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HITS AND MISSES IN MOZAMBIQUE'S CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLANS

BY JESSICA BLYTHE

SUMMARY

- The creation of Mozambique's National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) embraced a bottom-up process lauded for its inclusiveness.
- For most Africa countries, the NAPA process has resulted in contextually relevant plans that are plagued by slow decision making and funding shortfalls.
- Decision makers can learn from the successes and failures of the NAPA process as they move into the next phase of climate change adaptation strategy—the National Adaptation Plan (NAP).

Like many African countries, Mozambique is familiar with change and adaptation. Since gaining independence in 1975, the country has reacted to disruption from civil war and a shift from socialism to a free market economy. Currently, climate change is a new source of pressure that is challenging the nation's capacity to adapt; Mozambique ranks third among African countries most vulnerable to climate change (Macaringue, 2010: 4). It is expected to result in more frequent droughts and cyclones, and higher flooding. These hazards will compound challenges for communities largely reliant on natural resources and burdened with chronic poverty and endemic disease (McSweeney, New and Lizcano, 2011: 2-3). Given the linkages to food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable development, understanding successful adaptation strategies to climate change is critical in Mozambique and across Africa.

During the last decade, adaptation has become cemented in the climate change lexicon. At the 2001 Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Marrakech, Morocco, the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) was established to

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sponsor the development of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) in the 48 Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Mozambique was one of the recipients of funding from the LDCF.

Approximately US \$200,000 was given to each LDC to develop a NAPA, a document that identifies a list of climate change adaptation activities. The initiative acknowledged that the LDCs – who produce the least greenhouse gas emissions – are most likely to experience climate change impacts and have the least capacity to adapt. The development of the NAPAs represents a critical step towards addressing urgent, short-term adaptation in the world's most vulnerable countries.

This backgrounder uses the case of Mozambique to explore the creation of a NAPA, and considers its strengths and shortcomings in an attempt to identify lessons that can be applied to future adaptation actions.

CREATION OF A NAPA IN MOZAMBIQUE

A multidisciplinary NAPA team was assembled in Mozambique by the Ministry of Coordination of Environmental Affairs (MICOA). The team consisted of members representing government departments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations, research institutions and the private sector (MICOA, 2007: 2-3). The process began with the synthesis of available information, participatory assessment of vulnerability to climate variability, identification of key adaptive measures and selection of a prioritized list of adaptive actions. No original research is included in the NAPAs.

Over 620 people were interviewed at the national level, representing a mixture of individuals from government, NGOs and community leaders and members (MICOA, 2007: 11). Respondents identified droughts as the most extreme event affecting the country, followed by floods and tropical cyclones (MICO, 2007: 11). Based on these interviews and a review of national and international documents, a set of criteria was submitted for approval in provincial, regional and national seminars (MICOA, 2007: 13). This process resulted in the development of four national priority adaptation actions: strengthening an early warning system, enhancing the capacity of agricultural producers to cope with climate change, reduction of climate

change impacts in coastal zones and management of water resources under climate change (MICOA, 2007: i-ii).

STRENGTHS OF THE NAPA IN MOZAMBIQUE

Two strengths of the NAPA in Mozambique emerged in this review. First, the process of the NAPA development, which emphasized a participatory, bottom-up approach, was a critical strength of the program (Osman-Elasha and Downing, 2007: 22). In contrast to conventional scenario-driven or top-down approaches, the NAPA process was reliant on existing local coping strategies and the identification of context-specific priorities. Data in Mozambique was collected from a range of geographic and sectoral scales, for example, and information was collected from a geographically diverse representation of individuals; 37 percent of interviewees were based in the country's northern region, 24 percent from the central region and 30 percent from the southern region (MICOA, 2007: 11).

Further, participation was sought across sectors and disciplines to ensure that results were representative at all levels of engagement; government and NGO professionals represented 28 percent of the respondents, 29 percent were community leaders and 43 percent represented members of local communities (MICOA, 2007: 11). Involvement of individuals across geographic and sectoral scales is critical for creating a sense of ownership among stakeholders. In addition, the engagement of stakeholders from all levels is important for creating widespread awareness about climate change. Rural communities possess a wealth of local knowledge relevant to climatic adaptation; likewise, government and research institutions are large repositories of climate change data and knowledge. The participatory nature of the NAPA process ensured that different forms of knowledge contributed to the identification of practical adaptation techniques and the production of a document that reflects priorities from villagers up to national policy makers.

Mozambique's NAPA was completed in July 2008. The completion of the document represented a significant success, particularly considering the complex climate impacts faced by the country and the limited institutional, technical and policy capacities to respond (Huq, 2011: 2). The process resulted in a concise, accessible summary of the four most urgent national climate change adaptation needs: early warning, agriculture, coastal

systems and water. The document itself is a powerful tool that can be used to create greater awareness of climate change, and is a significant step towards reducing national vulnerability.

SHORTCOMINGS OF THE NAPA IN MOZAMBIQUE

Despite the successful completion of the NAPA in Mozambique, there are several shortcomings that may limit the success of the program. Notable among these are the complications created by the number of partners engaged in the process. The large number of partners led to a lack of clarity, inefficient resource use and tensions over who should take leadership on climate change issues (Macaringue, 2010: 22). The NAPA group in Mozambique, for instance, consists of technicians representing the MICOA, the Institute for Disaster Management (INGC), the National Directorates of Agriculture, Energy, Health and Environmental Management, Meteorology, Hydrography and Navigation, Mozambique Red Cross and the Environmental Working Group (MICOA, 2007: 2-3).

In addition to coordination among stakeholders, climate change discourse and framing vary among these groups and can result in disagreements over adaptation priorities (Chambote and Shankland, 2011: 15). Further, competition for current and future climate change funding can create barriers towards successful collaboration.

There is international consensus that climate change impacts will require urgent adaptation actions in most LDCs. Substantial funding has yet to be secured, however, creating a major gap between adaptation planning and implementation (Osman-Elasha and Downing, 2007: 2). It has been over a decade since NAPAs were commissioned by the UNFCCC and funds disbursed to date are inadequate for carrying out the adaptation techniques. Countries like Mozambique are left waiting for resources to address their most pressing needs (Huq, 2011: 2). Only one project from Mozambique, has been approved for funding, leaving three of the four national adaptation priorities sitting idle. Where funding has been secured, countries have had very little authority to decide how best to spend the funds. Instead, the Global Environment Facility has managed the funds through intermediary implementing agencies, such as the UN Development Programme in Mozambique (Huq, 2011: 2). In a report published by the European Capacity Building Initiative (ECBI), NAPA teams expressed deep concerns

regarding the funding of adaptation projects and described available funding opportunities as “either insufficient or difficult to access due to procedural constraints and complicated criteria set by the funding agencies” (Osman-Elasha and Downing, 2007: 22). For Mozambique, delays resulting from coordination between project partners, coupled with inadequate funding, will limit the ability of NAPA to address urgent climate adaptation priorities.

LESSONS FROM MOZAMBIQUE'S NAPA PROCESS

The international community is currently designing the second phase of climate change adaptation programs, called National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). NAPs are intended to build on NAPAs by identifying long-term priorities for responding to climate change challenges. As such, it is timely to review the NAPA process to extract lessons that can inform the development and implementation of their successors.

The formulation of Mozambique's NAPA offers a good opportunity to collect lessons learned. In particular, the participatory, bottom-up approach was a key strength of the program as it ensured that the NAPA document reflected local, regional and national priorities. But, along the same lines, the large number of stakeholders and partners involved in the process resulted in development and implementation delays.

Past experiences with international aid have underlined the importance of national ownership of decision-making processes and resource allocation to ensure that funds reach those in need (Huq, 2011: 3). Without adequate resources and ownership over their distribution, the NAPAs can become less effective at addressing immediate adaptation requirements.

Drawing from the Mozambique example, NAPAs should not be seen as an end point; rather they are the first of several consecutive stages that build towards developing effective climate change adaptation strategies (Osman-Elasha and Downing, 2007: 27). The NAPA process has been successful in building awareness and placing climate change adaptation on national and international agendas. It has also highlighted challenges that can be used to guide future adaptation initiatives.

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