

ALFA2017

AFRICAN LEARNING FORUM ON ADAPTATION

Towards a Climate Resilient Africa

This communiqué represents the voices of participants who attended the Africa Learning Forum on Adaptation (ALFA2017) in Saly, Senegal, March 2017.

Coming from 52 African and global government and non-state organisations working across the spectrum of adaptation policy, finance, practice, capacity building and research, in 23 African countries ALFA2017 deliberated on the significant threat climate change poses to Africa's sustainable development and how an increased commitment to people centred adaptation and collaborative learning could address this serious issue.

Communiqué - May 2017

New thinking needed for Adaptation in Africa

Urgent and purposeful adaptation actions from all actors is essential in addressing the threats climate change poses to development and vulnerability in Africa. Solving these challenges will not be achieved with a one-size-fits-all approach. Climate resilience requires locally determined actions that take into account the interests and different vulnerabilities of the local community and ecosystem, and which have the flexibility to respond to the risks and impacts of climate change over time. Climate resilient development is therefore a product of people's capabilities in a particular context, beyond technological interventions.

The challenge of climate change is too big for any one actor to address alone. Organisations and individuals need to learn from each other and put their heads together for collective understanding and action. To keep up with a changing climate, approaches to adaptation and resilience need to focus on flexible decision-making and build skills to anticipate and respond to future uncertainty and ongoing change. This calls for mechanisms that integrate continual reflection and learning.

There is therefore great urgency to deepen existing relationships and to create new learning partnerships that engage a broader diversity of actors and sectors to participate in the co-creation of new knowledge.

Knowledge brokering by all stakeholders for ongoing resilience at scale

Knowledge brokering supports and facilitates social and anticipatory learning processes, local knowledge creation, and knowledge exchange between climate science, social sciences and local and indigenous knowledge. It incorporates practical experience and builds the institutional relationships needed. Knowledge brokers foster institutional linkages, collective action, monitoring and feedback loops and coordinated climate services. The practice of knowledge brokering is an essential contribution to Africa's adaptation efforts and is a role and skill that needs to be taken up across all adaptation actors. ALFA2017 deliberately brought together stakeholders, all of whom are called upon to take on the role of knowledge broker.

THERE IS A CRITICAL NEED TO BUILD:

Systemic capacity for informed and adaptive decision-making processes

Individual and collective resilience under increased uncertainty and risk

The needed enabling environment and support for local action

With adaptive capacity and decision-making processes at the heart of an effective approach to climate resilience, knowledge brokering becomes essential.

A cross section of participating organisations from research, practice and policy are working together to develop further knowledge brokering capacity, knowledge and commitment towards realising a climate resilient Africa. This communiqué is a call to maintain momentum on adaptation learning and to strengthen multi-actor and cross-sector learning structures such as ALFA.

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CALL TO ACTION

The African Learning Forum on Adaptation 2017 reinforced the call for all adaptation initiatives, plans and financing to be underpinned by continuous learning, the exchange of actionable knowledge, and the strengthening of community and institutional capacity. The participants of ALFA2017 pledged to maintain momentum on adaptation learning, and to strengthen ongoing, multi-actor and cross-sector learning structures. Knowledge brokering mechanisms on adaptation emerged as an essential pre-condition to achieving climate resilient development in Africa - a new discipline to be taken up by all stakeholders. An inclusive network of practitioners, policy-makers, adaptation financiers and researchers, together with strong climate knowledge brokering roles is critical toward addressing Africa's climate adaptation knowledge and practice needs.

1. FOCUS ADAPTATION DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION ON STRENGTHENING ADAPTIVE CAPACITY

Researchers and practitioners develop dynamic decision-making pathways that are participatory. This will help facilitate locally determined, forward-looking actions and services which are inclusive of and respond to diverse and changing vulnerabilities and aspirations.

2. INCLUDE MULTI-ACTOR AND MULTI-LEVEL LEARNING MECHANISMS IN ADAPTATION INNOVATION

Knowledge brokers facilitate actors in the co-creation of knowledge to support well-informed, anticipatory and proactive responses. This cultivates a culture of learning to connect people, places, practices and policies.

3. STRENGTHEN CAPACITY FOR KNOWLEDGE BROKERING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Knowledge brokers build capacity of all stakeholders to ensure that cross sector, cross disciplinary and multi-level learning, innovation and knowledge exchange is well facilitated and leads to desired impacts.

4. SIMPLIFY AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO CLIMATE FINANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Climate finance structures prioritise resourcing of adaptation initiatives that promote innovation, inclusive decision making processes and sustainable systems for responding flexibly to change. In doing this, finance is also targeted to support knowledge brokering activities throughout project lifecycles.

5. LINK CLIMATE FINANCE WITH NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANS

Climate finance structures and national budgets support integration of adaptation in sector and local development, and risk management. They enable context-specific, multi-actor, local-level and coordinated decision making and action, without predetermined solutions, and on an ongoing basis.

ACHIEVING THIS CALL DEMANDS THREE AREAS OF CHANGE

Facilitate effective adaptation and climate resilience

- Integrate decision making and climate services in sector and local plans.
- Integrate risk management and development action.
- Focus on participatory, inclusive, timely and flexible responses.
- Strengthen adaptive capacity, local leadership and innovation.
- Include local knowledge and voices, gender, social and political considerations.

Strengthen the role of learning and knowledge brokering

- Facilitate ongoing multi-actor interdisciplinary learning platforms.
- Promote vertical and horizontal linkages across climate change efforts.
- Support prioritisation and translation of research into practical use that meets real needs.
- Build a collaborative network of knowledge and information sharing.
- Translate and tailor climate science, local knowledge and research.

Ensure climate finance contributes to a climate resilient Africa

- Use evidence and experience from innovation, implementation and research to inform financing decisions.
- Contribute to development agendas, the sustainable development goals, and avoid duplication.
- Develop guidelines and minimum standards on adaptation good practice.
- Reduce complexity of financing modalities and increase capacity.
- Make long-term, dynamic investment commitments.



Learn more about ALFA: <https://sites.google.com/site/adaptationlearningforum2017>