REGIONAL FORUM
Hybrid Format

« Strengthening the resilience and increasing the climate ambition of Local and regional Governments of Africa »

Summarized Report of the Regional Forum of Local Governments, held in Lomé, Togo

June 11 and 12, 2021, Hôtel 2 Février, Lomé, TOGO
WAEMU Regional Forum on "Strengthening the resilience and increasing the climate ambitions of Local and Regional Governments in Africa".

Lomé, Togo, June 10 and 11, 2021

Placed under the High Patronage of His Excellency Mr. Faure Gnassingbé, President of the Republic of Togo, the Regional Forum of Local and Regional Governments under the theme of “Strengthening resilience and increasing the climate ambitions of Local and Regional Governments in Africa” was held by the Covenant of Mayors for Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA), and United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa) in collaboration with the Government of Togo, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the BOAD bank, UNDP, and Expertise France.

Held in a hybrid format, the Forum was attended by more than 200 people. It also mobilized more than 100 Mayors and elected officials of municipalities and cities of the West African region.

I - Background and goals

Faced with a health and human crisis opening onto an economic shock unprecedented at the global level, local and regional governments have been placed on the front line to maintain basic services and ensure close management of the crisis by being as close as possible to the populations. Local governments undoubtedly have a central role to play in stimulating the economy in a manner that is compatible with Sustainable Development Goals and with the climate goals. This is why, when considering any possible reconstruction, it is crucial not to underestimate the essential role that local governments must play, but even more so it is crucial to ensure that they have, more than ever, the means to act immediately but also over the long term. The establishment or strengthening of a partnership framework between the national and the local authorities can and could effectively contribute to an exit from the crisis through a resilient and low carbon economy.
The Lomé Regional Forum was of capital importance insofar as it was necessary to prepare cities and local governments to:

- Successfully place the imperatives of the territorialization of NDCS within the framework of the climate agenda of local authorities in the countries of the WAEMU region and within the goals set out by COP 26;
- Strengthen the capacities of local authorities in the WAEMU area to integrate climate issues at the territorial level into the national climate agenda;
- Strengthen the framework for transparency and monitoring of climate actions at the local level;
- Strengthen the framework of inter-territorial cooperation within the climate - energy nexus, notably through the mobilization of cities around the CoM SSA;
- Achieve access to climate finance and market mechanisms through the establishment of a financial vehicle to provide local and regional governments with the means to act and implement territorial climate plans;
- Set up a Regional Readiness program to strengthen the capacities of local and regional governments to request funding for projects eligible for the Green Climate Fund.

II- Course of work and conclusions

The proceedings were opened by His Excellency Mr. Payadowa Boukpessi, Minister of State, Minister of Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Territory Development of Togo, representative of the President of the Republic of Togo. Also took part in the official ceremony His Excellency Mr. Joaquín Tasso Vilallonga, Head of Delegation of the European Union in Togo, Mr. Mohamed Yassine Daoudi, Representative of the President of UCLG World, Mr. François Albert Amichia, President of the CCT (Council of Territorial Communities) of WAEMU, Mr. Serge Ekué, President of BOAD, Mr. Aymeric Lorthiois, First Counselor of the French Embassy in Togo, representative of the French Ambassador, Mr. Markus Wagner, Director General of GIZ Togo, Mr. Kossi Dzinyefa Atabuh, Prefect of the Golfe district, and Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General of UCLG Africa.
The main goal of this meeting, the first of its kind in Lomé, was to raise awareness and bring local elected representatives of cities and territories in Africa in general and those of the WAEMU space in particular to take ownership of climate action with a view to defining and implementing development plans in harmony with the demand for decarbonization and actions to adapt to climate change.

By officially opening the proceedings on behalf of the President of the Republic, His Excellency Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, the Minister of State, Minister of Territorial Administration, Decentralization, and Territorial Development, Mr. Payadowa Boukpessi, expressed his gratitude to the organizers for having chosen the city of Lomé to host the proceedings of this important Forum. Regarding the theme of the meeting, the Minister of State indicated that the subject deserves great attention because of the topical context of issues and challenges facing the phenomenon of climate change which spares no country. This is why the Minister of State urged everyone to work so that local authorities become frontline actors for the fight and strengthening of resilience and increasing of climate ambition of countries and local governments for the common cause. In the same vein, and while highlighting Togo’s leadership in climate finance, the various speakers expressed the need to involve local authorities as a key partner in taking into account local climate issues by involving them in the planning, preparation, and budgeting process of investment plans, which will make it possible to mobilize the still under-exploited potential at the local level and speed up the implementation of the NDCs.

The opening session was followed by the intervention of outstanding personalities sending key messages to the attention of the community of local and regional governments in Africa. These personalities included Ms. Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, Mr. Pa Ousmane Jarju, Director, Country Programming Division of the Green Climate Fund, and Chairman of the AMCOMET Board, Mr. Frédéric Vallier, Secretary General of CEMR, and Mr. MacDonald S. GOANUE, Director of the Research and Strategic Planning Department of EBID, Representing the President of EBID. The speeches emphasized the need to place local authorities at the heart of the economic recovery plans aligned with the climate goals, and underlined the importance of supporting innovation and the need for a paradigm shift to face the inevitable transition to a new and more pronounced phase of the climate crisis. The importance of regional cooperation between local and regional governments was also highlighted insofar as the latter could act as a lever for building resilience and accelerating the ambition of countries, but also make proposals for solutions to raise the obstacles related in particular to access of local governments to climate finance.
To feed the strategic expectations of this forum, sessions were organized and articulated around 4 themes, the main recommendations of which are:

• **The strategic framework:**
  1. Economic recovery plans must integrate environmental and climate goals in order to make societies and economies more resilient to foreseeable future shocks.
  2. Climate action can no longer be seen as a top-down approach but a merger of a bottom-up and a top-down approach (NDCs - LDCs)
  3. The strategic framework should combine planning, capacity building and project implementation. This framework must be open to actors who implement actions in the field, in particular the private sector and the farmers. The strategic framework will allow the ownership and facilitate the co-creation of innovative solutions to contribute to the concrete implementation of climate actions on the ground.

• **The governance framework:** The role of the Structured Dialogue in strengthening vertical governance for an effective territorialization of NDCs;
  1. Improving the institutional and regulatory framework governing the decentralization process;
  2. Structuring the multi-level governance framework that promotes the consistency of territorial climate action with national programs and NDCs;
  3. Strengthening the Structured Dialogue between the national and local levels which will make it possible to align the processes of the NDCs, Communal Development Plans, SDGs, and territorial climate plans.
  4. Strengthening the framework for data collection, monitoring, reporting and verification of the implementation of the Climate agenda in our territories;

• **The implementation framework:**
  1. Setting up a climate focal point within each national umbrella body of the communities in the WAEMU area so that it acts as an interface between the national focal points of the Green Climate Fund and the local authorities of the countries concerned;
  2. Mobilizing Local Governments around the Covenant of Mayors (CoM SSA) in order to develop the Mobilize Local Authorities around the Covenant of Mayors (CoM SSA) in order to develop the Sustainable Energy Access and Climate Action Plan (SEACAP);
  3. Budget alignment at both local and national levels to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure optimal use of limited resources;
  4. The need to take the gender approach into account in the planning, budgeting, and implementation of climate projects. In this context, the Network of Locally Elected Women of Africa (REFELA) can play an essential role in raising awareness and increasing the scope of this approach;
  5. The establishment of a capacity building program in the structuring of projects, the greening of local finance and the mobilization of climate finance.
The round table on the mobilization of climate finance, chaired by Mr. François Albert Amichia, President of the Council of Territorial Communities (CCT-WAEMU) and moderated by Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General of UCLG Africa, is part of a process consultation already initiated with the Focal Points of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) at the end of which a draft regional readiness program for the WAEMU countries was established and was the subject of a debate which made it possible to take into consideration the specificities of each country and draw up a timetable to finalize and submit the Readiness program to the GCF by the Togo Focal Point.

As a reminder, the goals of the regional “Readiness” program are

Overall goal

- Help WAEMU member states to mobilize resources from the GCF to finance adaptation and mitigation measures in local communities and contribute to the territorialization of NDCs, and make effective the contribution of local governments / territories.

Objectifs spécifiques :

- Strengthen the capacities of institutions at the local level of the WAEMU area: allow a better understanding of the issue of climate change through technical assistance and training workshops;
- Promote access to climate finance at the local level: make available to local governments in WAEMU countries the financial resources necessary to deal with climate change, in terms of mitigation and adaptation
- Strengthen local cooperation in the fight against climate change: promote and consolidate cooperation between local governments in WAEMU countries, in the fight against climate change.
Declaration in French: https://bit.ly/3gHh0Zc


Video links for the sessions:

Day 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Y-5cuyBszE

Day 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWzQUEbo090

Closing Ceremony: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzSTw6G1LDA

Video link: Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

https://uclgafrica723-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/personal/hbernoussi_uclga_org/EVZr66CoRzlBgL4xwpWpcwB-qCM_Gh5-qAj96ks-1QGEQ

Video link: Mr. Frédéric Vallier, Secretary General of CEMR

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Video link: Mr. Pa Ousmane Jarju, Director, Country Programming Division, Green Climate Fund, Chairman of the AMCOMET board.

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Video link: Ms. Kobie Brand, Regional Director, ICLEI Africa

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Video link: Ms. Aziza AKHMOUCH, Head of Division, Cities, Urban Policy and Sustainable Development, OECD.

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