

Regional Workshop on Civil Society Readiness to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Kampala (Uganda) Summary statement

Co-organised by the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) and CARE International¹

From 20-22 June 2017, civil society representatives from Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Zambia and from organisations implementing the GCF CSO readiness project² convened in Kampala, Uganda, for a regional GCF CSO readiness workshop (held back to back with the 11th Community-based Adaptation Conference). The workshop also included engagement with government officials in the host country.

The workshop pursued the **objectives** of sharing knowledge and experience on GCF readiness and engagement matters from various African countries; inform about the objectives and activities of the CSOs readiness to the GCF project; learn about recent development and challenges around the GCF; identify effective strategies to overcome barriers for CSO engagement and increase the impact that African civil society; agree ways of working together to enhance exchange across the region, and develop a road map to guide CSO activities at the national and regional levels.

Participants highlighted the important role that the [Green Climate Fund \(GCF\)](#) is expected to play in order to assist highly vulnerable developing countries including those in Eastern and Southern Africa, in particular their vulnerable populations, in shifting to low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways. The **success of the GCF is in the common interest of governments and civil society, and not at the least the intended beneficiaries**, in developing countries, but also of the global community as a whole. This common interest provides an important basis for identifying strategies and approaches for working together effectively, constructive where possible and critical where necessary.

Participants identified **different roles and contributions that CSOs** can bring to the table, noting that different organisations might have different priorities and strengths. Experience in on-the-ground implementation of climate-relevant activities, both mitigation and adaptation, can be conducive to designing, submitting and implementing effective GCF programmes. Expertise and capacity in the functioning of the GCF, both globally and nationally, is not only important for CSOs to be appreciated and respected as critical dialogue partners with government representatives, GCF structures (like NDAs) or implementing entities, but also to contribute to the capacity development of these and other relevant stakeholders, including the beneficiaries of projects. Policy engagement and advocacy experience can play a role highlighting and promoting solutions to issues identified as critical or problematic

With these different roles also come **responsibilities**. Those identified included the responsibility to be informed and stay on top of the GCF debate, identify joint priorities when engaging with government institutions, transparency in the interests pursued and activities undertaken, and accountability.

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² The event took place in the context of the project “GCF CSO readiness for the Green Climate Fund – Africa focus” funded by the International Climate Initiative (ICI) of the German Federal Ministry for Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) on behalf of the German Bundestag.

An essential element of the workshop was **extensive experience sharing** on the GCF state of play in African countries, including from a West-African regional workshop which took place in late May. This exchange of experience brought to the forefront both good and weak practice in the ways that key GCF-related institutions in the countries handle matters such as transparency, clear and structured engagement of CSOs (and other stakeholders), provision of information on key GCF matters, and procedures of generating project proposals from a country to the GCF. It also showed ways of how CSOs can actively and productively engage and work together, but also highlighted the need for good coordination and self-capacitation to be relevant counterparts.

Participants also identified a number of **challenges** that need to be addressed. With regard to information challenges, this includes for example the need to increase capacity in obtaining and processing the multiple information that is available (e.g. on the GCF website) and limited access to relevant information in certain areas (e.g. GCF website does not publicise all supporting documents to project proposals; national institutions do not always provide necessary information in a transparent and timely manner). Other challenges discussed include limited capacities and financial resources to invest time into understanding and engaging on the GCF in-country (and globally) and for designing impactful proposals and accessing resources from the GCF.

The workshop participants identified a **range of potential next steps** towards a roadmap for enhance the effectiveness of CSO engagement in relation to the GCF, both nationally as well as regionally. This includes using and disseminating existing tools more proactively, such as GCF fact sheets; sharing agendas and learnings from national workshops and frameworks for state-of-play assessments etc.; actively sharing proceedings and outcomes of the workshop with CSO constituencies in their home countries; starting to develop national CSO strategies towards GCF engagement; proactively building up relationships with NDAs, implementing entities with a defined common agenda and agreed terms of engagement etc., disseminating information about the GCF in the general public; using other meeting and workshop opportunities to capacitate on the GCF; maintain exchange of information among the participants as well as more strongly linking up to the global CSO community working on the GCF board level.

The **participants request key institutions** – NDAs and national focal points, relevant ministries, implementing entities, the GCF Board and the GCF Secretariat – to step up their efforts in ensuring transparent and accountable procedures at all levels and structured and effective engagement of civil society, while highlighting the need for civil society to do its part for engaging responsibly and effectively bringing its strength to the table, as a relevant player for the common interest of making the GCF succeed.

Overall strengthening the engagement of civil society actors and organisations from Africa in the GCF processes at the national level is an important step to scale-up existing CSOs capacities to advocate for ambitious proposals, bring on-the-ground expertise to the table and ensure accountability of GCF-funded activities by national authorities through a broader societal mobilisation for transformation and better impacts. Furthermore, African CSOs can as well play a relevant role in the international aspects of the GCF, such as during Board meetings discussions, given that just few African civil society representatives are currently engaged at that level. The regional workshop served as an important opportunity to step up efforts based on joint learning and experience sharing, in order to increasingly contribute to an effective functioning of the GCF for the benefits of vulnerable people and the planet.