

# Virtual Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Day

For the African region  
2020



United Nations Climate Change  
Paris Committee on Capacity-building



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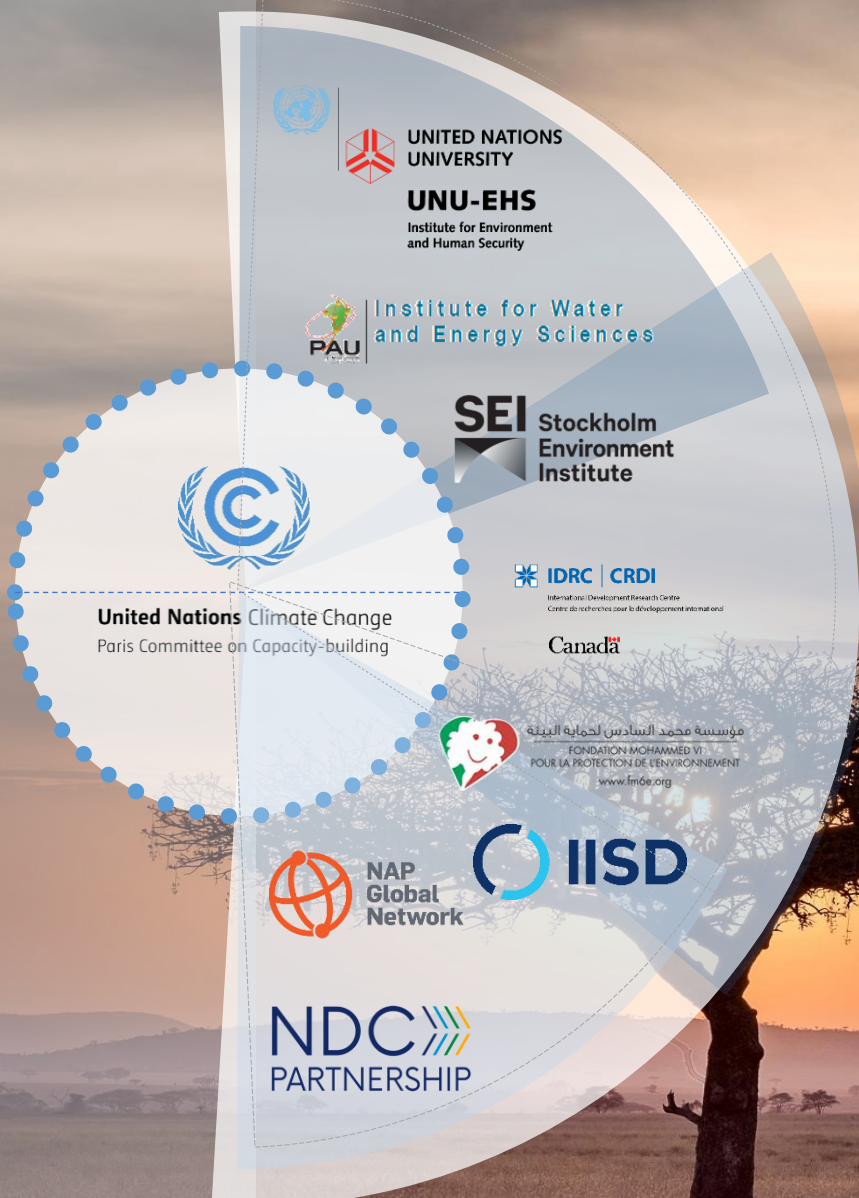
Strengthening engagement of universities and research institutions in building capacity for the preparation and implementation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and for raising ambition in climate action

Notwithstanding the great variety of existing institutional arrangements for promoting climate change mitigation and adaptation, the continuous participation of local, national and regional stakeholders in these systems, including research institutions (which encompasses think tanks, universities and other institutions that conduct and facilitate research), is considered crucial to enhance climate action and ambition. The **insufficient levels of capacity and capacity retention in developing countries, inadequate engagement of stakeholders, and insufficient coordination** among them is a recurring issue in the discussions on capacity-building under the UNFCCC process.

The Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Days are aimed at bringing together a diverse array of stakeholders, including national and local governments, and research organizations, **to explore better ways to mobilize local and policy-relevant knowledge for making informed decisions and taking effective action** in the face of climate change. Through the exchange of sub-national and national-level experiences and knowledge, the Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Day contributes to **strengthening the engagement of research institutions**, in building capacity for the preparation and implementation of national adaptation plans (NAPs) and nationally determined contributions (NDCs).

# Partners

The organizing partners of the Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Day depict a rich diversity of committed national, regional and international institutions that are working in the African region, aimed at raising climate ambition through collective efforts, action, and exchange of knowledge. This event aims to encourage regional dialogue and mobilize expertise for the more effective preparation and implementation of NAPs and NDCs, by identifying and connecting committed partners to explore the cross-sectoral synergies and foster lasting impacts through effective climate action and increasing climate ambition at a regional, national and local level.



# Background

The previous two regional Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Days were held during the Latin America and Caribbean and Asia-Pacific Climate Weeks in August and September 2019 respectively. In addition, a full-day Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Day took place during the Capacity-building Hub hosted by the PCCB at COP 25 that focused on key topics including a review of the first two Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Days, the importance of indigenous knowledge, collaborative online platforms and the role of the private sector in climate-related knowledge generation.

The Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Days during the UNFCCC Regional Climate Weeks are aimed at shedding light on the **central role of research institutions in developing countries in enhancing climate action**. While universities in developing countries are already building local capacity, promoting enhanced **South-South and South-North knowledge sharing** among academia and other relevant stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of NAPs and NDCs could yield great benefits. Furthermore, the Knowledge to Action Days recognize the need to create an enabling environment where researchers and decision makers can work closer together, so that the real-world impact of research increases.

As such, the Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Days were conceptualized with a view to **fostering the engagement of national and regional knowledge producers**, including research institutions **in climate capacity-building efforts**, facilitating the interaction of actors involved in the planning and implementation of NDCs and NAPs. As part of the regional climate week agendas, the Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Days:

- Convene stakeholders to **shape cross-cutting dialogues and accelerate collaborative action** at the national and regional levels;
- Enable the **exchange of national, regional, and international knowledge and experiences** in identifying capacity gaps and needs for the design and implementation of NAPs and NDCs at national level;
- Facilitate the exploration of ways to enhance the dialogue between North and South researchers and decision makers, as well as to build the capacity of developing country academic and research institutions, governments, and non-government stakeholders, including the private sector, to collaborate in **building and retaining climate-related capacities at national level**.

# Objectives

The specific objectives of the Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Day are to:

- Increase the **understanding of capacity-building gaps and needs** of developing countries when it comes to boosting ambition and accelerating action to prepare and implement NDCs and NAPs and of the role local and national research institutions can play in building and retaining the required capacity;
- Foster a dialogue and facilitate the sharing of experiences and good practices related to **effective collaboration among research institutions, governments, the private sector, and civil society** in both the Global South and North for designing and providing tools, guidance, platforms, and advisory support aimed at strengthening capacity for preparing and/or implementing NAPs and NDCs;
- Encourage a discussion on **how to interpret and match knowledge needs** when enhancing implementation and increasing ambition of NDCs and NAPs, aiming to translate these into researchable questions;
- Jointly **prioritize the capacity-building gaps** with a view to **identifying a research agenda and exploring ways to build the capacity of research institutions and governments** to collaborate and promote effective climate action.

The findings of this virtual event will be summarized and integrated into a **joint report** highlighting the outcomes and recommendations from all Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Days organized in 2019 and 2020. The findings will also be reported at the next research dialogue event.

# Virtual Format

The Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Day for the African Region will be conducted virtually this year, as a result of Africa Climate Week being postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis. The format and modalities of the previous events consisted of **group discussions** designed to explore ways and means to create a space for dialogue between decision makers, research institutions, so that these mixed knowledge and needs could constructively feed into country-level planning and implementation of climate-related capacity-building under the Paris Agreement. These discussions were complemented by a **panel discussion** composed of representatives from organizing partners and a number of distinguished experts in the intersection of knowledge and action at the national and regional level. In creating a virtual Knowledge to Action Day, this format will be adhered to as much as possible and the organizers have endeavored to keep the process as interactive and engaging as possible, given the circumstances.

The organization of the Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Days is an effort to provide a grounding for higher ambition, and further action in the different regions. **Diversity, participation, and partnership** are guiding principles in the organization of this event series. The design of the Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Days also benefits from tools and methods for effective feedback loops, interactive facilitation, and innovative group learning.

# Virtual Layout

The virtual Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Day for the African region will be a condensed version of the panel and group discussions, lasting three hours online, following the format of:

- Welcome and introduction
- Panel discussion followed by Q&A
- Breakout room discussion
- Report back with comments and closing remarks

The virtual Capacity-Building Knowledge to Action Day for the African region will begin with a short introduction presenting outcomes and findings garnered from Capacity-Building Knowledge to Action Days during previous regional climate weeks and will then be followed by a panel discussion. The virtual panel discussion will be composed of a moderator and three to four panel members and will focus on **fostering effective collaboration between research institutions and government and non-government actors, and on addressing challenges and lessons learned in cross-stakeholder collaboration through knowledge and capacity-building**. The condensed time and format were chosen in order to reduce participant fatigue, maintain active engagement in the discussions and ensure the event is accessible to as many time-zones as possible.

To keep the panel discussion as interactive as is possible, interactive discussions will be promoted and, furthermore, tools that allow participants to actively engage and contribute to the panel discussion will be utilized. These will facilitate real-time feedback and sharing of opinions during the discussion. There will be active participants to the virtual Capacity-building Knowledge to Action day who will be sent personal invitations prior to the event, and the number of active participants will be limited to ensure equal. The panel discussion will also be streamed for observers to make the discussion as accessible and wide-reaching as is viable.

After the panel discussion, there will be facilitated 'breakout room' discussions for participants. Each of these groups will be facilitated by one to two of the virtual Capacity-building Knowledge to Action partners and this breakout discussion **will focus on solutions** to the topics discussed by the prior panel on capacity-building needs and gaps in the Africa region. Facilitators will be briefed prior to this and will work to ensure there is equal participation and input across the breakout group, allowing for **a diverse dialogue and active engagement from a range of researchers, decision makers and other stakeholders**.

The event aims to have a representative spread across the sectors of research and academia, private sector, local and national government and civil society. We hope to have representatives from multiple sectors present to encourage fruitful discussions with a variety of perspectives, experiences and ideas in the field of building capacity for the design and implementation of NAPS and NDCS. After the breakout room discussion, each group will report back with key comments and findings to the entire group of virtual Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Day participants. The event will finish after three hours with concluding remarks and a follow-up survey will be sent to participants ex-post, to garner feedback on working modalities and topics discussed.

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