



Summary Report

A PUBLIC SEMINAR JOINTLY ORGANIZED BY THE INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY STUDIES (ISS) AND THE ETHIOPIAN INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT (EIIPD)

Copenhagen Talks on Climate Change and Africa's Response

Friday 20th November 2009 9:30 am – 13:00 pm

Harrar Grill Conference Room, Hilton Hotel

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Institute for Security Studies (ISS) jointly organized a public seminar with the Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development (EIIPD) entitled "Copenhagen Talks on Climate Change and Africa's Response" on November 20, 2009 at Hilton Hotel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. After many years negotiations and debates over the impact of climate change in the world in general and Africa in particular, the two institutions hosted this gathering in order to discuss possibilities of strengthening and enhancing African common position on climate change. The seminar aimed at addressing key underline issues related to climate change in Africa including mitigation, adoption and compensation. Furthermore, the seminar emphasized the necessity to conclude negotiations on a strengthened, fair and effective global agreement in the upcoming Copenhagen talks on climate change.

Session I:

Welcoming Remarks

Mr. Roba D. Sharamo, Acting Director Addis Ababa Office/Programme Head, Conflict Prevention Programme.

Mr. Sharamo welcomed the participants and expressed his happiness for conducting this public seminar with the EIIPD. He noted that the collaborative work of ISS and EIIPD will contribute for the peace, carbon free development, not only in the Horn of Africa but also for the African continent at large. He further indicated that this is the first of the series of other joint engagements between ISS and EIIPD. Finally he thanked the participants of the public seminar and reminded that the seminar was being conducted under the Chatham House rules.

H.E. Ambassador Akuei Malwal, Deputy Head of mission, Embassy of the Republic of Sudan to Ethiopia, who was chairing the seminar introduced the panelists and kindly asked Mr. Sebhat Nega, Executive Director, EIIPD, to make the opening remarks.

Opening Remarks – African Perspective

Mr. Sebhat Nega, Executive Director, EIIPD, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

In his opening remarks Mr. Sebhat expressed his gladness for organizing this public seminar with the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). He further commented that this collaborative seminar was convened within the spirit of the ongoing partnership between the two institutions. This spirit was emanated from the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations on September 2009. He also noted that climate change is affecting the human security of the African people. Africa is the most vulnerable continent by the impacts of climate change such as extreme poverty, frequent and rampant diseases, drought and low agricultural productivity. It is clear that scarcity of natural resources will lead to conflict and tension at intra-and inter-state level. Currently, Africans are facing a problem of climate change and this necessitates the collaboration of all African states. He said that the public seminar is believed to a forum for discussing and strengthening the African common position on climate change for the coming Copenhagen Talks. In his conclusion Mr. Nega reminded the participants that the adaptive capacity of people and communities is mediated through institutions. Disseminating information, building knowledge, articulating needs, ensuring accountability, exchanging goods and services, and transferring resources, all these are needed for adaptation and all are guided by and happen through institutions. Adaption can not be efficient without effective and accountable organizations and institutions. Finally, Mr. Sebhat declared the opening of the public seminar and wished fruitful deliberations.

Opening Remarks - European Perspective

H.E Ambassador Jens Odlander, Embassy of Sweden, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

H.E Ambassador Jens Odlander, presented the European perspective on the coming Copenhagen climate change meeting. He noted that Sweden identified climate changes as the most priority issue and made appreciated measures in addressing the global warming. He said that the 27 EU countries agreed to make a 30% emission reduction by 2020 compared to 1990 level. He also appreciated the African common position for the Copenhagen talks and noted that a united Africa may get the good deal out of the talks. He also mentioned that on 18 November 2009 EU and AU discussed about the Copenhagen talks. Africa and Europe are ready and need same commitment from other parts of the world. By 2020 EU pledges 100 billion Euros for total mitigation and adaptation programs in developing countries. EU is ready to take its global share of addressing global warming. Similarly, all countries, except the least developed, should try to contribute for the mitigation and adaptation program in Africa. In their parts the African countries should accept a clean development program. EU and AU have a common position which is usually referred as 2 degree Celsius (limiting climate change to not more than 2 degree Celsius pre industrialized levels). EU is already financing the Great Green Wall of Sahara and continues to provide support for mitigation and adaptation measure of climate change. Ambassador Odlander concluded his opening remarks by saying that the EU is also

planning financing some projects under the EU-Africa strategic partnership, which is under discussion starting from October 2009-April 2010.

**H.E Ato Neway Gebreab, Chief Economic Advisor
to Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Office of the Prime Minister, Addis Ababa,
Ethiopia**

In his part, H.E Ato Neway Gebreab, said that humanity has taken nature for granted and nature is now revenging on us on what we call climate change. Therefore, he suggested that it is now time to apologize and reconcile with nature by setting a benchmark not exceeding 2 degree Celsius. Though it is too late to completely arrest climate change it is not too late to protect our common planet with wise and responsible manner. Africa is in the same boat and that's why we took the same and united position. He emphasized that wishing Africa a good luck is not enough and the rest of the world, particularly the US and Europe, have to help Africa as they owe Africa a debt by polluting the world starting from the time of industrialization to the present. For Africa, development and adaptation are inextricably interwoven. Without adaptation no development and without development there will be no capacity to adapt. In this regard, Africa hopes the Copenhagen talk will deliver the best for Africa, if that not possible Africa is ready to get the second best option. He also appreciated the position of EU and its commitment to reduce emission and commended their support in this regards.

**Mrs. Francoise Villette, Counsellor Climate Change/Environment, European
Union Delegation to the African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,**

Mrs, Villette, discussed on the EU's position on climate change, the EU-AU Joint Strategy and its climate change partnerships; the issues of mitigation, adaptation, technological transfer and financing. She said that EU is committed to come up with strong and ambitious climate change deal in Copenhagen. However, she further emphasized that to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, all countries including China and India with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities need to carry their fair share of responsibility to limit a global temperature increase to not more than 2 degree Celsius. Regarding mitigation, the EU believes that the industrialized countries should take measures. She also reiterated that the EU confirms the objective of limiting the rise of global temperature to 2 degree Celsius. She further commented that technological transfer is a key component of Africa's strategy to cope with climate change. It was also explained that the EU is ready to support both national strategies and regional organizations like ECOWAS, COMESA and SADC to address the issue of climate change. The two specific Pan-African initiatives that have been prioritized are Great Green Wall of Sahara-Sahel and Clean debt program, which is working in collaboration with EU, UNECA and ADB. These initiatives led to the establishment of African Policy Climate Center, which aims to strengthen the resilience of Africa to short-term climate variability. She concluded her presentation by noting that the Joint collaboration of EU and Africa also led to the 'Africa EU declaration on Climate Change.'

Session II:

Dr. Teweldebrhan Gebregziabher, Director General, Environmental Protection Authority Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Dr. Gebregziabher, a chief negotiator from Ethiopia and one of African scientists in Copenhagen talks, noted that climate change is real and it is already having substantial impacts in Africa. He also narrated that the rate of changing climate can be trace back to as long as 35 million years ago. A big meteorite hit the earth on carbon and fossil fuel deposit that popped up and fill our atmosphere with the same pollutant that we are fighting now. It is frightening that we are now doing the same as that terrible meteorite did. He succinctly put that climate change and agriculture interrelated processes, both of which take place on a global scale. Global warming projected to have significant impacts on conditions affecting agriculture, including temperature, carbon dioxide, glacial run-off, precipitation and the interaction of these elements. These conditions determine the carrying capacity of the biosphere to produce enough food for the human population and domesticated animals. Unfortunately, in the last 100 years crops have been disappearing very fast. Humanity used to feed on several thousands but a handful crops are feeding the world nowadays. We are now at the vulnerable stage when it comes to crop genetic resources. He noted that humans exploited and damaged nature and we are now paying for that and not all humans benefited from the exploitation of natural resources. As a result, all human beings, particularly Africans are suffering the most.

Dr. Gebregziabher stated that because of this ‘historic reason’ the developed states should ‘compensate Africans to adapt through clean development, technological transfer and financial support. He strongly pointed out that ‘the technological transfer should be provided without any strings attached,’ i.e. not to be crippled and manipulated by unnecessary and inappropriate copy rights. Still now, he added, we are only seeing ‘good words and gestures’ and specific projects and programs. However, they are ‘not far and good enough’ and that’s why we are eager to see a fair and just deal from the Copenhagen negotiation.

Ato Negusu Aklilu, Director, Ethiopian Civil Society Network on Climate Change, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,

Ato Aklilu noted that the civil society is aggressively taking part to understand and influence the process of the Copenhagen Talks. He pointed out that the civil society organizations will have an observer status in the Copenhagen Talks. However, he expressed the need for more room and consultation, as the civil society represent and voice the majority of the African people, particularly those who are most vulnerable and most affected by climate change variability. He further asserted that the Africa’s position is realistic and a historic one. He also did not fail to express his fear that the Copenhagen Talks might not make a big difference unless all commit themselves for a better and healthy future of the world. While activities in civil society may be motivated by a quest for equitable and fair global agreement in Copenhagen, it is collective action in which governments join to pursue shared goals, and it takes place in the institutional commons that lie beyond the boundaries of the world.

Ms. Trusha Reddy, Senior Researcher Climate Change Project: Corruption and Governance, Institute for Security Studies, Cape Town, South Africa

Ms. Trusha noted that the African position is both politically and scientifically commendable. She tried to break down the African position by analyzing the following issues: what led to the road to Copenhagen, how the African position initiated, developed and consolidated, what motivates the African positions and the key points in the Copenhagen Talks. Ms Trusha explained that the process of the African position started in 2006 and the sensitization of the common position was initiated in November 2008 which is called Algiers Platform or the African Platform to Copenhagen. Following this, there was a Nairobi Declaration in May 2009 to crystallize the Algiers consensus. The above mentioned initiatives and other, led to the present unanimous strong position of Africa. This will make Africa a key player in the coming Copenhagen Talks. She also identified some gaps and the need for further clarification in Africa's position in relation to the idea of low carbon details, issues of mitigation, adaptation, means of implementations and financing mechanism.

Dr. Abebe Haile-Gabriel, Director, Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA), African Union Commission, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

His presentation mainly focused on the legal and institutional architecture that drives common Africa position on climate change. He noted that the Twelve Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Head of States and Government passed a decision on the Africa's common position on climate change. It was highlighted the need for negotiation on climate change to give Africa an opportunity to demand and get compensation for the damage caused global warming. Furthermore, he noted that the Summit also decided the need for representing Africa by one delegation and with one voice, which was never the case before. To this effect, the AU Commission is also mandated to workout modalities of implementation of the decisions. Subsequently, based on the report of the AU Commission, the thirteenth session of the Assembly of Head of States and Government adopted a decision on the African common position in Copenhagen talks on climate change. Moreover, the Summit passed a decision on the accession of the United Nation Convention on the Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol, which AU was an observer. This led to the establishment of the committee of the African Head of States and Government on climate change composed of ten countries. These countries are Algeria, The republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda, The chairperson of AU (which is Libya), the Chair of AMSON (South Africa), Chairperson of the AU Commission as well as negotiators. This committee is headed by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia.

Finally, the floor was open for questions, comments and suggestions. The public seminar was attended by more than sixty people coming from international, regional and national organizations, embassies, research institutions and others.

Concluding Remarks,

Dr. Debay Tadesse, Senior Researcher, Conflict Prevention Programme, Institute for Security Studies, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Tadesse reminded the participants that climate change is already affecting people across Africa and will wipe out efforts to tackle poverty unless urgent action is taken in Copenhagen related to adoption, mitigation and compensation. Furthermore, climate change is also another security threat facing Africa. He also stated that the impact of climate change in Africa is mainly desertification which is affecting the pastoral community by forcing them to migrate further and further in search of water and grassland and this has been a major source of conflicts between the pastoralist and the agrarian settled community in Africa. He also noted that today over 85 percent of the people in Sub-Saharan Africa depend on biomass for their household energy consumption and energy in these areas are about wood, dung and waste which is also a major contributor to ever expanding desertification in Africa. He further commented that developing countries, including India and China should play an active role in Copenhagen talks and announces their readiness and set a clear example on cutting carbon emissions in Copenhagen. Otherwise, everyone else effort is useless.

Finally, he thanked the participants for their support and the donor community including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Government of Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Humanity United. USA for their kind support to make this seminar possible through funding provided.

Summarized by Dr. Debay Tadesse, Senior researcher and Mr. Wondwosen Michago, Intern

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