

# **Orientation workshop for new members of the Young African Lawyers (YAL) Programme on Climate Change**

## **CCDA-VI Pre- event**

**17-18 October 2016**

**UN Conference Center, Addis Ababa**

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### **Background**

The global climate change negotiations under the UNFCCC process usually culminates in a legally binding treaty, or agreement (such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement), and instruments for enforcement. Inevitably, each Party to the negotiation must fully understand the legal ramifications and implications for engagement. Historically, the participation of African lawyers in climate change negotiation processes has unfortunately been limited, exacerbating the potential risks inherent in any legally-binding interest-based process. In recognition of the importance of increasing the engagement of African lawyers and building their capacity to support the continent's multilateral climate negotiations from an Africa perspective, the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) of the Economic Commission for Africa developed a partnership programme for African lawyers and training institutions on climate change issues. The programme has an overarching goal of strengthening Africa's negotiating position and ensuring Africa gets the best possible deal under the UNFCCC process. It also provides the opportunity for building a critical mass of expertise of young African Lawyers on climate change to support national responses to climate change through the formulation of policies, strategies and laws.

The ClimDev-Africa Young Africa Lawyers (YAL) Programme commenced in 2015. That same year the programme made an indelible impact on both the African and global climate scenes. For example, the young lawyers played important roles during the buildup processes of the global climate negotiation that culminated in the adoption of the Paris Agreement during COP21 in Paris. During this process they illuminated Africa's participation through an unwavering focus on Africa's interests in the global negotiation process. The YAL members diligently reviewed and debated each clause of the draft negotiation text before crafting and proposing amendments to the lead negotiators to ensure that Africa's core interests were always safeguarded. Their participation was welcomed and widely applauded even

beyond the Continent. In the history of Africa's engagement in multilateral negotiations, this was the first time that all the lead negotiators were provided with instant legal backstopping services.

Public and policy awareness of the programme has grown significantly resulting in heightened interests from countries and youth groups anxious to become members of the programme. This is in line with the strategic vision of the programme to build a critical mass of well-trained African lawyers on the global climate change negotiations and national climate change response. In response to this heightened demand, and to build national ownership of the programme, an invitation letter was sent to the UNFCCC national focal point of all 54 member states requesting a nominee for the 2016-17 YAL programme. Twenty responses were received and all nominees have been carefully reviewed through a fair and transparent process. The selection of new YAL members was concluded in line with available financial resources. An orientation workshop members is currently being organized.

## **Objective**

The workshop objective is to formally welcome and to begin grooming the new members to support national responses to climate change and also provide vital support to the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) lead coordinators during the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP), and during the Subsidiary Bodies (SBI & SBSTA) sessions.

The inception workshop will provide a forum for interaction between the new and old members as well as the mentors of the programme. In addition to revisiting the Paris Agreement, there will be opportunities to discuss and plan for its implementation as it goes into force following its ratification by member states.

## **Deliverables**

1. Inception workshop report highlighting the induction, mock experiences and review of the Paris Agreement and mode of engagement with the implementation of the agreement.
2. A proposed work plan for the YAL Programme for 2016/2017.