Briefing Note No. 6

Climate Change and Development in Africa IVth conference
Marrakech 8-10 October 2014 – EUISS & adelphi

1. Background to the event

The Climate for Development in Africa Programme (ClimDev-Africa) organised the fourth annual conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa under the theme: *Africa Can Feed Africa Now: Translating Climate Knowledge into Action*. The conference was attended by a pan-African mix of participants from economics, science, agriculture and trade backgrounds. adelphi and the EUISS organised a side event to the conference with the theme: *Understanding the linkages between climate change and fragility in Africa*. These notes are based on discussions during the side event and conference sessions.

2. Summary of findings

The African conference participants do not generally see climate change as a security issue, but as a development issue that can impact food and water security, agricultural production and economic development. It is seen as a secondary issue to the important ones such as jobs, basic needs and opportunities for growth. There is, however, openness for engagement with international partners on climate change, with a welcoming approach to expertise and funding from abroad and an interest in climate finance mechanisms. This openness differs from the more closed attitude toward engagement on security issues, raising the question as to whether security is a good entry point to engage on climate change with African leaders.

The debate was peppered with tensions over trade-offs: investing in macro- vs. micro-solutions; openness to foreign investment vs. protection of local sovereignty (such as over land purchases); land for food vs. land for energy production; energy for poverty reduction vs. green energy; which disclosed uncertainty about approaches in responding to climate change. While climate change will affect food, water and energy *supply*, changes in *demand* were recognised as the biggest drivers of scarcity, especially considering African population growth and global interest in African resources. But increasing demand is the outcome of the growth model being followed to increase living standards. This unsettles discussion on climate change in Africa. When discussing policy responses, the need for better data collection, analysis and sharing was highlighted, along with improved risk management capacity.

3. Risk clusters

The climate change discourse was centred on drought, floods and food/water supply and framed in a development context. It is unclear which policy frameworks are needed. The following climate security risks were perceived to be most relevant:

Risk cluster 1: **Livelihood security and local natural resource conflicts**

- Competition over, and potential mismanagement of, natural resources, particularly across borders. This is especially important where several different livelihood strategies overlap (e.g. pastoralism, fisheries, agriculture).
- Displacement and migration from affected areas. This could lead to conflict over limited resources, causing tensions between migrants and established populations.
- Poverty. The lack of roads, energy, clean water, health care, and access to markets in many areas is perceived as a key underlying challenge that may make populations more vulnerable to climate impacts.
- Inadequate health care systems. Limited capacity to respond to chronic shocks and emerging outbreaks could be socially disruptive.
- Loss of habitat. This could erode social capacity to cope with traditionally used non-forest products such as hardship foods and medicines.

Risk cluster 2: Weakening of governance institutions

- Fire-fighting efforts to respond to climate impacts could divert resources from building on development gains. National budgets could also suffer, such as when droughts hurt agricultural exports, creating a vicious circle and exacerbating vulnerability.
- Customary institutions and governance could weaken as traditional modes of agriculture and lifestyle are forced to change. This would be particularly problematic in many rural societies, potentially eroding adaptive capacity, fostering mismanagement and over-use of natural resources and nurturing resentment that could exacerbate conflict.
- Capacity limitations in leadership and planning. National capacities to plan for an uncertain future are widely seen as hostage to a lack of confidence in finding and acting upon local solutions. This is seen in the failure to create pan-African markets, supported by necessary infrastructure that can aid development and resilience.

Risk cluster 3: International connections

- Following poor models. Climate risks and best practices for building adaptive capacity are not communicated consistently by global organisations. This may lead to replication of unsustainable development models, creating more risks. Climate change should be viewed as an overarching threat rather than as a niche issue.
- Migration to Europe is discussed as a daily reality but is not seen as a threat to Africa.
- Temporary top-down aid. International relief organizations providing short term aid, designed from the top down, are a serious risk to local capacities for planning development and adapting to climate change.

4. Further observations

Framing climate change*:* In many countries, climate change is a stand-alone issue. There is declared intent to mainstream it into different sectors or ministries but it has low priority and is surrounded by some confusion: decision makers are faced with different frameworks and approaches and are cautioned about the uncertainty of predictions on which they should base their decisions. In order for climate action to occur, climate change and disaster reduction must be anchored at the appropriate institutional level to trigger forward looking planning and become part of the "every day business" of staff i.e. creating *a habit* of climate proofing sectoral plans and budgets. Existing sustainable development policies should be strengthened to handle the range of climate risks rather than replaced with a new policy framework.

Financing climate action*:* The capacity of governments to mobilize resources is being driven, to some extent, by efforts to respond to the impacts of climate change – climate change is already eroding development gains. Climate funds are seen as too diverse and complex to be accessible and useful for too many African actors. Resources to apply for and implement projects from these funds could be diverted from other development issues. Therefore, the tackling of development deficits is a prerequisite for a climate resilient future.

Managing climate risks: There is recognition that climate change creates risks to development and that shocks are likely to occur more often. Some components of early warning systems are beginning to be reasonably well developed, but the extent to which they trigger early action is minimal. This is partly due to a lack of analysis and buy-in at the local level with multiple stakeholders and a lack of finance for locally developed actions. The majority of internationally financed actions are about crisis response instead of risk management. Actions should support improving adaptive capacity, reducing the vulnerability of populations at risk and supporting local populations in monitoring the situation.

Localising processes: National capacities to analyse and strategize need to be built to find solutions to long term problems that national sectoral institutions do not have time to look at. Coupling territorial approaches (spatial analysis), with temporal approaches (monitoring risks and future trends) at local, national and international levels would provide a means to bring sectors together under one integrated framework in common problem recognition and analysis. This would help with finding solutions that are locally anchored and nationally driven.