

Africa Climate Conference 2013

Addressing Priority Research Gaps to Inform Adaptation Decision-Making in Africa

Concept Note

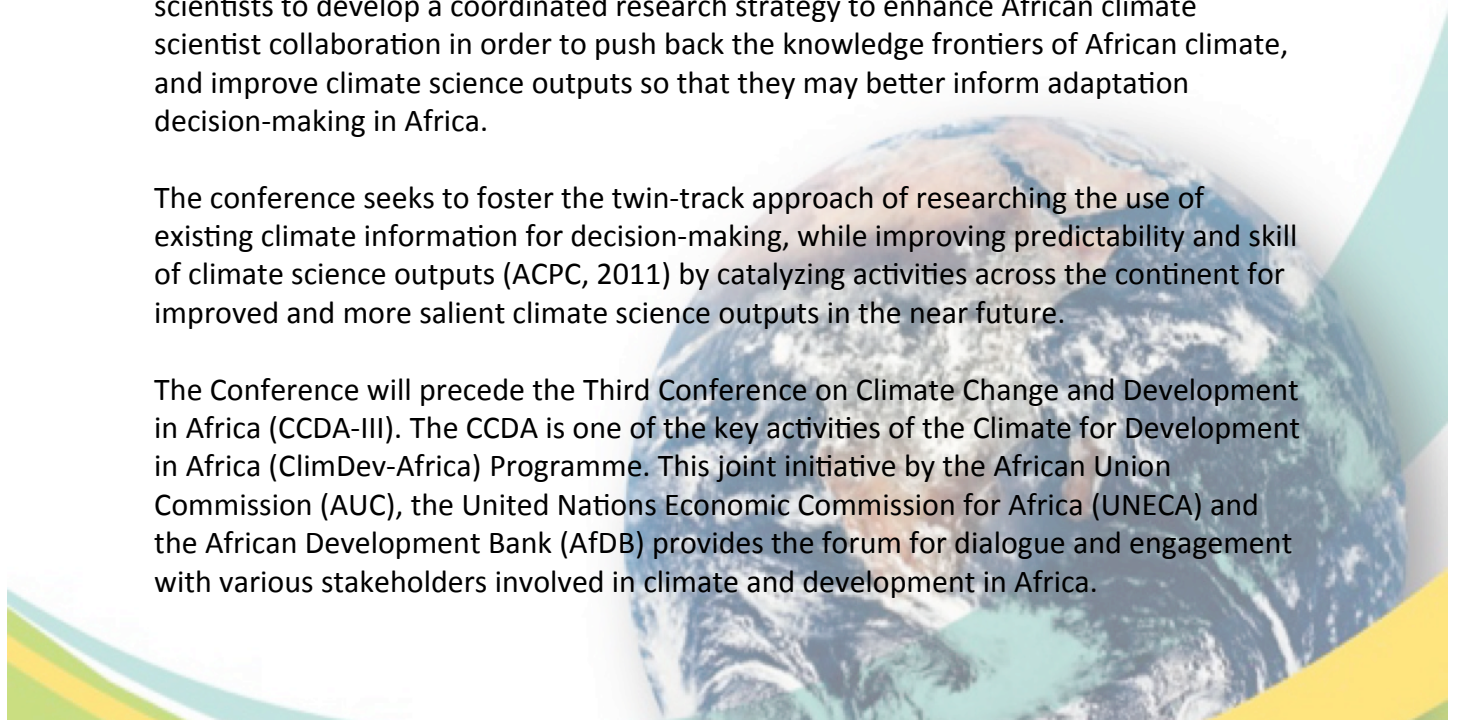
Limits to knowledge impose tenacious boundaries and restrict the usability of climate information for African decision-makers and communities most vulnerable to current and future impacts of a changing climate. As the continent predicted to be the second hardest hit by Climate Change impacts, immediately following polar zones (IPCC, 2007), Africa has a stake in improving the skill and salience of its climate research outputs. Current and future African climate research must be both informed and driven by the critical adaptation needs of African decision-makers in Africa, at national, regional and local levels, striving to adapt under an uncertain climate future.

As such, there is a need to bring together African decision-makers and climate researchers and scientists, around the common goals of identifying the state of knowledge on the African climate system, identifying current gaps in climate knowledge, developing a framework for mainstreaming climate information into decision making, and defining and driving an African agenda for future climate research that will inform adaptation decisions, today, and by the mid- to end 21st century.

The **African Climate System Conference 2013** proposes to narrow the large gap currently existing between African decision-makers and climate researchers and scientists to develop a coordinated research strategy to enhance African climate scientist collaboration in order to push back the knowledge frontiers of African climate, and improve climate science outputs so that they may better inform adaptation decision-making in Africa.

The conference seeks to foster the twin-track approach of researching the use of existing climate information for decision-making, while improving predictability and skill of climate science outputs (ACPC, 2011) by catalyzing activities across the continent for improved and more salient climate science outputs in the near future.

The Conference will precede the Third Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA-III). The CCDA is one of the key activities of the Climate for Development in Africa (ClimDev-Africa) Programme. This joint initiative by the African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) provides the forum for dialogue and engagement with various stakeholders involved in climate and development in Africa.



Climate Research Frontiers

The Africa Climate Conference 2013 Steering Committee has developed a foundational paper on the research frontiers in climate research in Africa, framed from the perspective of user decision support needs, which will form the basis of the conference agenda.

There are three key issues that must be addressed through the frontiers. One is the priority to build interdisciplinary capacity, in other words to link three distinct communities – stakeholder users, research, and interface practitioners. The second is how to integrate multiple lines of evidence - historical data, global climate and regional model data, and process understanding - to deliver robust messages. Finally, there is the need to identify the limit of information and to quantify uncertainty.

Objectives

The overarching goal of the Africa Climate Conference 2013 is to craft an Africa wide agenda on climate research for sustainable development, linked to existing continental policy processes, partners and institutions (regional, national and sub-national) to deliver an Africa agenda on climate research, while addressing global research needs.

- 1) Provide a wide international forum to exchange understanding on the current state of knowledge of the African climate and the drivers of African climate variability and change.*
- 2) Deepen and broaden the consensus, begun at CCDA-II, on the priority knowledge gaps/climate science frontiers that need to be addressed.*
- 3) Review and assess the state of knowledge on each climate science frontier identified (from the mapping of knowledge gaps in 1), through presentations by leading researchers in each field.*
- 4) Identify missing links and obstacles that will need to be overcome in order to bridge African climate science and applications.*
- 5) Develop pan-African climate research program proposals for each critical climate science frontier, for funding submission.*
- 6) Leverage national, regional and international sources of funding to advance climate research for sustainable development in Africa.*
- 7) Develop and strengthen the network of climate researchers and practitioners working on the African climate system, building on existing national/regional/continental climate research institutions and knowledge hubs.*
- 8) Create a platform for knowledge sharing, advocacy and consensus building for climate research in Africa to serve sustainable development needs.*

