

## How Does Africa Speak with One Voice?

### Africa's Evolving Positions on Aid Effectiveness, Climate Change and the Post-2015 Goals

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#### Key messages

Africa is increasingly seeking to formulate a common African position ahead of key international events

Pathways to common positions are not always pre-defined and evolve depending on the needs that manifest themselves during the process. However, it is clear that in recent years, there is a consistent effort to formulate common positions ahead of key moments in the global agenda.

Creating African Common Positions involves both technical and political input from various African actors, organisations and platforms. African negotiators often seek to form international partnerships to push their agenda forward.

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#### Introduction

The Fourth EU-Africa Summit held in April 2014 highlighted the complexities of the dynamic relationship between Africa and the European Union. The Summit reasserted the principles set out in the 2007 Joint Africa-EU Strategy and further proposed a Roadmap for 2014-2017.

Specific “Priorities” were set out by the Roadmap, one of which is “Priority Area 5”; which aims to ensure that the two continents “achieve common positions in global fora and international negotiations and jointly address global challenges”. This priority presents several key areas for cooperation, including Climate Change and the Post-2015 Agenda. In order to achieve common positions however, the two partners first formulate their respective continental positions. Therefore, to understand how Africa and Europe come to take common stance in international fora is to comprehend how they currently formulate their own continental positions. Here, we will focus on how Africa formulates its common positions on global challenges.

The capacity for Africa to develop its own stance on global issues has been exemplified in different ways over the last 5 years; there are different *actors* and *processes* involved in creating a “Common African Position” on specific issues. Three case studies can be drawn upon to show this; namely Africa’s stance on aid effectiveness at the Busan High-level forum in 2011, Africa’s emerging stance on climate change and Africa’s evolving position on the post-2015 agenda.

The cases present a mixture of African positions that have been completed and are still in progress. Some of these positions are institution-led and others are more country-led. Therefore, the diversity of approaches and strategies toward developing the common position is revealed. The focus of this document is on the *processes* and *drivers* of creating the African common position; it highlights the *diversity of approaches* in the formulation of a common position.

Last but not least, this is a living document that will be updated to reflect progress in the African position on these issues and to reflect on the process of formulating a common position in other areas.

## 1. Busan HLF4 Meeting on Aid Effectiveness 2011

The Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Busan in November 2011, was Africa's first attempt at creating a common approach to development and aid effectiveness in the global arena. The African Position in Busan recognized that aid continues to play an important role in development financing of African countries, however it emphasized the need to mobilize domestic resources and the private sector in order to reduce their reliance on aid for sustainable development of the future. A document entitled the "*African Consensus and Position on Development Effectiveness*"<sup>1</sup> was developed and contributed to the discussions at the Busan HLF4 meeting. Some of the key priorities mentioned in the Common Position include:

1. **The Unfinished Aid Effectiveness Agenda** – which attempted to ensure that outstanding commitments by donors and African countries would be delivered. Commitments such as using country systems, eliminating aid conditionality, improving transparency, aid predictability and mutual accountability were highlighted.
2. **Building Capacity for Development Effectiveness (DE)** – a principle that saw public and private sectors driving the "turn-around" in African economies, by relying less on aid but investment from these sectors. (RECs), investments and cooperation was explained.
3. **South-South Cooperation** - which encouraged knowledge sharing and solidarity with developing countries and emerging economies as well as endorsing African-owned development efforts.
4. **Beyond Aid** - reiterated the need for Africa to reduce its aid reliance and develop a varied development finance base.
5. **New Development Cooperation Architecture** - which encouraged the
6. Formation of creative partnerships that promote inclusive, equitable and sustainable forms of development.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1. What were the key processes and events that led to this document being developed?

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 and the Accra Agenda for Action 2008 were some of the initiating agreements that attempted to establish the first set of common principles and commitments to govern and represent both sides of development partnerships. However, these two declarations focused largely on mechanics of aid delivery.<sup>3</sup> The African common position on the Busan High-Level Forum aimed to move beyond this and focus especially on South-South Cooperation (SSC), Aid Effectiveness (AE) and Capacity Development (CD). As the principle development instrument of the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) mentions in its base framework of 2001 that the continent "will establish a forum of African countries so as to develop a common African position on ODA reform, and to engage with the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD and other partners in developing a charter underpinning the development partnership".<sup>4</sup> This provided a mandate for the African Union (AU) and its NEPAD Programme to promote a continental approach to AE.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.africa-platform.org/sites/default/files/resources/african-consensus-english.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nepad.org/crosscuttingissues/news/2492/african-leaders-agree-common-position-aid-development>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.africa-platform.org/sites/default/files/resources/Tunis\\_Consensus\\_3mars.pdf](http://www.africa-platform.org/sites/default/files/resources/Tunis_Consensus_3mars.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.un.org/africa/osaa/reports/nepadEngversion.pdf>

With the prospect of the Busan High-level Forum in 2011, initiatives began to take shape to facilitate the realization of a common African position on Development Effectiveness. Under the custodianship of the AU, jointly coordinated by the AU Commission (AUC), the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) became an important driver for coordinating the African common position. The Chief Executive Officer of the NPCA, Ibrahim Assane Mayaki asserted that the African continent was “taking charge of our own destiny. For the first time, Africa has presented its own vision for aid and the future of development on the continent. Aid is just one source of finance required to meet Africa’s development needs. Aid must be used as a catalyst for development, along with innovative use of domestic resources, and the private sector playing a key role.”<sup>5</sup>

The continent’s stakeholders largely coordinated their efforts through the African Platform for Development Effectiveness (APDev), which was officially launched in 2011. This continent-wide coordination mechanism aims to address the inter-relational thematic issues of AE, SSC and CD. APDev is an African-led and owned initiative, coordinated by the NPCA and the AUC, and it continues to be used as a form of interaction on development issues in Africa.<sup>6</sup> APDev has been produced in the form of a knowledge-building platform to share information and engages with a broad African audience; however it also rallies together a number of different countries, civil society groups and institutions such as ActionAid International, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the AU, the African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD), the German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation (GIZ), the Institute for Security Studies, the National Treasury of the Republic of South Africa, TrustAfrica, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank Institute.<sup>7</sup>

APDev built an alliance with AU member states, Regional Economic communities (RECs), civil society groups, parliaments, business and academic groupings on the continent as well as key development partners. APDev is structured with an Oversight Committee that includes 10 countries that represent a cross-section of African regions, languages and statuses (such as fragile states). Membership is held on a rotational 2-year basis. Kenya and Rwanda represent East Africa, Ghana and Mali represent West Africa, Cameroon and Gabon represent Central Africa, South Africa and Mozambique represent Southern Africa, and Egypt and Tunisia represent North Africa. Institutional support came from multilateral partners, the UNDP, bilateral institutions, the GTZ, UNECA, the AfDB, regional bodies and the World Bank Institute. RECs such as the AU, the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the East African Community (EAC), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) also participate in APDev. Additional partners include the African Capacity building Foundation (ACBF), the Capacity Development Alliance (CD Alliance), the Learning Network on Capacity Development (LenCD) and civil society groups such as African Monitor, BetterAid, Africa Chapter, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation; and even academia such as the Association of African Universities, AISA, Wits University, MAKERERE RUFORUM and FEMNET and AWDF.<sup>8</sup>

At the 15<sup>th</sup> African Union Summit held in July 2010, African heads of State and Government endorsed the establishment of the APDev under the coordination of the NPCA and the AUC. This approval was based on the recommendation put forth by the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee (HSGOC) at its 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Since the AU Summit, regional and international forums called for the process of creating the APDev Platform to be speeded up. The Africa Regional Preparatory Meeting on AE, SSC and CD that was held in Pretoria, and the Bogota High Level Event on SSC and CD all placed emphasis on the need for an Africa platform to be created<sup>9</sup>. Although endorsed by the 15<sup>th</sup> AU Summit, APDev was only officially launched in 2011 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.<sup>10</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> Africa Regional Meeting (ARM) on Development Effectiveness held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2011, was a key meeting that contributed to the “*African Consensus and Position on Development Effectiveness*”<sup>11</sup> document at the Busan HLF4 meeting. This meeting took place under the auspices of the APDev; but it was jointly

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nepad.org/crosscuttingissues/news/2492/african-leaders-agree-common-position-aid-development>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.africa-platform.org/sites/default/files/aide\\_memoire\\_-3rd\\_africa\\_regional\\_meeting\\_0.pdf](http://www.africa-platform.org/sites/default/files/aide_memoire_-3rd_africa_regional_meeting_0.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.africa-platform.org/partners>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.africa-platform.org/resources/launch-africa-platform-development-effectiveness-apdev-27-march-2011-addis-ababa-ethiopia>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.africa-platform.org/resources/african-platform-development-effectiveness-apdev-operational-framework>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.africa-platform.org/sites/default/files/resources/african-consensus-english.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.africa-platform.org/sites/default/files/resources/african-consensus-english.pdf>

coordinated through the AUC and the NPCA.<sup>12</sup> However, prior to the ARM held in Addis Ababa, two other ARMs were also held; the first in Pretoria, South Africa in March 2010 and the second in Tunis, Tunisia in November 2010. Together these three meetings formed an important foundational basis through which the final “*African Consensus and Position on Development Effectiveness*”<sup>13</sup> document was formed.

These ARM consultations were co-organized by the AUC and NPCA; jointly with the Government of South Africa for the First ARM, the AfDB for the Second ARM<sup>14</sup> and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa for the Third ARM.<sup>15</sup> Their aim was to shift the discourse from “Aid Effectiveness”, to “Development Effectiveness”. The outcomes of the meetings were broadly termed:

- The Pretoria Outcomes;
- The Tunis Consensus: Targeting Effective Development;
- The Addis Ababa Statement.

In the ‘**Pretoria Outcomes**’, the foundation was laid for expressing Africa’s new ‘Development Effectiveness approach’. African countries called for the establishment of a coordinating platform under the custodianship of the AU.

The ‘**The Tunis Consensus: Targeting Effective Development**’ meeting is where stakeholders reiterated the advance of the development effectiveness, but incorporated a regional dimension, also emphasizing the role of the private sector and innovative financing in moving beyond aid.

The ‘**Addis Ababa Statement**’ finally incorporated all the agreements of the preceding meetings into in the ‘African Consensus and Position for the HLF IV in Busan’; which was issued and highlighted the stand for DE based on a global partnership framed on an inclusive development cooperation agenda. These processes helped to shape the African Position while also emphasizing the ‘Beyond Aid’ initiative.<sup>16</sup>

## 1.2. Additional influencing moments and events that contributed to the African Position

An event that influenced the creation of the African position on aid effectiveness for the Busan High-level Forum was the ‘Bogota High-Level Event on South-South Cooperation and Capacity Development’ held on 24-26 March 2010. Over 400 participants that included ministers, vice-ministers, heads of cooperation, agencies from 66 countries, delegates from 38 multilateral organisations, representatives from 39 civil society organisations, 5 parliamentarians and representatives from various academia, institutions and think tanks. The event was hosted to engage in a discourse around South-South Cooperation as a toll for horizontal development partnerships and capacity development – which directly links to the agenda that Africa attempted to promote at the Busan High-Level forum. The Bogota Statement was released at the event as a consensus document, and its conclusions were created with the aim of the South-South agenda being incorporated into the discussions of the Busan meeting.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to the support that civil society groups provided to the APDev, their presence in the process formulating the Common African Position was reinforced in other areas as well. For example, in 2011, the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG) coordinated a workshop of African Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Accra, Ghana<sup>18</sup>. The Accra workshop produced outcome documents and was able to integrate different voices and perspectives of CSOs on the issue of emerging aid architecture and the meeting and work that had already been drafted ahead of the meeting in Busan. The participants did note however, that

<sup>12</sup><http://www.nepad.org/system/files/THE%20ADDIS%20ABABA%20STATEMENT%20ON%20DEVELOPMENT%20EFFECTIVENESS-1%20.pdf>

<sup>13</sup><http://www.africa-platform.org/sites/default/files/resources/african-consensus-english.pdf>

<sup>14</sup><http://www.nepad.org/system/files/Africa%20is%20determined%20to%20shape%20the%20post-Busan%20Agenda%E2%80%99%E2%80%99.pdf>

<sup>15</sup><http://www.nepad.org/crosscuttingissues/knowledge/doc/2493/third-africa-regional-meeting-development-effectiveness>

<sup>16</sup><http://www.nepad.org/system/files/Africa%20is%20determined%20to%20shape%20the%20post-Busan%20Agenda%E2%80%99%E2%80%99.pdf>

<sup>17</sup><http://www.southsouth.info/page/high-level-event-on-southsouth>

<sup>18</sup><http://www.acbf-pact.org/index.php/en/med/311-the-road-to-busan-a-workshop-of-african-civil-society-organizations-csos>

despite the progress that the African position paper would initiate for creating the African common position, it did not sufficiently reflect all the viewpoints and concerns of African CSOs. These discussions also led to the creation of the Accra Civil Society Consensus on Africa Position on Aid Effectiveness - which was yet another advancement to enrich the African Position paper; and ultimately, Africa's influence in Busan as a continent.<sup>19</sup>

It can be commended that such a wide variety of stakeholders were incorporated into the process of creating the African Common Position; showing a commitment to reflect and engage with all parties in the process of development at different levels.

The final document of the '*African Consensus and Position on Development Effectiveness*'<sup>20</sup> drew from the input from the three ARMs and the stakeholders within the guiding mechanism of the APDev. The AU Assembly in the 18<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session on 29-30 January 2012 made a commendation on the creation of the African consensus document and reiterated the need for a post-Busan agenda to be developed.<sup>21</sup> The document was presented at the Busan-level Forum; and the document was introduced as reflecting the representatives of the member states of the African Union, parliaments, RECs and institutions, civil society including women and youth groups, business and academia.

## 2. African Initiatives on Climate Change

Another important global issue that the continent has rallied around is the issue of climate change. For more than a decade, the world has been negotiating global agreements under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). At the UNFCCC a number of actors, groups and platforms are instrumental for the development of a consolidated African position. A Conference of the Parties - or COP - to negotiate on climate change, is held annually since 1995. As of 2014, 196 parties take part in the UNFCCC.

The AU has adopted its own Declaration on Climate Change and Development in 2007. In the declaration, member states committed to improving public awareness of climate change, promoting integration of climate change into developmental processes, funding etc. The declaration called for integrated, focused action on climate change. But the major weaknesses for successful implementation of such programmes remain that of funding.<sup>22</sup> Despite these weaknesses, an AU climate change regime has been growing since 2007. The first time that the AU clearly expressed a common position was at the Copenhagen COP in 2009, when it put forward the 'African Common Position on Climate Change' that set the mandate of African negotiators.<sup>23</sup> This position is built on the core concept of 'environmental justice' and stated that adaptation is the highest priority for Africa, since the continent's greenhouse gas emissions are so small. The AU has followed various strategies and cooperated with a variety of actors on climate change issues, such as multilateralism, bilateralism and regionalism.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.acbf-pact.org/index.php/en/med/311-the-road-to-busan-a-workshop-of-african-civil-society-organizations-csos>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.africa-platform.org/sites/default/files/resources/african-consensus-english.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/ASSEMBLY%20AU%20DEC%20391%20-%20415%20%28XVIII%29%20\\_E.pdf](http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/ASSEMBLY%20AU%20DEC%20391%20-%20415%20%28XVIII%29%20_E.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> AU Assembly, 2007. <http://www.au.int/en/content/addis-ababa-29-%E2%80%93-30-january-2007-assembly-african-union-eighth-ordinary-session>. See also:

[http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/ASSEMBLY\\_EN\\_29\\_30\\_JANUARY\\_2007\\_AUC\\_THE\\_AFRICAN\\_UNION\\_EI\\_GHTH\\_ORDINARY\\_SESSION.pdf](http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/ASSEMBLY_EN_29_30_JANUARY_2007_AUC_THE_AFRICAN_UNION_EI_GHTH_ORDINARY_SESSION.pdf); and AllAfrica, 2013, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201305270426.html>.

<sup>23</sup> AU/AMCEN, 2009. [http://www.unep.org/roa/amcen/docs/AMCEN\\_Events/climate-change/2nd\\_TechMeeting/KeyMessages\\_EN.pdf](http://www.unep.org/roa/amcen/docs/AMCEN_Events/climate-change/2nd_TechMeeting/KeyMessages_EN.pdf)

## 2.1. Why did it take so long to formulate a common position?

Generally, Africa's geopolitical status has been perceived as low. Important obstacles are African countries' conflicting needs and interests, the lack of progress among these countries to implement national climate change policies and so on. In addition, there was little negotiators' training, limited institutional capacity and poor access to high-quality information. The AU also had limited capacity to consolidate all the different positions. But, there was perhaps an even more important reason for Africa's lack of participation; the way climate change was initially communicated. In the beginning, climate change was seen as a scientific problem, debated among developed countries. Decisions were taken by these countries, which were largely safe from the worst impacts of climate change. Also, Africa was portrayed as a recipient, not a formulator, and as a victim, not a participant of responses to climate change.<sup>24</sup> Today however, although barriers remain, the situation has changed and climate change is now a high profile political issue in Africa.

African countries negotiate through so-called 'regional blocs' to provide input into the UNFCCC, such as the Group of 77+China (G77) and the African Group of Negotiators (AGN). There are also smaller coalitions, which include African countries such as the Brazil, South Africa, India and China (BASIC) groups, or the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) as well as continental bodies such as the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN).

## 2.2. How are all these groupings related and how have they led to the formulation of a common position?

Firstly, many African countries are members of the G77+China, which is a much larger coalition of developing countries. It has its origins in the 1960s conferences of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). In recent years, it has come to play a stronger role at the climate negotiations as a representative for developing countries' needs. African countries in the G77+China alliance are known as the 'Africa Group' or the 'African Group'.<sup>25</sup> They formulate common negotiating position and partnerships promoting adaptation and mitigation initiatives in Africa.<sup>26</sup> The G77+China has also been a vigorous proponent of the "Common But Differentiated Responsibilities" (CBDR). Essentially, the CBDR means that it is the responsibility of the so-called 'Global South' to develop in a sustainable manner and adapt to climatic changes, whereas the Global North must mitigate its emissions in accordance with strict targets and timelines. Generally, African employs a common position, in wanting to maintain the CBDR principle. Although, suggestions have been made that the CBDR should be reinvigorated to reflect more contemporary realities in the global system. This point is also problematic among African states as the continent has a variety of different countries (ranging from Least Developed countries (LDCs) to countries with strong growth such as South Africa). South Africa sees CBDR in a more flexible way, calling for differentiated commitments for all parties.<sup>27</sup>

The AGN is the most active regional coalition for pooling resources and power among African states in the international climate change negotiations and other negotiation platforms for Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (e.g. the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification). The AGN was formed at the time of the Rio Summit in 1992. It has its origin in the bloc politics of the UN General Assembly and only until recently, the AGN was acting alone as Africa's lead negotiator on climate change. This meant a small delegation at a meeting with a packed agenda, at a big venue, against big delegations.

<sup>24</sup> Anesu Makina, [http://journal-iostudies.org/sites/journal-iostudies.org/files/JIOSfinal\\_4\\_2.pdf](http://journal-iostudies.org/sites/journal-iostudies.org/files/JIOSfinal_4_2.pdf); Climate Exchange, 2014. Negotiating Africa's Interests on Climate Change: The African Group of Negotiators. <http://climate-exchange.org/2014/03/13/negotiating-africas-interests-on-climate-change-the-african-group-of-negotiators/>

<sup>25</sup> The Africa Group is a coalition of African states that works through the G77 in order to negotiate the best possible decisions for the continent. It is a broader term, not only comprising African countries, but also CSOs and all other actors that aim at achieving the African goals related to climate change.

<sup>26</sup> The group has been a vigorous proponent of "common but differentiated responsibilities", (CBDR). Essentially, CBDR means that it is the responsibility of the 'Global South' to develop in a sustainable manner and adapt to climatic changes, whereas the 'Global North' must mitigate its emissions in accordance with strict targets and timelines.

<sup>27</sup> <http://ecdpm.org/talking-points/common-differentiated-responsibilities-cbdr-challenge-rejuvenating-old-school-principle-ahead-2015-climate-negotiations/>

Hence, the AGN's influence has been limited. It has been far less influential than the G77+China. However, recently the AGN has been more proactive in the climate negotiations, playing the role of a **technical coordinator**. It has also differentiated itself from others, such as the G77. The AGN contains technical negotiators from every African country.<sup>28</sup> (One country is selected to chair the AGN for two years. In January 2014, the Republic of Sudan became its current chair.) Over the years, the AGN has also grown in size and strength: it is now being guided and coordinated by the African Union Assembly (AUA), the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC), African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), among others.

### 2.3. The Role of Different Institutions Contributing to the AGN's work

The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), initially formed in 1985, is a key platform involved in the process of presenting the African Common position to the UNFCCC.<sup>29</sup> AMCEN has played a key role in terms of improved coordination of the common African position. It has worked towards a common framework in which all climate change programmes for Africa are merged. For example, the African Common Position of 2009 was updated at an AMCEN Session and endorsed by the AU. AMCEN's 'African Group of Experts' – the technical segment of AMCEN - has been instrumental in this respect. It also ensures that the African common position is constantly backed by new scientific, economic and technical information.<sup>30</sup> AMCEN provides **technical input as well as political oversight** to the AGN.

Then, the Conference of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC), is the highest continental body for approving and endorsing the common position. It was established in 2009 by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government and assigned the responsibility to provide **political guidance** and champion Africa's common interests during global climate change negotiations. So, it started its work with the Copenhagen COP in 2009. It has adopted a common position with regards to international climate change policy. However, CAHOSCC is also fragmented, which has impeded smooth functioning.

Another key partner for supporting the AGN is the UNECA African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) that has provided **technical support** to the AGN for preparing the UNFCCC negotiations. In order to support its capacity, the AGN is supported by other technical agencies such as the UN.

Furthermore, Joint negotiating positions have also been pushed by African political 'champions', such as former President of Ghana, H.E. John Kufuor, the President of Tanzania, H.E. Jakaya Kikwete or the late Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. Certain countries such as South Africa have also become frontrunners at the UN climate conventions.

These structures and processes are complemented by inputs from Africa's Regional Economic Communities (RECs), a coalition of CSOs - the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance, and, since 2011, the annual Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA). However, the consensus among African countries on their negotiating positions has proven fragile in several instances, despite the above-mentioned institutions enabling consultation and coordination at the continental level to prepare for negotiations and develop the common position. In turn, incoherence in their respective negotiating positions has generally weakened the position of the AGN in the UNFCCC negotiations.

Some of the main causes of fragmentation within the group are policy positions on climate change, which vary according to environmental and political priorities as well as the ways states are classified. For example, within the Group there is the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) that places emphasis on response measures. There are also the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) that are pushing for all large GHG emitters to take more responsibility in reaching the 2 degrees limit in temperature, while the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) have a particular interest in finance, technology transfer and adaptation. Within this mix South Africa stands out, not only as one of the continent's largest economies, but also as a significant contributor to GHG emissions. Internationally, it holds the 12<sup>th</sup> place.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.uneca.org/node/30/pages/african-group-negotiators-agn>

<sup>29</sup> <http://africasd.iisd.org/institutions/african-ministerial-conference-on-environment-amcen/>,

<sup>30</sup> In 2011, AMCEN invited institutions, African centers of excellence, the AUC, the AfDB, UNEP, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) and other development partners including the World Bank to support the elaboration of the research agenda in support of the African common positions. UNECA, 2011, <http://www.uneca.org/node/30/pages/african-group-negotiators-agn>.

Moreover, the challenge facing South Africa is that it is part of the AGN, but at the same time it is also aligned with other geo-political groupings including the BASIC that includes Brazil, South Africa, India and China. The BASIC group was established in 2009, initially to promote the Copenhagen Accord and to promote the interests of the G77 with regards to GHG emission reduction commitments. This all poses as a challenge that Africa as a continent is still working through.

Having assessed the key actors involved in the process of creating the African position on climate change, we want to **understand how these actors engage in the processes of creating the common position**. The process of creating the common position on climate change is largely developed within the various negotiating mechanisms of the UNFCCC leading up to the COP at the end of the year. These technical meetings have an impact on country-level priority setting and later building consensus within the RECs or key continental bodies.

## 2.4. The process to develop a common position on climate change and represent it at the negotiations

AGN consultations to determine negotiating positions at the COP aim to take a typically 'bottom-up' approach where technical consultations, led by country focal points to the UNFCCC (usually AGN representatives), take place among stakeholders at the national level. These national consultations are normally facilitated by country multi-sectoral climate change committees and are the starting point for determining climate change priorities and strategies. Following this, AGN members convene to assess outcomes of the previous COP, review national priorities and agendas, assign responsibilities for thematic focuses at the negotiations, nominate lead coordinators for key issues, and consolidate a draft common position. The AGN then presents the outcomes of their consultations for both technical and political oversight to AMCEN to review the common position. Finally, CAHOSCC meets to discuss the common position proposed from AMCEN and gives final recommendations and endorses it ahead of the COP.<sup>31</sup>

Representing this jointly formulated common position at the UNFCCC negotiations, and with a united African voice, has been challenging to the AGN. The chair of the AGN works with lead coordinators who represent the Group in the various thematic work streams of the negotiations (adaptation, mitigation, finance, technology, and so forth). These coordinators provide technical guidance to the group. In doing so, they have to reconcile the views of countries with different degrees of exposure to climate change, vulnerabilities, languages, cultures, and development approaches, so as to ensure that the group can reach common, well-grounded positions. During or after UNFCCC conferences, the coordinators also inform the group on sessions that not all country delegations could attend (as most African countries are usually represented by only one or two delegates) whereas some Parties have delegations of more than 50 negotiators. Without this practice, most African delegations would never be able to stay abreast of all the on-going UNFCCC processes.

The former Chair of the AGN at COP 19 explained that a particularly burdensome task of his and the lead coordinators is to review numerous party submissions in various thematic processes of the UNFCCC and obtain technical input from national and regional stakeholders. The Chair and lead coordinators regularly mobilize scientific and legal experts to review available knowledge and provide technical advice for developing positions in African Parties' interests. However, constraints such as the changing composition of country delegations, the frequent dearth of access to information, knowledge and expertise, language barriers, and lack of domestic resources to support the work of AGN representatives complicate the work of the AGN ahead of and during the negotiations.<sup>32</sup>

**In the run-up to COP 15**, African countries showed more willingness to act jointly and some scholars have argued that Africa was one of the most united groups at COP 15 articulating its position very well as a result of polishing the common position.<sup>33</sup> The proposal of a "common responsibility framework for mitigation" put forth by developed countries was perceived by Africa as blurring the distinction between the commitments of developed countries and those of developing countries, as laid down in the earlier

<sup>31</sup> This sequence was outlined by senior officials close to the coordination of the AGN and African national focal points to the UNFCCC.

<sup>32</sup> Makina, A. 2013. Managing Climate Change: The Africa Group in Multilateral Environmental Negotiations. [http://journal-iostudies.org/sites/journal-iostudies.org/files/JIOSfinal\\_4\\_2.pdf](http://journal-iostudies.org/sites/journal-iostudies.org/files/JIOSfinal_4_2.pdf) (accessed 28 January 2014).

<sup>33</sup> Masters, L. (2010) "Africa, climate change and Copenhagen: a post mortem," *Institute for Global Dialogue*, Issue 91.



mentioned CBDR-principle. Eventually, the African bloc and the EU reached a common position on climate finance, but developed countries only pledged 100 million USD.

**At the 2010 COP 16**, held in Cancun, African political leaders showed significant differences, especially among regional powers, whereas technical negotiators appeared united. It was nearly impossible to consolidate the political and technical positions.

One year later, in 2011, **at the COP 17 in Durban**, an African flagship partnership was created. This was the first time Africa had a dedicated platform at the conference for high-level engagement. This partnership was the result of preparation for the COP and support from continental institutions including the African Development Bank.

During the **last COP19, held in Warsaw in 2013**, Africa presented a common position. The African Group of Negotiators pointed out that historical responsibility in greenhouse gas emissions as well as loss and damage should be addressed. As a result, a 'Warsaw Mechanism for Loss and Damage' was established. This addresses loss and damage associated with impacts of climate change, including extreme events in the most vulnerable developing countries. However, the African Common Position remain fragile and there are still questions as to how long a consolidated common position can be sustained in future negotiations.

At the **COP 21 in Paris 2015**, a legally binding climate agreement is expected to be signed by all parties. Finding an agreement is crucial as Africa is facing significant adaptation costs; the Africa Adaptation Gap Report, compiled in 2013 by UNEP, estimates the costs of up to \$7-15 billion per year by 2020. At this point, it remains unclear how climate change will be financed. Also, the contested principle of CBDR should be revised, since the emissions of some African countries, such as South Africa, are so big that they can no longer not be considered as a 'developing country'.

Africa is still in the process of formulating a common position for 2015. This will be presented at the next **COP20 to be held in December 2014** in Lima, Peru. Hopefully, in 2015 all parties can come to a common agreement.

### 3. The Post-2015 Development Agenda

The reflections on and review processes of Africa's progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) within African countries as well as follow-up work on the implementation of Rio+20 Commitments provided key input for the Common Africa Position on the Post-2015 development agenda - the global goal framework that will succeed the MDGs. The final [Common African Position](#) (CAP) was launched at the end of February 2014 in N'Djamena, Chad.

The declaration highlights commitments in 6 pillars with aspirational objectives under each of them, these pillars are:

1. Structural Economic transformation and inclusive growth.
2. Science, technology and innovation.
3. People-centred development.
4. Environmental sustainability, natural resource management and disaster risk management.
5. Peace and Security.
6. Finance and Partnership.

The process establishing the final outcome document already dates back to November 2011, when the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in collaboration with the African Union Commission and the United Nations Development Programme's Regional Bureau for Africa (UNDP/RBA) held a [workshop](#) in Accra, Ghana to begin the process of formulating a common vision and position for the post-2015 agenda. 47 representatives of government, civil society and academia from 18 African countries attended this workshop, which was hosted by the National Development Planning Commission of Ghana. A key message emerging already from this meeting was the call for shifting the existing development paradigm away from aid and externally driven initiatives towards economic growth and transformation; which is mainly funded by domestic initiatives driven by developing countries themselves.

An important step towards the formulation of a common position of the African Union was the formal mandate the African Union Commission (AUC) received from the 20<sup>th</sup> African Union Summit in July 2012. African leaders mandated the AUC, ECA, the AfDB and UNDP to identify Africa's priorities for post-2015 and to continue to developing an African common position on post-2015 through extensive consultations with all stakeholders in the region.

Following this mandate, the AUC with its partners; UN Economic Commission for Africa, African Development Bank, UN Development Programme and the Regional Bureau for Africa, hosted three further consultations, which were instrumental in informing the first draft of the CAP on post-2015:

- The first took place in Mombasa, Kenya in October 2012 (16 Eastern and Southern African Countries were represented among the participants).
- This was followed by a meeting in Dakar, Senegal in December 2012 (participants represented 24 Central, Western and Northern African Countries).
- The final one in Hammamet, Tunisia in March 2013 (convening 43 African Countries. These consultations were complemented by an online survey, which received 330 responses from the different African sub-regions).

The outcomes of the consultation process were synthesized in an [overall report](#) and draft document for the Common African Position (CAP). The draft text had been build on various discussions that took place in the continent and involved many different stakeholders ranging from civil society organizations, the private sector, academia as well as governments and regional bodies. This first draft was submitted to the 21<sup>st</sup> AU Summit that took place in May 2013.

### 3.1 The Post-2015 Goals Converges with the Sustainable Development Goals

The draft acknowledges that the post-2015 agenda and a goal framework succeeding the MDGs should be convergent with the process on elaborating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the development of which was the key commitment agreed at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio+20). As these two processes were separate at first, African consultations on the follow-up of the Rio+20 Conference happened simultaneously to the post-MDG consultations, with a Rio+20 follow up meeting organized by UNECA with the AUC, the AfDB and UNDESA in November 2012, which was called 'Africa Regional Implementation Meeting (Africa-RIM). The Africa-RIM outcome document noted priority areas for the SDGs and agreed that SDG goals, targets and indicators should also be informed by the outcomes of the African process on the post-2015 development agenda. Similarly, the outcome document of the last post-2015 consultation meeting in Hammamet stated that the post-2015 development agenda process in Africa should incorporate the Rio+20 outcomes and outcomes of the Africa-wide initiatives and consultations.

Deliberations on converging the two processes were held at the 6<sup>th</sup> Joint Annual Meeting of the African Union Commission Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. This conference was held in March 2013 before the AU Summit in May 2013 and it called for taking the necessary steps to ensure a convergence between the post-2015 development agenda and the Rio+20 follow-up process. At the global level this convergence of the SDG and post-MDG processes into one single post-2015 global development agenda was confirmed later during the 68<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly in September 2013.

Rather than endorsing the [draft Common Africa Position](#), as originally envisaged, the [21<sup>st</sup> AU Summit requested](#) the AUC together with NEPAD, UNECA, AfDB, UNDP and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other relevant organisations to continue to engage with African Member States on the formulation of a common African position 'for consideration during the next Summit to be held in January 2014'. It further requested to establish a technical working group that can converge the post-2015 priorities into goals and targets for inclusion in the global SDG and post-2015 process.

## 3.2 The High Level Committee of Heads of State and Government

In parallel, a High Level Committee of Heads of State and Government (HLC) on the post-2015 development agenda was formed following recommendations of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. The decision of May 2013 of the African Union Summit, established the HLC of Heads of State and Government to sensitize and coordinate the activities of African leaders and build regional integration and an alliance on the common African Position.<sup>34</sup> Mrs Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia was appointed as Chairperson of this Committee, which also included two Heads of State per region.<sup>35</sup> The HLC was tasked to further synthesize and consult as necessary in order to finalize the CAP as well as to engage with the Africa Group in New York, to ensure that the CAP feeds into the post-2015 agenda. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf already had a good support team, experience and network for the post-2015 process, as she was part of the UN Secretary General-appointed High Level Panel on the post-2015 agenda.

The first meeting of the HLC was held in September 2013 in New York, on the sidelines of the 86th UN General Assembly, where it adopted a roadmap for the finalization of the draft CAP. But even before, the HLC circulated the draft CAP to all African Member States and RECs, conducted consultations with the Group of African Ambassadors in Geneva in July 2013 and took a number of consultations in Washington DC with African Ambassadors as well as with Permanent Representatives in New York at the UN.<sup>36</sup> After the HLC meeting in New York, the technical team and the Sherpas met several times to work on incorporating comments received from various stakeholders and on building consensus around priority areas. Part of the recommendations included emergence of a further Regional Consultative Meeting on the priorities for the SDGs, which was convened by The AUC and the AfDB at experts and ministerial level in October/November 2013 and adopted an outcome document with a number of goals for Africa to put forward in its common position. This process refined the draft CAP, which was presented to African leaders in January 2014 at the 22<sup>nd</sup> AU Heads of State and Government Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Summit of January 2014 welcomed the text and adopted the draft position in principle but also agreed to make some final changes to the draft, including the change of 'peace and security' from an 'enabler' to the status of key pillar, next to the pillars structural economic transformation and inclusive growth; science, technology and innovation; human-centred development; environmental sustainability, natural resources management and risk management of natural disasters; finance and partnership. The AU Summit thus requested the HLC to hold a meeting before June to ensure this inclusion of peace and security as the sixth pillar of the CAP. This meeting of the HLC took place in Chad in February 2014 at which the changes to the document were endorsed. In addition a strategy for taking the CAP to the global stage was discussed including advocacy, negotiations and how to build alliances were agreed in this meeting.

While the development of the CAP provided a good vehicle for African countries to arrive at a converged and harmonized common approach on the continent to communicate during the global process of negotiating the post-2015 development agenda, one of the main challenges now is to influence the post-2015 process globally with a unified voice. As part of the communication and advocacy strategy a formal launch event was held on June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014 at the African Union Commission in the presence of the Chairperson of the AUC, Dlamini-Zuma, as well as the Sherpas of the HLC and other guests. The event aimed at deepening ownership of the CAP within the African continent and understanding of the evolution of negotiations and advocacy efforts.

As mandated, the HLC continues to engage with other major groups around the world such as the G20, G77, the BRICS and the EU in order to forge alliances around the CAP. Although the Africa-EU Summit in April 2014 discussed post-2015 matters, these discussions did however not result in a Common Africa-EU position on the post-2015 agenda.

<sup>34</sup> [Common African Position \(CAP\) on the Post-2015 Development Agenda](#)

<sup>35</sup> In total it comprised 10 Heads of States from West Africa (Liberia and Guinea), North Africa (Algeria and Mauritania), Central Africa (Congo and Chad), East Africa (Ethiopia and Mauritius), Southern Africa (Namibia and South Africa).

<sup>36</sup> Source: Speech by Ellen Johnston Sirleaf: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201403290083.html?page=2>

## 4. Conclusion

Examining of Africa's progress on the global issues of aid effectiveness, climate change and the post-2015 agenda, it is clear that there is a mix of approaches and actors that are involved in the process of creating African common positions. The three case studies provide a broad overview of how Africa is making significant strides on formulating a united front in its engagement with international partners over issues that are important not only to the continent of Africa, but the global system too. Increasingly, international actors and processes are coming to the realization that African countries are beginning to work together to create unique perspectives and positions that should be valued.

In all three case studies, it is evident that the NPCA, the AUC and champions of African countries have been largely responsible for the coordination of the processes of African Common Positions. There is no single template that dictates the way of creating common positions; instead processes have been tailored to the situation/ global issue concerned under a series of discussions. The trajectory of processes is not always predefined and evolves depending on the needs that manifest themselves.

In recent year however, there has been a consistent effort to formulate common positions ahead of key moments and events in the global agenda. Political mandates are often provided by the African Union Summit of heads of States, as they can delegate political follow-up with African ministers. Technical follow-up and support is delegated to working groups or platforms that are supported by key institutions such as the AUC, NPCA, AfDB, UNECA and many more. African negotiators also find it important to form international coalitions that push their agenda forward. These engagements often happen at the technical level.

Certainly, the processes of creating and consolidating African position has been a complex task; however the issues of aid effectiveness, climate change and the post-2015 agenda have initiated the creation of the necessary mechanisms and avenues of dialogue between African countries on both political and technical levels. Africa as a unified continent will hopefully continue to develop these inter-linkages between its states to deliver concrete and effective decisions in the international system.

### **ECDPM Briefing Notes**

ECDPM Briefing Notes present policy findings and advice, prepared and disseminated by Centre staff in response to specific requests by its partners. The aim is to stimulate broader reflection and debate on key policy questions relating to EU external action, with a focus on relations with countries in the South.

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