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The first projections based on INDCs submitted indicate warming will increase by around 3°C, short of the 2°C target. What happens now?

- ◆ The first point to make is that the INDC process has been a significant first step in bringing all parties together in a bid to reduce emissions.
- ◆ In my view, if the world really wants to uphold its 2°C target, we must insist that the heaviest polluting countries go back to their obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as set out in the Kyoto Protocol. As things stand, INDCs will indeed slow down the growth rate of emissions but they won't allow us to avoid temperature increases that will lead to dangerous and irreversible climate change.

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Financing INDCs is a topic of hot debate. What are the prospects for African countries in raising the funds needed to support their plans?

- ◆ Our methodological outline was designed to distinguish mitigation actions a country could implement using local resources, and targets they could achieve with additional external support including financial resources, capacity building and technology transfer. It's

common spirit in fully engaging with the process. However, how they uphold that same spirit, will be determined by the outcome in Paris with regards to the means of implementation of the INDC.

- ◆ not yet clear whether the UNFCCC's analysis of INDCs will capture this distinction and it will be interesting to see how this pans out.
- ◆ All eyes will be on the decision in Paris to see whether there will be funding to implement INDCs. What's almost certain is that raising the finance will be a significant challenge for African countries.

About ClimDev-Africa

The ClimDev-Africa Programme is an initiative of the African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). It is mandated at the highest level by African leaders (AU Summit of Heads of State and Government). The Programme was established to create a solid foundation for Africa's response to climate change and works closely with other African and non-African institutions and partners specialised in climate and development.

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Supporting **INDCs** in Africa



United Nations
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Q&A: Supporting INDCs in Africa

Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) set out national intentions of how individual countries plan to tackle climate change, and will contribute to the new international climate deal to be agreed at COP21 in Paris.

Following the second informal deadline for nations to submit their plans, Dr Johnson Nkem, Senior Climate Adaptation Expert at the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) discusses challenges faced during the INDC process, sticking points in the Lima text and the thorny issue of financing to implement these plans.

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ACPC has been providing technical support to some African countries as they prepare their INDCs. What have been the main challenges?

- ◆ The first major challenge was unpacking the language in the Lima text on INDCs. The agreement included a number of indicators to help countries structure their plans to reduce emissions, using keywords such as reference point, base year and time frame.
- ◆ A country might, for example, set a target for emissions of peaking and declining after a base year, or reach zero net emissions by a certain date.
- ◆ Establishing such targets requires a high level of scientific analysis of current data and existing mitigation activities. With very little guidance on how to interpret the specific indicators in the Lima outcome, building an understanding of what these terms meant for African countries was an important first stage.
- ◆ In practice, predetermined targets of emission reductions are only appropriate for countries that have reached a certain level of development and can project with some accuracy when their emissions will peak. African countries are in varying stages of development with many experiencing rapid economic growth. Even with visions to pursue low-carbon pathways, emissions from major sectors – such as agriculture and transport – will increase significantly in the coming decades as new infrastructure is built. Furthermore, emission levels hinge on support in capacity building, technology transfer and financial assistance.
- ◆ We convened groups of African and international experts to work through these sticking points in some detail and, with their input, es-

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Some of the countries ACPC supported in preparing INDCs requested multiple support which meant a number of different organisations contributing to the process. How did that work?

- ◆ The involvement of multiple organisations enriched the process as each held a different view on how to develop INDCs. But these differing viewpoints brought with them another level of challenge, leading to some tough decisions. For example, some organisations wanted to set mitigation reduction targets at an economy-wide level while others insisted this should be done by sector.
- ◆ In our view there were flaws with both these approaches; most African countries do not have the systems in place to aggregate emissions and generate economy-wide targets while pledging mitigation contributions by sector requires corresponding actions to achieve that target - which in most cases hadn't been established.
- ◆ ACPC pushed for an action-based approach by which a country can calculate very exact, quantified emission reductions for a particular action undertaken – for example, producing a certain number of solar water heaters, distributing energy saving cook stoves to a set number of households or increasing the generation of hydroelectric power within a fixed time frame. By attaching targets to specific projects actions, countries are able to determine emission reductions with a high degree of accuracy, putting them in a much stronger position of achieving their targets. After in-depth discussions, all parties eventually agreed to this action-based approach.

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In your view, what is the most vital ingredient in getting an INDC right?

- ◆ Mapping INDCs against existing national development strategies is absolutely essential if plans are to be implemented successfully. Production of ethanol fuel, for example, is central to Malawi's

established our methodological framework for INDCs.

- ◆ It was also essential that the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) agreed our methodology addressed all the elements that would be important within the negotiations – such as adaptation, means of implementation and capacity building, as well as mitigation. The AGN fully endorsed our methodology, clearing the way for us to set up inception workshops with the countries that had requested our support.

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INDCs are an opportunity for African countries to show how they plan to cut their own emissions as well as adapt to climate change. How did different countries approach these two elements in their plans?

Mitigation and adaptation have long been framed as separate elements and - with the biggest emitters responsible for the majority of climate damage at one end of the spectrum and developing countries grappling with the consequences at the other - there are obvious reasons for that.

But this, in my view, is also something of an oversight since adaptation activities often reduce emissions while mitigation contributions can serve adaptation. The regeneration of degraded lands across Ethiopia, for example, is classed as adaptation by improving soil fertility in increasing crop yields but the millions of new trees planted mitigate climate change by absorbing significant quantities of carbon dioxide. Similarly, distributing clean, efficient cook stoves reduces emissions but also brings strong adaptation benefits; with improved health and livelihoods through less exposure to indoor pollution, communities are more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

African countries have long been preoccupied with adaptation without establishing robust, trackable frameworks of mitigation. The INDC process really highlighted that there are already a lot of mitigation benefits intertwined with existing adaptation activities that are not counted. The process raised awareness of the need to track emission reductions as part of these activities.

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At this stage INDCs are just indicative pledges – it's not yet clear how countries will be held accountable to their contributions. Do you think this has made countries less ambitious in their plans?

I wouldn't say less ambitious, but perhaps more cautious in terms of what they put on the table and may be bound to at a later date. How or whether INDCs become legally binding will be a major point of interest in Paris. Based on INDCs submitted, there is a sharp contrast in the levels of ambition and orientation of the INDC. I think African countries have really demonstrated a