



Post-crisis lessons from the African Coalitions of Climate Chance

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Covid-19 had a much different impact on the African continent than in Europe. People that were already vulnerable, saw inequalities intensify faster in Africa than anywhere else. This Dialogue highlighted how non-state actors from Climate Chance's coalitions proved their ability to adapt and continue to convene via virtual and even hybrid events, sparking more initiatives at local, national and regional levels to keep the momentum going and keep actors engaged. Civil society and communal organisations can fill the gaps, with the formal and informal sectors coming together to protect the most vulnerable. Women-led and youth-led initiatives are central for resilience, with new ongoing initiatives in urban and rural areas.

Facilitator:

Romain Couzet, Programmes Director, Climate Chance

Speakers:

- **Ronan Dantec**, President of the Climate Chance Association, Spokesperson on Climate for UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments), Senator of Loire-Atlantique
- **Tara Caetano**, Senior Professional Officer: Climate Change, Energy and Resilience, ICLEI Africa
- **Gbemisola Titilope Akosa**, Executive Director of Centre for 21st Century Issues
- **Patience Alifo**, Founder of Greenfuel Innovation Africa and Country, Representative of the African Circular Economy Network
- **Sylvestre Kouame Kouassi**, Director of the Observatory of the African Mobilities (OMA)
- **Balkissou Buba**, Global Indigenous Youth Caucus Representative
- **Mohamed Nbou**, Special Advisor on Climate to the Secretary General of UCLG Africa
- **Nigel Topping**, High-Level Champion, UK High Level Climate Action Champion

Summary - Keynotes per speaker

Opening Remarks by Ronan Dantec:

Climate Chance has been able to gather global non-state actors working on a common ground, including all the 9 groups recognized by the UNFCCC. Working in cooperation with them on climate issues, adaptation and mitigation is at the core of Climate Chance's work. With **COVID-19** we have been successful in shifting to the virtual space, and not losing out on this ongoing dialogue.

We are at a time to start analysing the impacts of this crisis, on climate action, on the environment as well. The **impact in Africa** has not been so much on the health level, than on the **economic level**, with 10-12% drops in GDP.

We have seen **causes for concern but also hope** in the last few days - such as the election of Joe Biden and the US re-joining the Paris Agreement. It is also encouraging to see an actor like China taking up carbon neutrality targets. We also need to see how this will happen in Africa. We hope for a more **ambitious multilateralism** in climate action and be ready to develop new projects.

For Africa, we have recognised the points of concern and potential for action from our work and our advocacy-- consider, access to finance as a point of concern-- we're working on these, on training, on coming up with new projects, all to develop a more favourable environment.



An introduction to the coalitions and virtual workshops by Romain Cruzet

These coalitions were created at the 2018 Climate Chance Summit, to bring together non-state actors from various **thematic sectors** like education, energy, mobility, etc. Each of these coalitions has a roadmap, setting goals to be achieved. We also share the best practices between actors. As we were not able to gather these coalitions this year, we organised a series of virtual workshops, which enabled us to touch base with the various coalitions and see how they were impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

We noticed that there was a consensus that climate action needs to continue through the crisis. The virtual workshops allowed for this, in a very flexible way. We were able to reach out to around 1500 people, from across 103 countries and representing various actors. From a survey sent to participants, we found that the best takeaways for people were knowledge, contacts and a need for networking. We also realised how important it is to at least be bilingual, if not multilingual.

Tara Caetano

- Though it is hard to engage at a time like this, it is important to keep the conversation going.
- **Local governments are at the forefront of this crisis**, the key role of local governments in the face of a crisis has become apparent -- even in the face of the climate crisis.
- E.g. local governments in Uganda dealing with drought, in South Africa with wildfires -- the links already being made between the COVID crisis and the climate crisis are remarkable. Local governments are **changing their institutional structures** to be better able to deal with emergencies.
- On a more global scale, the **Africa-EU partnership** is growing, and a lot of funding is coming in, especially in the access to energy space. The EU external investment plan is expected to generate up to 44 billion euros of additional investment in Africa for low carbon infrastructure. Though things have physically come to a standstill, there is progress.
- While nothing can replace face-to-face meetings, ICLEI Africa saw that the development of **new techniques** can keep the momentum going. A webinar series on building sustainable cities was launched in July, which was very well received by the local governments, who appreciate the **space to engage** with each other and experts. The CoMSSA is another space wherever local governments can come together. Mayors and technical staff at municipalities really want to engage and learn, even virtually.
- **Whatsapp groups** have also been effective in getting projects going, and working with CSOs **on the ground** has proven helpful.
- In terms of **access to finance**, the key gap that exists is in terms of having trained officials to make project proposals or applications to avail funding.

Gbemisola Titilope Akosa

"The Climate Chance Virtual Workshops have been really rewarding. I have learnt a lot about what is going on around the world, especially colleagues in Africa."

"We have learnt that it is really important to listen to local communities. Listening to them will help us understand the kind of financial instruments needed to respond to their needs and struggles in terms of climate finance."



- The Virtual Workshops were a place of reference for finding out how non-state actors in Africa were able to cope during lockdown and even keep forward with projects from in the field.
- For women, a main issue that has been highlighted by the lockdown has been **food security**. Need for more strategy to avoid the escalating situations.
- The lockdown issues accumulated with the unrest in Nigeria at the moment (police brutality, many arrests), there has been a certain situation where individuals have intruded warehouses to extract any food available.
- Women-led initiatives for women for the post-COVID-19 era, concentrating on women and girls who are pregnant and need support. There are also studies being conducted to trace children who have not gone back to school to assess their needs in terms of support.
- Work on climate finance since post-lockdown, over **800 women are being trained to respond to the need for climate finance**. Currently, there is an ongoing project being put in place called "**locally-led climate finance strategy**" for local women and more attention is being paid on **how local finance reaches local communities**.
- Gender is being added into the Nigerian NDC for the first time.

Patience Alifo

"Since the Covid-19 pandemic in Ghana, there has been no school in Ghana. For this reason, I have depended on online workshops such as Climate Chance's Virtual workshops to keep up to date. That has really helped me as a young person who is passionate about climate action."

- In 2020, Greenfuel Innovation received 5,000US\$ which really helped the start-up cope during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- As a student in Ghana Institute of Management and public administration, Greenfuel Innovation mobilises many young individuals to gather and come up with innovative solutions to climate change.
- Due to lockdown, the monthly brainstorming sessions were organised virtually. Some students lost interest in the project because of diverse distractions, others faced bigger challenges like in rural areas where access to energy is much lower.
- One of Greenfuel Innovation's main activities is providing clean energy to women in rural areas in Ghana and organising training workshops on clean energy production. These activities were put on stop during lockdown.
- Covid-19 has had a major impact on education in Ghana. Schools have yet to provide lessons again (including virtual lectures). Most climate information is shared through whatsapp groups.

Sylvestre Kouame Kouassi

- The Mobility and Transport Coalition has an especially important tool: a **roadmap for sustainable mobility and transport**. The Paris Process on Mobility and Climate's global roadmap for mobility was adapted to the Ivorian context in 2018 with the participation of all non-party stakeholders who were committed to developing this special roadmap.
- The process began in 2019, the vision being to create a Roadmap for sustainable mobility by 2050 as the objectives align with the Paris Agreement.
- The quantification of GHG emissions is the next step of the Roadmap. Practically speaking, data on social, economic and transport context is still being collected. Very important exercise to collaborate with the Ministry of Environment.
- Local authorities of Côte d'Ivoire with the Climate Chance Mobility Coalition were committed to organise activities over the past months. Both state and non-state actors gathered during three face-to-face workshops to collect feedback from local communities and integrate this into the Roadmap. The aim being to make to Roadmap as applicable as possible.



- The Roadmap is currently being used by local authorities and even the Greater Abidjan to **help decision makers**.
- A key step to the Roadmap is its possible influence on the Ivorian NDC. On October 6th 2019 when the Mobility Coalition presented the Roadmap to state actors (including the Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development), the Ministry underlined how the Roadmap **could be integrated into their own process**.

Mobility Coalition webpage:

<https://www.climate-chance.org/en/get-involved/african-coalitions/mobility-coalition/>

Balkisou Buba

- Cameroun was hard hit by COVID-19 compared to the rest of Africa, but indigenous people were less affected. Many of them went **back to nature**, to their villages and peripheries of society living in harmony with the environment. They made use of **traditional methods**, preventively and curatively, against the COVID-19.
- They have been **valorising traditional indigenous knowledge**, passed on from previous generations; and strategize together as a community to combat the crisis.
- But there were challenges, like the **lack of information** and understanding on the disease in **local languages**. Workshops were conducted in local languages to better explain the crisis and safety measures.
- Lifestyles of indigenous people are related to nature, but the **loss of livelihood** induced by socio-political crisis is pushing these people to urban areas, where they are more vulnerable. Efforts are being made to train them in simple vocations, especially women and young girls, so that they can continue to earn a livelihood.
- The belief that all **solutions can be found in nature** has been highlighted by this crisis, and has been proven useful to the newer generations, and can also be applied to **fight climate change**. Indigenous societies are already working on adaptive measures, and monitoring climate change, because they have recognised that it affects their livelihoods.

Mohamed Nbou

"I would like to congratulate Climate Chance for this dynamic that they have created in Africa. This event is extremely important because it shows to what extent local communities play a crucial role in times of crisis."

"I would like to again congratulate the different coalitions. I worked on the [building and construction] coalition, it was quite extraordinary. It is through these initiatives that we are able to reach the objectives of the Paris agreement."

- In Africa, the pandemic was mitigated in terms of severity, compared to Europe and other regions. Local communities and the lifestyle of the African people have contributed to the mitigation of the effects of the pandemic.
- This crisis has shown important political actors, who make decisions on climate, and the role of local governments and communities who are key for rebooting the economy post-COVID-19. It is important to coherently **link national climate action with local action**.
- Each country has their own NDC, and the economic recovery plans are trying to integrate these. There is no single model, but the national recovery plans must meet economies needs and take into account realities from in the field.
- The Race to Zero, that is carbon neutrality, cannot be reached without local communities and cities. Cities represent 60-70% of GHG emissions worldwide and so the pandemic must reinforce African cities commitments.
- UCLG-A is working towards this with CoMSSA and Climate Chance. 2 phases of the project have been completed, and phase 3 that is ongoing, focuses on embarking key players, like



financial institutions into this CoMSSA initiative. Multilateral approaches are fundamental to governments and cities.

Nigel Topping:

"I thank immensely Climate Chance for the fantastic work in convening all of these coalitions, I can tell there is a vibrancy and an action orientation in your work [which is so important. Thank you to the 1.500 people who joined these activities, I am really impressed by the work,] a wonderful example of what I call "radical collaboration".

Four important takeaways expressed by Nigel Topping:

1. Governments cannot implement the Paris Agreement alone, the feedback between State and Non-State Actors is important, we call it the "ambition loop".
2. By having many more people active, we learn faster, by experimenting different areas.
3. When a national actor is struggling to be as ambitious as science demands, non-State actors can keep hopes alive.
4. **We need [practical steps,] practical net zero pathways, I look forward to working through the Marrakech Partnership with you to align the global pathways with the regional and national pathways, to work on implementation.**

Some powerful messages from this Climate Chance dialogue expressed by Nigel Topping:

- We have to keep in mind the power and fragility to rely on digital communication. Investments in digital infrastructure are needed as part of the resilience agenda.
- Climate change and Covid-19 both intensify vulnerability.
- **I find the local application of a roadmap as you showed in Côte d'Ivoire for the mobility sector to be very strong, I am looking forward to comparing that roadmap to the one we are working on within the Marrakesh Partnership and continue to improve them over the years.**
- I take away **the importance of listening to [some of] the key voices of women, young people, indigenous people who have sometimes different perspectives but valuable perspectives, and are key stakeholders if we want to make a kinder transformation.**

→ This collective work - this responsibility we share - will require a strong dose of solidarity, it is perhaps one of the most important ideas at the heart of the Paris Agreement.