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May, 2014

**Dear Participants in the Workshop to Launch the Multi Country Programme to Strengthen Climate Information for Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change in Africa (CIRDA),**

It was a pleasure and an honor to have you at our workshop. Your active participation made our event very successful and paved the way for a sound implementation phase.

The CIRDA team is ready to work with all of you to ensure that all participant countries can access the climate information that they need and that relevant, timely, targeted information reaches vulnerable communities, farmers and policymakers. This is essential to enable better climate risk management and development of mid- and long-term national adaptation plans (NAPs).

In response to the interest expressed at the workshop, I am pleased to announce that we are establishing an ongoing program of communication with you and our partners starting with this letter, to be followed by monthly newsletters. These newsletters will inform you on project implementation and progress and will be an opportunity to ask for your feedback and inputs on a regular basis.

This first letter includes: A short summary of the launch workshop meeting held in Addis Ababa in April 2014; a brief analysis of the outcomes; and next steps to take the CIRDA programme forward.

Workshop Outcomes

In summary, the Multi Country Programme to Strengthen Climate Information in Africa for Resilient Development and Adaptation was launched in Addis Ababa through a two day workshop. The event had several objectives:

- 1) Initiate a dialogue among participant countries, WMO, regional institutions, UNDP and other UN agencies to discuss plans to develop a platform on Climate Information in Africa to build on existing initiatives;
- 2) Identify information gaps and explore how the multi-country program could assist countries to fill them;



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- 3) Carry out a roundtable to listen to the specific needs and expectations of the participating countries and integrate those inputs into the project design and next steps;
- 4) Consult and coordinate with the Regional UNDP Office and Country Offices on how to provide support through the Multi Country Programme
- 5) Coordinate with WMO and other international and regionally relevant institutions on how to promote access to climate information in Africa;
- 6) Hold an Expo with private meteorological service and technology providers so as to begin to expose country representatives to the range of technologies, including some new and innovative, that are available to help countries develop their climate information services.

The workshop was attended by high level representatives from the governments of Benin, Liberia, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome and Principe, Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia, including Ministers from Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone and Uganda. In addition, representatives from WMO, UNFCC, regional information centres (ICPAC, AGRHYMET), FEWSNET and the Red Cross also participated.

The meeting was launched by Lebogang Motlana, Director of the UNDP Regional Service Center; Pradeep Kurukulasuriya Head of Climate Change Adaptation for UNDP-GEF and Bonizella Biagini, CIRDA Manager. In addition, Caroline Richter, Director of Global Climate Observing Systems at the WMO; H.E. Haddijatou Jallow, Chief Executive Chair Person of Sierra Leone's Environment Protection Agency; H.E. José Maria Amado da Fonseca, Secretary for Infrastructure and Environment of Sao Tome and Principe; and H.E. Ephraim Kamuntu, Minister of Water and Environment of Uganda made introductory remarks stressing the importance of climate information for long term planning and development.

The three Ministries who attended the opening ceremony, namely H.E. Haddijatou Jallow, Chief Executive Chair Person of Sierra Leone's Environment Protection Agency; H.E. José Maria Amado da Fonseca, Secretary for Infrastructure and Environment of Sao Tome and Principe; and H.E. Ephraim Kamuntu, Minister of Water and Environment of Uganda, participated in the entire workshop providing insightful political and technical inputs and ideas on how to implement this regional initiative.



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In her presentation, Boni Biagini introduced the Multi Country Programme addressing its overall objectives and scope. Participants were invited to comment during this introductory session as well as during a roundtable discussion that ensued. The need to enhance local capacity in managing climate information and new technologies was stressed as well as the need for adequate equipment to help Met agencies collect, analyze and disseminate climate information effectively. Discussion regarding the possibilities for engaging with the private sector generated considerable interest from participants.

Presentations from speakers were also made so as to present different case studies, introduce trends in technologies as well as the varied sources of climate information that are available. A case study on Guinea's climate information system by the country's hydromet director, which included recent experience with innovative technologies, generated a lot of interest from government and international agency participants. Representatives from the UNFCCC and UNEP presented on the importance of collecting and using climate information as part of the NAP process in long term adaptation planning. Participants stressed the importance of reaching end users in an effective manner.

The second day of the workshop focused on possible engagement of the private sector as well as on the importance of reaching out to end users. The closing of the event presented an opportunity for the countries to look forward to the Programme's development and contribution to addressing their needs. A formal invitation from Uganda was made to analyze private sector engagement through a future forum.

The Expo was also well received by the workshop's participants. The introduction to new technologies and services it provided was welcomed by both the government participants as well as by other stakeholders. The meteorological service providers also benefited from the opportunity to gain improved understanding of government needs in collecting and disseminating climate information. The Expo was also a welcome change from the traditional workshop setting, allowing for inspection of some innovative systems and hands-on discussion of cost, performance, and application issues.

### Next Steps

The programme is now officially launched and its relevance to the individual country projects was made clear. A team of experts- including on technologies and private sector opportunities- has been put together to support you as much as possible.



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This year's activities will focus on capacity building and training on the interpretation of data as well as on private sector engagement. Actions include:

1. A training workshop will be held in Tanzania in November 2014 (date to be confirmed) on data interpretation and processing;
2. An agreement will be developed with UNDP BOM to provide, upon request, support to participating countries on preparation work for procurement;
3. A high level event will be planned at the end of 2014 or beginning of 2015 in Uganda on how to involve the private sector as both a service provider and end user, with opportunities for new services and revenue generation;
4. Platforms for communicating to governments, including a monthly newsletter, will be established so as to assure an ongoing conversation that includes all stakeholders.
5. As a follow up to a proposal from HE Mme. Jallow, the possibility to engage in an educational campaign with schools in Sierra Leone, tentatively in cooperation with UNICEF, will be explored.
6. In response to your requests, a website has been created in collaboration with the Adaptation Learning Mechanism (ALM), which includes the list of participants, all presentations and project documents (both national and multi-country). This website will be updated to include information related to the CIRDA project as it becomes available. So feel free to visit <http://www.undp-alm.org/projects/cirda> to explore this information.

I look forward to hearing from you and remain available to shape this project according to your requests and needs.

Warm regards,

Bonizella Biagini  
CIRDA Manager  
UNDP-GEF