



NEWSLETTER

May 2012

Welcome to the first Newsletter of the Adaptation Network in 2012. This edition focuses on COP17 in Durban, and features reflections made by various 2011 steering committee members on their COP17 experience.

The newsletter also outlines some of what has taken place in the Network since the last newsletter, including the set-up of the website, the general meeting in Limpopo in May 2011 and the Annual General Meeting that took place in March 2012.

COP17 reflections from the 2011 steering committee

Dr Sylvester Mpandeli, Specialist Advisor: Climate Change Adaptation, Department of Environmental Affairs

“COP itself was difficult, especially for South Africa being at the center of it all. It was not an easy process. Still, I feel it was a good COP, inclusive and transparent, and a great learning curve for South Africans.”



Colleagues, let me acknowledged up-front that this it was not going to be an easy COP, especially after the Copenhagen events. As part of team South Africa, we really appreciate your support throughout preparations, negotiations and during this COP.

My role in the Department of Environmental Affairs is to make sure that adaptation issues are well taken care of. As champions of adaptation activities in this country, we also need to bear in mind that even if we come up with good plans or outcomes such as the National Adaptation Plan, Programmes, Projects and so on, we still need means of support to drive adaptation issues on the ground. I am aware that not everyone is happy about Durban outcomes, but I believe that as South Africans we need to appreciate the fact that we managed to revive the Kyoto Protocol process, and also managed to secure the Green Climate Fund, the Programme on the Loss and Damage, the Nairobi Work Programme and the Adaptation Committee (AC). The latter, the AC, was a big issue during COP17. There were big discussions, based on four main issues. Firstly, there was disagreement on the set up of the AC, around the number of representatives from the different regional groupings, and on the number of Annex I country representatives versus representatives from Non-Annex I countries. It has for example been proposed that 60% of the AC representatives should be from Annex I countries, which the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and small island states, among others, are not agreeing to. Secondly, there was disagreement around elements of governance, especially in relation to funding. While LDCs argue that Annex I countries should not be involved in decisions on the way that the adaptation funding is spent, Annex I countries argue that if they provide resources they would like to also have input on how the money is spent. Thirdly, there was an issue around linkages. While it is not desirable that the AC stands alone, linking with for example the finance committee, the technology committee and the capacity committee means that barriers and challenges from those committees are carried into the AC. Lastly, it is the issue of reporting, and so who the AC is supposed

to report to. The final decision at COP on the AC representation did go in favour of developing countries with their being a decision that there will be 16 members on the committee in total that represent all five United Nations regional groups, small island developing States, Least Developed Countries, Annex 1 and non-Annex 1 countries. So while some agreements were made at COP17, for example in relation to the governance issues and on representation, I can see heavy discussions ahead at the next meetings, which take place in Bonn in March.

Sarshen Marais, Director for Policy and Markets at Conservation South Africa

“COP17 was incredible in terms of learning and networking. As for the negotiations there were some important moves forward, but we need to continue doing work within our own country and not just wait for the negotiations process to move further forward before implementation as the timelines are too long.”



There were some very important decisions made in terms of a global commitment to a legally binding deal in the future and developments in adaptation, such as the operationalisation of the committee, the development of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process and advancements in the Nairobi Working Programme (NWP) around ecosystem based adaptation and water. The operationalisation of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) was also a key outcome.

For me there were two important highlights that stood out after returning from COP17 in Durban. Firstly, I was involved in producing and presenting a booklet on Ecosystem based Adaptation, “Biodiversity, Climate Change and Sustainable Development,” which was presented at a high level panel discussion, supported by our Ministers for Home Affairs and Trade and Industry, as well as representatives from Brazil and Indian government and NGOs, WWF and Conservation International. The booklet received some amazing response, and plans for a follow up booklet focusing on similar approaches in Latin America are now underway in the buildup for Rio +20, and then again in India for the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 11) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Secondly, I became familiar with an important initiative, the Adaptation Partnership between Costa Rica, Spain and the US, focused on dedicated effort and support towards adaptation. The Adaptation Partnership will be organising a workshop in Costa Rica in March, where I will possibly be attending and presenting on experiences from South Africa. I see the partnership as what can potentially become a valuable space for the South African adaptation sector, facilitating multilateral sharing of information and knowledge.

I would like to thank the South African delegation for what I experienced as a transparent negotiation process, where delegates were welcoming to inputs from myself and others from civil society on adaptation issues. Conservation South Africa also had some really positive engagements with the business sector through presenting at various events and through a partnership between the Cambridge Programme for Sustainable Leadership and Wildlands Conservation Trust and Ogilvy Earth. The four organizations hosted various conferences, one on one interviews and fresh thinking panel discussions with key businesses and government representatives at a venue called the Oasis in Durban. At the Oasis very creative and dynamic ideas were formed and important connections and relationships developed for future advancements around adaptation.

Noel Oettle, Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG)

“COP 17 provided an excellent opportunity for interacting with colleagues from across the world who work on similar issues, for sharing knowledge and insights and for developing and implementing common strategies. I met up with many of my contacts, but because of busy schedules there were many that I did not get to see.”



I travelled to the COP with some farmers and artisanal fishers whom we work with around climate challenges, and together we were involved in a number of events. In partnership with Rhodes University, Penn State University and Indigo, EMG co-organised an official side event titled “Gender, Justice and Social Learning: Exploring Theory and Practice in Adaptation.” I chaired a panel whose speakers ranged from academics, to practitioners, to farmers. The event brought a sound theoretical framework together with practical examples of implementation, and was very well attended.

I also took part in the SADC Networks networking dinner, which was a great opportunity to link up with practitioners from all over the region. The briefings on the COP process by Saleemul Huq of IIED and Richard Worthington of WWF were very informative and sobering.

With Indigo, the Adaptation Network and Drynet, we co-organised an interactive workshop for practitioners, farmers and artisanal fishers. The workshop enabled participants to learn experientially as well as from theoretical inputs, and generated a very positive spirit.

The Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the South African Government co-organised Land Day during the second week of the COP, and I had the opportunity to present some insights from the ground with the international panel and participants, and to remind them that innovations such as Climate Smart Agriculture frequently contain within them pitfalls that have not yet been uncovered, but which might have serious negative impacts on the poor in dryland areas.

EMG also organised an event with farmers and artisanal fishers in the C17 venue at the University of KwaZulu Natal. The fishers and farmers presented their experiences in such an engaging way that a great deal of enthusiasm was generated.

At the COP I focused mainly on learning and networking, but I think that for the next COP EMG will focus more on the negotiations. The move towards a more integrated approach to mitigation and adaptation is an issue that our Network must critically assess and engage with.

Malusi Vatsha, IndaloYethu

“COP17 created a good opportunity for engaging with a number of stakeholders, and discuss current and potential future projects.”



COP17 was a busy time where I was caught up in a number of activities organised by IndaloYethu. IndaloYethu, had an aggressive social Mobilization concept, a climate train that traveled through 17 towns, mobilizing communities for COP 17 and raising climate change awareness by planting trees in each of the towns. In each town there were set of activities that included, dances by learners, poetry, art work displays, speeches and so on. Inside the train there was an exhibition room with learning resources. In Durban we had similar activities organized. The train was welcomed by well-wishers, with prominent guess speakers that included Mayor of EtheKwini honorable Cllr James Nxumalo and the Secretary General of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

Therefore, through out the conference our climate train was busy hosting a number of groups for workshops and presentations. We also hosted more than 1300 learners that were bused to the CCR expo and the climate train. IndaloYethu organized tours for the learners to view the train and took them through the train concept. We also had a number of awareness officers that were bussed in from different Ecotowns to share their experiences and to work with learners in the train, as well as in the IndaloYethu’s stand located in the CCR expo.

Bettina Koelle, Director, Indigo development & change

“COP17 was well organized, and provided a stimulating environment for learning and networking.”



I was involved in organising the two Adaptation Network events at COP17. We started off with the SADC climate change networks dinner at a Durban restaurant in the middle of week one. It was a lovely, informative dinner, and a great opportunity for connecting with other civil society climate networks from across SADC. As a follow up to this event, a mailing list is being set up for the SADC networks as a way by which people across the region can stay in touch and share information. Anyone who is interested in being on this mailing list can contact Katinka Waagsaether, the Adaptation Network Coordinator. The second event we organized was an interactive workshop for farmers, fishers and practitioners at a nursery in Durban. It was a lovely day in a relaxing, green space, and provided a platform for interesting exchange and a fresh breath of air in the midst of the intense meetings and seminars of the COP.

Gabriel Lekalalala, Limpopo Department of Agriculture

“COP17 was quite overwhelming and a bit of an adventure.”



There was a lot of information on various aspects of mitigation, adaptation and impact of climate change. From a learning point of view, such a platform as the COP, is the best place to get snaps of everything and enter into in-depth discussions on.

I found that I learnt quite a lot from being at COP17 in Durban. Among other things, I attended an event organised by the Department of Agriculture, where experts talked about different topics. I was also at the SADC Networks networking dinner, an interesting event where I connected with many people. From the networking dinner I can see many potential opportunities for the coming year, and would like to follow up on those connections.

General news from the Adaptation Network

General Meeting in Limpopo – May 2011

For our third general meeting the Adaptation Network met in the lovely province of Limpopo as guests with the Limpopo Department of Agriculture. Together with staff at the Limpopo Department of Agriculture Adaptation Network members spent two days sharing information, learning and strategizing. The first day was spent at the Department’s offices in Polokwane, followed by a second day out in the field, visiting the Toowoomba Research Station. It was a fascinating two days, with lots of information sharing and knowledge exchange between all the participants.



Web-site

The Network's website, <http://www.adaptationnetwork.org.za/>, features news, information on adaptation related events and adaptation projects, as well as various resources, including relevant national reports and fact sheets. Network members are encouraged to contribute to the website, and any relevant information that you would like to share can be sent to Katinka Waagsaether, Adaptation Network Co-ordinator, at katinka@indigo-dc.org.



The second Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the Adaptation Network – March 2012

The Adaptation Network held the 2012 AGM on the 01 March. The AGM was hosted by the Drylands Fund at the DBSA offices in Midrand. At the meeting last year's steering committee reported on 2011, and a new steering committee was elected. The members of the steering committee are now: Dr Sylvester Mpandeli (DEA), Noel Oettle (Environmental Monitoring Group), Lucinda Fairhurst (ICLEI Africa), Nokutula Mhene (Fairtrade Africa), Katinka Waagsaether (Indigo development & change), Sandile Ndawonde (Green Network), Sarshen Marais (Climate Action Partnership) and Gabriel Lekalakala (Limpopo Department of Agriculture). Indigo development & change will continue to host the secretariat for the Network in the coming year.

At the AGM members shared information on their various activities, and engaged in brainstorming on the Adaptation Network priorities for the coming year. Some of the proposals that were made during this exercise include skills development, a regular newsletter, input on policy and reports at a national level and continued information sharing.

The minutes from the AGM can be at the Adaptation Network website: www.adaptationnetwork.org.za



Steering Committee: Regular teleconference meetings

During 2011 the Adaptation Network steering committee held teleconference meetings, and this was found to be an affordable, low carbon, way for the committee to hold regular meetings. The new steering committee, elected in March, has continued in the same fashion, with monthly teleconference meetings. To this point the teleconferences have been funded by the Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG), and the Adaptation Network steering committee would like to thank EMG for their support.

Katinka Waagsaether, the Adaptation Network Co-ordinator, is facilitating this Newsletter. To comment on the newsletter or contribute to future newsletters, please contact on katinka@indigo-dc.org