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**AR5 Outreach in developing countries – Africa’s perspective of the IPCC**  
**By Rabelani Tshikalanke**

The IPCC regularly undertakes outreach events to communicate the findings of its Assessment Reports to broader stakeholders. South Africa was privileged in hosting the African Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Outreach event that took place on 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> November 2014 and ran in parallel with the South African National Climate Change Conference at the same venue from 10<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> November, to ensure that the findings of the Fifth Assessment Report was fed into the national policy process. In addition to the main policy dialogue event, media training took place on 9<sup>th</sup> November and brought together journalists from the African region. The outreach event saw more than 500 delegates attend, including nationals from 25 countries: Egypt, Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Namibia, DR Congo and Algeria.

The South African event discussed challenges and opportunities in the region including on how the IPCC produces its assessment reports, how the IPCC reports are consumed by the broad users including media and governments, experience of the African media in climate change reporting, capacity building for local science and research community, and the prospects to improving Africa’s contribution to the IPCC process.

The outreach was aimed at raising awareness on the outcomes of the Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC and the workings of the IPCC, as well as building capacity for media, local science and research community in Africa. Some of the anticipated outcomes were: increasing in IPCC Authorship from Africa as well as increasing African media coverage on climate change.

Messages from the media training workshop:

- Understanding the dilemma faced by policy makers when making decisions

Over the years the IPCC has been criticised for using technical language or scientific jargon in their summary reports for policy makers. Understanding the reality of climate science is less complicated than responding to climate change. Policy makers face the dilemma of making choices from the complicated picture they get from the IPCC assessment reports. The complication is also worsened by the fact that the language of climate science is exact and always needs to be relayed carefully. Part of the problem is that capacity to tailor information to decisions is limited. Policy-makers often request quick and certain answers which are simply not readily available. Rather, more needs to be done to inform decision-makers on how to use, and make decisions, based upon the available science and its limitation.

- Experiences of African journalists in reporting climate change

African journalists have a unique experience in reporting climate change compared to other journalists elsewhere. The challenge for journalists in Africa is how to make climate change interesting to readers. This is because often at times people do not take climate reporting seriously until climate disaster struck. It is for this reason that making linkages to climate change

in stories when the links are not immediately obvious is important. African journalists used the outreach event to share their interesting examples of climate change stories that they reported over the years. Some of these reported stories are as follows:

- Linking climate change to why people are moving into forests in Zimbabwe;
- In Zambia there is a high degree of absenteeism because girl children have to travel longer distances to go and fetch water;
- How climate change impacts on Lake Victoria and the effects of the dwindling fish supplies on families;
- In Uganda human faeces are turned into energy for cooking;
- Food security in Malawi.

#### Messages from the IPCC outreach

- Prospect to improve Africa's contribution to the IPCC process

There is a chronic shortage of African scientists contributing to IPCC reports, as well as generally publishing their work in international journals. The most critical step in improving Africa's contribution to the IPCC process should be to improve the participation of developing countries into the IPCC process. There were important lessons learnt by the developing countries in the AR5 process in as far as this critical issue is concerned. In order to improve Africa's contribution to the IPCC, participants made the following recommendations:

- Setting up communication and outreach activities. Enhance the awareness of the Focal Points regarding IPCC activities and possible funding for scientists from these countries to attend the events. Focal Points and Bureau to nominate more experts/scientists from developing countries (over 3000 were nominated for AR5, but only just over 800 were selected);
  - Ensuring that the selection of authors and reviewers are conceived in a way that facilitates the identification and selection of suitable experts from developing countries.
  - Considering ways to increase funding for participation for the attendance of more experts from developing countries to IPCC meetings.
  - Organising more regional meetings in developing regions.
  - Encouraging the participation of experts from developing countries in the outreach events/process;
  - Encouraging more involvement of young experts from developing countries in the IPCC process;
  - Allowing for the participation of developing countries scientists in the scenario development to get a developing countries perspective.
- Building a community of interface scientists

There are a number of gaps that hinder the integration of science and decision-making, with communication being among the most prominent gap. While improvements in the ability to model African climate are being made, the ability to communicate this science remains poor: messages are often contradictory and unsuitable for informing adaptation.

It is therefore of outmost importance to build a community of interface scientists as this will ensure that academic institutions work closely with local community. It is important to note that issues of technology and communication, lack of documents in local languages, and making the reports more accessible remains a barrier to effective science and policy interface. Some suggested solutions to address these barriers were co-exploration between governments and researchers, and embedding researchers within policy institutes (and vice versa).