop productivity (expected for cereals and perennial crops like coffee and tea), adverse effects on livestock, vector-and-water-borne diseases (expected increase in the incidence of meningitis and malaria in highlands such as Kenya), under nutrition and migration” (Niang et al., 2014) all pose medium to high risk for the continent, even with current adaptation efforts.

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1. This was the first COP to take place in sub-Saharan Africa.

Further, Africa's reliance on natural resources increases its vulnerability because the continent already faces high exposure to climate stressors due to its geographic location, and lack of capacity and safeguarding mechanisms, which in turn are all threatened by climate change. There is therefore an urgent need to scale up and enhance adaptation efforts in Africa, particularly because the continent will still face dangerous climate impacts associated with global warming more than any other continent. In recent years, this dire situation has been reflected in the international climate negotiations by a shift in agenda away from mitigation and towards adaptation as a result of lobbying efforts by African governments and civil society organisations (CSOs)<sup>2</sup>. However, to successfully adapt, Africa relies heavily on support from developed countries<sup>3</sup> in the form of finance, technology and knowledge transfer, as well as capacity building for institutions and climate professionals alike.

As the representative body for African governments in international climate negotiations, the AGN therefore has a mammoth task of putting forward the African agenda and pushing for African interests at the COPs. However, as in many developing countries, African negotiators are faced with several obstacles that put them at a disadvantage. Participation and representation in international negotiations are costly, and African countries often lack the resources to send large delegations. Thus, while some countries can send delegations of 50 people or more to climate summits, some African

countries have to cope with as few as two negotiators to cover meetings discussing different themes and topics and which often take place in parallel. Lack of funding also affects the sustained presence of African negotiators at successive COPs.

African governments and negotiators alike also have to contend with a lack of adequate information, skills and technical expertise to better understand the agenda items, including the climate science and legal aspects surrounding the climate debate and other countries' negotiation positions, coupled with a lack of clear government mandate (Roger and Belliethathan, 2014; Mumma, 2001). In addition, communication among African representatives at planning meetings, events and processes prior to the COP meetings is hampered by language barriers<sup>4</sup>, a situation made worse by a lack of adequate infrastructure for internet and cell-phone coverage across the continent.

However, despite these challenges, African negotiators have been able to improve their negotiating capacity and effectiveness, at least to some extent, among others by working together with CSOs and frequently including more external experts from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in their official delegations (Roger and Belliethathan, 2014).

2. CSOs consist of a multitude of actors commonly described as non-state, not-for-profit, voluntary organisations, networks, associations, groups and movements that are independent from government and the market. In this publication, CSO and NGO are used interchangeably to refer to civil society.

3. In this context "developed countries" refers to those countries listed as Annex II countries under the UNFCCC that are required to provide financial resources to enable developing countries to undertake emission reduction activities under the Convention and to help them adapt to adverse effects of climate change. See [http://unfccc.int/parties\\_and\\_observers/items/2704.php](http://unfccc.int/parties_and_observers/items/2704.php)

4. The three main languages on the continent are English, French and Portuguese, which presents challenges in communication among participants at meetings and in presenting and sharing official documents.

## CSOs participating in climate negotiations

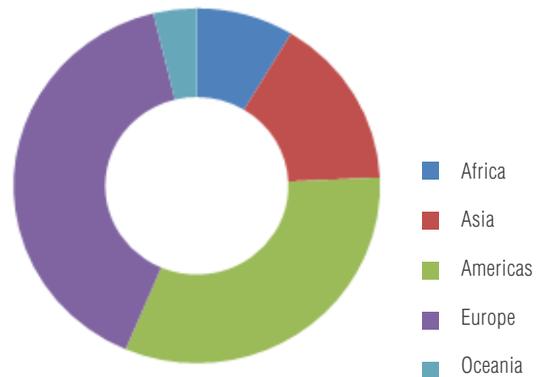
CSOs play a very important role in international climate negotiations for all countries. Although CSOs formally have no seat at the negotiation table, they are officially recognised under the UNFCCC as observers. They have therefore been using their observer status to participate in the negotiations in large numbers, increasing their participation from just 196 total observer organisations with 1 056 representatives at the first COP in Berlin in 1995 to 681 organisations and 3 695 representatives at the COP in Warsaw in 2013. The highest number of representatives of observer organisations recorded at any one COP was 13 482 during COP 15 in 2009 in Copenhagen<sup>5</sup>.

However, despite the UNFCCC having a clear policy on NGO participation, African CSOs are still underrepresented with less than 10 percent of all UNFCCC registered CSOs being from Africa. Currently, over 1 600 organisations are registered as observers with the UNFCCC Secretariat, and most of these are European or American CSOs. Only 117 of the 1361 active organisations registered as observers on the UNFCCC website are from Africa, that is, less than 10 percent of all active organisations.

The UNFCCC currently recognises nine different observer constituencies: environmental NGOs (ENGOs); business and industry NGOs (BINGOs); local government and municipal authorities (LGMAs); indigenous peoples organisations (IPOs); research and independent NGOs (RINGOs); trade union NGOs (TUNGOs); farmers; women and gender groups; and youth NGOs (YOUNGOs). The three largest constituencies are the environmental, business and re-

search constituencies which together account for over 80 percent of all registered active CSOs.

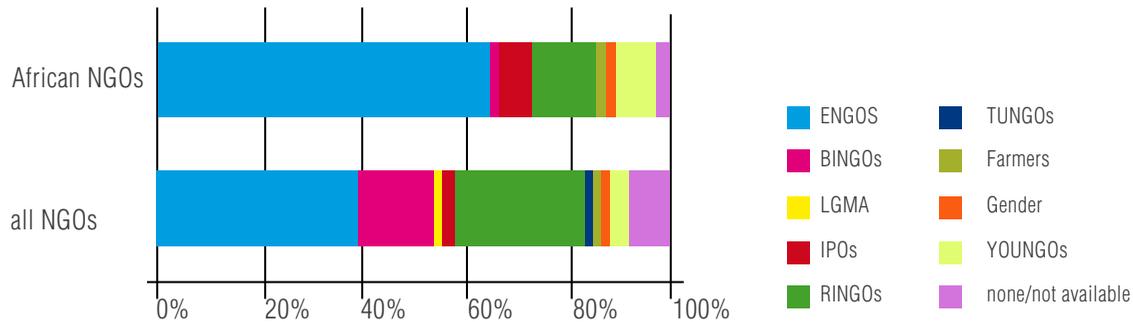
In Africa however, while the environmental and research constituencies are also the largest constituencies, making up 67 and 15 percent of all registered active organisations in the UNFCCC database respectively, the business constituency is very small and has only two CSOs that are registered and active. For Africa rather, the YOUNGO constituency ranks third, accounting for seven percent of the African CSOs registered and active on the UNFCCC database<sup>6</sup>.



**Figure 1 registered NGOs by continent**

5. These figures are based on the lists of participants that are available from the UNFCCC website at <http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/items/3595.php>.

6. Considering all observers globally however, African YOUNGOs account for just 2.5 percent.



**Figure 2: Observer constituencies**

## The role of CSOs in climate negotiations

Participation of CSOs in international climate negotiations is engraved in the Rio Declaration<sup>7</sup> and governed by articles 4, 6 and 7 of the UNFCCC<sup>8</sup>. The majority of those participating are environmental NGOs, and their participation is crucial for several reasons (adapted from Jamil and Maeztri, 2011):

- They enhance multi-stakeholder participation in the negotiations;
- They help in framing the issues to be considered on the agenda;
- They enable the public to follow the negotiations by translating science into simple language;
- They increase accountability and transparency in the negotiation process through advocacy for climate justice; and
- They represent marginalised and disadvantaged groups such as women and indigenous groups.

Important for many CSOs is also the opportunity to network and interact with other NGOs during the annual COPs, which allows them to share ideas and experi-

7. <http://www.unep.org/Documents/Multilingual/Default.asp?documentid=78&articleid=1163>

8. [http://unfccc.int/essential\\_background/convention/items/6036.php](http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention/items/6036.php)

ences as well as cement old and establish new contacts.

Although CSOs are admitted only as observers and thus unable to officially participate in climate change decision-making at COPs, they have adopted innovative approaches in order to try to influence negotiation outcomes directly and indirectly.

Such approaches broadly fall into two categories of insider and outsider strategies (Gulbrandsen and Andresen, 2004). Insider strategies require an intellectual and political base in the form of networks and government representatives. They include CSOs participating in the negotiations as members of government delegations, policy advisors and technical experts to negotiators, and at times by providing expert information through direct submissions to the UNFCCC Secretariat. Outsider strategies on the other hand attempt to influence the multilateral decision-making process of the UNFCCC from outside the circle of decision makers through, for example, mass protests, mass campaigns and use of the media to gain public support (Rietig, 2011).

It should be noted that CSOs also contact and consult with government negotiators in their home countries prior to the COPs. This is one of the more important local strategies by CSOs to target delegates from their home country because of personal relationships that have been built which may determine the degree to which they can influence negotiators' positions and in turn, the negotiations. Indeed, even at the COPs, CSOs often prefer to establish contact with rep-

resentatives from their home governments (Betzold, 2013) in order to lobby for certain positions or ensure that certain topics and themes are raised at the negotiation table.

Further, as noted by some international climate change negotiation observers, ever since the Copenhagen failure (which threatened the legitimacy of international climate negotiations as the resulting COP decision, "the Copenhagen Accord", was negotiated behind closed doors and only by a few countries), some CSOs have reconsidered their approach to climate advocacy and re-focused on the national level, a practice that has long been recommended by some scholars (Jamil and Maeztri, 2011).

Whichever approach is adopted, CSOs in general are flexible in how they engage in international climate change negotiations and, in most cases, use a number of approaches simultaneously in order to effectively leverage their positions.

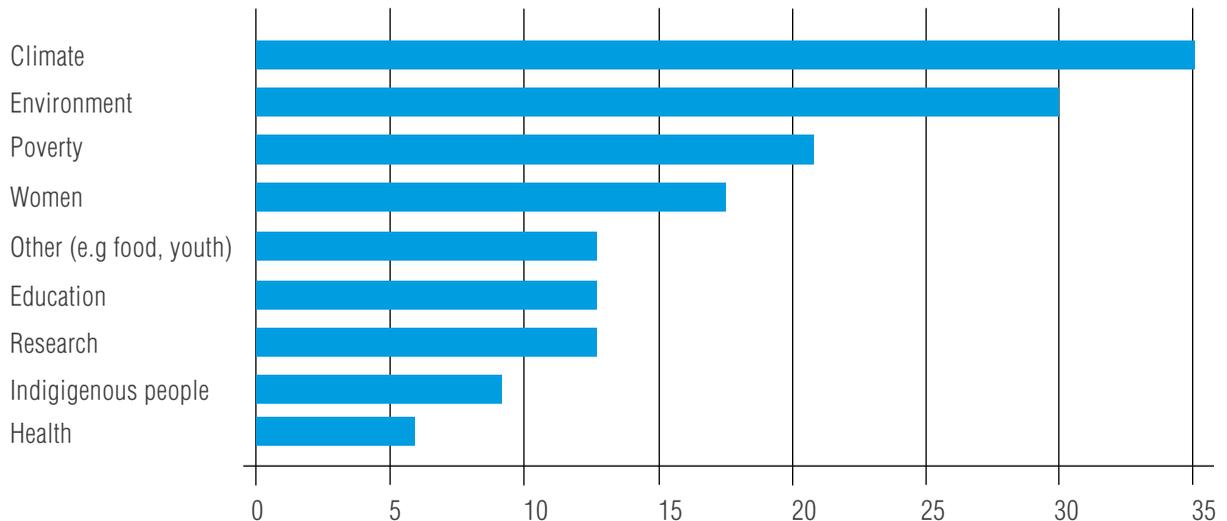


## African CSOs at the COPs

A survey commissioned by the HBS in 2014 revealed that African CSOs have deviated very little from their global counterparts in their engagement and strategies for influencing international climate negotiations.

All of the 35 organisations that took part in the survey focus on climate change, but the organisations are also active in other areas outside the environmental field, prioritising issues such as poverty and women for example, which were

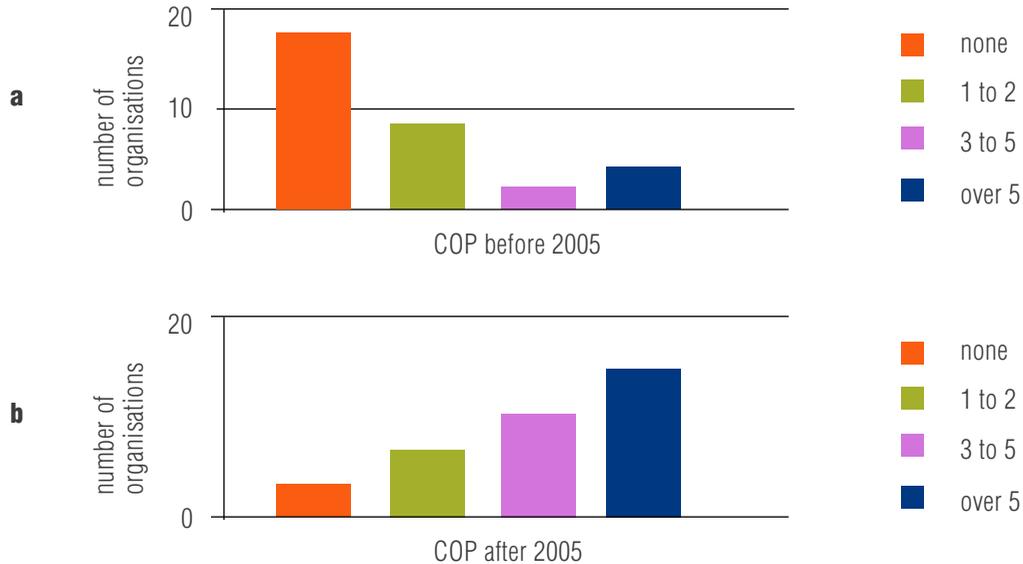
flagged as concerns for at least half the organisations. Other issues prioritised by African CSOs with regard to climate negotiations include education, research, the plight of indigenous peoples and health issues associated with climate change, although these were mentioned by fewer organisations. A number of African CSOs also referred to other areas in which they were working, such as biodiversity, food security, youth and community rights.



**Figure 3: priority areas of African CSOs**

While climate change is today a concern for most CSOs, this has not always been the case in Africa. On average, most African CSOs have been engaged in climate change issues for only the past eight years, with a few having worked on climate change for as long as 25 years. While a few African CSOs have thus attended

COPs since the very beginning of the UNFCCC process, most are relatively new to the process. Over half of the surveyed organisations had not been to any COP before 2005, whereas more than half of the organisations had been to at least three COPs since 2005.

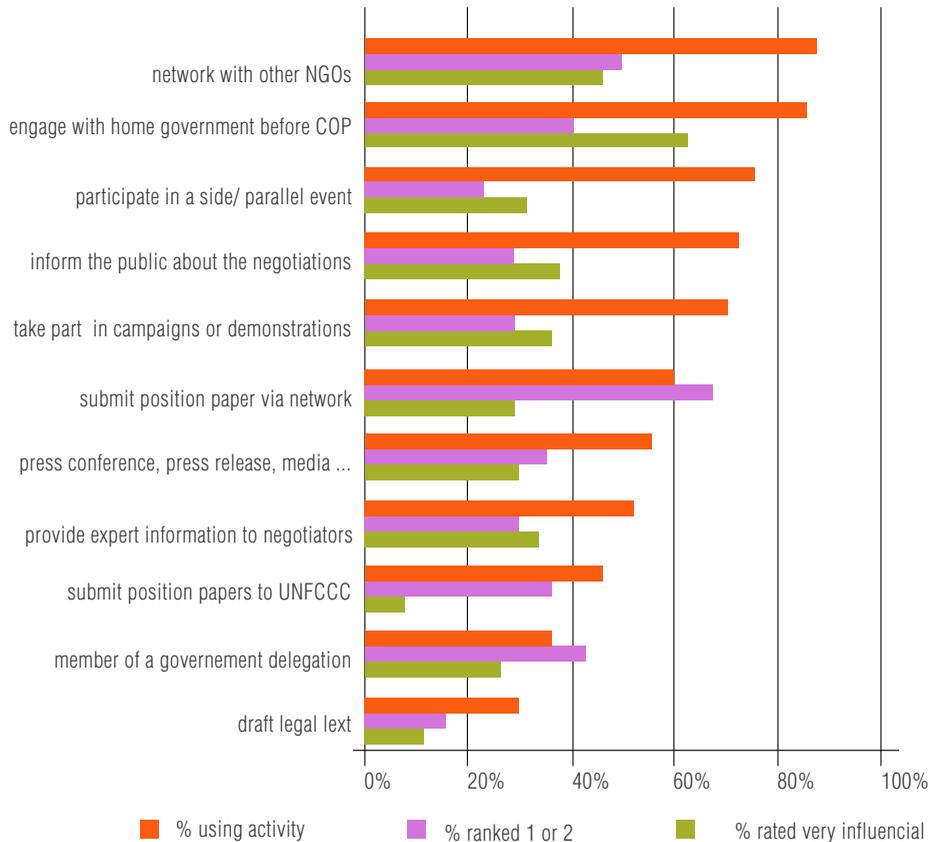


**Figure 4: COP attendance of African NGOs (a) before 2005 and (b) after 2005**

The survey revealed that during climate talks, most African CSOs equally place top priority on adaptation issues and climate finance at both the domestic and international levels, whilst mitigation was universally rated as the second most important topic at the COPs, particularly reducing emissions from forests and forest degradation (REDD). CSOs based in East and West Africa felt particularly strongly about REDD as a stand alone key topic as they still have vast forest reserves requiring protection and sustainable use in their home countries. These are also the regions in which the majority of REDD projects are being implemented under the UNFCCC.

The priorities speak to the dire situation that Africa finds itself, with above average global temperature rise and severe climate impacts expected to negatively affect African economies, livelihoods and natural resources now and in the long term. This also explains CSO consensus in focussing more on adaptation and finance at the climate talks.

The survey also revealed that when they attend COPs, African CSOs use at least seven different approaches, some of them simultaneously and ranging from participation in a government delegation to street demonstrations and peaceful protests. The top three activities mentioned by African CSOs as key approaches when they engage in climate negotiations were submitting position papers via NGO networks, networking with other NGOs and attending the COPs as members of a government delegation. These approaches were closely followed by engaging with the home government before the COPs, submitting position papers directly to the UNFCCC and issuing press releases/doing media outreach. The most frequently used of these approaches were networking with other NGOs and engaging with the home government. Other frequently used strategies that were mentioned include holding side events, informing the public about the negotiations, and carrying out campaigns and demonstrations.



**Figure 5: CSO activities at UNFCCC COPs**

*CSOs were asked to rank the importance of each of the activities they do at the COPs in ascending order starting with the activity that is most important to their organisation/that the organisation relies most heavily on ranked as 1 with the next important ranked as 2 ... up to a possible 10 rankings.*

However, when it came to rating the activity CSOs believed to be the most influential or successful in achieving their goals at climate negotiations, engaging with the home government before the COPs was rated as the most influential strategy (over 60 percent of the surveyed CSOs rated this as very influential). This was followed by networking with other NGOs, informing the public about the negotiations, and taking part in campaigns and demonstrations.

Drafting legal text or submissions to the UNFCCC Secretariat were not seen as important in obtaining results (only about five percent of the CSOs in the survey rated these two activities as very influential).

The results show that although submitting position papers via NGO networks was mentioned as one of the top three key strategies, it is seldom used, and CSOs tend to rely more on other approaches such as networking with other NGOs, engaging with the home government, holding side events, informing the public about the negotiations, and carrying out campaigns and demonstrations. A possible reason for this could be that CSOs find it important to belong to a network and maintain relations on that front by submitting position papers here and there, probably to keep abreast of key issues and to re-affirm their points of argument in the climate debate, but find it more rewarding to carry out other activities such as engaging with their home governments, networking and holding press conferences. This argument is justified by the CSOs' selection of these approaches, which in addition also include holding side events, informing the public about the negotiations, and carrying out campaigns and demonstrations as the most frequently used strategies.

Submitting position papers via NGO networks is a key strategy used by African CSOs to participate in climate ne-

gotiations, but they clearly felt that networking with other NGOs and engaging with their home governments before the COPs yields better results in achieving their objectives. This makes sense considering that the availability of finance is a major limiting factor for CSOs to participate in climate negotiations, therefore submitting position papers could also be seen as a cheaper option for some CSOs, whilst becoming a member of a government delegation would also save the CSO on participation costs as the government would normally absorb these costs for its entire delegation.

It could be implied that the role of networking being rated as the most important reason for CSOs attending the COPs and also the most frequently used strategy could be why there has been slow movement in driving Africa's agenda at the COPs over the years. However, a closer look at the nature of the negotiations shows that by the time of the COPs, positions have already been agreed to in the home countries and endorsed by their national parliaments, and these are unlikely to drastically change during the negotiations as this would usually require approval by parliament back home. The networking by CSOs could therefore serve to strengthen each other's positions, enhance knowledge and understanding of complex climate issues and cement old and new relationships with other NGOs and donors alike, which could altogether strengthen their negotiating position and lobbying efforts with their home country governments to influence the next country negotiating position before the COPs. This could explain why engaging with the home government back home came in as the second most frequently used strategy and the most influential approach to climate negotiations in the rankings.

Although the survey did not explore in depth the underlying reasons behind the choice of strategy selected by the

various CSOs and any perceived connection between choice of strategy and perceived outcome in influencing negotiations, there are obvious advantages associated with the most popular strategies.

Networking is clearly a crucial CSO activity at COPs, and has, if anything, become more important over time. Climate change negotiations have become huge summits attracting hundreds of public and private organisations and the climate change agenda has grown to cover a wide range of issues. It has therefore become an increasingly important forum for CSOs to meet partners, attract funders and plan joint activities. Apart from the opportunity to share information and experiences with people of similar interests, networking at the COPs also allows CSOs to seek advice from peers and acquire new perspectives, establish credibility and raise the organisation's profile, increase confidence and capacity on specific contentious issues, and develop and strengthen existing friendships and social networks.

There are substantial cost saving benefits from participating in domestic climate negotiation meetings and events and working locally with government officials rather than attending COPs (in fact, most CSOs cited lack of financial resources as a major barrier to COP attendance). Other benefits associated with this approach include opportunities to strengthen CSO-government cooperation in the home country and to permit more localised and focused discussion based on local needs and the local setting. Engaging at the domestic level creates a space for fostering a bottom-up approach to addressing climate change and bringing the voice of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups directly to public policy and decision makers. Other strategies

mentioned such as holding side events, demonstrations and holding press conferences or generally doing media outreach allow CSOs to present specific issues either directly to the public and to the UNFCCC Secretariat through their networks. This enables the CSOs to set out the technical details opposing or supporting certain decisions in the negotiations and to also bring the "reality of climate change" back into the negotiations by making the case for the most disadvantaged and affected communities on the ground.

Insider and outsider strategies are both important for African CSOs – and for most of them this has not changed over the years. Twenty-two (63 percent) of the 35 CSOs in the survey indicated that their approach to the negotiations had not changed over the years, while the remaining 13 (37 percent) said that they had changed their approach; for some towards more outsider strategies, for others towards more insider strategies. One CSO, for example, described how, since COP 16 in 2010, it had "become more active in its media outreach, particularly social media and new media outreach around the COP events and side events", while another CSO explained that "instead of orchestrating demonstrations, the organisation members now try to get accreditation through government in order to gain entry into closed meetings of the COP negotiations".



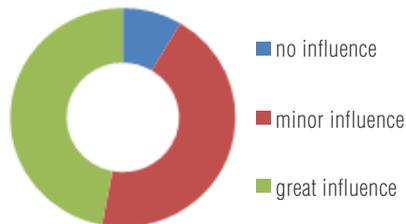
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## Impact of African CSOs on climate negotiations

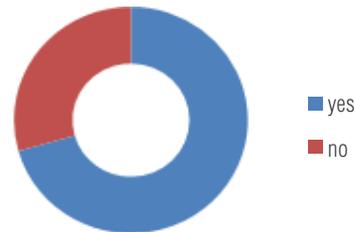
When asked how their organisation had influenced negotiations, African CSOs described how they worked with negotiators by providing technical support and advice, how they worked with national governments as part of government delegations and how at times, they also submitted text directly to the UNFCCC Secretariat. They also described influencing negotiations through outsider strategies, including “producing pamphlets, flyers, and articles in the CAN [Climate Action Network] newspapers”, “training and supporting mainstream media journalists to communicate Africa’s position”, or organising and participating in side events, campaigns or civil society protests. Importantly, CSOs emphasised that they manage to influence COP negotiations by working together with other CSOs, both from Africa and

other parts of the world, highlighting the importance of networking with other CSOs at COPs.

According to the survey respondents, CSOs – whether African or non-African – do make a difference in climate change negotiations. Only one CSO felt that CSOs in general have no influence on the negotiation process or outcome. Seventy percent of the organisations surveyed felt that their participation at the COPs had made a difference to negotiation outcomes (roughly evenly split between those saying that this influence was minor and those saying that it was great), while the remainder felt that they had little or no influence on the negotiations.



**Perceptions of CSO influence in general**



**Do you feel that your organisation had any influence on the climate change negotiations?**

**Figure 6: CSO influence in climate negotiations**

Survey respondents were also asked whether they felt that the level of CSO influence had changed over the past 20 years. Many organisations believed it had, and most reported seeing a positive development towards increased CSO influence. Better coordination, greater public awareness (mostly attributed to CSO activism via social media) and greater confidence have all allowed African CSOs to become more vocal and more influential.

CSOs now also work more with negotiators, who are “opening up to NGOs” and “engaging with the CSOs and taking their views”. In particular, at the national level, African governments are increasingly taking note of the information and expertise available within CSOs and are making an extra effort to engage and accommodate NGOs on international climate change issues at home and during COP meetings. This willingness to engage by both parties has seen optimism grow within African CSO circles of their ability to influence international climate negotiations in the future. However, this optimism is not shared by all. A number of African CSOs argue that improved national influence is paralleled by decreased influence at the international level or, even more pessimistically, that CSO influence in general has decreased. One organisation, for example, remarked that “NGOs started with fire and slowly this fire is dying out”. This points to the notion of “COP fatigue”, emanating in particular from the Copenhagen summit in 2009, and more recently pronounced at COP 19 in Warsaw in 2013,

when over 800 delegates representing CSOs from all over the world walked out of the proceedings due to frustration and disgruntlement over the slow pace of negotiations and a lack of political will to commit to concrete climate action by Parties to the UNFCCC. Speculation is now rife that CSOs are tiring of attending COPs on an annual basis with no tangible results or progress to addressing the climate challenge.

Since COP 19, many organisations, including African CSOs, have re-considered their COP attendance and, in some cases, have decided to re-focus attention on the national level instead. According to one respondent, for example: “We focus more on engaging decision makers at home. We are discouraging wasting time on endless meetings that end with rhetoric”.

Looking at the historical trend in COP attendance, on average there was a steady increase in CSO attendance to the COPs from 1997 to 2009. However, after the dramatic failure and huge disappointments of COP 15 in 2009, there was a significant drop in CSO attendance to COP 16 in Mexico the following year, and subsequent decline in CSO attendance followed over the years. COP 20 in Lima, Peru then saw an increase in the overall number of CSOs participating, including government representatives and the media. This could most likely have been due to the heightened sense of importance and urgency of activities leading to COP 21

in Paris, which is expected to be a turning point in the Convention as all players in the negotiations anticipate to see a new agreement set in place to reduce global carbon emissions, in which all Parties to the convention will be bound. The trend in COP participation seems to dismiss the notion of COP fatigue but rather suggests that COP attendance by CSOs generally fluctuates based mostly on the perceived significance of a particular COP and other factors such as availability of finance and resource support for CSO participation in that year.

Regardless of whether CSO influence is seen as worsening or improving, on average, all African CSOs generally agree that it is difficult to make Africa's voice heard. Besides the obstacle presented by limited financial resources, a major challenge for African civil society is a lack of negotiation capacity due to limited human resources. Although there has been some progress on enhancing capacity and knowledge within CSOs, limited expertise remains a block that hinders the full understanding and engagement of African CSOs in the different negotiating tracks during climate negotiation meetings prior to and during the COPs. This is compounded by a similar challenge on the government side, where high levels of turnover among officials make it difficult to build up expertise, trust and lasting networks. As one respondent explained "African negotiators are

also changed frequently due to national political processes, thereby compromising the institutional memory and ability of African NGOs to meaningfully engage and influence the negotiations". Additional challenges mentioned by respondents include lack of political will, limited CSO access to meetings and language barriers.

A common approach used by CSOs to overcome some of these challenges is to work together with other CSOs to pool expertise and resources. As already noted, networking and cooperation with other CSOs is a common activity that is also thought to lead to success in realising COP objectives. As a result, African CSOs have been fairly well interconnected, particularly since the establishment of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) in 2008. On average, CSOs reported being a member of at least three NGO networks, of which two were global and one African. Eighty-eight percent of the organisations interviewed indicated that they were part of a global network and 85 percent indicated that they were part of an African network. Of all networks, PACJA was the most popular, with 19 out of the 35 surveyed organisations indicating that they were members. Climate Action Network (CAN) was also named frequently, and nine of the 35 surveyed organisations reported being a member of CAN.

## CSOs and the Pan-African position at COP

Of course, cooperation and coordination are not without their own challenges. For example, it is difficult to agree on a common position – which is understandable given the diversity within Africa. Indeed, it is unclear whether there even exists a common African position. The CSOs that took part in the survey were divided on this question, with half agreeing that there is a joint African position and the other half disagreeing.

African CSOs do identify certain common concerns such as adaptation, climate finance and the historic responsibility of industrialised countries, but they also stress the diversity of interests among African countries. As one respondent pointed out: “There are many African countries with quite diverse interests, so they don’t have a common position because they speak about different things and [hold] views based on their own countries’ activities”. Additionally, CSOs are not always necessarily flexible enough to allow for compromises, as another respondent pointed out: “If their individual interest isn’t concerned, they don’t agree and do not go along with the other African NGOs”. Different interests may also have to do with international ties and funding sources. “Most African CSOs are affiliated to international networks and that seems to block a uniform African CSO approach”, explained one respondent.

Despite such challenges, African CSOs have supported their governments in successfully promoting African interests in climate negotiations. One important achievement for the African continent has been climate finance, and in particular the Green Climate Fund (GCF)<sup>9</sup>. In 2014, there were roughly 22 African NGOs accredited as civil society obser-

vors to the GCF out of just over 125 organisations. African CSOs have been consistently voicing the same message as their governments regarding the need for new, additional and predictable flows of climate finance from developed countries to least developed and developing countries. The commitment by developed countries to fast start finance reaching USD30 billion between 2010 and 2012 and the commitment to establishing the GCF as the main vehicle to channel climate finance to developing countries, with an equal balance between adaptation and mitigation finance, is seen by most as a positive move in the right direction. The GCF structure, in particular, is a notable achievement for addressing Africa’s need for financial support because its 24-member board has equal representation from developed and developing countries and because it has adopted a country-driven approach to disbursements of climate finance.

While several African CSOs refer to the equal recognition of adaptation and mitigation in the COP negotiations as a major achievement for the continent, others also point to developments in loss and damage, REDD and the agreement to a Second Commitment Period under the Kyoto Protocol as achievements for Africa.

However, African CSOs complain that implementation is still lacking and, in particular, criticise the fact that substantial funding promises have not materialised. One respondent noted rather pessimistically that “Africa’s position keeps dwindling and its trade-offs are more than what it gets”.

9. <http://news.gcfund.org/>

## Views from Africa: CSO perspectives of climate negotiations

Several of the CSOs interviewed in the survey agreed to share their experiences and impressions of the COPs. The case studies presented in this publication demonstrate how African CSOs seek to exert influence through

both insider and outsider approaches. They provide useful lessons from the past 20 years African CSO engagement in international climate negotiations.





# CASE STUDIES



Climate change is already affecting Malawi and projections indicate that the country faces more erratic and less predictable rainfall, more frequent and extended dry periods, and more extreme heat events. The vulnerability of Malawi and its ecosystems to the adverse impacts of climate change is increasing with high population growth, increasing rates of deforestation and land degradation, severe erosion and poor land management practices.

## Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONECC) - MALAWI

*This case study is based on an interview with Herbert Mwalukomo of the Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONECC).*

CISONECC is a consortium of civil society organisations set up in response to the growing interest and work of civil society organisations in the area of climate change and disaster risk reduction in Malawi.

### Facilitating consultation for policy development

CISONECC has been able to engage with government on various policy processes, such as the development of the National Disaster Risk Management (NDRM) Policy, and Climate change policy. The NDRM policy was approved and the Climate change policy is yet to be approved. CISONECC also participates in the actual negotiations as part of the government delegation.

In addition, the network has contributed to the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) stocktaking and review, and the initial processes of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process. The network also sits on the National Technical Committee on Climate change (NTCCC).

In relation to negotiation processes, the network is working with government in readiness for the establishment of a National Implementing Entity (NIE) under the Adaptation Fund.

CISONECC initially lobbied for the development of the policies, providing a platform for civil society to engage with the decision makers and continuously engaging government to ensure that civil society positions were considered and that the legislature approves the policies. The network provided inputs at all stages of the policy development process including consulting communities to ensure

that proposed policy elements reflect community interests.

The network also contributed to the NAPA stocktaking by consolidating civil society organisations in the policy review and setting new priority areas as well as developing a position paper for CSOs on the establishment of NIEs

The network and the government are working towards the inclusion of loss and damage in the new climate change agreement following the decision on Loss and Damage in Warsaw and the approval of the two-year work programme in Lima.

CISONECC advocated for the mainstreaming of gender in climate change processes which saw Malawi championing the adoption and establishment of the Lima Work Programme on Gender at COP 20 in Peru.

### Amplifying community views

In the context of global climate change negotiations, CISONECC has mobilised voices from local communities and member organisations in terms of what they wish to see in these negotiations and provided that input to government.

“Whenever we formulate positions that we would want to contribute to the national position to take to international negotiations,” explained Mwalukomo, “we have actually gone down to the grassroots and consulted, for example, women farmers. We have gone to them to ask what it is that they expect to see as the outcomes of negotiations.”

“

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## CISONECC AT A GLANCE

- CISONECC has attended 4 COPs since 1994 and has been part of 4 government delegations to the COP.
- CISONECC has a membership of 35 organisations that range from CBOs, FBOs, International NGOs, youth development, education and activist organisations.
- CISONECC believes that major achievements for Africa aligned with its objectives in the negotiations have been work under the ADP to formulate a climate change agreement, the recognition of Loss and Damage in Negotiations and the establishment of a work programme on Gender.

- CISONNECC would like to see future COPs agreeing to countries submitting to a global rules-based system for not only reducing emissions, but achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

Mwalukomo believes that the role of CSOs such as CISONNECC lies precisely in the key role that they play in shaping the international debate by participating in key alliances that contribute to the debate.

### Building alliances

According to Mwalukomo, African civil society organisations and governments have been pursuing a common agenda because the African position is also shaped to an extent by what civil society is advocating for. “There are platforms in which we engage with governments as African civil society both in our own respective countries and platforms like African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN),” he explained.

The network participates in the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), the global Southern Voices on Climate Change<sup>10</sup> platform and the Climate Action Network (CAN) of civil society organisations advocating for a favourable climate change response globally.

CISONNECC also works with partners from the global North “because, by interacting with them in our own sphere, they can take the issues that CISONNECC members are advocating for to their own governments. “When we come together we are able to influence the negotiations from different angles,” Mwalukomo said.

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10. <http://www.southernvoices.net/ev/>



**We  
Have Failed**  
act now for climate justice



Climate change presents Kenya with a number of environmental challenges, including intensified natural resource degradation, increased flooding, storms, excessive and erratic rainfall, and droughts, as well as socioeconomic challenges, including damage to infrastructure, changes in disease patterns, particularly malaria, reduced agricultural production and increased food insecurity and increased climate-related conflict.

## Climate Change Network - KENYA

*This case study is based on an interview with Henry Neondo, spokesperson for the Climate Change Network of Kenya (CCN Kenya).*

CCN has been involved in climate change issues since 2009.

The organisation was established to meet the national need for enhanced policy advocacy and effective and informed participation in the climate change and sustainable development debate. With the emergence of county governments under Kenya's new Constitution in 2010, the network recognised the need to work towards better preparedness for country level advocacy in climate change, environment, natural resources and sustainable issues at community, national and regional levels.

### A pro-poor focus

According to Neondo, the most important area of the CCN Kenya's recent activities has been analysis of the impact of climate change on vulnerable groups, and on women, girls and children in particular. CCN is also concerned with the impact of climate change on food security and water, especially the cycle of rainfall seasons in arid and semi-arid lands, with a pro-poor focus.

Neondo highlighted adaptation in arid and semi-arid areas of land within workable national policies as one of the most useful concrete measures introduced so far. However, he noted that there was still some way to go towards bringing communities into the climate change debate and in terms of financing for combatting climate change.

### Value of networks – local and global

Looking into the future of climate change negotiations, Neondo stressed the importance of networking among CSOs globally, because many of them "have capacities that we do not have in Africa and better tools to analyse issues".

Towards influencing climate change negotiations, Neondo emphasised the need for CCN to remain focused on the 'polluter pays' and 'common but differentiated responsibility and respective capability' principles, noting that polluters often try to escape that responsibility and also complicate negotiations.

According to Neondo, CCN membership strives to pursue interaction with government in order to harmonise common positions and will continue to engage with local communities in order to create awareness and deepen understanding of climate challenges.

He concluded by saying that "as we shape up the position in Africa we are also feeding into the global agenda on sustainable development. And here UNESCO's programme on climate change education for sustainable development<sup>11</sup> is part of what we do."

“

Networking with CSOs at a global level is critical because many of them have capacities that we do not have and better tools to analyse issues.”

### CCN AT A GLANCE

- CCN Kenya's success areas have been in the analysis of the impact of climate change on vulnerable groups.
- CCN believes that an important strategy in the fight against climate change is engaging with local communities to raise awareness and deepen understanding of Africa's challenges.

<sup>11</sup>. Through its 'Climate Change Education for Sustainable Development' programme, UNESCO aims to make climate change education a part of the international response to climate change. The programme aims to help people understand the impact of global warming today and increase "climate literacy" among young people through strengthening the capacity of countries to provide quality climate change education - <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001901/190101E.pdf>



Uganda is highly vulnerable to climate change, with its economy and the wellbeing of its people tightly linked to climate. Climate change is expected to result in more extreme and frequent periods of intense rainfall, erratic onset and cessation of the rainy season, as well as more frequent episodes of drought. These changes are likely to have significant implications for agriculture, food security, and soil and water resources. At the same time, adaptive and mitigation capacity is low due to shortages of economic resources and technology.

## Environment Management For Livelihood Improvement (EMLI) - UGANDA

*This case study is based on an interview with Robert Bakiika, Deputy Executive Director of Environment Management for Livelihood Improvement Bwaisese Facility (EMLI).*

EMLI is a Kampala-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) established in 2007 to involve local communities in the formulation and implementation of development plans and programmes that promote sustainable development.

According to Bakiika, a key measure of the success of African CSOs in the negotiation process is that CSOs have grown in importance and relevance. “We now provide input, fundraise, disburse funds to other NGOs and even fundraise for government representatives to participate at various conferences,” he explained.

### Impact through coalitions

Bakiika emphasised the power of coalitions, noting, “If you look at the negotiations where civil society has become really strong, joining hands and speaking with one voice, governments have come out with at least a balanced outcome”.

According to Bakiika, EMLI’s most useful alliance is with PACJA. He explained that through PACJA, African CSOs are able to work together to ensure that climate change negotiations do not come with “empty shells”. EMLI has also worked with the African Group on advancing some of its negotiating positions. Bakiika said, “This has been a successful strategy because the G77 and China, which are amongst the strongest coalitions, bring informed positions and they will stick to those positions. There are sometimes trade-offs and these have affected the African Group, but that is how negotiation goes.”

EMLI participates in capacity building workshops organised by the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as well as using information generated by the two bodies for advocacy purposes.

### A flexible approach to emerging scenarios

EMLI has had to change its focus, strategies and approach to influencing the climate negotiations over the years because the negotiations are continually changing and “when you miss a step, it is very hard to catch up.” Previously focused on adaptation, EMLI has reviewed its priorities to joining the national delegation under finance and REDD+ following an assessment of impact.

It has participated in more than seven COPs and provides input by engaging with Ugandan government representatives prior to COPs, drafting and commenting on legal text for negotiators, submitting position papers via NGO networks and actively organising and participating in side events and campaigns during COP. It also undertakes public information activities through the media and other communication channels. Its strategy has also been to focus on regional meetings and talking to donor countries individually. But it has since discovered that this does not always work as new groups surface and new strings or parameters to the negotiations are attached. As a result, it has been forced to become flexible and tailor its strategy to emerging scenarios. “Just as African CSOs begin to act as a consequence of what has been decided, the game rules change and, because financial constraints prevent them from being present on every occasion, they find it difficult to keep up with shifts in the negotiations,” Bakiika explained.



If you look at the negotiations where civil society has become really strong, joining hands and speaking with one voice, governments have come out with at least a balanced outcome. ”

### EMLI AT A GLANCE

- EMLI has participated in 7 COPs since its establishment.
- EMLI participated in developing the National Climate Change Policy for Uganda which resulted in the uptake of a greenhouse gas inventory by the Kampala Capital City Authority.

### Monitoring local level implementation from international agreements

For EMLI, success at international climate change negotiations can be partly measured by the extent to which agreements reached at international level are translated into concrete action at local level. The organisation was part of a consortium of NGOs under Climate Action Network Uganda (CAN-U) that advocated for a greenhouse gas inventory by the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) to inform the city strategy for climate change.



CLIMATE JUSTICE



Senegal is a land of geographic and climatic contrasts, with most of the country subject to the weather conditions of the Sahel zone, which is characterised by a single rainy season that lasts for up to three months. The region is prone to unstable and irregular rainfall, and has experienced recurrent droughts, for periods ranging from decades to centuries. The variability of rainfall during the rainy season is increasing, making weather harder to predict and droughts more severe, particularly in northern Senegal.

The livelihoods of about 77 percent of the Senegalese population depend on agriculture, which is adversely affected by the consequences of climate change.

## Environmental and Development Action (ENDA) Energy - SENEGAL

*This case study is based on an interview with Emmanuel Seck, Programme Officer for ENDA Energy which is member of the Environmental Development Action network (ENDA).*

Established in 1972, Environment Development Action (ENDA) is based in Dakar Senegal.

ENDA advocates for the principles of equity, climate justice and historical responsibility. The organisation conducts research in Africa and works with global networks and alliances through which it submits positions and produces publications. One such network is the Climate Action Network (CAN). According to Emmanuel Seck, ENDA's international advocacy capacity grew stronger on climate change when it joined CAN. "This platform has helped to create a critical mass, even if we are yet to extend it to communities to raise issues of climate change as citizenship' issues". To overcome language barriers and mobilize more CSOs, ENDA has joined up with RAF France the francophone network *Climate & Developpement*

### Amplifying community voices

A key role for ENDA in the negotiation process has been to bring discussions, which often take place at an abstract level, to regional, national and community levels by producing publications and inviting civil society to events where they make the bridge between international debates and actions on the ground. Financing for both CSO participation at negotiations and for information and outreach work on the ground is a major challenge. "We need to increase public awareness to show that people are concerned about climate change. It is not just an issue for scientists and negotiators but an issue that concerns communities. Solving this problem could help affected people to improve their way of life," Seck emphasised.

ENDA is also involved in what Seck called “intelligence” work – going through the texts at negotiations and tracking the changes as well as engaging with negotiating parties outside the formal negotiating platform.

Over the years, as the climate change debate has evolved, ENDA's priorities in the African context have also changed. Having previously adopted a broad research focus on global sustainable development issues and climate research covering sustainable agriculture, desertification, biodiversity loss and water scarcity among others, it is now first looking for development in Africa financed from within Africa. “The continent's development will not be done by others. It is the same with the capital flight that carries the most severe blow to the mobilization of domestic resources available for investment.” Seck concluded.



## ENDA AT A GLANCE

- ENDA has attended 13 COPs since 1994
- ENDA is a network comprised of 200 members ranging from CBOs, youth, gender, ecology and communication for development to alternative technology and HIV and AIDS organisations.



South Africa is particularly vulnerable to climate change because, among others:

- much of its population has low resilience to extreme climate events (poverty, high disease burden, and inadequate housing infrastructure and location);
- large areas of the country already have low and variable rainfall;
- a significant of its surface water resources are already fully allocated; and
- agriculture and fisheries, which would be adversely affected by climate change, are important for food security and livelihoods.

Although South Africa's poor are only minor contributors to climate change, they are the most vulnerable and will therefore be the most affected.

## Project 90 by 2030 - SOUTH AFRICA

*This case study is based on an interview with Gray Maguire, Community Engagement Facilitator for Project 90 by 2030.*

Project 90 by 2030 is a non-governmental organisation based in Cape Town, South Africa that was established in 2007.

Project 90 by 2030 became involved with the climate change negotiation process at COP17 (Durban, South Africa) in 2011 where the organisation came to realise that international-level engagement was necessary in order for the organisation to:

- i. Contribute towards civil society oversight of the implementation of international programmes and facilities such as REDD<sup>12</sup>, the Adaptation Fund, the Small Grants Fund and the Green Fund, and
- ii. Contribute towards civil society oversight on what South African negotiators are adding into international climate negotiation processes.

Since COP17 in Durban, Project 90 by 2030 has participated in two subsequent COP meetings. The organisation's priority is to remain engaged on the key issues, such as the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). "On these," said Maguire, "we are looking at how the INDCs are being formulated and whether they are actually putting us in a position to be able to keep the global average temperature increase to below 2 degree Celsius".

### Common position contextual differences

According to Maguire, there are competing interests and priorities in the African NGO environment. "Much of the context within which the NGOs operate is determined by the national environment. I don't think we are in a position to speak for the continent as a whole." He explained that because South Africa is one of the worst greenhouse gas emitters in the world, the focus of South African CSOs

12. Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) - <http://www.un-redd.org/aboutredd/tabid/102614/default.aspx>.

like Project 90 x 2030 needs to be on mitigation, unlike in Burundi, for example, where emission levels are negligible, such that the key focus there needs to be on adaptation.

Despite the differences, Maguire said that there is a broad African agenda based on the recognition that Africa will be the continent worst affected by climate change and a unifying perspective is to ensure the continent is well positioned to access finance to carry out mitigation and adaptation activities.

### Representing public interests

Project 90 by 2030's aim in the continuing climate change negotiations is to ensure that South African priorities are appropriately and effectively communicated to its citizens and government is held accountable for its actions. It also wants government to allow adequate time to NGOs to examine proposed policies before they come into effect.

"We are going to be directly impacted as NGOs and as members of society by decisions that take place at international level, and we want to make sure that our perspectives are adequately represented there," Maguire said.

“

Much of the context within which the NGOs operate is determined by the national environment. I don't think we are in a position to speak for the continent as a whole.”

### PROJECT 90 BY 2030 AT A GLANCE

- Project 90 by 2030 focuses on energy policy lobbying and advocacy in South Africa.
- The organisation has participated in two COP meetings since 2011.







As a small island developing (SID) country, Mauritius is particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, especially in its coastal areas, where a combination of accelerating sea level rise and increasing frequency and intensity of tropical cyclones results in considerable environmental degradation, besides economic loss.

Heavily dependent on tourism, the island's tourism facilities and infrastructure would be seriously affected by sea level rise, not to mention the impact on communities living along the seashore.

## Mauritius Council for Development, Environmental Studies and Conservation (MAUDESCO) - MAURITIUS

*This case study is based on an interview with Rajen Awotar of the Mauritius Council for Development, Environmental Studies and Conservation (MAUDESCO).*

MAUDESCO was established in 1985 as a Mauritian NGO for the protection of the environment, conservation issues and empowerment. The organisation's involvement in the climate change debate began with its participation at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit.

MAUDESCO has since participated in all COPs and most UNFCCC and United Nations-sponsored meetings, conferences and workshops.

The organisation specialises in sustainable development linked with climate change and with a focus on capacity building, empowerment and awareness raising, especially among women, youth and students.

### COP success and setbacks

According to Awotar, among African CSOs successes have been their influence on the priorities that African delegations have put across at the negotiations: namely adaptation and mitigation of adverse impacts of climate change as well as the need for capacity, technology and finance, biodiversity, land use and forestry. "They got across all priorities, but adaptation is number one among them," Awotar said. To improve its impact at the COPs, MAUDESCO is working more with government at home prior to COPs and increasing its engagement with the media.

Awotar pointed to the overly protracted nature of the negotiations as a major challenge, describing them as “too time- and resource-consuming, highly political and yielding extremely limited results”.

### Strategic alliances for impact

MAUDESCO has established strategic alliances with African and international climate change organisations, including the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) and the organisation is the Southern African Development Community (SADC) regional coordinator for Climate Action Network (CAN) International<sup>13</sup> and a representative of Friends of the Earth International.

As CAN regional coordinator for SADC, MAUDESCO is working with many sub-regional networks, mostly in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Through these joint alliances and pressure groups, MAUDESCO expects to put maximum pressure on local negotiators and ministers, as well as on regional SADC, SIDS and COMESA<sup>14</sup> networks. In recent COPs, MAUDESCO has also been working strategically to bring in more partners, especially from the United States. It is asking its U.S. partners to put maximum pressure on their government representatives to take up SIDS and developing country priorities.

“This is the way to go,” according to Awotar. “We don’t need to change the mind-set of our own governments because they are our strategic partners. They know we share the same opinion and concerns but the pressure should come from U.S. civil society networks and from those in the European Union, Japan and Canada. We are trying hard to pull them together so that we can have a coherent strategy.”

13. <http://www.climatenetwork.org/>

14. Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) - <http://www.comesa.int/>

## MAUDESCO AT A GLANCE

- MAUDESCO has attended all COPs since 1994.
- MAUDESCO is the SADC regional coordinator for Climate Action Network (CAN) International, and is also a representative of Friends of the Earth International.



Declining rainfall in already desert-prone areas in northern Nigeria is causing increasing desertification, the former food basket in central Nigeria is now empty, and people in the coastal areas who used to depend on fishing have seen their livelihoods destroyed by rising waters. Most rural Nigerians are employed in the agricultural sector and climate change represents a threat not only to their livelihoods but also to the country's food security.

At the same time, Nigeria has the world's ninth largest gas deposits and flares more than 17 billion cubic metres of natural gas every year, contributing to climate change through the emission of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas.

## International Centre for Energy Environment and Development (ICEED) - NIGERIA

*This case study is based on an interview with Ewah Eleri, Executive Director of the International Centre for Energy Environment and Development (ICEED).*

The International Centre for Energy, Environment and Development (ICEED) was established in 2000 to address issues of access to energy services and climate change protection for Nigeria's poor. The organisation's focus is on national processes rather than climate change negotiations at international level because, as Eleri explained, the solutions lie at home

### Opening spaces for dialogue

The organisation has opened up climate change decision-making processes by getting key actors involved in the negotiations, opening up the space for negotiation and expanding awareness on climate change in Nigeria. In partnership with other stakeholders, ICEED contributed to the development of a Nigerian climate change policy which resulted in the National Assembly taking the bold step of passing a bill in 2011 to establish the National Climate Change Commission, although the bill is yet to be signed.

ICEED has also produced research that has underpinned Nigeria's positions in negotiations. It has trained Nigerian negotiators for climate negotiations and helped prepare other CSOs, working in partnership with the Nigeria Climate Action Network.

Towards promoting local solutions, ICEED has been involved in the provision of access to clean cooking energy and technologies to Nigerian households. For ICEED, the initiative's value addition lies in the creation of small women-led businesses manufacturing the stoves, selling cooking gas and

efficient wood combustion technologies.

Other initiatives aimed at identifying and instituting local initiatives include a drive towards conversion of the gas from Nigeria's oilfields, a significant proportion of which is currently flared into the atmosphere, to productive use. ICEED is also focused on bringing alternative sources of energy, such as solar, to communities that are currently off-grid.

### Opening spaces for dialogue

According to Eleri, ICEED's initiatives are not only focused on adaptation and mitigation but carry the additional incentive of economic development and growth. As countries "in the growth mode", a major concern should be with creating the infrastructure necessary for that growth, and "if we can take those interests to the negotiations and see the convergence between our economic circumstances and the environmental opportunities that we have, growth in Africa will result in a more environmentally responsible continent."

“

The solutions lie at home.

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"The good news for Africa," Eleri said, "is that those steps that our continent needs to take to achieve double digit economic growth and pull us out of poverty are the steps that are also necessary to reduce our carbon footprint and protect our people from the dangerous impact of climate change."

In conclusion, Eleri said that what Africa wants is also good for the global climate – "growth in Africa will only result in stronger and better infrastructure, cleaner energy and people that are more protected from the hazards of climate change.

## ICEED AT A GLANCE

- ICEED has trained Nigerian negotiators and helped prepare other CSOs for climate negotiations
- ICEED worked with the Nigeria Climate Action Network to build support for Nigeria's negotiations at the Copenhagen Conference of the Parties (COP) in 2009



**COP17/CMP7**  
UNITED NATIONS  
CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE 2011  
DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





**COP17/CM**  
UNITED NATIONS  
CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE  
DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

United Nations  
Climate Change Conference 2011



**ECCAS**



**DEPUTY  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**





Cameroon has 22 million hectares of tropical forests, which are a vital part of the Congo Basin forest ecosystem, providing an important source of revenue, employment, livelihoods, ecosystem services and habitat for many plant, bird and mammal species.

Although the country enacted a forest law in 1994 to promote community forest management for the sustainable management of forests and promotion of local development, 3.3 million of hectares of Cameroon's forests have been cleared since 1990, mainly due to increasing pressure from other sectors such as commercial and subsistence agriculture, mining, hydropower and infrastructure.

## Centre for Environment and Development (CED) - CAMEROON

*This case study is based on an interview with Samuel Nguiffo of the Centre for Environment and Development (CED).*

The Centre for Environment and Development is a non-governmental organisation set up in 1994 to promote grassroots and independent voices in policy reforms in the forest and environment sector in Cameroon and the Congo Basin.

### Knowledge, awareness and protection of community rights

Since 2000, CED has made capacity-building one of the pillars of its strategy, providing support to NGOs and local associations in Cameroon's forest zones and in other countries in the Congo Basin (including the Central African Republic, Gabon, Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)) for tracking the illegal exploitation of forests, supporting indigenous communities, and increasing knowledge of legislation related to forestry, mining, indigenous peoples and the environment, among others.

According to Nguiffo, CED became involved in climate change processes at the very beginning of the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD)<sup>15</sup> initiative when it was launched in 2008. The organisation now also works with communities on alternative solutions to energy, with the aim of developing renewable energy use in poor communities and is pushing for the protection of indigenous people's rights in climate change negotiations. It also works on exposing multinationals which engage in harmful activities such as the deforestation of large forests and protected areas for agro-industrialisation that stand as a threat to climate change mitigation efforts.

Its strategy is partly based on carrying out legal analysis, highlighting weaknesses in forest and land laws, and engaging with the private sector and government to see if deforestation due to poor land laws can be integrated into climate change discussions. But it also advocates for other groups, such as traditional leaders, sharing its findings with them and helping them to formulate a position to be tabled before the government and Parliament.

“If land rights are protected,” said Nguiffo, “more people will return to the villages to earn money by growing crops, being farmers instead of precarious workers in agro-industries or in the cities’ suburbs.”

15. The United Nations collaborative programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) in developing countries was launched in 2008. It builds on the technical expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP) and the U.N. Environment Programme (UNEP). The REDD programme supports nationally-led REDD processes and promotes the informed and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities, in national and international REDD implementation.



## CED AT A GLANCE

- CED has attended 8 COPs since 1994 and plans to continue its involvement beyond COP 21 in Paris
- CED is coordinator of the African Community Rights Network and member of the International Land Coalition Africa, Publish What You Pay Africa and Oilwatch Africa
- The CED would like to see communities' rights and efficiency in emissions reduction and transformation of global and national economies being addressed/discussed more in COP negotiations



South Africa has the potential to be one of the countries worst affected by the impacts of climate change. According to statistics, South Africa can expect average temperature increases between 1°C and 3°C by the mid-21st century, accompanied by an up to 30 percent reduction in rainfall, an increased incidence of droughts, floods and intense storms, as well as a predicted rise in sea levels of up to 1 metre.

The social, economic and environmental impacts of these changes could be devastating, with decreasing agricultural, forestry, livestock and fish stock yields threatening food and job security. Further, the collapse of the country's unique ecosystems could mean extinction for many of the country's plant and animal species.

## Earthlife - SOUTH AFRICA

Earthlife Africa is a volunteer-based activist organisation founded in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1988. Its goal is to mobilise civil society around environmental issues in relation to people. Towards encouraging individual and community actions for protecting the planet, the organisation engages in climate mobilisation, advocacy and research activities. "For pursuing our goals, it is important for us to work with the people on the ground to change attitudes and change mind-sets," Lekalakala emphasised

Its advocacy and lobbying activities have mainly focused on mitigation and adaptation. However, Earthlife also looks at equity, technology and finance and conducts research into how renewable energy could contribute towards job creation in South Africa and carries out analysis of gender aspects of energy and climate change.

### Speaking with one voice

Lekalakala noted that civil society in South Africa is very broad and many different issues – such as water, forestry, biodiversity, adaptation and energy – are dealt with at a sectorial level but, by coming together in a platform, sending messages to the government and highlighting the country's priorities, CSOs can make a major contribution. In this regard, Earthlife is a member of the National Climate Change Coordinating Committee, which brings together government institutions, CSOs and private sector companies working around climate change issues. The Committee provides a feedback platform for government and is a mechanism through which civil society can critique, modify or complement what is being decided.

## EARTHLIFE AT A GLANCE

- Earthlife Africa has attended 3 COPs since 2005. They also participated in 3 other COPs between 1994 and 2004.
- Earthlife Africa promotes and encourages people to become responsible for protecting the planet.
- Earthlife Africa carries out research into how renewable energy could contribute towards job creation in South Africa and analyses gender aspects of energy and climate change.



## WHAT NEXT FOR AFRICAN CSOs?

Like the governments and countries they are based in, African CSOs have diverse interests and priorities when it comes to their involvement in climate negotiations at both the domestic and international level. As such, they also employ a wide range of strategies and approaches in order to realise their goals and agenda, making use of both outsider and insider strategies, and very often using the two simultaneously. The survey showed that from participating in international climate negotiations as part of government delegations and carrying out mass protests outside COP venues, to intense lobbying of home governments and building relationships with government representatives at home before the COPs, African CSOs generally found it difficult to place a higher importance on any one strategy over the other.

What has become evident is that CSOs tend to be flexible in their approach, assessing the current situation and employing one or the other or several at the same time depending on their capacity, but also usually largely dependent on their financial capabilities. This seemingly ad hoc way of engaging appears to have worked for African CSOs over the past 20 years and has seen some positive results for example, on the adaptation and climate finance fronts as highlighted in the case studies.

It is therefore important that African CSOs continue to work at different levels, from the grassroots, to participation at regional forums and international meetings. Although evidence shows that the national level may have become more

important in recent years, particularly since the disappointing Copenhagen Summit in 2009, this should not lead to less focus on the international level. And, while it may be costly and difficult to send representatives to global climate summits, it is important that African civil society be present and visible at the global level to make sure that Africa's interests are heard beyond the continent.

The notion of COP fatigue while being a current subject of "whisper" in the CSO community along corridors at the COPs and expressed in CSO meetings through frustration at the slow pace of developments in climate negotiations, evidence seems to suggest that CSOs have retained a presence at the COPs, though their numbers tend to rise and fall at random in any given year, with no clear pattern of sustained decline. However, CSOs have made it clear time and again that UNFCCC Parties need to start taking the climate negotiations seriously and pay more attention to action on the ground beyond just talk, and they will openly express their dissatisfaction as witnessed in the "great walk out" at COP 19 in Warsaw.

CSOs have shown that they are not yet willing to desert the climate change agenda altogether, and instead seem to be paying more attention to active engagement of their home governments (a strategy that has the added benefit of being cost effective for some). The general trend, looking from COP 1 to COP 20, seems to be that CSOs will increase visibility and involvement at the international climate ne-

gotiations whenever there is an issue to be discussed that they deem as highly significant or important for the future of international climate talks or that could result in a mile stone for achieving UNFCCC objectives. By this token, they re-affirmed their visibility in international climate negotiations as seen by the upward spike in their numbers at COP 20 in Lima, and it is expected that COP 21 in Paris should see a higher attendance by CSOs compared to COP 20. The same spike in CSO attendance is to be expected at COP 26 in 2020 should a new climate deal be agreed on in 2015. Climate negotiations should therefore see a continued presence of CSOs, and rightfully so, as they fulfil their role of bringing the voice of greater civil society, in particular the most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities into the negotiations.

An important aspect of climate talks is the near universal acknowledgement by CSOs of limited success by the negotiating parties in coming up with concrete actions on climate change. There is also wide appreciation of the political nature of climate negotiations and the need to put pressure on political leaders to make change. This realisation has caused African CSOs to devise and employ a new strategy looking beyond their usual op-

erational boundaries, and realizing that a joint effort is needed in order to achieve the desired outcomes. The case studies therefore point to a willingness by African CSOs to work with partners from the global North so that they are also able to take the issues that African civil society is advocating for to their own governments and thus influence negotiations from different angles. The near future is likely to see an increased effort by CSOs to form alliances with other networks and like-minded institutions within Africa and worldwide.

The push by CSOs is slowly becoming more coordinated as commonalities are found on some broad climate issues such as the importance of adaptation for Africa, the urgent need for climate finance and discussing a roadmap to reduce green house gas emissions immediately and way into the future. While it is acknowledged that combining the many interests and priorities of the multiple climate change stakeholders can be a daunting task, the past 20 years have shown that a unified African voice is now more easily heard in the negotiations and CSOs have a role to play in bringing the voice of the ordinary citizen to the negotiations.

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This publication explores African CSO engagement in the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COPs) process. It looks into the strategies CSOs have employed and how these have shifted over the years, the successes and challenges encountered along the way, growing government recognition of the role and value of CSOs to their engagement as negotiators and as a link between affected communities and African government positions at the negotiating table. It also seeks to identify whether there is a common African CSO position and if African CSOs that have been engaged in the UNFCCC COPs believe they are making a difference.