



# International Symposium Dakar 12 to 14 December 2012



## Population, development and climate change

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## 1. Context

Climate change is one of today's phenomenon that mostly concerns decision makers, scientists and civil society representatives. Because, at first, it is the result of the development everybody is craving for and then it is the cause of many big damages for mankind. Indeed, Man, via his productive activities of goods and services meanwhile contributes to the degradation of his environment: clearing of trees, deforestation, water and air pollution, modification of the atmosphere components, global warming, etc which results in serious consequences for man's wellbeing and mankind at large: Jeopardy on our health, poor quality of the air and of the water, droughts and food precariousness menaces..

At the Population and Development International Conference (P DIC, 1994), those issues had already been discussed and had been taken into account in the PDIC Action Plan Programme (AP/PDIC). The AP/PDIC evaluation due in 2014 will be an opportunity to set the records straight on the progress made in the implementation of the programme recommendations. Thus, all through 2013, countries and institutions will be preparing that evaluation that somehow will be a summary of all the efforts made by the continent and the rest of the world, in view of bringing in line the interaction between the population and the environment in general, and more specifically the demographic behaviours and the climate change, which today is most blatant and the most concerning.

At the United Nation Conference on Sustainable Development ( RIO+20),held last June in Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil, member states have asked developed countries to keep the promises made to support Africa in its attempts at reaching the Millennium Development Goals ( GMD). In that respects, pleading activities are scheduled so that investments and all the other initiatives from African countries be punctuated by guarantees meant for the protection of the environment and the implementation of a sustainable development policy. The question of financial compensations for poor countries in general and particularly for African countries has also been a topical issue.

Those compensations are for repairing the damages made on the environment; the first concerned being the developed countries both from the North and the South.

They have also raised the financial compensation issues for poor countries in general and for African countries more precisely. They aim at repairing the damages made on the environment by the developed countries in the North and the South as well.

However, despite the numerous recommendations and decisions from the different United Nation Conferences on Sustainable Development, progress in the Protection of the environment has been very mild since Rio 1992.

Mine exploitation of African natural resources keeps going on, along with the deforestation, water and air noise pollution; there is rampant insalubrities in the African towns and some have turned into junk places for the wastes from the North. These examples show clearly the importance of the challenges to be met. And yet, we have to reconsider the result of the ill-development impact on the environment to which climate change is one of its main corollaries.

By the way, the current reflexion tends to give top priority to the connexion between the economic behaviours on the one hand, the environment degradation and the climate change on the other. There is no strong emphasis on the demographic factors that motivates those economic behaviours or directly impacts the climate change, or has a boomerang-effect on some demographic behaviour. The high fecundity level in rural areas for instance has some impact on the deforestation, which in turn impacts the labour migration, either directly or through the issue of food security. But what is the situation all about in the different countries?

It is above all admitted that men and women are of different vulnerability towards the climate change effects which depends on the sharing responsibility based on gender, on the unequal access to resources, they, as a result, benefit from unequal opportunities to react to the climate change effects and adjust well. Thus, all the vital interest to devote to the differences related to gender in the analysis of the phenomena related to the climate change.

To answer those questions, share the teachings on the climate risks and the impacts from its current dynamics as well as the strategies to be implemented to maximise the good effects and attenuate the negative effects of the climate change, the Population, Development and Reproductive Health Institute of Dakar Cheikh Anta Diop University

(IPDSR) and CODESRIA, in partnership with some African and European Institutes and Research Centres are organizing a symposium about the current interrelationships between climate change, population and development.

## 2. Objectives

The symposium is a multidisciplinary and scientific meeting of African researchers which aims at finding the results of the ongoing researches concerning the interrelationships between populations and the climate change in Africa and to give recommendations in view of setting up strategies for curbing the negative impacts. :

More precisely, the symposium aims at:

- Determining the interrelations between the current population growth and the development challenges in a climate change context in a globalized world in order to make some recommendations for soothing the negative impacts.
- Analysing the urban population vulnerability facing more and more concerning climate phenomena (food security, human security, health, rapid urbanisation, etc...)
- Finding the reciprocal links between some specific kinds of migrations of populations, climate and development challenges now such as inner migrations in the same region or same country.
- Identify the challenges youth have to face related to climate changes (child over mortality as a result of urban insalubrities, vulnerability due to natural catastrophes caused by over flooding, inundations...etc...) and the necessities for readjusting ones lifestyle .
- Analyse the challenges due to the climate changes on gender relations.
- Analysing the policies and strategies set up against climate change both by the government and the populations for a better management of the natural resources.

### 3. Agenda

The scientific agenda of the symposium folds into 7 sessions:

- **Session 1** : Population growth challenge and climate change.
- **Session 2** : Urban populations and climate change
- **Session 3** : Migrations of population and climate change.
- **Session 4** : Management of natural Resources and Climate Change
- **Session 5** : Populations' Health and Climate Change
- **Session 6** : Economic and Socio-cultural Aspects of the Climate Change
- **Session 7** : Gender and Climate Change

#### 3.1. Population Growth Challenges and Climate Change

From the early days of independence up to now, the strong fecundity in African countries has been taken as a main handicap to their development because it has stimulated a demographic rise at odds with the economic growth. To that constraint, is added the climate adversity. At the time when the climate change issue is a kernel point in the development agendas of governments, multilateral institutions and non-governmental organizations, the question of the interrelations between the demographic rise and the climate change may be analysed from different angle. Today the climate change has every chance to be a jeopardizing factor that nullifies the relationship between strong fecundity and development. Indeed, a strong fecundity favours an overexploitation of the natural resources (forest, soils, etc...) which in the long run will entail deforestation and to climate change, and in fine to rampant poverty. However, regarding that link between environmental factors, few empiric studies are available. By the way, there certainly prevail some retroactive effects of climate changes on demographic phenomena, which deserve to be better investigated. For instance, a growing concern is to know how the inundations that will go on the rise resulting in the global warming, impact the health, the mortality and the displacement, the migration or poverty of the people. What is the link to be made between the demographic growth, gender equality and climate change?

### **3.2. Urban Populations and climate change**

Un housing holds it “that urbanization and climate change are the « two most outstanding challenges men have to meet in the XXIst century”. The concentration of populations in urban areas, but more specifically their actions and their needs pressurize and destroy the environment, which at long last entails climate change. But in turn, the consequences from the latter have destructive effects on the urban populations ( various types of pollution, inundations and their corollaries such as catching or parasitic diseases), let alone the hydric consequences, Aeolian but also costal, that gulp down infrastructures, fertile soils and houses, causing many losses of good assets and human lives.

What is the situation in the different African towns? and “ *what are the political responses the strategies and actions stemming from the urban areas to alleviate the pains and adjust to the climate change, and their level and achievement and the probable hindrances*”.

### **3.3. Migrations of Populations and Climate Change**

Migrations in both Africa and somewhere else are motivated by economic reasons. Nowadays, new explicative tools have cropped up. For instance, natural catastrophes that force people to migrate turning them into ecologic refugees. What is the extent of these new types of migrants? What impact does it have on already overcrowded rural areas or towns and on the urban management? Are these just side-effects or effects of great importance? What strategies to implement in order to attenuate those negative and reciprocal effects. How can scientific research contribute to a better efficiency of those strategies? What are the gained experiences in that field by the different actors of development and how to share every thing? What impact does “environmental migration “have on vulnerable populations?

### **3.4 . Natural Resources Management and Climate Change**

The increase of economic and social needs resulting from the improvement of people's living standard and demographic growth, today, is pressurizing more and more the natural resources (water resources, forests, fishing, arable ground, etc...). The degradation of the environment and its impact on the climate change along with its corollaries (rain deficit, severe meteorological events, sea level rise, ecosystem destruction, etc...) accentuate that pressure. The issue is also about the consequences of climate change on women's access to resources. How, in globalized context, achieve a rational management of natural resources and a good handling of any mal governance? How do local governments interact with local authorities, including the households which are sometimes land owners? How do they dialogue with and oppose multinationals as far as the African natural resources are concerned?

### **3.5. Populations' Health and Climate Change**

Man has with his environment close and complex relationships which may impact his health. That is the reason why, some environmental modification, due to climate change, result in an outbreak of diseases or the appearance of new pathologies.. It is easily noticeable that the global warming now widens the geographic areas where pathogenic agents used to develop. So, tropical diseases tend to overlap larger areas reaching more people. It is exactly the case of cold areas.

The symposium will be the right place for concrete study and sharing about those new dimensions of human health in order to contribute to a better knowledge of the connexions between health issues and climate change.

### **3.6. Economic and Socio cultural Aspects of Climate Change**

In this panel, the question of climatic information shall be raised along with the resort to local expertise ( alone or with scientific knowledge) in view of improving the season weather broadcasts and mainly draw the local population at the heart of the adjustment strategies as they are the most concerned by the climate change. How do, for instance, some food habits may entail an over exploitation of the forest; or conversely, how the change in their lifestyle of the people living in the forests or some cult practices (holy forest, for ex...) do they favour the ecosystems upkeep for the attenuation of or adaptation to climate changes? What is the situation in the different African countries?

We will also analyse the change in people's lifestyles as a result of the climate change (new farming methods, new modes of production, and manufacturing of sea, or horticulture products, new social practices).

### **3.7 Gender and climate changes**

In communities and more precisely in communities dependent on natural resources exploitation, Man and Woman share different roles and responsibilities, as shown by the gender -based labour division; which results in differences concerning their vulnerabilities towards climate change and their reacting capacities. It is indeed accepted that women and young children are more vulnerable to natural catastrophes with at the same innovating capacities to set up survival strategies against the changes.

Moreover, challenges grow important as regard the taking in charge of the gender issue in the climate change phenomenon analysis and its management whereas experts agree on the fact that adaptation and attenuation capacities are more effective if gender differences are better understood and taken into account.

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## **ROUND TABLE ON POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE**

The current climate, environmental, economic, financial and food crisis results from a vision and a practice of the economy and human progress that ignore the biophysical limits of Nature, the life style and the contributions of the peoples and their cultures. That results partly in the over exploitation of the natural reserves, the monopoly of lands and the degradation of the ecosystems, the global warming and the accentuation of the structured mechanisms that entails poverty and iniquity in the wealth sharing.

Since the launching of the United States Organization outline Law on Climate Changes in 1992, tremendous efforts have been made by states and International Organisations to predict and alleviate the effects of these changes on populations and their lifestyles. National Committees for climate Changes in charge of coordinating local programmes were then set up and National Adaptation Programmes have been elaborated in countries. But a common and coherent approach to anticipate and fight against the worst scenery from climate change or courageous policies were still lacking. In short, the institutional weaknesses and the lack of means are the main hindrances to the adjusting capacities to climate change. The successive failures of the negotiations in Copenhagen, Durban, and in Rio+20 in the management of the climate changes may testify to the end of the global governance of the environment which is beyond the reach of the countries single interests.

This panel is a reflexion on

- The place of climate change in the governments' agendas and in that of the international organizations including those belonging to United Nation System.
- The definition of development models and policies freely chosen by African countries according their needs and interests, now and in the future and that takes into account the changes and the preservation of our environmental resources.
- The political and institutional obstacles to the implementation of adaptation strategies to the climate changes and some guidelines towards solutions.

