



Climate diplomacy: Drawing conclusions and recommendations

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IIED's Climate Change Group has been providing support to the Least Developed Countries (LDC) group at the UNFCCC since 2001. They are currently working with in-country LDC experts to understand the existing infrastructures for undertaking climate diplomacy, and to identify policy recommendations for furthering this work. Mr. Gebru Jember Endalew of Ethiopia, an LDC group core team member, has produced three research papers as material for a forthcoming IIED Briefing. Recognising that effective climate diplomacy must be firmly rooted within the national interest, the three research papers look at: Understanding national engagement; Understanding national policies and drivers; and Drawing conclusions and recommendations. This is the third paper and draws on the experience of Ethiopia to develop some conclusions on the benefits and challenges of integrating climate change concerns with foreign policy and diplomatic action, and presents some policy recommendations.

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Introduction

Ethiopia is one of many LDCs that have been adversely affected by climate variability and change over recent decades. The efforts that are being undertaken by the government to overcome the climate shocks are becoming increasingly challenging over time. In order to sustain the national development efforts that the country is undertaking, and at the same time to be able to absorb any climate related disasters, the priority for the Government of Ethiopia is to address climate change issues at both national and global levels.

As outlined in Paper 1, Ethiopia started giving more focus and addressing climate change issues, including the integration of climate change concerns with foreign policy, after 2009. The then Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, was actively engaged in different fora at both national and international levels. His engagement contributed significantly to the establishment of the Conference of African Heads of State on Climate Change (CAHOSCC), which has served as the political wing of African climate change negotiators up until now. P.M. Meles also helped guide Ethiopia towards establishing its Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy. Ethiopia continues to play a major role in climate change diplomacy, working closely with African Union member states and a number of multilateral and bilateral agencies.

As outlined in Paper 2, the Ethiopian government's national commitment to climate change as a high priority is best shown through its mainstreaming of the CRGE strategy into the Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II). A ministry dedicated for coordinating the climate change agenda, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, has also been established; and Ethiopia has fulfilled all its national commitments in terms of National Communications, and mostly recently its ambitious Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC). The establishment of the Ethiopian Panel on Climate Change has also created an important platform for science-led policy decisions.

Integrating the national level climate change agenda within the processes of international cooperation to address climate change remains a major challenge for Ethiopia and other LDCs. This third paper highlights some of Ethiopia's experiences of integrating climate change concerns within foreign policy and diplomatic action, as well as some policy recommendations for addressing the on-going challenges of LDC climate change diplomacy.

Integrating climate concerns with foreign policy and diplomatic action

With the impact of climate variability and change having been observed for many years across Ethiopia, over varying time intervals, a considerable number of sectoral and cross sectoral policies and strategies have been developed and realised. The sustainability of these interventions has always been a challenge however, and the Government of Ethiopia identified the need for a climate change strategy that would be a national priority, just prior to COP15 in 2009. The drivers for Ethiopia's focus on a national climate change agenda included clear evidence of the existing adverse impacts of climate variability and change, the unsustainability of development efforts without considering climate change, a strong period of political leadership, and the dedication of the people of Ethiopia. This combination of drivers resulted in the development of Ethiopia's Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) vision and strategy in 2011. Ethiopia's ambition to reach middle-income country status with a carbon neutral economy by 2025 is now mainstreamed within the current Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II), with many sectors now establishing their own climate resilient strategies. The CRGE Facility has been established as the funding mechanism.

Mainstreaming is setting the foundation for sustainably realising the mitigation and adaptation goals at country, regional, continental as well as global levels.

The Government of Ethiopia realises that the country's efforts towards a green economy can also be a contribution for wider interventions across the world, and that there is a need for all countries to take similar measures. To help achieve this, the Ethiopian government has been in the front line for having a climate change agenda in its foreign policy. Starting from the regional level, Ethiopia has focused on addressing climate change through the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which comprises Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan and Somalia. IGAD assists and complements the efforts of its Member States to achieve development through increasing collaboration in the areas of: food security and environmental protection; promotion and maintenance of peace and security and humanitarian affairs; and economic cooperation and integration.ⁱ IGAD has now started preparing a regional climate change strategy for the period 2016-2030. The strategy is expected to be used in harmonising and consolidating the national and regional efforts across the region, and is going to focus on both adaptation and mitigation. The strategy is also expected to support countries in the region to follow low carbon climate resilient sustainable development. In line with this, the identification of climate change challenges, opportunities, strategic areas of interventions as well as capacity building needs and financial requirements will be undertaken.ⁱⁱ

The climate change agenda has also been pushed by the Government of Ethiopia at a continental level in the African Union, and at international levels as well among foreign policy discussions. The integration of climate change into the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II) provides an opportunity for addressing climate change alongside development goals during bilateral discussions. This will help the country to meet the challenges of climate change embedded within the development agenda.

Benefits of integrating climate concerns with foreign policy

The opportunity of the climate change agenda lies in its cross-sectoral, transboundary and global nature. Its cross-cutting nature offers the chance for sectors to undertake joint planning, address cross cutting issues jointly, plan at medium and long term scales, as well as work at basin and sub-basin level instead of having an administrative boundary focus. Moving in the right direction for an inclusive solution to climate change will require engagement of all actors, both horizontally across sectors and vertically across different layers of administration, at the national level. Doing so will contribute towards having an economy which will be able to absorb climate related shocks better, and make development efforts more sustainable.

Communication channels among countries at the trans-boundary level occur through the implementation of foreign policy. Effective dialogue allows lobbying countries to address climate change and integrate it in their development plans. Development partners also need to act in this direction in all bilateral discussions, as climate change is contributing directly or indirectly to the development challenges across all pillars. For instance, security issues occurring among neighbouring countries may have been as a result of instability emanating from food security issues, limited access to water, loss of assets as a result of frequent drought, and so on. Hence, incorporating climate variability and change into bilateral discussions will contribute towards looking at addressing the underlying causes in a more sustainable way. At the same time it will also shift the bilateral and multilateral support of countries for addressing climate related shocks to happen in a more developmentally sustainable way.

In the pastoral areas of Ethiopia the frequency of drought has been increasing over time. Among the coping strategies that the pastoralists use is mobility—in search for pasture and water for their animals. However, the challenges faced by an increasing population with more animals competing for the use of ever-shrinking access to pastures and water sources leads to conflict. In pastoralist areas 'climate change is neither the necessary nor sufficient cause of pastoral conflict, but it is a powerful stressor that configures the circumstances that pastoralists face into situations that are ripe with the potential for conflict. In that sense, it is akin to conflict contributors such boundary and global nature. Its cross-cutting nature offers the chance for sectors to undertake joint planning, address cross cutting issues jointly, plan at medium and long term scales, as well as work at basin and sub-basin level instead of having an administrative boundary focus. Moving in the right direction for an inclusive solution to climate change will require engagement of all actors, both horizontally across sectors and vertically across different layers

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The opportunities that exist within the global nature of the climate change agenda are best illustrated by the focus on GHG emissions. GHG emissions from Least Developed Countries are minimal compared to developed countries, but increases in population and economic growth will result in significant increases in emissions unless a new model of green growth is followed. For instance, Ethiopia's emission is 1.3 tCO₂e/capita in 2010. The business as usual growth scenario will result in 3.0 tCO₂e/capita by 2030. Following a more green approach to development, however, will reduce Ethiopia's emissions to even lower than the 2010 baseline to only 1.1 tCO₂e/capita. As climate change does not have any boundaries, whatever emission reduction measures countries take, their efforts will only have an impact if all other countries plan and take measures at regional and global levels as well.

Ethiopia has been contributing to GHG emission reduction at the regional level via the exporting of energy, and is working towards having energy security at the regional level through a regional grid system. Ethiopia has started exporting energy generated from hydropower to neighbouring countries like Sudan, Djibouti and Kenya, and has a plan to further expand it countries across the region. This strategy not only has identified potential areas for reducing emissions at the national level, but is also contributing to the reductions of emissions in neighbouring countries via the export of energy generated from hydropower.

The current major opportunity for integrating climate change concerns within foreign policy is through the Paris Agreement. It has set a benchmark for a collective effort for effective engagement of countries towards a better climate change outcome. As of the end of June 2016, 178 parties had put their signatories, and 19 of them have also deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval.^{iv} This is an encouraging commitment by parties across the world, and will also help encourage parties to integrate climate change concerns within their foreign policy.

Challenges of integrating climate concerns with foreign policy

There are a number of challenges associated with linking Ethiopia's climate change agenda to its foreign policy. The increasing frequency in the occurrence of droughts and floods in the country has resulted in the government allocating a significant amount of resources, which could have been used for the

development efforts that the country is undertaking. This is significantly undermining Ethiopia's effort towards becoming middle-income status and a net zero emitting country by 2025.

Instability challenges in neighbouring countries is another major challenge, and requires having cross boundary programmes as well as more efforts for sustaining interventions in the border areas. The instability within neighbouring countries has a further impact in that they do not have climate change policies and plans. At the same time there are a significant number of refugees coming from neighbouring countries affecting the natural resources in the areas of Ethiopia where they are temporarily settling. Ethiopia has been among the countries with the highest number of refugees from neighbouring Somalia, South Sudan and Eritrea. Most of the refugees are temporarily settled in the lowland escarpment of the country, which is nearby the forest area. Unless the government undertakes early preparations and proper management there is a high chance of deforestation, mainly for energy and other income generation purposes.

A further challenge is that the level of understanding and engagement of countries in the climate change agenda is not at the same level. For instance, some developed countries already have a mitigation commitment, but a few that have significant emission contributions do not have them. Some developing countries are in a better situation via setting targets and integrating climate change into their development plans while some others are not. Hence, incorporating climate related issues into foreign policy might not have equal buy-in among countries with their varying levels of commitment.

Resource mobilisation is also going to be a future challenge as the resources required for the realisation of the CRGE strategy in Ethiopia is very high. For instance, realising the CRGE requires more than \$7 billion per year. The resources are to be generated from government contributions, bilateral and multilateral sources. The current trend of resource mobilisation for climate change issues at the global level is far lower than the demand from the most vulnerable countries, such as Ethiopia. Besides, countries are also now mixing their international aid flows through official development assistance (ODA) with their climate finance. This may loosen the boundary between official development assistance and climate finance during bilateral discussions and decrease support among parties.

Policy recommendations to enhance benefits or mitigate challenges

Ethiopia has moved fast with developing its CRGE vision and strategy: realising it through fast track projects, establishing a climate facility that has been accredited by Green Climate fund (GCF), and with the integration of the CRGE into GTP II. The policy environment and the government's leadership in Ethiopia are seen as exemplary. The full implementation of the integrated CRGE, however, requires the availability and accessibility of sufficient resources, regional stability and having a green growth vision both across the region and at the continental level.

Realising the CRGE will require US \$150 billion, which needs to be generated from multilateral and bilateral support as well as from contributions by the government, and this is going to be a challenge. There needs to be a mechanism to mobilise more resources at the global and regional level in order for the ambitious plans of LDCs like Ethiopia to be realised, and to encourage others to follow a green growth model. Engaging the private sector both at local and international levels will make a significant contribution in realising the green growth path. The global community as a whole needs to work more closely however in raising and dispersing more funds to the most vulnerable countries.

The regional instability affecting Ethiopia is also among the challenges it faces, as this will have implications in terms of budget shifts into security. Additional funds will also be needed to cover both the permanent and temporary migration of people. Addressing the stability agenda in the region will challenge the dedication of countries to continue the climate change agenda. But ultimately, funding the climate change agenda will help to reduce costs associated with the climate-induced conflict related

displacement of people. This will in turn contribute to more resources being available for improving the resilience of the communities within their home countries.

Unless there is a common vision for having green growth at the regional level it will be difficult to realise programmes that are trans-boundary, and the sustainability of interventions will also be affected even at national level. Hence, sharing of experiences among countries needs to be considered between countries that have a similar socio-economic status. At the same time, neighbouring countries need to work closely in their planning processes in order to avoid any leakage. For instance, if Ethiopia is conserving its forest in the boundary area with its neighbours, but its neighbouring countries are not undertaking any action, the forest in the area will be over exploited by communities from neighbouring countries or there will be a chance for communities in Ethiopia to utilise resource in the unmanaged areas. Joint planning and management needs to be considered.

The Paris agreement, Article 21 paragraph 1, states that 'the Agreement shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the date on which at least 55 Parties to the Convention accounting in total for at least an estimated 55% of the total global greenhouse gas emissions have deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with the Depositary'. So far only 19 states with a total of 0.18 % of the global greenhouse gas emissions have fulfilled their requirements. Overall, there are encouraging actions and commitments in fulfilling requirements across the continent; the momentum, however, needs to be kept up and requirements need to be met in time.

Endnotes

ⁱ Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) <http://igad.int/>

ⁱⁱ PRESS RELEASE on IGAD Regional Climate Change Strategy (IRCCS) Validation <http://www.icpac.net/wp-content/uploads/IRCCS-Press-Release-Final-11-March-2016.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Climate Change and Conflict in Pastoralist Regions of Ethiopia: Mounting Challenges, Emerging Responses

http://www.fess-global.org/Publications/Other/Climate_Change_and_Conflic_%20in_Ethiopia.pdf

^{iv} Paris Agreement - Status of Ratification http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9444.php

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