



CONSULTATIVE PLATFORM ON CLIMATE AND HEALTH IN AFRICA (CAPCHA)

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Climate change is a global crisis with far-reaching implications for public health, and Africa stands out as a region particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of extreme weather events linked to climate variability. This heightened susceptibility is exacerbated by an already strained healthcare system and the absence of robust early warning systems, factors partly attributed to the region's fragile socio-economic conditions. Besides, many African countries have failed to effectively adapt to climate change impacts due to lack of context-specific data to inform action. While research evidence has been identified to be key in furthering sustainable development in policy documents like the 2030 United Nations Agenda and the 2063 African Union Agenda, data generated from the Global North may fail to effectively foster the much-needed transformative change in Africa. Though the data may help inform researchers, policymakers, and communities on how to address C & H issues, they may not be context-relevant, and thus the need to support and augment the capacity of African researchers to enable them to produce context-specific data for action.

From the policy perspective, African countries appear to have national climate change policy and national adaptation plan documents that merely alludes to C & H in barely a paragraph. Regional adaptation plans for different countries, therefore, have to be co-developed to facilitate policy interventions. Moreover, limited funding and inadequate capacity of C & H actors is also another impediment to the advancement of the climate and health agenda in Africa. The noticeable absence of climate change and health courses or fellowships offered within the various African regions further makes it difficult for interested stakeholders to access such courses and enhance their capacity. This inadequacy acts as an obstacle to the effective design and implementation of research and adaptation programs. Compounding the matter is the fact that climate change and health research are often compartmentalized across various disciplines, resulting in a fragmented landscape of specialized discussions. This compartmentalization hinders efforts to synthesize key findings aimed at identifying trends and gaps in the evidence. Advancing the climate and health agenda in Africa will, therefore, depend on how well the linkages between research, policy, and capacity are strengthened in addition to tackling existing inequalities in research.

Urgent action is imperative if economies are to be decarbonized and more resilient health systems developed. This can be accomplished by providing contextualized evidence to support action, leading in climate advocacy and leadership, guiding sectors that significantly affect health through their actions, and assuming responsibility for climate resilience and the imperative to decarbonize healthcare systems. Transdisciplinary research and action agenda on climate change and health can help inform evidence given the human-environmental system problems being currently experienced by society. Considering the importance of collaboration in advancing the C & H agenda, key role players have to be identified and the process has to be intentional to guarantee that regional adaptation plans can be developed for different countries.

Rationale: Why A C & H Platform

The transformation needed to address the health impacts of climate change in Africa will demand innovative approaches of mobilizing resources, working jointly, and applying knowledge. To efficiently address the diverse C & H challenges as well as the varied needs and interests of actors in the different sectors, research must be effectively interlinked with policymaking, planning, and action. The co-generation of data across disciplines is one approach that can foster such transformations. By providing timely and policy-relevant research, researchers can support evidence-based decision-making and effective implementation of climate and health policies.

This can be achieved by creating platforms such as CAPCHA that brings together researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners from various disciplines and sectors. The platform will facilitate knowledge exchange, sharing of best practices, and collaboration on research and policy development. The platform will also be used to encourage regular communication channels such as meetings, conferences, and webinars to help foster dialogue and information sharing between different stakeholders. This will ensure that C & H stakeholders are up-to-date with the latest research, policy updates, and field experiences. Information on the connection between climate and health will equally be provided on the platform as most people view them separately. This can be done by sharing evidence of how climate change can affect the health sector, and similarly how the health sector can get prepared and minimize the negative effects of climate change.



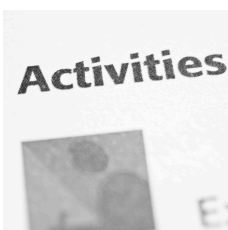
VISION STATEMENT

Building a transdisciplinary community of practice towards enhanced decision support environment on C & H research and policy in Africa



MISSION STATEMENT

Nurturing transdisciplinary science-policy engagements towards advocating for resilient and low-carbon health systems.



ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Database Dashboard
 - ✓ Knowledge sharing and engagement
 - ✓ Knowledge translation and policy
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Research and Innovation

Africa is among the regions that is most affected by climate change; experiencing more frequent and severe extreme weather events, such as droughts, floods, and heat waves. These events exacerbate health issues by increasing the incidence of water-borne and vector-borne diseases, malnutrition, and respiratory problems. Many African countries have fragile health systems that struggle to cope with the additional burden of climate-related health impacts. Improved data collection and sharing are thus key for understanding the health impacts of climate change and facilitates the development effective interventions. The platform will strive to centralize data from various sectors as well as promote joint research for informed decision-making.

Focus Areas

1. Food security and nutrition
2. Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)
3. Vector-borne diseases
4. Air quality
5. Urban heat and climate adaptation
6. Disaster preparedness and response
7. Sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (SRMNCAH)
8. Ethical frameworks in C & H

Policy and Advocacy

The platform will provide a space for unified voice to advocate for policies that address the health impacts of climate change. The platform will provide avenues for influencing national and international climate policies to ensure they incorporate health considerations and support the specific needs of African countries and guarantee that health strategies are aligned with broader climate resilience efforts. Opportunities for participation in international climate negotiations to advocate for Africa's health priorities and ensure that global climate actions consider the continent's unique vulnerabilities will equally be made available/visible.

Focus Areas

1. Global
2. Regional
3. National
4. Local

Capacity Enhancement

Raising awareness about the health risks of climate change and engaging communities in adaptation and mitigation efforts are vital. The platform will support educational campaigns and community-based initiatives while empowering local populations to take action. Integration of health in climate change courses in school curriculum will also be advocated for to guarantee that those who graduate from universities have the needed capacity to tackle transdisciplinary research in C & H.

Focus Areas

1. Summer school
2. Bootcamp
3. Webinars
4. Seminars/Workshops
5. Short self-paced courses

Multisectoral Partnerships and Collaboration

Promoting collaboration across sectors, including health, environment, agriculture, and water, to develop comprehensive policies that address the interconnected impacts of climate change on health is vital. The platform will provide avenues for engaging with regional frameworks like the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy to share knowledge, best practices, and resources across countries. Better coordination and integration of climate and health policies will be facilitated to ensure a comprehensive approach to address the complex interplay between climate change and health. This will encourage multisectoral collaboration among governments, NGOs, and international organizations.

Funding

Securing funding from international donors, climate funds, and private sector investments to support climate and health initiatives is essential for implementing climate-resilient health strategies. With adequate funds, countries can invest in sustainable technologies and practices, such as renewable energy and clean cooking fuels that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve public health. The platform will help mobilize resources from international donors, climate funds, and private investments, ensuring sustained financial support for climate and health initiatives in Africa.

Conclusion

A C & H platform for Africa is crucial due to the continent's high vulnerability to climate impacts and the significant public health risks posed by these changes. The platform will offer a blueprint for addressing the impacts of climate change on health in Africa and will embrace a multifaceted approach that integrates climate resilience into health systems, leverages regional collaboration, and ensures sustainable development practices. The platform will also help strengthen these systems by providing targeted resources, training, mobilize resources and infrastructure improvements, ultimately protecting and improving public health across the continent. By implementing these strategies, Africa can build a resilient health system capable of withstanding the impacts of climate change while improving public health outcomes and promoting sustainable development.

