

DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

BY RWANDAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

PREAMBLE

1. We, the undersigned Rwandan Local Governments, came together in Kigali City on 26th-27th November 2009, at a conference on Local Governments & Climate Change organised jointly by the Rwandese Association of Local Government Authorities (RALGA) and UN-HABITAT;
2. Aware of the stakes of the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference scheduled from 7th to 18th December 2009, with the view of establishing a global climate agreement for the period commencing 2012;
3. Confident that the Representatives of National Governments in consultation with Local Governments, Civil Society Organisations, Private Organisations, Researchers and Scientists, ... will reach an agreement taking into consideration the potential dangers of ignoring the evidences, facts and trends of the climate change;

We generally agree with the African declaration on climate change signed in Tshwane, South Africa, on 31st July 2009. We additionally emphasize on the following:

STATEMENT

- i. We are aware of the crucial role played by Local Governments in the implementation of agreements as well as other policies, programs, laws and regulations; aware that plans and actions based on knowledge are crucial to the effective engagement of Locals Governments in dealing with climate change;
- ii. We are aware that climate change halts and undermines development, thus nullifying efforts to attain the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), the Vision 2020 and other intermediate policy framework such as the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS);
- iii. We are aware that the effects of climate change such as floods have started to materialise on the Rwandan environment;
- iv. We hereby acknowledge that Rwanda has a fast growing urban population and that our urban centers are the site of substantial development pressure which are the frontline of response to climate change;

- v. We acknowledge that Rwanda as a country has to-date contributed very little to the problems of associated with human induced climate change and therefore is only accountable for a marginal proportion of the consumption of 'Carbon space'.

COMMITMENT BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

We, Rwandan Local Governments, commit ourselves to the following:

- i. Tackle, through systematic programs (such as reforestation, wetlands safeguarding) the causes impacting on climate change;
- ii. Contribute actively in the education and sensitisation of local population on changing mindsets, attitudes and behaviors impacting negatively on climate change; increase awareness about the linkages between climate change and other aspects such as informal use of settlements, irrational use of space, poor family planning, waste management,...
- iii. Adopt the new ways of doing things such as producing without impacting negatively on the environment, putting in place relevant guidelines and regulations, disseminating available adaptation and mitigation technologies within local communities, taking part in joint programs aimed at curbing the impacts of climate change;
- iv. Finance projects and other initiatives aimed at mitigating or adapting to the effects of climate change; put in place a fund for the communities affected by Climate Change especially those affected by floods, drought and the like and develop other affordability and access mechanisms for the poor;
- v. Put in place mechanisms adapted to the budgeting for climate change, review Districts Developments Plans (DDPS) and Annual Action Plans (AAPs) as well as related performance contracts, in order to integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation programs; this implies the inclusion of Climate Change in all local decision making day – to day operations, planning and development, financial systems as well as human resources allocations;
- vi. Take informed decisions based on the analysis of specific vulnerabilities within local governments and learn from others' experience; utilize, draw on and share indigenous knowledge in finding solutions to the global climate crises;
- vii. Mainstream Climate Change response into local government through high level political commitment;
- viii. Empower local communities and ensure their effective involvement and contribution in addressing climate change related issues;

- ix. Contribute to the development of localized medium and long – term adaptation strategies and low carbon development plans that address the issues of poverty and Rwanda local development potentials;
- x. Support local centred research including the establishment of locally grounded long- term baseline data related to emission and climate change impacts and related perceptions by local communities;
- xi. Recognize and value ecosystem services for local and global contribution to climate stability;
- xii. Combat corruption that may jeopardize programs and actions aimed at dealing with climate change issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO OTHER PARTNERS

We, Rwandan Local Governments, recommend the following other partners (central governments,private and civil society actors, international community,...):

- i. Facilitate the access to relevant information, benefit from research and other relevant knowledge through dissemination such as those in relation to environmental friendly constructions;
- ii. Speed up technology transfer related to mitigation and adaptation measures at local level with great emphasis on capacity building to support sustainability;
- iii. Realise a visible commitment (substantial resources) towards adaptation commensurate with the anticipated impacts and associated costs ; avail financial support for the communities affected by Climate Change especially those affected by floods or drought;
- iv. Facilitate the establishment of local institutions and other mechanisms that can involve in research and predict Climate Change impacts (Early Warning Systems) especially with regard to vulnerable communities;
- v. Build and develop a pro-poor framing of the global response to Climate change, including the setting up of a fund to support mitigation and adaptation projects in relation to the climate change;
- vi. Establish an adaptation framework that is flexible, accessible, supportive of long –term, sustainable development and responsive to the Rwanda local government reality, and its diverse regional characteristics;

- vii. Commit to ambitious emission reduction targets for developed countries that are cautious and reflect local levels of development and future growth needs;
 - viii. Support Rwanda's enormous potential for low carbon economic growth, especially in relation to local jobs creation opportunities;
 - ix. Establish a framework for anti- pollution technology transfer flows that provides access for Rwandan Local Governments to scientific and technology advances of the industrialized countries;
 - x. Elevate and support indigenous knowledge systems and approach in climate response action;
 - xi. Support the empowerment and capacity development of Rwandan Local Governments as the main platform for climate response implementation;
 - xii. Support the inclusion of ecosystem services approaches within the global climate adaptation framework; emphasize the value of ecosystem services in climate stability and include actions to ensure health ecosystems as key component of the global mitigation framework;
 - xiii. Take concrete steps to speed up both total and residual risk compensation and obtain commitments from polluters to cooperate;
 - xiv. Collaborate in converging efforts to denounce corruption and condemn any tentative aimed at worsening the current climate change status or at contravening to the international agreements in relation to the climate change.
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