

**A Climate-Smart Governance Response to Food Insecurity in Africa:
Leveraging Decentralization to Enhance Resilience
Against Drought and Floods**

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Summary

1. The Impact of **Climate Change** on a Rapidly Urbanizing Continent
2. **Decentralized Climate Governance** in Africa: An Opportunity for Adaptation
3. **Urbanization** in Focus: Bringing Sustainability into the Picture
4. Thematic Priorities for a Medium-Term Vision to Enhance **Resilience**
5. Concluding Remarks

Key Messages

- The worst excesses of the climate crisis will affect all regions in Africa, which already is impacted by devastating floods and droughts
- Inflationary pressures and fiscal constraints due to the pandemic necessitate investment prioritization
- Greenhouse gas emissions from African economies remain essentially negligible compared to the rest of the world's impact on global warming

... ***Therefore***

- African governments and their international partners should focus on adaptation and disaster risk management strategies that prioritize enhancing the resilience of communities and infrastructure against drought and floods
- The wave of fiscal and administrative decentralization that has taken root in many African countries, and the wave of urbanization that is unfolding in parallel, can be effective entry points for such adaptation strategies.

1. The Impact of Climate Change on a Rapidly Urbanizing Continent

While climate change threatens Africa's dependency on its natural resources...

- 59% of Sub-Saharan Africa's population currently lives in rural areas
- Agriculture accounts for about 30 to 40% of the GDP in Africa
- About 80% of Africans remain dependent on low-yielding, rain-fed agriculture
- **As Sub-Saharan Africa faces water shortages, the IPCC projects that rain-fed agriculture could contract by 50% in some African countries**

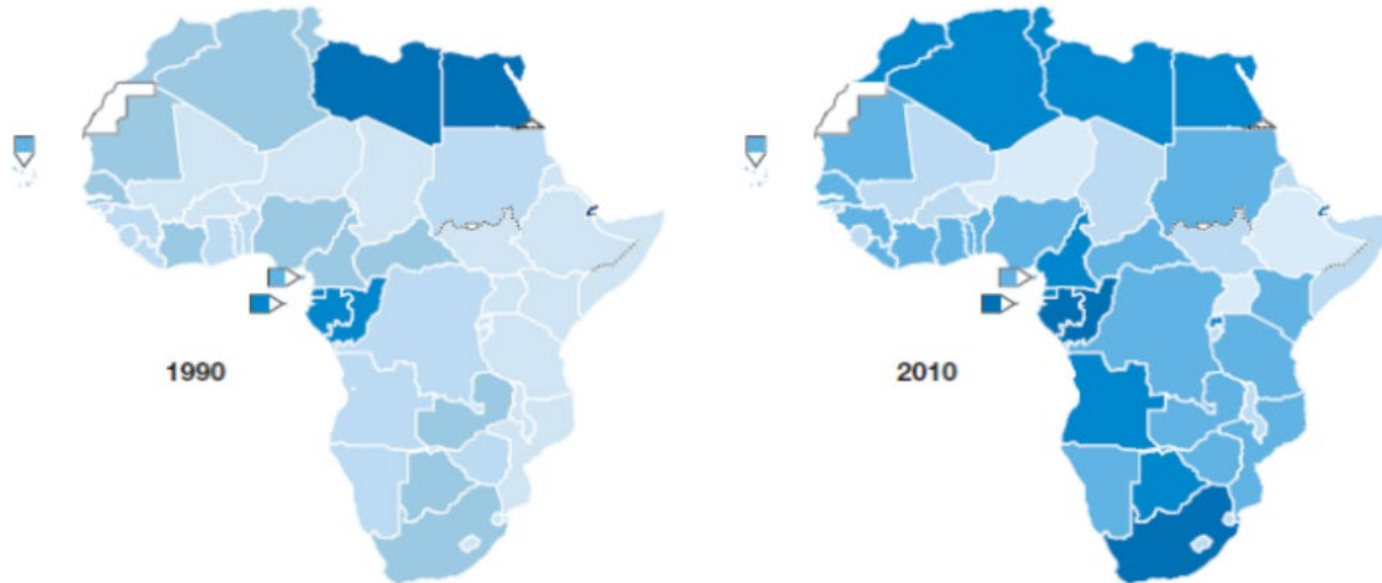
...Africa has sustained the fastest urban growth in the world in the last two decades, at an average annual rate of 3.5%

- in 2050, African cities will be home to an additional 900 million people
- in 2020, an estimated 68.1 million people in the urban population were at risk of acute food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa
- The demand for electricity is projected to quadruple between 2010 and 2040 as the need intensifies for more housing, public services, and income-generating activities in cities

1. The Impact of Climate Change on a Rapidly Urbanizing Continent

Share of urban population in total (%)
[Number of countries]

	< 20%	20-32	33-49	50-65	66-79	> 79%
2010	[3]	[12]	[20]	[8]	[5]	[2]
1990	[17]	[14]	[13]	[3]	[2]	[1]
1970	[30]	[13]	[4]	[3]	[0]	[0]
1950	[42]	[4]	[2]	[1]	[1]	[0]



Sources: OECD/SWAC 2018, Africapolls (database); Geopolls 2018

➡ These trends signal the **pivotal role that planning, managing, and financing development in cities will play** in registering progress toward the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

2. Decentralized Governance in Africa: an Opportunity for Adaptation

The Period of Independence through the 1990s: The Emergence of Environmental Protection as a Development Priority

- The movements to decentralize political, fiscal, and administrative decision-making have been underpinned by policies outlining the process for the devolution of service delivery in sectors such as agriculture, water and sanitation, and energy.
- Administrative responsibility for environmental protection devolved to local governments while environmental policies started flourishing at the national level.
- Decentralized frameworks failed to provide adequate guidance and staff for local governments to fulfill their mandates in this area

2. Decentralized governance in Africa: an opportunity for Adaptation

The 90s through the Present: Mainstreaming Climate Priorities in Decentralized Governance Frameworks

- Since the 90's, most African countries put in place some national climate change related action plans and adaptation strategies
- Very few countries have developed legally binding instruments or integrated their NDCs into their regulatory framework, impacting decentralized functions
- The mandate of most subnational entities and local governments regarding climate policy and actions in current policy frameworks remain largely administrative

Malawi example:

- Malawi adopted a Decentralization Policy in 1998
- The same year, the Local Government Act required the District Assemblies to assist the national government in preserving the environment through the protection of forests, wetlands, lake shores, and streams
- In 2017, the Environmental Management Act created Villages Natural Resources Management Committees and mandated local forestry assistants and agriculture officers to oversee resilience related issues

2. Decentralized governance in Africa: an Opportunity for Adaptation

The 90s through the Present: Mainstreaming Climate Priorities in Decentralized Governance Frameworks

- Appropriate coordination, funding, and capacity development mechanisms remain a challenge:
 - Required reporting (vulnerability assessments, environmental monitoring reports) are not systematically conducted at the subnational level and/or not publicly available
 - Subnational climate change action plans (where they exist) are not integrated into local development plans or sectoral plans
 - Subnational climate change directorates are underfunded and respond to top-down directives

3. Urbanization in Focus: Bringing Sustainability into the Picture

- There is an important infrastructure gap in most African cities
- Urbanization trends will increase GHG emissions in cities, raising health and well-being concerns
- The conversation on resilient and sustainable cities has begun in Africa
- 13 African municipalities are part of the Global Covenant of Mayor for Climate and Energy

Yaoundé example – Climate Change Action Planning pioneer

- Adaptation: Since 2005, the city has been working on plans to limit the effects of floods in the city – creating drainage systems and landscaping
- Mitigation: In 2020, the city developed an Action Plan for Access to Sustainable Energy and Climate – setting ambitious targets for emissions reduction, mostly through energy efficiency of buildings, optimization of urban mobility and promotion of decentralized renewable energy.

4. Thematic Priorities for a Medium-Term Vision to Enhance Resilience

- The demands of the international climate agenda overwhelm the current fiscal and administrative capacity of African governments
- Prioritizing enhancing resilience against drought and floods can provide the focus that national adaptation strategies and local development plans need
- Three thematic priorities can help governments operationalize this focus:

i. Addressing information gaps at the subnational level

ii. Closing the resilient infrastructure gap

iii. Engaging communities to leverage local knowledge and resources

4. Thematic Priorities for a Medium-Term Vision to Enhance Resilience

i. Addressing information gaps at the subnational level

Systemize local risk and vulnerability assessments to improve local DRM and early warning systems

- **Africa's meteorological and hydrological services and weather tracking stations need more investments** to better inform:
 - DRM schemes and determining the provisions for contingency funds
 - Land use planning and determining high risks zones
 - PIM and asset management systems to gauge the vulnerability of existing and planned infrastructure
- **Locally collected data should be made publicly available and used in the design of all sectoral projects**

4. Thematic Priorities for a Medium-Term Vision to Enhance Resilience

ii. Closing the resilient infrastructure gap

Improve service delivery while reducing the potential impacts of climate change hazards

- Many countries in Africa are undertaking reforms in the management of public investments to support competitiveness and service delivery outcomes
- These policy reforms are an opportunity for public investment to play a key role in the transition to a green economy by:
 - **developing coherent policy and legal frameworks governing climate-smart infrastructure investments and maintenance** at the national and subnational levels;
 - **crafting local medium-term public investment plans addressing green transition goals** – “Climate-smart” MTPIP
 - **developing strategies for financing these plans** – mostly using DPs investments and conditional grants; “green bonds” or subnational borrowing for cities

4. Thematic Priorities for a Medium-Term Vision to Enhance Resilience

iii. Engaging communities to leverage local knowledge and resources

Improve local planning processes by leveraging local knowledge and ownership

- The continent has many examples of communities deploying adaptation strategies learned through local knowledge and experience – forests management, land use, irrigation strategies, etc.
- However, only five African governments (Benin, Burkina Faso, Somalia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe) acknowledge and include indigenous and local knowledge in their long-term adaptation planning
- Adaptation actions can also improve communities' livelihoods, through REDD+ programs and payment for environmental services schemes

5. Concluding remarks

- Investments in infrastructure and social safety nets to build resilience against drought and floods should be a core component of local development plans.
- Central agencies should promote such investments through budgeting, public investment, and environmental policies and guidelines that govern the intergovernmental fiscal transfer schemes.
- Central agencies should work with city and municipal authorities to resolve institutional coordination and capacity issues so that the momentum for building livable cities is reflected in national policy frameworks and financed through concessional and other financing mechanisms such as subnational borrowing and green bonds.
- Understanding the risk exposure of local communities, approaching the resilient infrastructure gap as a whole-of-government concern, and engaging local communities in the adaptation discourse can be the foundational principles underpinning these priority actions.