



## Regional Sustainability Network RSN 2022-2023 Factsheet

### A Platform of Sub-Sahara wide Dialogue for Partners in Climate Change Adaptation

**HSF's Regional Sustainability Network RSN is a unique platform that brings together 12 organizations of different profile and status from 11 Sub-Sahara African countries to discuss Africa's climate change challenges in a unique multi-level and multi-perspective approach.**

#### Challenges

The past 10 years were the hottest on record as global greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise. Africa is the least responsible continent for climate disruption yet is among the first and worst to suffer the consequences. Africa's per capita/year Co2 emission hovers around 700 Kg, half of which is emitted in South Africa alone. On the other end of the spectrum, Canada emits 18,6 **tons** of Co2 per capita, the US 15.5, Germany 9.5 and China 7.5 tons. Africa's 54 Countries contribute next to nothing to climate change. Their *combined* output accounts for less than 4% of global Co2 emissions and 1% of global emissions in general. There is no factual urgency to curb Africa's Co2 output.

But there is an urgency for African countries to build resilience and to adapt to the inevitable impacts to come. There is very little that Africa can do to stop global warming, even with the temperature rising in Africa at twice the global average and weather events changing the traditional ways of farming and pastoralism. Changing rainfall patterns, for example, are particularly grave in Sub-Sahara Africa, where the overwhelming majority of subsistence farmers have no access to irrigation beyond natural water resources. For Africa, it's mainly about *adaptation* against a climate change caused by others, and simultaneously creating sustainable economic development within the continent for its own population.

Additionally, there is a growing link between climate change and conflict, and that link is seen clearly across the African continent. Climate change is widely recognized as a "threat multiplier" due to its role of exacerbating the traditional causes of conflict, which are many. The most obvious form is the way changes in climate alter competition over increasingly scarce resources.

## Solutions

„African Solutions to African Problems” is more than a mere motto- it is the only way forward, especially for Sub-Sahara African countries. The unique challenge these countries face – to increase the economic capability while keeping emissions in check and simultaneously developing adaptation measures for the impact on climate change on the countries at large and specific regions and lifestyles in particular - needs to be addressed on a case-to-case basis on the ground. Yet it is of the utmost importance that an Africa wide dialogue and, hopefully, consensus about the way forward develops. This needs an exchange between grassroots organizations, think tanks, academia and decision makers in administration and politics. There is not one way to reach UNFCCC Goals and SDG`s in each country`s specific context, but many.

This is where the RSN becomes relevant. It`s participants share insight and experiences from their respective field of expertise and contribute to a south-south and peer-to-peer learning. The formats used include yearly physical meetings, 3 to 4 peer-to peer visits of selected members per year and monthly virtual activities with a focus on common learning through input given by RSN-members or external experts. In preparation of COP Conferences RSN-pre-COP Meetings are conducted to position RSN-Members regarding the COP`s respective main topics. For reasons of financial prudence, sustainability and registration not all RSN-Members can participate at every COP. Additionally, RSN has the possibility of funding micro-projects for its members as pilot activities.

Some of the members have already access to decision makers, others not (yet). The important grounding of national climate policies with experts on the ground and the exchange with stakeholders in other Sub- Saharan countries is an important part of RSN`s internal dialogue. This also helps to address and ultimately balance contradictory goals in any given country`s development trajectory; until recently South Africa clearly put a focus on energy production as a means to improve its economy and the livelihood of its population, at severe costs for the environment and the countries Co2 footprint. Ethiopia, on the other hand, goes energetically “green” with the huge Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam GERD - which creates challenges on other levels.

## Effects

The Regional Sustainability Network (RSN) is first and foremost a platform for exchange, dialogue and common learning. It is supposed to leverage on the networks that HSF project work has created in other sectors to make the complexity of climate change visible and to achieve a better position in terms of policy, engagement, capacity and dialogue to address climate change in Africa. Members of the network represent organizations working in the fields of climate change, environmental sustainability and the energy sector on the African continent. Members use RSN as a platform for extended dialogue, knowledge sharing, mutual learning and co-working to develop positions and solutions. Members have taken an active part in national discussions on climate action such as low-carbon growth, smart technologies, renewable energy, green agriculture and climate smart agriculture. In the UNFCCC process, the network has organized regional pre-COP conferences and HSF supports members to participate in conferences such as COP and UNEA.

The strength of the network lies in its diversity. Members represent small grassroot-organizations of various profiles, as well as established expert organizations and influential think tanks. The thematic expertise ranges from recycling of plastic waste and drip-irrigation, desertification and agroforestry to policy development and government consultation.

A closer link to HSF project work in other sectors, foremost good governance, could open the members perspectives beyond technical and practical climate related topics to meta-questions like adaptation to climate change for groups of indigenous population, the special concerns of women, youth and other vulnerable groups and, most importantly, a concept of climate justice for Africa and Africans. This is the entry point for global conferences as COP even for small, local based NGO's; very few of national climate action can be implemented without active participation of the multitude of individual and organized climate champions on the ground. All Members are not only experts in their own right, but extremely active in societal engagement and therefore multipliers on various levels.

One of the shared topics, among much else, is the implementation of "climate-smart agriculture" by better managing cropland, livestock, forests and fisheries. As Africa urbanises and as the population expands, raising farming productivity will be existential.

In the future, one of the Network's tasks will be to help ensure that the ambitious targets of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are actually integrated into national climate plans, The necessary capacity building of member organizations is an important component of further support by HSS.

#### Quote

***There may be alternative routes to development that involve leapfrogging the dirty phase of the industrial revolution. This is an urgent question about which there seems to be little coherent thinking. Yet one thing is clear. If the expectation is that African countries must stay poor for the good of the planet, then quite rightly they will say No.***

David Pilling, Africa Editor, The Financial Times

#### 2022 Activities

A total of six virtual activities took place in 2022, covering the topics:

- Net Metering as an opportunity to promote solar photovoltaics systems and protect the environment in Sub-Saharan Africa (Togo)
- Use of Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA) as a tool for adaptation planning (Zimbabwe)
- Land Rehabilitation – (South Africa)
- Barriers to Off-Grid Energy Development: Evidence from a Comparative Survey of Private Sector Energy Service Providers in East Africa (Ethiopia)
- Understanding the UNFCCC process and climate Negotiations at COP (Ethiopia)
- Expert training on Developing Technical Proposals: Preparing funding proposal, fund raising techniques and financing for locally led Adaptation – (Kenya, External Trainer)

Physical activities: **Peer-to-peer** ecchange

- CADIM (DRC) hosted Kenya and South Africa – Focus was on agroforestry, value addition, apiculture.
- DRFN (Namibia) hosted Kenya and Djibouti – Focus was on waste management
- CAN (TZ) hosted Kenya and Ghana – Focus was on sustainable agriculture and energy

HSF Kenya: **Fact-Finding Tour** to Diani (Kenyan Coast) – Focus was on protection of the **Mangroves forests** for carbon credits and livelihoods. **Campde Voices** - an online forum for university students keen to fight the effects of climate change. Issues discussed include

Climate Change Communication, Food Security, Energy and Politics. **Fair Climate Network** Mbeere North: Fact Finding Mission and Appraisal – after several meetings with the Founder, Hon Geoffrey Ruku – MP Mbeere North. **COP 27** – RSN was represented by Adam (Togo) and Prof. Taba. (DRC)

### 2023 Activities

A total of eight Virtual Activities took place in 2023, covering the topics:

- Loss and damage from Climate Change (Zimbabwe)
- Clean energy for sustainable development: scope and limitations. (DRC)
- Unlock Climate Action in Africa Through Climate Finance (TZ)
- International Financial Institution reform agenda for Climate and Development. (ET)
- Double smallholder food production and income (SA)
- Ecological and Economic impacts of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (ET)
- Improving community resilience to climate induced disaster through agroecology (Ghana)
- Water scarcity – Causes, effects and Solutions (Djibouti)

Physical activities: **Peer-to-peer exchange** visit - Urbis Foundation Togo hosted Kenya and Environment & Climate Research Centre ET) Focus was on renewal energy and agriculture. Micro Grant - CAN TZ - **Capacity Building on Mangrove Ecosystem Conservation** at Pangani Community.

Partner Appraisal - **Northlight Green Services** Uganda to validate their suitability to be onboarded to RSN.

**Fair Climate Network** Mbeere North - 2 TOTs done in February (32) – 8 activities 16 COBs trained (March, May, July & September) – 1216 members were trained on Ecopreneurship and propagation of melia volkensii (mukao) (The climate champions of Mbeere North Constituency)

The Regional Sustainability Network **Annual Gathering 2023 / Pre COP 28.**

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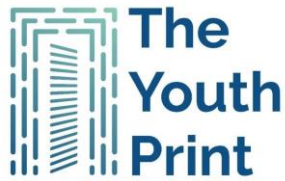
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