

Managing Climate Change: The Africa Group in Multilateral Environmental Negotiations

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This paper aims to add to the growing body of knowledge regarding climate change negotiations and the role of African countries. Utilizing regime theory as a foundation, it provides a firm backdrop against which the political economy of climate change management is discussed especially as it pertains to African countries. The premise of this paper is that owing to the structure of the international climate change regime, African countries are disenfranchised. In an endeavor to unpack elements of this marginalization, the capacity of the Africa Group is examined. The paper concludes that a solid continental framework complemented with endogenous resources is an important step in strengthening the international climate change architecture.

Introduction and Background

Africa as a continent has received ample attention in relation to climate change, more specifically adaptation, and is often depicted as a helpless victim. As one reviews literature on the governance structures pertaining to climate change, therein lies a dearth of information on Africa, which is often lumped under the broad group of developing countries or the south in spite of its unique needs. A reason for this paucity could be attributed to Africa's position as a recipient, not formulator, and a victim, not participant, of responses that will affect future generations of its citizenry. It has been suggested the continent has set itself up in a manner that it can be marginalized and altogether ignored. Unlike emerging developing countries that are of strategic importance to developed countries, Africa can only receive attention if it puts forward a compelling case (Mumma 2001). The emerging economies of China, India, Brazil, and South Africa pose a threat to the atmosphere with regard to their increasing global emissions, and some small island countries will cease to exist in a few decades. These states receive prominence in climate change architecture so much that negotiations hinge on their ability to commit to future regulation.

Climate change makes for an interesting study because of the wide varying issue linkages that are handled. There are a number of competing aspects in the arena of environment diplomacy such as deforestation, trade, GHGs, development, disaster management, energy, business—these issues have also been dealt with in separate forums, through organizations with divergent mandates to those of the UNFCCC. It must be noted that climate change is novel in that it is predominantly governed through a convention-protocol model as opposed to an organization. This, however, has not hindered the operationalization of a climate change regime. Proponents of the UNFCCC purport that the necessity of the institution for organization has proved an overwhelmingly stronger response than nations showing strong interest (Glover 2006).

In terms of genesis, global interest in climate change has gained considerable traction in the international development arena since the first World Climate Conference in 1979. A breakthrough conference held in 1988 in Toronto, Canada, preceded the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which culminated in the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The UNFCCC, whose ultimate goal is to stabilize

greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere, was an important step in committing to the fight against climate change (Article 2, UNFCCC). Of the then fifty-three African countries, forty-seven signed the convention in Rio de Janeiro, thereby demonstrating tremendous support and commitment. As of September 2000, it had been ratified by fifty-one African states (UNFCCC 2001). The UNFCCC was expanded through the Kyoto Protocol, which was adopted in 1997, which ran through 2012. Under this protocol, Annex 1 or “developed” countries (including the Eastern European “economies in transition”) are encouraged to reduce their GHG emissions, and a subset of states are required to assist (through financial, scientific, and technology transfer support) developing countries (also referred to as non-Annex 1 countries) to adopt more climate-friendly technologies as well as to adapt to the impacts of climate change (Richards 2001). The current status of the global climate change architecture involves state parties working toward a post-2012 regime in order to secure a deal that will be agreeable and equitable to all. Climate change management is a huge undertaking that will require constant changes, adjustments, and “tweaks” as it were, in accordance to the changing status of signatory parties and the emergence of new scientific developments. Climate change management can be viewed from different aspects and pillars such as provision of financial assistance or enforcing compliance to treaties. This paper which takes a normative view that climate change should be governed in a manner that is equitable, and will deal with the aspects of the international climate change regime as the overarching system of administration. Although negotiations are the main focus of this analysis, there is an acknowledgment that global negotiations are associated with the formation and development of regimes. Mathaison (2007a) contends that regime theory provides an excellent structure to organize what happens on the inside of an international public sector institution and is particularly useful for investigating complex processes such as climate change negotiations. Regimes are defined as “sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations. With relevance to developing countries, iterative functionalism is also a good way of understanding the negotiation process because it accommodates the notion that regimes are not static, there is the continuous replication and gradual refinement of rules, procedures” (Feldman 1995).

The paper, which is premised on the basis that African countries are disenfranchised in global climate change management structures, endeavors to examine the capacity of the Africa Group within the context of international climate change negotiations. It asserts that African countries should proactively seek to strengthen their negotiating methods to suit individual situations irrespective of whether or not the current regime adequately accommodates their needs and concerns. Of the variety of perspectives that could be taken to analyze this topic, the interaction of African countries with the UNFCCC climate change negotiations was sufficient enough to rouse attention and pique interest further.

This paper is a limit analysis of the current challenges that African delegates face in their navigation of the international climate change regime. It utilizes information from researcher observation made during COP-15 as well as desktop (secondary) data. In particular, there will be an examination of the structure of international climate change negotiations and the role it (structure) plays in limiting or aiding African country delegates. It will analyze capacity challenges with which African countries have historically dealt with and probe how the dynamics within the group of African countries (and its structure thereof) play a role in the group’s ability to negotiate in unison. Because the successful influence of any negotiating group is context dependent, this study delimited to the meetings and conferences mentioned in this paper.

The North-South Divide

With reference to multilateral negotiations of the many divisions among negotiators, one of the most marked has been that between the north and the south. Barriers that impede efforts to formulate an equitable, sustainable solution to climate change lie in the conflict between

these two broad groups. Although not inherent to negotiations, inequality is fairly ubiquitous. The notion of the north-south divide is more than a binary distinction between haves and have nots. The south wishes to not only have economic development but also a say in political decisions that affect its future. This is especially true in the case of multilateral negotiations; the notion of north-south is not only about economic poverty but about the poverty of influence (Najam 2005). Climate change management still requires all players to have a comparable voice through voting structure and the outcomes (Feldman 1995). This will possibly ensure more robust outcomes because there is a tendency for multilateral negotiations to be limited in effectiveness because of their frequently sluggish pace combined with diplomatic strategies such as lowest common denominator measures, and double standards provisions. Indeed, the poorest and most vulnerable groups are likely to be at the receiving end of policy responses to climate change. They have not been given a choice about whether or not to adapt, yet for a number of reasons fall behind in making processes (Adger et al. 2006).

Resultantly, equity debates have historically hindered the successful conclusion to negotiations; this divide is linked to the proposed policy responses. The south's arguments have developed around the principle of "common, but differentiated responsibilities" (Article 3, UNFCCC). While industrialized countries generally agree that responsibilities to combat climate change should be common, developing countries stress the viewpoint of differentiated (Kasa et al. 2008). Where the poorer south views climate change as a development issue, the richer north views climate change as an environmental issue. Moreover, the north, in official texts, has recognized its historical irresponsible use of the atmosphere. It is the compensation schemes that are currently being contested. Where the north prefers market-based economically framed solutions in the form of buying and selling carbon, the south proposes solutions ranging from financial compensation to agreements that do not bind it to future emissions reductions (Newell 2000 and Gupta 2000). Throughout international efforts to tackle global warming, the south has maintained that solutions must not hinder its ability to develop, an important point because institutions such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program are working to halt and even reverse poverty. Because the UNFCCC is not an institution, the onus is on various intergovernmental bodies to feed into its processes.

Political Economy of South in International Climate Change Negotiations

Political economy is defined here as the processes by which ideas, power, and resources are conceptualized, negotiated, and implemented by different groups at different scales (Tanner and Allouche 2011). In the case of multilateral negotiations, this takes place within the framework of global governance architecture, defined as the overarching system of public and private institutions, regimes, principles, and norms that regulate decision-making procedures (Biermann et al. 2010). It is a structure that allows for a variety of actors to utilize different capabilities in order to increase their effectiveness and influence the process to their advantage. Because global governance is a political process that is often guided by economic interests, a political economy analysis will be a reoccurring thread in this paper. Perhaps ironically, climate change as an overarching issue relegates control of individual states to a global system. By simply controlling its own behavior, a state cannot protect itself from the effects of climate change hence the need for coordinated efforts through a regime. Of the many functions that the climate change regime has been tasked with, the most salient of these roles at this stage is the negotiations. Mathiason (2007b) posited a number of functions of a regime, these include: regime creation (including negotiations and modifying an international system), mobilization of information, and norm enforcement. According to Auer and Racine (2001), a multilateral negotiation is determined by a series of elements such as the convening organization and its own internal configuration, the formal and tacit rules that apply to the negotiation process, the emergence of coalitions, the roles assigned to the presidency, the Secretariat, ad-hoc groups

and commissions, and the time factor, i.e., whether negotiations are a one-time event or a recurring process.

Negotiations in the context of multilateral environmental agreements can be defined as a decision-making procedure with which one or more parties have shared interests and others are opposed and in which one party's utility in the outcome depends on the other parties' courses of action (Skodvin 1993). This analysis begins with the recognition that the south remains a key but reluctant actor in global environmental policy whose ability to influence global environmental processes has remained severely constrained by its self-perception of marginalization and its capacity limitations (Najam 2005). Theoretically, treaties, conventions, and protocols have input from each participating nation; with respect to African countries, it might be argued that decisions are predominantly by consensus. In international negotiations, states have the decision-making power over both contents of decisions and over procedural issues (Corell and Betsill 2001), and, in theory, each country has an equal vote and equal participation is equivalent to equality of power (Fisher and Green 2004).

In practice, situations unfold differently, and this paper will illustrate how. Structure is at many times the cause of inefficient and undesirable outcomes. To assess capacity or lack of, it is imperative to have understanding of the structure of the UNFCCC negotiations, because it has a direct impact on how the various actors can maximize their impact within this complex architecture.

The UNFCCC

The formal negotiations of the UNFCCC take place in the Conference of Parties (COP) plenary sessions and in meetings of the two subsidiary bodies. The COP presidency is rotated and it is customary for the host country to preside. COPs are heavily choreographed in advance to prevent spontaneous debates that may erupt due to the size and diversity of the delegates. Whilst it is important to have diverse voices representing their views, numerous voices may also be disruptive to the process of consensus building.

The COP bureau has two officers from each region. It has been observed that those able to articulate their position with evidence may be able to swing a position in their favor especially because the decision-making procedures at the COPs are indeterminate (Depledge 2005 and UNFCCC 2000).

The COP also serves as the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) of the Kyoto Protocol in which all the parties to the convention can participate as observers but cannot vote unless they are parties to the protocol (UNFCCC, 2000). Organizing negotiations for over 180 states is no easy feat. Coupled with the numerous tracks and themes that are for discussion, most of the actual negotiations take place informally in contact groups, "corridor groups," expert consultations, and informal workshops. Decisions in multilateral conferences are rarely the result of a vote. They are reflective of consensus among a large number of parties, while the others do not categorically oppose (Auer and Racine 2001). There are smaller groups which are constructed by the COP president and subsidiary body chairs to prepare, reframe, and redefine text in order to develop consensus. These groups are presided over by what have been titled "friends of the chair" (Richards 2001 and Depledge 2005). The (few) selected "friends of the chair" represent groups of countries and negotiate the actual wording of the decisions. This process has been deemed as undemocratic, because many a time the friends of the chair will ultimately prioritize their own country's interests. If this happens, the input of national delegations is very limited, as is the role of the Secretariat of the UNFCCC and other UN bodies. Voting and membership are also critical in exercising influence. The weight and number of votes are an important consideration, as is membership on committees, expert groups, and boards. This is where coalitions and negotiating blocs become important (Green and Chambers 2006).

How Developing Countries Negotiate

One of the most important structural features of multilateral negotiations is the emergence of coalitions. Coalitions form because they allow their members to exert more influence in a negotiation than they could as individual participants (Auer and Racine 2001). An analysis of the capacity of developing countries in multilateral negotiations would be incomplete without a section on the coalitions. African countries negotiate through the Group of 77 + China (G77) and through the Africa Group. There are also smaller powerful coalitions such as Brazil, South Africa, India, and China (BASIC), least developing countries (LDC), Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), and Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). The G77 and Africa Group will be the main coalitions distinguishing to this paper.

The G77 + China

South-south cooperation is particularly visible with the UNFCCC negotiations, with the most important developing country coalition being the G77. Established in 1964 to promote the collective economic interests of developing countries and increase their negotiating powers. It consisted of 130 developing countries in December 2009. African countries participate in international negotiations through the G77, although country groups and delegations often negotiate in their own capacity and within these coalitions.

The G77 is the largest and most diverse bloc of countries consisting of both converging and diverging views. In order to accommodate dissonant interests, the group's positions are usually stated in general rather than specific terms and are normally the aggregate sum of the viewpoints of its members in order to enhance the group's influence in international negotiations (Kasa et al. 2008). Due to a variance in policy preferences, the G77 is flexible with their positions, this being an issue of pertinence to their overall effectiveness (Gupta 2000a and Najam et al. 2003). For example, due to conflicting policy preferences on the clean development mechanism (CDM)¹ during the initial negotiations, more advanced developing economies believed they could benefit from this market-based mechanism for emissions trading suggested under the Kyoto Protocol. China and India wanted the CDM to include nuclear energy projects to support the energy needs of their increasing populations. The AOSIS was strongly opposed to such an inclusion due to their negative experiences with nuclear testing. African-country delegations on the other hand argued that there were few benefits for them implementing CDM, because their region's energy consumption was less than 3 percent of global energy resources. Consequently, the G77 position papers on the CDM were phrased to leave fundamental differences on this all-so-important matter (Chasek and Rajamani 2002). This inability to have a concrete policy position translates in the failure to move debates forward to a resolution. As such, the group tends to react to specific suggestions put forward by Annex I Parties rather than leading the debate by proposing detailed measures (Frost 2001).

Obstacles to negotiating within G77 include the delineation of policies and positions to those adopted by the group. With the generalist nature of the G77 position, it is important that each country campaign for its own voice because even within this coalition, there are winners and losers—weaker countries may be marginalized at this macro level (Green and Chambers 2006). Although countries can choose to intervene independently in debate situations, solidarity with the group is important. Irrespective of the internal (G77) voting procedures, delegates will always have the right to address the floor, introduce proposals, and negotiate text. However, due to the limited individual capacities of delegates from smaller developing countries, these same delegates may be unable to exercise power or influence the discussions

1. The most important “flexible mechanism” for developing countries is the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) created under Article 12. This allows investment by Annex I countries in climate change mitigation projects in non-Annex 1 (developing) countries in exchange for “Certified Emission Reductions” that can be set against emission reduction targets. CDM projects should also meet sustainable development criteria.

of multilateral policy-making (Frost 2001). Perhaps one of the more important obstacles of negotiating with the G77 coalition is that the group spends more time opposing than proposing. While this strategy allows for blocking and preventing unfavorable policies, it does not leave much room for advantageous proposals (Green 2004).

African countries formed a large majority of G77 countries at COP-15 and often had to struggle through many layers in order for the texts to reflect their concerns. Although clearly very vulnerable on account of climatic conditions and extreme poverty, delegations of larger developing economies such as China and India have been drawing attention to their own vulnerabilities, which differ greatly from those of most African countries. Even wealthy oil exporting countries have argued for compensation of costs to be incurred in adapting to a reduced global demand for oil (Kasa et al. 2008). African countries still negotiate through the G77: First, individual developing country negotiators that are not considered “big players” or included among the “friends of the chair” have limited influence outside coalitions. A big group can influence decisions via pressure or even boycott (Yamin and Depledge 2004; and Depledge 2005). Second, developing countries are reluctant to lose their “south vs. north” voice. The G77 offers “protection in numbers.” This dynamic is advantageous for disenfranchised delegations as they benefit through networking within the alliance. The negotiation process itself can be daunting, especially balancing political and economical interests (Yamin and Depledge 2004; Depledge 2005; Frost 2001; Richards 2001).

While under some circumstances working in unison within the confines of a large coalition provides immense bargaining power, it may be more convenient to separate to take advantage of the internal similarities and differences (Caparrós et al. 2004). For continental actors, this is where the usefulness of the coalition of African countries comes into play. African countries, when working in unity toward a common position have in some instances managed to achieve success.

The Africa Group

The Africa Group, also known as the African Group, is a coalition of African states that works through the G77 in order to negotiate the best possible decisions for the continent. It is the only active regional group that participates in international environmental negotiations. It has been highlighted by experts that developing country negotiators often enter meetings and forums without clear political directives from their relevant governments; this notion was termed a hollow mandate (Richards 2001). This was a challenge until recently when the continent strengthened its climate change architecture with positive results for the Africa Group. The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) is the current structure that guides the group and is a permanent forum where African ministers of environment discuss matters of relevance to the environmental affairs of the continent. The conference is convened every second year (UNEP 2009). The mandate and priorities of AMCEN are translated into a continental position which is presented to international environmental meetings by the African Group of Negotiators. This group of people is tasked with representing their own country positions, the continental position, and of course that of the G77. The position known as the African Common Position on Environment and Development (Common Position) was initially adopted in 1989 and focused on poverty eradication and environment as two intertwined issues (Eleri 1997). More recently, the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) was formed. It is important to note that 2009 was the first time the African Union (AU) presented a clear signal to the continent and the world that it had reached an African consensus on the issues of climate change, an important step given that the mandate to all representatives was now clear (Hoste 2009 and African Union/AMCEN 2009).

Understanding Capacity: How Has the Africa Group Fared so Far?

The significance of climate to African economies in contrast to its insignificance in clout

within the global regime is a cause of concern to scholars and policy makers alike. It was argued by Mumma (2001) that the Africa Group has struggled to demonstrably articulate an African position in the Climate Change Convention negotiations. An African position can be described as one that articulates Africa's unique interests in the negotiations.

Furthermore, concern over the excessive influence of powerful nations such as China and India has been consistent with suggestions of U.S. hegemony (Glover 2006). This has seen climate games as synonymous with energy games, a direct contrast to the broader continental interests of development.

The struggles to promote the African agenda in negotiations can be attributed to participation. Participation (or voice) does not necessarily result in influence, but it is an essential precondition. These separate considerations are often conflated, yet it is the need to deepen and broaden the participation of delegations of poorer countries that will provide a conducive environment for reaching a fair, equitable, and legitimate agreement on climate change (Green 2004).

This aspect of participation is referred to as disenfranchisement, defined as the inability to both participate in and/or influence agenda setting and decision making in international regimes for sustainable development. Disenfranchisement has in the past resulted in latent energy being released then imploding into numerous debates about equity at all levels including the future of those most vulnerable to climate change impacts. In multilateral negotiations, all countries are afforded the same rights under international law, are recognized as sovereign nations, and are free to negotiate agreements with other nations. In this case, the major constraint is that some countries lack the authority to influence agenda setting or to affect outcomes (Fisher and Chambers 2006).

A number of factors rooted in the lack of endogenous resources account for African delegates' disenfranchisement in international climate change negotiations. These were illuminated by Page (2004, 2003), Frost (2001), Richards (2001), Gupta (2000b), Fisher and Green (2004), Mumma (2001), Chasek and Rajamani (2002), and Minang (2009), and include the following items.

Delegation Size

Many African country delegations are comprised of fewer people than those of more developed countries. This, in part, is because the bulk of the attendance is funded from the two air tickets availed to developing country delegates by the UNFCCC. After the AOSIS, the Africa Group has one of the smallest negotiating capacities in real numbers (Richards 2001 and Mumma, 2001). Minang in 2009 observed the delegation sizes of different negotiating groups—there were about one to four African negotiators against the fifties for the U.S. and ten for the EU (Minang 2009). Similar numbers were observed by Mumma in 1997 (Mumma 2001). Size matters at COPs, as there are several meetings taking place concurrently. Small or one-person delegations prevent attendance at multiple, simultaneous sessions/working groups. Additionally, conference venues are vast in size and meetings take place after each other so a smaller delegation means a negotiator attending a meeting in one part of the venue has to rush across to the other side to make another meeting, possibly arriving tired and/or late. Because of the intensity of the meetings, a smaller delegation is also accompanied by fewer support staff so negotiators can often be exhausted and alienated.

Delegation Composition

African delegations habitually negotiate in isolation, without sufficient support from their countries. Richer delegations may be accompanied by policy makers and scientists who can decipher the complex technical language, its implications to national priorities, and provide supporting evidence. Richer delegations often include technical and resource persons such as lawyers who can interpret legal language and procedures. This is advantageous in regard to

challenging decisions by the chair—countries that lack similar support may miss opportunities to make appropriate interventions.

Lack of Familiarity on How Negotiations Are Done

Previous sections of this paper synthesized the structure of negotiations and illustrated how complex the proceedings are, especially for novice participants. Delegates (state and NGO) usually require assistance in understanding the procedures and working of the negotiations before they may participate meaningfully. Within the climate change regime, many African delegations struggle due to internal reasons including civil service rotation, recruitment into civil society/intergovernmental organizations, and poor coordination.

Science versus Diplomacy—Lack of Research to Support Position

The general lack of dedicated human and financial resources to the climate change agenda on the African continent means negotiators are unable to make evidence-based contributions since effects are country specific. It is easier to gain consensus if verifiable research is presented. Much of the research on developing countries is conducted by foreign researchers through NGOs who, although well meaning, may not churn out specific data sets because of their own organizational mandates. African countries spend less on domestic research compared to other regions across the world. Gross expenditure on research and development (GERD) comparable data indicates that Africa as a whole accounted for 0.6% share of world GERD in 2000: SSA 0.4%, and Arab states in Africa 0.1%. Other regional figures are Asia at 30.5%, Oceania at 1.1%, Latin America and the Caribbean at 2.9%, Europe at 27.2% and North America at 37.7% (Teng-Zeng 2009).

Other Technical Issues

There are technical challenges specific to *some* African country delegations. These include slow or lack of Internet, which limits access to networks that can serve as information resources and powerful contacts. Language barriers sometimes affect effectiveness where, although many African countries are Anglophone, the Francophone and Lusophone countries are occasionally disadvantaged during small contact groups and late-night sessions that are normally held in English as opposed to the plenary sessions, which are translated into all six official UN languages.

Financial constraints manifest themselves at the COPs where the EU and U.S. have “manned stands” and “side events” (Mumma 2001). At COP-15, years on from when Mumma made his observations, only two African countries, Ethiopia and Malawi, had manned stands. There were a negligible number of African institutions that had stands out of many organizations that provided an African view internationally. Based on my observations, it was also rare to find Africans presenting at panels during side events organized by others, and often Africa was included in those presentations on “southern perspectives,” despite its unique challenges. Some of these matters outlined above speak directly to the reality that the state has a primary role to play in this process, and the climate-change regime will have to do much more to bridge the equity gap.

More important than the capacity matters outlined above is the structure of the Africa Group, which has played a pivotal role in recent negotiations, particularly at COP-15. The result was fragmentation and the inability for Africa to sing in unison, consequently reversing all the preparations made by the group ahead of this all-important conference.

Politics of the Africa Group

As with all diverse negotiating coalitions, the Africa Group is not immune from politics. It is the inability to transcend the politics and disagreements that is of interest to this paper. Furthermore, if a regional institution or regime is to be created and maintained, the very basis of the variances needs to be unpacked in order to form an operational continental system. This

will ensure that African countries will strengthen their negotiating methods to suit individual situations irrespective of whether or not the current regime adequately accommodates their needs and concerns.

Singlehandedly, the issue of sheer numbers prerequisites disunity and poses coordination challenges irrespective of institutional support. However, the main causes of fragmentation within the group are policy positions on climate change, which vary according to whether the state is classified as a small island state; a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC); a Least Developed Country (LDC) of which the bulk of the African countries are a part; or in the case of South Africa, listed as the eleventh largest emitter of GHG emission globally and the largest contributor on the continent. It has been observed that those few countries that fall under different (stronger) negotiating blocs are powerful and influential enough to derail and weaken the ability of the Africa Group to have one negotiating position and one voice. Despite these differences, there has been recorded success.

The most pronounced case within global environmental negotiations where the Africa Group performed resourcefully was at the negotiations on the Convention on Biological Diversity that resulted in the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The delegation, led by a leading Ethiopian scientist, premised its arguments on solid scientific findings from the perspective of Ethiopia, one of the most biodiverse countries in the world (Rosendal 2000). Through scholarship, Africa came prepared with progressive positions, such as no patents on living materials and the recognition of community rights. As part of these negotiations, developing countries did not want unregulated genetic engineering added to their biodiversity. The U.S. was particularly opposed to such an agreement because of the implications on its biotechnology industry. However, developing countries, especially those in Africa, contain the majority of the world's biodiversity (about 75 percent of it), therefore, they could exclude those who were not directly affected by this problem and command either their support or sympathy. Most scientific work on biodiversity takes place on the continent, resulting in African countries and those based at those institutions having relative power in discussions (Fisher and Green 2004). This strengthened the G77's negotiating positions, because Africa had a solid agenda. Despite the political strength of the U.S., civil society actors and the scientific community supported the Africa Group and, strengthened by the G77, there was some degree of success for the continent's biosafety.

It can be concluded that the Africa Group was successful in achieving some of its objectives. To go and succeed against powerful countries such as the U.S. that had great stakes in protocol is indeed an achievement and a prime reason why this example has been studied extensively, especially from the perspective of NGOs that were present at these negotiations. The Africa Group, having entered the negotiations from beginning, set and framed the agenda and saw it through to the end. Moreover, in this instance, the Africa Group organized itself and transcended above internal politics, something that should be done in the UNFCCC. The limitation of this example is that biodiversity is less complex in comparison to climate change, which encompasses multiple issues. Climate change is a global commons issue whereas biodiversity and desertification can be governed by individual states and in effect require little external effort and cooperation. The biodiversity negotiations and the current climate change architecture in regard to strategy employed by the Africa Group have some similarities, and there is potential for emulation.

So, How Has the African Group Fared? An Analysis

It has been argued by some scholars that Africa was one of the most united groups at COP-15 and articulated its position very well as a result of over a decade of polishing the common position (Masters 2010). The matters highlighted in the previous section paint a dire picture of prospects of success for this group but these constraints are highlighted only because the Africa Group has failed to implement a foolproof strategy. Indeed, strategy goes further in negotiations and bargaining than endogenous resources. It has been established that developed

countries tend to use realist and constructive negotiating strategies whereas developing countries, because of a range of limitations, resort to defensive tactics (Richards 2001).

This paper has noted that scholars have proposed the deepening of participation by developing countries. Part of this process would be to enable delegates from these countries to be proactive rather than reactive. For a coalition to be successful, Wagner (1999) observed that negotiation analysts tend to focus their attention to early negotiation stages as the key point for setting the stage for integrative outcomes. In a breakdown of the phases of negotiations to ascertain when each actor is relevant and influential, developing country delegates tend to be active toward the end of the processes when the least amount of influence can be exerted (Chasek 1997). Drawing from political economy theory, reasons for participation in negotiations can be twofold. From an economic aspect, governments need to explore how best to address the difficulties that climate change will bring. There is also the need to negotiate a deal that will open new funding and investment opportunities. Politically, the participation of African countries legitimizes the process by making it truly international. These are perhaps the underlying reasons for Africa's continued engagement despite difficulties faced.

Nevertheless, criticisms of regime theory hold true in relevance to the struggles to strike a climate change settlement in that the theory relies too heavily on positivism and the predilection for approving procedure at the expense of substantial failure and effectiveness (Glover 2006). When procedure fails, some groups focus on alternative methods such as protest to get their point across. This strategy has been employed numerous times in many negotiations and was successful at the Barcelona climate talks in November 2009, the last milestone on the road to COP-15. According to media reports, the Africa Group walked out of the negotiations as there was insufficient progress in the talks on developed country emission reduction targets. Of particular concern was the refusal of Annex 1 countries to adopt strong(er) climate change targets, with developing countries insisting that proposed targets were well below what was required to curb GHGs. When Annex 1 countries refused to comment on increments to emissions targets, the Africa Group members walked out of the meeting and talks on emissions reductions were suspended briefly.² During the COP-15, the Africa Group, supported by the G77 staged another walkout, thus deferring two working groups. The walkout was due to the proposed suspension of discussions about ending the Kyoto protocol.³ The talks resumed after compromise had been reached, but precious time had been lost. The power of protest shaped the agenda toward one that was more favorable to the Africa Group. This perhaps demonstrates that at crucial stages of negotiations, the agenda can be steered to a particular party's advantage with the right type of action. However, the impact was not long lasting as the Africa Group's concerns were not met in December, hence the need for another walkout at COP-15, which brought the negotiations to a five-hour halt in defense of the continent's priorities and interests. In the final analysis, walkouts did not produce the positive outcomes that the continent's negotiators had hoped. This strategy does highlight the pitfalls with the structure of international diplomacy and the need for comparable voice.

Policy Considerations

This paper deliberated on a number of aspects that contribute to an understanding of the role and effectiveness of Africa Group in climate change negotiations. Though not exhaustive in some areas, below are implementable recommendations:

1. The Africa Group is encouraged to utilize existing research. At the country level, there should be committees comprised of relevant stakeholders such as scientists, academics, and law makers to advise or even join country negotiating teams.

2. Barcelona Climate Change Talks—Main entrance shut down by activists while Africa boycotts talks. <http://www.climateime.org/en/original-news/2009/11/04/barcelona-climate-change-talks-main-entrance-shut-down-activists-while>

3. COP-15, Day 8—Walking away is not an option <http://www.commodities-now.com/news/environmental-markets/1342-cop-15-day-8-walking-away-is-not-an-option.html>

2. Training and capacity building should be done internally within countries so that individual states can build negotiating capacity. At COP-15, there were a number of schemes that supported the attendance of young people to these negotiations on the condition that they were put on their countries' delegations. Such schemes should be maximized in order to enhance and increase not only the number of current delegates within a team but also for the future.
3. NGO delegates can be used as negotiators, although country teams who view NGOs as actors in opposition of their work may view this with skepticism. Some NGOs also perceive joining state teams as a betrayal of their cause.

Conclusion

Utilizing regime theory, this paper examined a number of aspects relating to Africa's disenfranchisement within the international climate change negotiations. It began by defining the key concepts and actors, then moved on to defining the capacity deficits that the Africa Group faces relating to getting their position heard, the conclusion being that these challenges were a manifestation of lack of financial resources. While some of the findings can be remedied with time, capacity building, and development efforts, others are a product of the current political situations at play that could change in the next few years. Despite this, these findings are important because they are still relevant in the current context and could be used by policy makers and development practitioners to ensure that in different international negotiations, these capacity shortages are avoided or eliminated in the early stages of African participation.

The paper also highlighted key strategies that developing countries use to negotiate and briefly outlined why this is so. Examples were provided to exemplify the strengths and weaknesses of these methods. The key issue on strategy was that the Africa Group is often defensive as opposed to proactive and should begin to move toward framing and defining agendas. This of course will be a challenge, because the political landscape of climate change negotiations has changed considerably in the past year with the rise in prominence of CAHOSCC and South Africa. The paper asserts that although the Africa Group is handicapped in regard to endogenous resources, these are not the only reasons why it has failed to articulate its position.

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