

Around 70 representatives from some 20 regional adaptation knowledge platforms and others organizations came together on 05-06 February 2013, to network and exchange views on the possibility of coordinating their knowledge on climate change adaptation. COMESA also attended the two-day meeting and took advantage of the presence of the wide audience to identify potential partners that could enhance its Climate Change Initiative, particularly in the field of climate change advocacy. The delegates learnt from the continental climate change adaptation networks such as the Asia-Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN) and the Latin America and the Caribbean network, known by its Spanish acronym (REGATTA). They shared experiences, successes, challenges and lessons learnt.

The event was hosted at the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya and it explored the potential for synergies and concrete collaboration between the various initiatives in order to optimize the use of resources for adaptation under the current global financial resource constraint.

The meeting agreed that Africa has a lot of knowledge, including traditional knowledge; that has not been fully coordinated to benefit the continent. It was further noted that during international negotiations Africa is often challenged by the failure to provide evidence based argument due to the absence of documented issues, as a result it was found fit that the Africa Adaptation Knowledge Network (AAKNet) be adopted as a continental network to be responsible for coordinating, facilitating, harnessing and strengthening the exchange of information and knowledge, fostering and supporting strategic planning for exchange of adaptation knowledge. The delegates called upon the African Ministerial conference on Environment (AMCEN), an organ of the African Union, to recognize AAKnet so as to give it a legal and political operation modality.

This initiative that has come soon after the Eighteenth Conference of Parties (COP18) that took place in Doha in November/Dec 2012 is meant to inject more energy and momentum into advancing the adaptation agenda.

On the final days of the workshop, all the regional adaptation networks highlighted that knowledge has a critical role to support planning and implementation of climate change adaptation but there are challenges such as fragmentation, lack of alignment of practices, insufficient understanding of end users and overlap.

It is against this background that the regional networks adopted a declaration endorsing the Africa Adaptation Knowledge Network (AAKNet) as a continental network to be responsible for: coordinating, facilitating, harnessing and strengthening the exchange of information and knowledge, building new alliances to enhance collaboration and innovation, harmonizing and aggregating knowledge in useable packages tailored for addressing particular climate risks; fostering and supporting strategic planning and policy processes; and building capacity to provide short, midterm and long-term solutions to climate change. It was, however, emphasized that the role of AAKnet shall not replace the important role played by sub-regional, national, or local networks that are closer to the ground. Indeed for AAKnet to be successful it will have to

rely on these already established networks.

The Africa Adaptation Knowledge Network (AAKNet) aims at harnessing valuable knowledge and experiences gained from such initiatives, and to share these with governments, Regional Economic Communities, regional authorities, and communities facing similar climate challenges.