

AAI

Report of the High-Level Partners Roundtable



Africa Adaptation Initiative

Summary and conclusions

—

24th September 2018
New York City, UNGA
United States of America



www.africaadaptationinitiative.org/rt



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The AAI is an African-led initiative that will draw on expertise and experience on the continent to help African countries enhance action on both adaptation and implementing approaches to address loss and damage.



Introduction

The Government of the Gabonese Republic, as current chair of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) and the African Union (AU) “Champion” of the Africa Adaptation Initiative (AAI), hosted the AAI’s first High-Level Partners Roundtable on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly on the 24th September 2018.



The aim of the roundtable was to support the implementation of the AAI, focusing on all the four pillars of the initiative, but specifically to:

- Sensitise and raise awareness of the importance of climate adaptation in Africa;
- Operationalise the AAI, by launching a resource mobilisation process to support the AAI secretariat (US\$5m); and
- Launch the AAI’s 4 flagship programmes by mobilising partners for their implementation in Africa.

The meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Régis Immongault, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Gabon and H.E. Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

¹ The Framework document and other information about planned activities of AAI can be found at: africaadaptationinitiative.org

Roundtable Messages



In her opening remarks, the African Union Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, H.E. Josefa Leonel Correa Sacko, stressed the critical importance of climate adaptation in Africa. She **highlighted how climate change affects the most important and productive sectors of Africa's economies (such as food production) and therefore contributes to increased poverty and mass migration. She stressed that climate change represents a security threat for Africa.**



Mr. Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator

As the UNDP Administrator stressed in his opening remarks, however, African governments are already spending deeply on climate adaptation: **“Africa is already investing well over 2 per cent of its GDP, that is our estimate, in adaptation. That's 10 times the ODA (Overseas Development Assistance) that is coming to the continent!”** And despite this heavy commitment by African states, the continent still has an adaptation finance gap that ranges from 40 per cent to 80 per cent. Addressing this adaptation gap is one of the fundamental goals of the AAI.



The Minister of Environment for Rwanda, H.E. Vincent Biruta

Very strong messages of support for the AAI and its work were recorded from all sides. According to H.E. the AU Commissioner, **“the AAI, represents an opportunity for Africa to achieve agenda 2063”**. The Minister of Environment for Rwanda, H.E. Vincent Biruta, stated with directness that **“The Africa Adaptation Initiative is critical for our continent for a number of reasons.”**



H.E. Patricia Espinosa, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

H.E. Patricia Espinosa, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), also strongly supported the initiative, saying **“we at UN Climate Change [the UNFCCC] support this initiative, we are absolutely conscious, and we try to gather as much support as possible for adaptation.”** Ms Espinosa also highlighted the challenge in galvanising proper adaptation funding, and encouraged the AAI to continue its efforts and forge partnerships.

Other main messages expressed by key partners are summarised below:

Ownership by African governments



One of the key strengths of the AAI is that it is owned and driven by African peoples and governments. **“The initiative is both for and relevant to Africans themselves, and therefore strives to make a difference in the lives of many people”**, said UNFCCC Executive Secretary Ms. Patricia Espinosa.

Leadership by Gabon and African governments

Many partners commended the Gabonese Republic, and in particular, H.E. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President and Head of State, for the strong leadership he has demonstrated in his capacity as the CAHOSCC Chair and the AAI Champion. Partners congratulated Gabon and all African governments for taking the bold step together to establish and support the AAI, and for demonstrating their leadership on climate change. This is much needed, not least because **“Africa is one of the most affected, most vulnerable continents to climate change”**, said UNFCCC Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa.

Mr. Pierre Guislain, Vice President, AfDB



Partnerships are crucial if AAI is to succeed

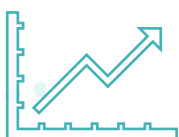
Governments cannot deliver on the climate agenda alone. Strong and broad-based partnerships will be essential if the initiative is to succeed and achieve its intended goals. Mr. Pierre Guislain, Vice President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), underlined that **“the AAI is a partnership effort. African partnership and international partnership is the only way we will be able to manage this [climate change] agenda!”**,



The theme of partnership was echoed by Ms. Espinosa: **“we need innovative solutions from businesses, investors, state and non-state actors, and from everyday people”**

Scaling up of adaptation action in Africa

The AAI represents an opportunity to scale up successful initiatives in the continent and develop new initiatives, a fact fully appreciated by partners. According to Norbert Gorissen, Head of Division in the German Ministry of Environment, Germany **“fully supports the aim of scaling up adaptation action and reducing the vulnerability of African countries to climate change. Germany is looking forward to engaging with the Africa Adaptation Initiative to foster synergies across existing activities and develop new ideas.”**



Norbert Gorissen, Head of Division, Ministry of Environment, Germany



Balance between mitigation and adaptation

The current imbalance in climate finance between adaptation and mitigation was highlighted by Kulthoum Motsumi, the AAI Coordinator. More than 70% of all climate finance is in mitigation, while only a mere 16% goes to adaptation. According to Rwandan Environment Minister H.E. Vincent Biruta, the AAI therefore presents an opportunity **“to swing the balance in the right direction and ensure resources are going to where they are needed most!”**

Investment in climate information services and infrastructure



Mr. Petteri Taalas, WMO, Director General

A crucial starting point for addressing climate adaptation in Africa is reducing the gap in climate information services and infrastructure – another of the AAI's priorities. This will have a beneficial impact on numerous sectors, including agriculture, public safety, transport, energy, health. The approach was supported by Mr. Petteri Taalas, the World Meteorological Organisation Director General, who stressed that **“one very powerful way to adapt to climate change is to invest in early warning services, weather, climate, and water.”**

Overall support for the AAI and new entry points

The AAI gained broad support from numerous partners at the Round Table. The Rwandan Environment Minister fully supported the initiative, wished **“to encourage partners, friends, and supporters to join the Initiative. Rwanda is fully committed and ready to play its part to ensure the Africa Adaptation Initiative reaches its full potential.”**

H.E. Patricia Espinosa underlined that she **“will also take the opportunity to promote this Initiative as speak to groups throughout the world.”**



Confidence in African Driven Initiatives

“As we forge ahead to support this initiative we must always keep this insight, that we are not doing this with people who lack the courage, talent or creativity to take control of their own destiny: we're doing this with and within an already empowered community of nations.”



Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onochie, UNDP, Regional Director for Africa

Specific entry points identified by partners:

- The Government of India pledged significant financial support to the AAI in the area of early warning systems with Gabon;
- The Adaptation Fund Secretariat indicated their interest to partner with the AAI, particularly with their Readiness Programme. **“The Readiness Programme of the Adaptation Fund provides an excellent fit for a collaboration with the Africa Adaptation Initiative. The partnership will better support African countries strengthening their institutional capacities to attract climate finance and design and implement actions to address the adverse effects of climate change”** (Mr. Farayi Onias Madziwa - Adaptation Fund);
- Germany expressed their interest in **“engaging with the Africa Adaptation Initiative to foster synergies across existing activities and develop new ideas”** (Mr. Norbert Gorissen - Government of Germany);
- Support also came from all lead organisations of the four AAI flagship programmes for Africa. This includes the following:
 - The AfDB, through the Africa Programme on climate services for adaptation and resilience;
 - The Lake Chad River Basin Commission, through developing an early warning system for the Lake Chad River Basin;
 - The African Risk Capacity, through advancing risk transfer in Africa; and
 - UNDP and the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) on the knowledge management programme for adaptation planning in Africa. UNDP further undertook to make precise its support by the end of 2018.

Next steps

The AAI will work with its partners to ensure that the political commitments and pledges made at the roundtable are translated into concrete action. The AAI is also moving forward with further stakeholder consultations and the State of Adaptation Report with a view to scaling up efforts in 2019.

- **December 2018** - Promote the SoAR key messages and data at the CoP 24, Katowice;
- **February 2019** - Launch of the first Africa State of Adaptation Report (SoAR) during the Africa Union Summit;
- **February 2019** - Launch of Communications, Advocacy Strategy and promotion of online sharing platforms for the SoAR;
- AAI Flagships Programme Partners Meetings and Implementation Plans to be launched by **March 2019**;
- **September 2019** - Contributions from the AAI to the Global Commission on Adaptation's Report which will be presented at a major UN Climate Summit, convened by UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

Photos

Participants during the AAI High-Level Partners Roundtable



List of participants

No.	Name	Organisation and Title
1	H.E. Josefa Leonel Correa Sacko	African Union Commissioner for the Environment
2	H.E. Mr Achim Steiner	United Nations Development Programme, Administrator
3	H.E. Arlette Soudan-Nonault	Minister of Environment, Congo - on behalf of the Congo Basin Initiative
4	H.E. Nasser Bourita	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Morocco - on behalf of the Adaptation of African Agriculture Initiative (AAA)
5	H.E. Vincent Biruta	Minister of Environment, Rwanda
6	H.E. Régis Imoungault	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gabon
7	H.E. Ruchi Ghanashyam	Vice Minister of External Affairs, India
8	H.E. Ms. Patricia ESPINOSA	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Executive Secretary
9	H.E. Mr Petteri TAALAS	World Meteorological Organisation, Secretary General
10	Mr. Issifi Boureima	Special adviser of President of Niger - on Behalf of Sahel Commission
11	H.E. Ambassador Wael Aboudlmgad	Deputy Assistant Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development, Egypt and Chair of the G77 and China Group on Climate Negotiations.
12	Mr. Zaheer FAKIR	Head International Relations and Governance, Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa
13	Mr. Pierre GUISLAIN	African Development Bank, Vice President for Infrastructure and Private Sector
14	H.E. Ambassador Seyni Nafo	African Group of Negotiators, Coordinator of African initiatives
15	Mr. Mohamed BÉAVOGUI	African Risk Capacity, Director-General
16	H.E. Ambassador Mamman Nuhu	Chad Lake Basin Commission, Executive Secretary,
17	Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onochie	UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa
18	Mr. Mana Boubakari	Chad Lake Basin Commission, Technical Director
19	Mr. Manish Bapna	World Resource Institute, Executive Vice President and Managing Director
20	Mr. Farayi Madziwa	Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat, Programme Officer Climate Finance Readiness
21	Mr. Koen Vervaeke	European External Action Service (EEAS), Managing Director for Africa
22	Mr. David Thomas	Africa Business Magazine, Deputy Editor
23	Mr. Tanguy Gahouma	National Climate Council, Gabon, Secretary General
24	Mr. Stanislas Mouba	National Climate Council, Gabon, Adviser
25	Ms. Sonia Olendo	Diplomatic Counsellor, Gabon
26	Mr. Stephen Jackson	UN Resident Coordinator, Gabon
27	Ms. Kulthoum Omari Motsumi	AAI Coordinator
28	Ms. Franca Cossu	AAI Programme Assistant
29	Mr. Bruk Tekie	AAI Communication Assitant

AAI

Enhancing action on adaptation in Africa



The African Group of Negotiators (AGN)
Under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change



Africa Adaptation Initiative

www.africaadaptationinitiative.org/rt



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