

Climate Change

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Mainstreaming climate change resilience into development planning in the Gambia

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The Gambian Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs derives its mandate from the constitution of the Gambia. The ministry is responsible for setting the government's overall economic policy objectives and the legal and institutional framework through which such objectives are meant to be achieved.

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) is an independent, non-profit organisation promoting sustainable patterns of world development through collaborative research, policy studies, networking and knowledge dissemination. IIED's Climate Change Group works with partners to help secure fair and equitable solutions to climate change by combining appropriate support for adaptation by the poor in low and middle income countries, with ambitious and practical mitigation targets.

Introduction

Climate change impacts are likely to undermine planned development outcomes in a number of countries, and pose significant challenges for the resilience of many livelihoods and ecosystems. Development planning responses play an important role in addressing these challenges, and integrating climate change resilience into these responses is fast emerging as a major policy agenda item.

Between November 2011 and October 2012, government staff from diverse backgrounds came together at a course facilitated by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) at the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) to share and reflect on their countries' experience and needs around integrating climate change into development planning. Based on these discussions, they identified three building blocks for successful mainstreaming: an enabling environment, policies and planning, and projects and programmes.

The enabling environment for mainstreaming includes the political will to make climate policy and the information services that guide it. The second block — planning and policy — includes policy frameworks together with institutional arrangements and finance mechanisms. The projects and programmes block takes mainstreaming to the project level. The three blocks are non-hierarchical and non-sequential; in some cases, strategic planning led by technocrats may come before high-level political will, or a country may be pursuing important development goals mainly through individual projects.

This country paper reflects the Gambia's experience against this building blocks framework.

The Gambia is among those countries most vulnerable to climate change. As a low-lying country, climate change poses major development challenges as productive sectors such as agriculture, forestry, wildlife and tourism would be adversely affected by rises in sea level.

It has been estimated that more than 80 per cent of the country's domestic energy comes from biomass (wood). The combustion of biomass releases large quantities of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Such carbon dioxide emissions could be reduced by adopting wind and solar

energy. Improved cooking stoves have been promoted among the Gambian population in the past as a way of conserving energy and reducing the loss of the forest cover, and the country recently saw the introduction of biogas technology as a substitute for wood fuel in some rural communities. The National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) also addresses climate-related threats through actions that deliver immediate adaptation benefits, help build local and national adaptive capacity, increase awareness, and maximise long-term benefits.

1. Enabling environment

1.1 Political will

In the Gambia, environmental issues are taken seriously at the highest level of government. The National Assembly enacted the National Environment Management Act (NEMA) in 1994 and the National Environment Agency (NEA) was established in 1995. The ultimate goal of this agency is to achieve the essential policy objectives of the Gambia Environmental Action Plan (GEAP). The first phase of the action plan was implemented in the 10-year period 1992 to 2002 and phase two was validated in 2009. The action plan seeks to:

- Ensure environmentally sustainable economic and social development;
- Provide legal recognition of the fundamental right to a sound environment;
- Develop and maintain a National Environmental Planning Framework (NEPF);
- Educate people, increase awareness and empower communities to solve environmental problems;
- Provide information for sound environmental management;
- Conserve natural resources.

Under the UNFCCC, the Gambia submitted its Initial National Communication (INC) in 2003; the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) on climate change followed in 2007 and a plan for Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA) and Second National Communication (SNC) in 2012. A national authority for the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) was also established.

The Gambia has completed assessments on investment and financial flows to address climate change in the water, energy, forestry and agriculture sectors. These assessments highlighted national policy implications for addressing climate change. The Gambia's SNC provides a quantitative assessment of the country's own greenhouse-gas emissions and develops plausible scenarios for assessing the potential impacts of projected climate change on the national economy. The impacts of climate change on crop production, forestry, fisheries, range lands and livestock have been assessed. Public sector institutions, private sector entities, development

partners and civil society organisations were all engaged during preparation, review and validation. Both cabinet and legislative approval was gained.

The government made it an imperative that climate change is mainstreamed into development policies and programmes, including the new development blueprint: the Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment 2012–2015 (PAGE).

Climate change concerns and issues have been integrated in the Gambian PAGE. A costed Climate Change Action Plan has been produced and included in the strategy to implement the PAGE. It refers to, and builds upon, the climate change implementation efforts and documents produced and submitted to the secretariat of the UNFCCC, including the INC and the NAPA. The NAPA and the SNC serve as strategic documents to guide the implementation of climate-related work.

The national communications include the Gambia's 2000 national inventory of greenhouse-gas emissions and the mitigation options it has identified to reduce them. The PAGE recommends the development of the Gambia Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), and the mainstreaming of climate change into national development plans, programmes and policies.

The driving force of adaptation in the Gambia is politicians and technocrats, with the technical leadership being provided by focal points at the Department of Water Resources, the Ministry of Forestry and Environment, the NEA, and the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA). The technocrats within these institutions brief and sensitise politicians and others on adaptation.

A National Environment Council and Disaster Management Council was established, headed by the vice-president. The key roles of these councils are: to coordinate policies of both the government and the private sector that have, or are likely to have, a significant impact on the environment and climate change; to integrate environmental and climate change considerations into all aspects of social and economic planning; to harmonise plans and policies of the various sectors dealing with the environment and change climate; and to approve all environmental and climate change plans and policies.

In May 2012, a national Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) report was validated at a workshop that gathered regional governors, disaster coordinators and disaster committee representatives to devise a strategic and vibrant approach to risk reduction.

In her official opening statement, Vice-President and Minister of Women's Affairs, Aja Dr Isatou Njie-Saidy, who chairs the Disaster Governing Council, said that the capacity assessment of the NDMA and its partners could not have come at a better time, given the paradigm shift from disaster response to DRR in development planning and programming. She said: "This paradigm shift clearly dictates the need to understand and define the existing national capacities, identify capacity gaps, and subsequently build these capacities to enhance national and local resilience at all levels."

Vice-President Njie-Saidy added that promoting a 'resilience-based approach' would now be considered the best way to address humanitarian and emergency issues, while at the same time addressing the structural causes of vulnerability within the country as a whole and in individual communities. She maintained that it would be imperative to build the resilience of infrastructure, local economies, communities and services to withstand pressures from any future hazards.

1.2 Information services

The SNC, the NAPA, the Global Environment Facility, the Country-Programme Strategy, and the NAMA all provide information on how climate change will impact development in the Gambia. Technical stakeholder

working groups were formed during the development of these documents to provide information, assess and guide the process.

Public institutions in the Gambia engaged with regional and global research institutions, but no single entity is designated to coordinate national efforts. A 2001 Department of Water Resources (DWR) initiative establishing a Global Change Research Unit (GCRU) to conduct and coordinate research, particularly on climate change, has not been able to keep up the initial momentum it generated, partly due to the absence of a policy-relevant research environment. In effect, the existing institutional framework for research is a loose network of independent research centres or focal points, few of which specifically address global change questions. Chief amongst these are the National Meteorological and Hydrological Service (NMHS), legally constituted by the DWR, and the University of The Gambia.

Following its inauguration in 2001, the GCRU under the NMHS struck up a fruitful collaborative project with the Energy and Development Research Centre (EDRC) of the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and the UNEP Collaborating Centre on Energy and Environment (UCCEE) in Risoe, Denmark, to provide capacity building on the use of analytical tools for estimating and comparing costs and benefits of adaptation projects in Africa.

The NAPA process has been useful in uncovering compelling areas of research that add value to adaptation strategies pursued by the Gambia and provide information required for decision making.

2. Policy and planning

2.1 Policy frameworks

The Gambia is fully aware of the dangers and development costs imposed by greenhouse-gas emissions. The government is taking actions to mitigate emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change during PAGE implementation.

The government is developing a strategy that will facilitate the mainstreaming of climate change into national and sectoral policies, programmes and plans, as part of the national development agenda. It is expected that sectors such as agriculture, energy and water will include climate change issues in their revised policies and plans. They will look at climate impacts on their sectors because they are the most affected, and they will take those impacts into consideration in future planning.

The government has already taken several steps to address climate change. Climate change issues have been integrated in the government's PAGE blueprint as a cross-cutting theme. In PAGE, there are several other cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and women's empowerment, nutrition, population management. A Priority Action Plan for climate change was developed to complement the main plan, which also incorporated some priority programmes on climate change.

The pursuit of development objectives often results in some undesirable environmental problems. In this regard, 'Vision 2020' – the country's long-term development plan – is primarily intended to promote rational use of the nation's natural resources and environment for the benefit of present and future generations, in a manner that is consistent with the overall goal of sustainable development.

Climate Change has also been integrated into the Gambia's National Agricultural Investment Plan (GNAIP) – a medium-term (2011–2015) strategic plan aligned with national goals in Vision 2020.

The GNAIP is intended to increase the contribution of the Agriculture and Natural Resource (ANR) sector to the national economy by improving productivity through commercialisation and active private sector participation,

based on a sound national macroeconomic framework aimed at enhanced growth and poverty reduction.

To meet this goal, GNAIP should increase food and nutritional security and household incomes, including for vulnerable households, through increased output based on the sustainable use and management of natural resources in support of nutritional goals.

To ensure the attainment of policy goals, the Gambia Environment Action Plan (GEAP) will be continuously implemented under the leadership of the National Environment Agency. The GEAP, including support for institutional and legal frameworks such as the NEMA, will be continuously reviewed and upgraded. The key environmental problems of soil degradation, loss of forest cover, loss of biodiversity, and poor sanitation and pollution will be addressed through public awareness campaigns, community participation, the application of appropriate technologies and legal instruments.

2.2 Institutional arrangements

In the Gambia, the institutional arrangements can be visualised at three levels: central – ministry-level and the National Climate Change Committee; regional – the Regional Development Committee and the Climate Change Committee; and community – ward and village.

The Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources has overall policy and technical oversight for the implementation of projects, while the technical function is executed by the National Climate Committee, chaired by the Director of Water Resources (the UNFCCC focal point).

At the regional level, the Regional Coordinating Committee (RCC) has overall regional policy and technical oversight for implementation. Its technical coordination functions will be performed by the Climate Change Committee.

Community-level institutions are the entry point for development activities and therefore are responsible for the day-to-day implementation, management and administrative functions of projects.

2.3 Financial frameworks

The Climate Change Priority Action Plan is costed as part of the PAGE, to be updated periodically as part of a regular review process. Funds are currently not adequate for climate change adaptation and so a resource mobilisation strategy has been developed. The

necessary funds are expected to come from various sources including development assistance, both bilateral and multilateral, and foreign investment. The government provides funding and support for environmental and climate-related work and DRR through the national budget.

3. Programmes and projects

The NAPA – the Gambia's climate adaptation programme – brings a fresh perspective to previously existing development and environmental management plans. The NAPA seeks to consolidate gains, rectify current trajectories and propose new solutions to existing and emergent problems. It stimulates a critical re-examination of the role of climate on societal and natural systems. Implied assumptions of a stationary and/or benign climate, as well as oversight or denial of its centrality, are brought into sharp focus. According to Jaiteh and Saho (2006), nearly half of the Gambia's economically active population owes their livelihoods to agriculture and animal husbandry, which in turn rely heavily on ecosystem services. The projects in the NAPA portfolio seek to address urgent and significant climate threats through actions that:

- Deliver immediate adaptation benefits;
- Contribute to building local and national adaptive capacities;
- Create awareness and build foundations for maximising long-term adaptation benefits.

NAPA implementation has gone slowly, as is the case for most NAPAs. Through the implementing entity designated in Global Environment Facility (GEF) – in this case UNDP – the Gambia in August 2012 submitted a project proposal entitled: 'Strengthening climate services and early warning systems in the Gambia for climate resilient development and adaptation to climate change – 2nd Phase of the GOTG/GEF/UNEP LDCF NAPA Early Warning Project'. The total budget is US\$25.4 million, of which US\$8.8 million is requested from the Least Developed Countries Fund. This proposal has yet to gain GEF endorsement. The proposed national implementing agencies are the Ministry of Forestry and the Environment, the Ministry of Fisheries, Water Resources and National Assembly Matters, the DWR, NEA and NDMA.

Climate Change adaptation is now integrated into development programmes, particularly in the energy, education, agriculture, infrastructure and forestry sectors. In the agriculture sector, the government will implement the following strategies: optimisation of the use of natural resources; increase and stabilisation of crop productivity; stabilisation of the rural population; management of range land; preservation of eco-assets.

On integrated planning in the energy sector, the government's strategic decisions will be to: reduce the pressure on natural forests; provide access to reliable technologies and better or cheaper fuels; limit damage to infrastructure; improve energy efficiency, disaster planning, and the management of water resources; raise public awareness; restore biodiversity and the health of ecosystems; develop cleaner public transport; promote clean technology; and minimise the impact of flooding and saline intrusion in lowlands.

In other key sectors, the government is seeking alternative and renewable energy (solar and liquefied petroleum gas) as well as technological innovation and dissemination. It will promote integrated management of coastal zones – for example by boosting the adaptive capacity of coastal communities and encouraging the optimal use of marine resources.

The NAPA provided the means for assessing the vulnerability of sectors to climate change and the 'ripple effects' in progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. As a result, disaster management was no longer to be seen as just providing relief but rather as part of the development continuum. The emphasis has now shifted from managing crisis to managing risks and vulnerabilities through DRR, for which critical issues are:

- Poor and inadequate settlement patterns;
- Poor waste management systems;
- Inadequate drainage systems;
- Low awareness of the economic benefits of DRR;
- Inadequate capacity to address disaster issues at the local level;
- Inadequate early warning on impending hazards.

In light of the above, the Gambia – in collaboration with its partners – has developed a National Contingency Plan that focuses on developing an effective preparedness and management system, the creation of fire belts, resettlement programmes, waste management, shelter kits etc. designed to reduce the risk and vulnerabilities of the nation and communities.

Conclusion

Political will has been reflected in the fact that cabinet approval has been sought for climate-relevant policies. The NAPA, the Climate Change Action Plan and the Low Carbon Strategy provide a policy basis for national-level responses to climate change. Climate mainstreaming is happening, integration into the medium-term National Agricultural Investment Plan (2011–2015), for example,

and into the four-year PAGE. The Climate Change Action Plan has been prepared as a strategy to implement PAGE. Integrating climate into decentralised development planning and implementation, supported by a financial mechanism, will allow local- to national-level climate change responses and coherent mainstreaming.

Table 1. Summary of experience in the Gambia against the building block framework

Enabling environment		
Political will	Information	
<p>Driven by technocrats from MOEF and Department of Water Resources</p> <p>National Disaster Management Agency, NEA</p> <p>Politicians involved through Cabinet approval process and Councils like the Disaster Management Council and the National Environmental Council – both headed by the vice president.</p>	<p>Sources: Climate change documents (National Communications, NAPA, NAMA); sectoral data collected by line departments.</p> <p>Systems: Loose institutional network of independent research networks and focal government agencies responsible for assessing global change. Global Change Research Institute established in 2001 under Department of Water Resources.</p> <p>Developing tools to assess adaptation costs and benefits.</p>	
Policy and planning		
Policy framework	Institutional framework	Financial framework
<p>NAPA (2007), NAMA, Climate Change Action Plan</p> <p>National communications (2003 and 2012)</p> <p>National climate change and low carbon strategy</p> <p>Climate change integrated into the medium-term National Agricultural Investment Plan (2011-2015) and into 3-year National Development Plan (PAGE 2012-2015). Climate Change Action Plan prepared as a strategy to implement PAGE.</p>	<p>Decentralised arrangements in place. National level, policy and technical oversight by Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources. Technical functions executed by National Climate Change Committee. Regional policy and technical oversight by Regional Coordinating Committee. Technical coordination carried out by Climate Change Committee chaired by the Governor. Community-level institutions responsible for implementation and management of climate change projects.</p> <p>National Environmental Council and Disaster Management Council responsible for policy coordination across sectors.</p>	<p>Climate Change Action Plan costed and integrated into national 3-year plan (PAGE);</p> <p>Resource mobilisation strategy relies on international sources (ODA and FDI)</p> <p>Currently, government provides funding for environmental, climate and DRR related work through the national budget.</p> <p>Climate funds to be disbursed via national budget.</p>

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