



Young African Lawyers (YAL) Programme on Climate Change



About the Programme

In recognition of the importance of addressing the impacts of climate change comprehensively, and the unique roles and responsibilities of lawyers in the process, the Young African Lawyers (YAL) programme brings together young and motivated African lawyers in integrating climate change responses into Africa's development agenda. Their role in advocating, educating and supporting the formulation and enforcement of multilateral agreements, policies and regulations cannot be over emphasised.

Programme Goal

The Young African Lawyers Programme (YAL) established under the ClimDev-Africa Programme has the overarching goal of strengthening African's negotiating position and ensuring Africa gets the best possible deal under the UNFCCC process. The programme is providing opportunities for building the expertise of young African Lawyers on climate change in order to support national responses

of African countries to address climate change through formulation of policies, strategies and laws.

Programme activities so far

It currently has a membership of 12 lawyers drawn from nine countries (Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda and Zambia) on the basis of their knowledge-base of the UNFCCC processes. YAL members are directly involved in the design and negotiation of a new legally binding international climate agreement.

YAL members are assisting Lead coordinators of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) in negotiation leading to a new legally binding international climate agreement by providing legal advice to ensure that Africa's interests are reflected in the agreement. YAL will continue to assist African Lead coordinators and African countries post-2015 in the multi-lateral and national response to address climate change.

Programme Mentors

The programme is under the guidance of two seasoned lawyers experienced in Multilateral Environmental Agreements who act as mentors. Dr. Seth Osafo, former senior legal adviser of the UNFCCC Secretariat, is the Lead Mentor; supported by Mr. Matthew Stilwell, a climate change expert and legal adviser to the African Group of Negotiators, while Ms. Selam Kidane Abebe a lawyer and member of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) coordinates the programme. There are also guest speakers who are occasionally invited to provide training and seminal talks. By working interactively with the members of the African Group of Negotiators and participating in the various sessions and intersessions of the UNFCCC negotiation processes, they provide hands-on training for young lawyers including in the drafting of texts for the negotiation.

Way Forward

With the availability of additional resources and support, the programme plans to expand to other interested participants and legal institutions across Africa in developing the knowledge-base of legal experts on climate change issues.



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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