

## The Challenges of Climate Change Adaptation and the Potential of Sustainable Energies in the East African Community

THE PERSPECTIVE OF EAST AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AFTER THE COP 19

**According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the African continent is one of the most affected by climate change. The continent faces enormous challenges for sustainable development. The member states of the East African Community (EAC) are particularly vulnerable. To minimize the vulnerability of these states, adaptation measures are badly needed. At the same time, the use of renewable energies enables stimulation of socioeconomic prosperity and greenhouse gas emission reductions. In line with these observations, the EAC and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) Tanzania jointly convened a conference on "The Challenges of Climate Change Adaptation and the Potential of Sustainable Energies in the East African Community" on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2013 in Arusha.**

This meeting, the first of its kind at the EAC level after COP 19, created a platform for East African region representatives to jointly analyze and evaluate the climate negotiations in Warsaw (COP 19). In accordance with the EAC Climate Change Policy, the conference strived to engage the civil society as a crucial stakeholder of the efforts to meet the challenges of climate change adaptation and mitigation in the East African region. The conference served as a kick-off meeting to discuss how joint action concerning climate change under the umbrella of the EAC can be strengthened in the future.

The conference was officially opened by Brian Otiende, Climate Change Coordinator for the EAC. Stefan Reith, Resident Representative for Tanzania of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung made some opening remarks. Both highlighted the cooperation of EAC and KAS as a vital component involving the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the climate change equation in East Africa.



Brian Otiende, Climate Change Coordinator of the EAC, opening the conference

### Climate Change Impact and Implications of COP 19 for East Africa

Rev. Dr. Aidan Msafiri, Head of Department of Philosophy and Ethics at Stella Maris Mtwara University College in Tanzania, opened the first session. He outlined climate change impact in East Africa, demanding an increased ethical reasoning at climate change negotiations and demonstrating the necessity of a paradigm shift towards climate justice.

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Rev. Dr. Aidan Msafiri giving the first presentation

Fazal Issa, Project Officer for the Tanzanian Civil Society Forum on Climate Change (Forum CC), presented an evaluation of COP 19, summarizing main results and implications for the EAC and its member states. He accentuated Tanzania's role within the negotiations: representatives of the country led the „African Ministerial Conference on the Environment“ (AMCEN) and chaired the „Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice“ (SBSTA 39) among others. The COP 19 negotiations were dominated by issues relating to a 2015 climate change global agreement, loss and damage, climate finance, technology development and transfer, reporting mechanisms & guidelines as well as REDD+. Though the establishment of the „Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage“ under the „Cancun Adaptation Framework“ on the one side and the „Warsaw Framework for REDD+“ on the other side implied institutional progress, the configuration - especially regarding loss and damage - remained vague. The discussions on climate finance left many questions unanswered. While developed countries pledged to provide USD 100 billion annually effective 2020, neither concrete intermediate steps have been announced nor have the components of the Green Climate Fund been finalized. Leastwise some developed countries affirmed financial means worth more than USD 70 million, Germany being the main donor, in order to maintain the Adaptation Fund. The work on the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) in terms of modalities of the CTCN and rules of procedures of its advisory board has been completed, but issues of intellectual property rights have not been agreed - further discussions are scheduled in June 2014.

While the parties agreed to adopt a climate change global agreement by 2015 at COP 21 in Paris, however, major issues have been postponed. Fazal Issa pointed out, that the phrasing, which was meant to determine the states` pledges regarding the agreement, was limp. All in all, the international climate change negotiations are moving slowly compared to the actual urgency, he noted.

Subsequently, participants exchanged their opinions on climate change impact and implications of COP 19 for East Africa, discussing the subject intensely. With regard to international climate change negotiations contributions underlined the necessity of a common position across the African continent. Furthermore, emphasis was put on the need for a focussed approach to relevant issues for all EAC representatives especially during the preparatory period.

**The EAC Climate Change Policy and Member States Adaptation Strategies in the light of COP 19**

Brian Otiende opened the second session, outlining the EAC Climate Change Policy Framework. He presented detailed information on the „EAC Climate Change Policy“ (2011), the „EAC Climate Change Strategy“ (2013 - 2017) and the „EAC Climate Change Master Plan“ (2013), being effective pillars of the EAC-Treaty with regard to climate change. Furthermore he presented an outlook: the EAC aims to establish an EAC Climate Change Coordination Unit and an EAC Climate Change Information Centre and also fosters the operationalization of the EAC Climate Change Fund to enhance resource mobilization. Finally he underlined the need for an enhanced integration of stakeholders into climate policy processes.

Representatives of the EAC member states gave their comments on the EAC Climate Change Policy Framework and exemplified their national adaptation strategies. Geoffrey Bakanga, Environmental Management Officer in the Division of Environment of the Vice President's Office, outlined the Tanzanian Climate Change Strategy, noting that sector policies within and across the EAC

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member states face the need of being harmonized. Furthermore, he requested to strengthen the implementation of policy instruments with regard to climate change issues. Johnson Nkusi, Coordinator of the „Rwanda Environmental NGOs Forum“ (RENGOF), outlined climate change related initiatives for Rwanda. He observed that there was a limited implementation of regulatory and market based approaches and encouraged an intensified support in order to mainstream mitigation and adaptation actions. Celline Achieng Oduor, Project Coordinator for the „Kenya Wildlife Conservation Forum“ (KWCF), outlined the Kenyan national perspective. Kenya launched the „National Climate Change Response Strategy“, which contains a National Climate Change Action Plan supporting adaptation to the adverse impact of climate change. Celline Achieng Oduor underlined that adaptation actions are fundamental towards sustaining Kenya's ecosystems and therefore existentially for the nation's well-being. The presentation of the Burundian perspective emphasized the importance of national adaptation policies and tools.

Hereafter, the participants jointly discussed the EAC Climate Change Policy Framework and national adaptation perspectives before gathering for a group photo and a joint lunch.



Participants of the joint EAC-KAS conference, Arusha

### **The Challenges of Climate Change and the Role of the East African Civil Society**

Being the first presenter in the afternoon session, Euster Kibona analyzed the role of CSOs, characterizing them as watchdogs,

advocates and capacity builders. She observed that in terms of policy formulation civil society is a valuable partner in providing deep subject-matter expertise based on first-hand experience. While reflecting the importance of an intensified, more effective and well-managed exchange between stakeholders, Euster Kibona commended the joint EAC-KAS conference, which provides an excellent gateway to foster new partnerships. Her reflections were followed by a presentation on the role of the media by Richard Mwangulube, media expert. He characterized media as main source of large-scale communication to the broader public. While media ought to be central as disseminator and interpreter of climate information, access to knowledge, technologies and financial means are a constraint to journalists, he noted. Therefore, Richard Mwangulube requested the implementation of programmes and training opportunities on climate change in the EAC for journalists, editors and media owners.

Within the context of the challenges of climate change and the role of the East African civil society different opportunities to support the media were discussed. Awinja Lilian, representative of the East African Business Council (EABC), showcased the „East African Media Summit“ which is jointly organized by the EAC and EABC. This is a regular event that offers different types of support, e.g. support for environmental journalists. Collectively, the participants agreed, that the integration of CSOs in the adaptation and mitigation actions of the EAC and its member states is crucial in order to effectively tackle challenges of climate change.

### **Sustainable Development and the Potential of Renewable Energies in East Africa**

The last session was dedicated to the potential of renewable energies in East Africa in the context of sustainable development. Gerard Hendriksen, consultant for renewable energies, presented results of a regional scoping study on renewable energy and energy efficiency in the EAC countries. He outlined various technologies and showcased potentials in the East African region.

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Furthermore, he gave an overview of related institutions in the EAC-Secretary and in the designated „Regional Centre for RE&EE“.

With regard to electricity supply, Gerard Hendriksen emphasized the dominance of hydropower within the East African region. He indicated that - despite the enormous potential of this technology - nonetheless the use of non renewable energy sources is increasing. The use of solar based electricity and wind generated power on the grid system is in its infancy in East Africa. Access to electricity varies widely between countries as well as between urban and rural areas in the EAC member states. Compared to the average in Sub-Saharan Africa the access is low. Analyzing the primary energy balance, biomass is by far the largest source in all countries of the EAC. It is used mostly for cooking and heating, partly for electricity and marginally for transportation. With regard to energy efficiency technologies, Gerard Hendriksen outlined energy saving lights as a substantial option.

Edward Munabaa, Executive Director of the „Africa Partnership on Climate Change Coalition“, complemented the previous contributor and illustrated the potential of decentralized, affordable renewable energy solutions in East Africa. He addressed the issue on how to scale up best practices. Edward Munabaa underlined the importance of reducing the supply and the demand of firewood and charcoal. He presented solar based technologies as decentralized alternative, which implies economic, social as well as environmental advantages compared to the traditional use of biomass. Advantages include the reduction of deforestation, relief for women - health wise, free access to sunshine and the creation of jobs due to the use of available electricity. In order to localize the use of sustainable technologies, more awareness at all levels is needed, Edward Munabaa noted. It is imperative to integrate energy and climate knowledge in the curricula of all learning institutions today. In line with his observations he presented a „Climate Change Teaching Module“, which was supported jointly by KAS

Tanzania and VSO Tanzania. The module is available in English as well as in Kiswahili.



Edward Munaaba introducing the „Climate Change Teaching Module“

Subsequently, the potential of centralized and decentralized renewable energy supply as well as energy efficiency technologies were discussed in depth by the participants.

The conference was closed by concluding remarks of Brian Otiende and a vote of thanks by Euster Kibona. The organizers and participants draw final conclusions indicating that the sharing of knowledge and recommendations is the way to go. The establishment of a periodic forum for CSOs - to cooperate; to strive at consolidating their preparations; and to put them in a position to evaluate international climate negotiations - was considered a priority by the participants. It could be observed that both, EAC and KAS, are keen to have this event become a permanent feature on the EAC annual calendar. The representatives of the EAC further see this type of events as a way of transmitting EAC policies and obtaining CSOs feedback and accessing their expertise.



Konrad  
Adenauer  
Stiftung

### Impressum

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung e.V.  
Auslandsbüro Tansania

Isimani Street/ Upanga  
P.O. Box 6992  
Dar es Salaam / Tansania

Telefon  
+255 22 2153174  
Email  
[Info.Tanzania@kas.de](mailto:Info.Tanzania@kas.de)