

## **Africa's Climate Change Adaptation Examined**

Representatives from African countries are gathering in Mauritius next week to deliberate on measures to counteract Africa's vulnerability to the impact of climate change and the importance of scientific evidence to enable society to understand and respond to climate change threats.

The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), in collaboration with the Mauritius Academy of Science and Technology, the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, and a range of other organisations, is hosting a communication event to introduce a policymakers' booklet on *Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience in Africa*. The event will be held on 4 and 5 July 2016 in Mauritius and will be attended by some 60 representatives.

Africa is the most vulnerable continent regarding the impact of climate change and faces innumerable development challenges that are expected to be exacerbated by projected climate changes. Of concern is the direct reliance of a significant proportion of the population on natural resources, particularly, in arable and pastoral agricultural practices, but also through fishing and harvesting of natural vegetation for shelter, fuel, medicines and crafts. Present issues related to food and water security, health and safety are likely to be compounded by projected climate changes. At the same time, populations continue to grow, placing additional stress on resources.

To combat climate change effectively, mitigation and societies' adaptation to existing climate changes are crucial and need to be integrated into multi-sectorial policies and macro-economic frameworks for these issues to be adequately addressed. The focus must lie on informed, forward-thinking policies that

integrate the best understandings of regional risks and vulnerabilities, together with local understandings of the environmental context and cultural needs. The African continent should determine its needs and capacities to tackle climate change impacts and adaptation and plan for sustainable adaptation to realistic future climate change scenarios.

The advisory booklet aims to assess the status and makes recommendations for African governments to consider when dealing with climate change and resilience in Africa. It focuses on why climate change adaptation and resilience is crucial for Africa and provides guidance on effective policy responses for climate change adaptation. It also conveys key messages on addressing the climate change impact through targeted policy actions and interventions specific to water, agriculture and food security, fisheries, coastal and urban zones, and human health.

The communication event will also provide opportunities to bring to the fore perspectives of young scientists, applying a youth lens, as well as considering the vulnerabilities of children to the impact of climate change. A gender lens will also be applied to climate change in accordance with the objectives of the international programme on Gender in Science, Innovation, Technology and Engineering (GenderInSITE), which is a part sponsor of the event. ASSAf is the southern African focal point for GenderInSITE.