



## Experiences from the developing world: voices to enhance Global Climate discourse

*Concerted global actions are key to curbing climate change and adapting to its effects. Under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), multilateral climate negotiations have emerged as complex and crucial processes where countries decide the global course for action to address climate change issues.*

### Background

The Paris Agreement has been key in enabling parties to reach consensus on commitments to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and draft subsequent national plans to enact instruments and measures to assist Parties in achieving their commitments. However,

### Key messages

- Integrating and complementing climate policies with scientific knowledge allows a better response to the real needs of different levels of governments. Strong bridges between science and policies can take the form of forums, national dialogues or regional surveys.
- Fostering information exchanges and feedback loops among researchers and policy makers enables a stronger evidence base for understanding large scale and complicated systems as well as the influence of gender, health, and agriculture.
- Developing and bolstering the capacities of negotiators to use science and evidence to support climate policy can effectively shift the narrative towards equitable joint outcomes.

the most vulnerable countries to climate change often have limited resources and scientific expertise to effectively engage at international negotiations and make their voices heard to influence the outcomes of these meetings. In this regard, IDRC has been working on strengthening the technical capacity of national delegations to ensure the fairness and effectiveness of the agreements. Through the African Group of Negotiators Expert Support (AGNES) since 2015 and the LATINOADAPTA Group (Latin America) since 2017, researchers from the Global South are actively participating in discussions. They have provided scientific and other relevant evidence to negotiators, helped inform unified common positions on matters related to climate change, and identified opportunities for concerted actions. They are also contributing to the design of NDCs and NAPs in the countries involved in both Africa and LAC regions. These networks of scientists have created a platform for the exchange of ideas between experts and negotiators, including policy makers, on local and regional climate change issues

## Key research findings

The recent release of the IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels presented state-of-the-art knowledge and reached the conclusion that a resilient and sustainable global future “requires rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society” IPCC, 2018. IDRC aims at facilitating enhanced collaboration between researchers and policy makers on policy responses to address these challenges. This cooperation between researchers and policy makers can enable the creation of solutions for both mitigation and adaptation challenges, especially those faced by countries of the Global South. In the light of this situation, it is becoming critical to strengthen the technical capacity of negotiators from the Global South so they have the evidence-based arguments needed to shape international negotiations outcomes drawn from their realities. This capacity building is usually demand-led, planned by scientists in response to countries’ policy making priorities, and flexible enough to adapt to current global discussions on climate change. The AG-

NES and the LATINOADAPTA groups, both supported by IDRC’s climate change programming, are based on these principles. The researchers participating in both networks possess the necessary expertise and experience to support climate negotiators and policymakers in numerous ways.

## Enabling the exchange of ideas

The African and Latin American groups have highlighted the need to build bridges between science and policies and they have highlighted the importance of integrating and complementing climate policies with scientific knowledge in responding to countries’ needs. The resulting network of professionals is an essential asset for African and Latin American countries in addressing targeted research gaps in climate change adaptation and it is contributing to knowledge debates at regional and international meetings.

Both networks are fostering horizontal dialogues among researchers, negotiators and policymakers to enable the exchange of ideas and the strengthening of the evidence base on topics such as gender, agriculture and health. Both groups also completed the process of identifying climate knowledge gaps through active national dialogues and a regional survey bringing together policy makers from countries in Africa and Latin America.

In parallel, both groups of researchers work in synergy to support mutual learning and sharing of experiences, best practices and expertise to stimulate inter-regional climate discussion and actions. Both groups seek to provide evidence to negotiators to address four climate leadership gaps to:

- improve the capacity of African and Latin American scientists to effectively engage in climate assessments, including IPCC;
- effectively participate in climate change policy processes (UNFCCC, Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice – SBSTA and SBI – Subsidiary Body on Implementation) backed by scientific evidence;
- formulate and implement regional and national climate and gender- and youth-responsive policies, including low emissions development strategies

(LEDs), nationally determined contributions (NDCs), and national adaptation plans (NAPs); and

- coordinate among Africa's climate scientists, negotiators, policy makers and practitioners.

### Bringing Global South preoccupations forward

Improving the effectiveness of developing countries' participation has led to more rational, objective and legitimate outcomes to negotiations that take into consideration local realities. The involvement of African scientists in the negotiation process has shifted the narrative from value-based national perspectives to evidence-based and equitable joint discussions and outcomes.

The AGNES group has played an important role in providing empirical evidence to inform negotiations on issues related to agriculture and gender. For instance, AGNES supported African negotiators (under the Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technical Assistance) in preparing their technical submission to UNFCCC on several topics, such as the development of early warning systems and contingency plans in relation to extreme weather events, as well as risk and vulnerability assessments of agricultural systems to various climate change scenarios, including but not limited to pests and diseases.

AGNES also played a critical role in the adoption of the Gender Action Plan at the twenty-third Conference of the Parties (COP23) in November 2017 in Bonn, Germany. Acknowledging the particular effects of climate change on women, the plan proposed a gender-responsive policy in all aspects of climate change adaptation and mitigation activities. It was the first plan of its kind ever adopted under the UNFCCC.

In parallel, AGNES also played a critical role in the COP23 negotiations that led to the adoption of the Koronivia joint work on agriculture, a decision that calls on the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation to jointly address issues related to agriculture through workshops, expert meetings, and other methods. The decision calls on these subsidiary bodies to effectively link policy, science, and implementation.

On the LATINOADAPTA side led by AVINA, research

gaps have been identified for building national adaptation policies and their adoption by respective NDCs of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Paraguay and Uruguay. Additional efforts are being made to bring forward evidence that supports the integration of Latin American realities into future international climate decisions.

### The way forward

Truly achieving concerted global actions following climate negotiations is determined by the informed participation of all Parties, drafting proactive policy measures. To do so, future collaboration between scientists and policy makers must:

- **Extend to the Caribbean and Asia to strengthen the capacities of parties** in the use of scientific evidence for the development of climate policy and **provide them with tools** that can be used to build consensus on specific topics.
- In addition to gender and agriculture, it is now **essential to sensitize negotiators on the longer-term implication for adaptation of overshooting the Paris targets** of 1.5°C and 2°C and on the urgency for action implied by the IPCC report. Negotiators of the Global South will need to take bold action and serve as catalysts for collaborative initiatives that send a clear signal that nations need to strengthen their climate commitments. There are many expectations on future negotiations and the capacity of countries to agree on appropriate policy responses.

## Resources

- Strengthen scientific evidence and its use to inform policy, negotiations and climate implementation in Africa : <https://www.idrc.ca/en/project/strengthen-scientific-evidence-and-its-use-inform-policy-negotiations-and-climate>
- Strengthen the use of scientific evidence to inform climate policy, negotiations and implementation in Latin America : <https://www.idrc.ca/en/project/strengthen-use-scientific-evidence-inform-climate-policy-negotiations-and-implementation>
- Koronivia joint work on agriculture: [https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/bonn\\_nov\\_2017/application/pdf/cp23\\_auv\\_agri.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/bonn_nov_2017/application/pdf/cp23_auv_agri.pdf)
- Gender Action Plan: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2017/sbi/eng/l29.pdf>

A key part of Canada's aid program, IDRC supports research in developing countries to promote growth and development.

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