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UN official stresses climate change adaptation measures in Africa



Protected from external dangers, an elephant family roam peacefully in the Mikumi National Park in Tanzania

17 October 2011 –

African States have no choice but to implement climate change adaptation measures, given the continent’s vulnerability to the phenomenon, a senior United Nations official [said](#) today as the first conference on climate change and development in Africa got under way in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.

“Adaptation offers the chance to manage, spread risk and enhance choices, thereby contributing to sustainable development whilst dealing with social, economic and security threats posed by climate change,” said Abdoulie Janneh, the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

“African leaders have said repeatedly that for Africa, adaptation is an existentialist issue and a serious cause for concern,” Mr. Janneh told the opening session of the first annual Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa.

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He cautioned, however, that “adaptation without rapid cuts in emissions to maintain global warming at its lowest possible level, would be futile.”

The three-day [conference](#) was organized to serve as a forum for dialogue and awareness-raising to mobilize effective commitment and actions on climate change in Africa. It was convened by ECA’s African Climate Policy Centre, a joint initiative of the African Union, the African Development Bank and ECA.

It has brought together policy makers, academics and other participants and aims to come up with concrete proposals on how to integrate climate change concerns into existing and future development policies, strategies, programmes and practices in Africa. The theme of the conference is ‘Development First: Addressing Climate Change in Africa.’

Initially planned for about 300 participants, some 700 people attended the opening session. The keynote address was delivered by Rajendra Pachauri, the chair of the UN-backed Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

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