



**Impacts of Climate Change on Food Security, Health and Water
North-South Research Projects and Knowledge Sharing in a Network**

**Meeting presenting an initiative to promote research
cooperation and North-South Knowledge Sharing**

May 14, 2009 – 14:30-16:30

University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark

Introduction

Southern Africa is considered to be among the most vulnerable regions to climate change. Detailed and context-specific knowledge on the consequences of climate change at sub-regional, national and local levels is vital for mitigating the negative effects of climate change in the region in terms of increased vulnerability, food insecurity and human health risks as well as to secure the most efficient adaptation to climate change.

The aim of this meeting was to present the Southern African Climate Change Network (SACCNET), a newly established South-South-North network, for a Danish audience of researchers and practitioners who work with health, water and/or food security and who may be interested in joining the network and/or participate in North-South research projects.

The meeting was opened and lead by Miriam Feilberg (MF), network coordinator of Danish Water Forum (DWF), who gave a brief presentation of the network and its members and provided an overview of the meeting.

The meeting was initiated by a range of presentations, followed by discussions in two sub-groups with a subsequent discussion round and summary in plenum.

Brief introduction to SACCNET

By Anne Sørensen, Chief Coordinator, Danish Development Research Network (DDRN)

Anne Sørensen (AS) gave an introduction to the challenges of climate change and to the background of SACCNET. AS started out by underlining that climate change is a global challenge; yet, some regions are more vulnerable, such as the SADC region. There are direct linkages between climate variability and the Millennium Development Goals, which underlines the need for context-specific and cross-sectoral knowledge on the impacts of climate change on food, water and health.

The idea behind SACCNET originates from ongoing discussions among the Danish research networks and Southern partners and was also discussed in the climate task forces in Denmark set up by DDRN, DWF and ENRECA Health. The aim of SACCNET is to create a North-South and South-South knowledge sharing network that can facilitate development of joint proposals and provide knowledge input into policy and practice.

In the preparation phase of this network, workshops were in Botswana and South Africa. The workshop in South Africa in February 2009 resulted in the establishment of an Interim Steering Committee, which currently is working on the creation of Terms of Reference for SACCNET.

Overview of Danish research competences and research projects

By Thomas Birk, PhD, University of Copenhagen

Thomas Birk (TB) presented his report on Danish competences and research projects working on climate change. The report was commissioned by the three Danish research networks climate change task force to map the existing Danish research community working on climate change.

The report concluded that many of the focal areas in climate change research are closely interlinked and as a result researchers in this report often associate their competences and projects with several areas. Some areas such as climate change research in relation to agriculture, adaptation or mitigation are clearly more represented than others, whereas climate change in relation to health and in relation to security are less explored in the Danish research community.

Finally, TB noted that if a similar mapping exercise should be carried out in the future, focus should be on less, but more explicitly defined focal areas due to the overlap of many of the investigated areas. Also, with climate change currently being a buzzword, it has become difficult to assess the relevance of some research areas and projects.

Climate Change in Southern Africa: Research on health, water and food security

By Peter Furu, Senior Advisor, Centre for Health and Development (DBL)

The presentation of Peter Furu (PF) was structured around three issues:

1) Issues in relation to climate change in Southern Africa: Climate change means changes in temperature, precipitation, sea level rise and an increase of extreme events. In Africa this will most likely lead to a decrease in rainfall throughout the region. However, increased precipitation is expected in Eastern Africa, while warming will be greatest in the semiarid margins of Sahara and central Southern Africa. In relation to health, an increase of a.o. vector-borne diseases, malnutrition, meningitis, HIV/AIDS, psycho-social disorders is expected. Areas suitable for agriculture, length of growing seasons and yield potentials are likely to decrease; fisheries resources are expected to diminish due to rising water temperatures, and as the continent overall is expected to become dryer, populations will face additional water stress.

2) Inventory of research on CC and health, water and food security: Desktop research on geographical and thematic dispersion of CC-related research in the SADC region showed that CC and health research mostly is carried out on university, government or NGO level with South Africa and Zimbabwe having the highest amount of institutions engaged in research. With regards to CC and water, research is mostly undertaken by academic and public institutions with South Africa being the forerunner in the region and only little research being carried out in other SADC countries. The number of institutions and programmes working on food security was relatively high with an equal mix of regional and international institutions and academic and other institutions involved.

3) Potential of SACCNET: Subsequently, PF pointed to the potentials of SACCNET as a network, which as a cross-disciplinary research network brings the opportunity "to step out of one's box". SACCNET holds the potential for joint research capacity development and joint proposal development and strengthened South-South-North research collaboration.

Network participation as entry to international research cooperation

By Ole Fryd, PhD, University of Copenhagen LIFE

Ole Fryd (OF) focussed his presentation on the role and potential of knowledge networks. Danish knowledge and research networks operate to promote the production, dissemination and exchange of knowledge between researchers and development, promote interaction and research collaboration and to specifically address needs and issues in developing countries by promoting the integration of research-based knowledge and development practices.

OF outlined some of the motivating factors for engaging in knowledge networks. At individual level, networks can be used to establish new professional contacts and strengthening the professional capacity through cross-disciplinary knowledge sharing. Networks can contribute to getting a better understanding of complexity and possible synergies and meeting the challenge of moving knowledge to new fields. At institutional level networks, can be used as a platform to facilitate and promote academic exchange and cooperation, international thematic research groups, knowledge sharing through virtual and physical meeting places, relationships with other sectors and multi-lateral cooperation between research institutions. OF furthermore noted that network collaboration can be developed into more formal inter-institutional agreements and joint research applications at national and international level.

SACCNET – Thoughts on getting started

By Jens Raunsø Jensen, Lecturer, University of Copenhagen LIFE

Jens Raunsø Jensen (JRJ) identified potentials and possible pitfalls of SACCNET. JRJ started out by pinpointing basic network considerations, which should be kept in mind at the inauguration of new networks. JRJ stressed the importance of having a clear objective, focus and TOR and of moving beyond the loose and informal type of network. Members must add value to the network, but also benefit from participation. Furthermore, North-South sensitivity is of crucial importance. In many cases the South partners become mere data providers and the North participants take on the part as analysts; a trend that has to be avoided. In North-South partnerships much consideration should be paid with regards to work opportunities, funding, travel and meetings, and South partners have to be involved in every aspect of the network at all times.

JRJ outlined three possible research topics:

- Water, health and food security linkages of marginalised groups in rural-urban transition under climate change
- Improved scientific knowledge on the magnitude and impact of climate change
- Impacts of extreme events on food security and health

Finally, JRJ provided a few practical ideas on how to get started, i.e. the establishment of a website, a clear work plan and work groups, preparation for a network application for funding etc. JRJ underlined that the network has to be a strong organisation with well-defined roles, and a clear TOR and that "follow-up" proceedings and issues have to be integrated from the onset.

Experiences N-S research projects

By Sven-Erik Jacobsen, Lecturer, University of Copenhagen LIFE

Sven-Erik Jacobsen (SJ) presented a few ideas to aim at for SACCNET, provided general recommendations for project preparation, and highlighted funding potentials. It was underlined that SACCNET must not be an empty network, but should be filled with activities. In relation to funding possibilities, SJ drew attention to the potential of EU funding under the EU FP7 programme (Framework Programme), which seeks to support collaborative research projects and *frontier* research. SJ stressed that SACCNET should start to engage in lobby activities and be aware of calls for funding, e.g. from the EU and other sources.

SJ reflected on experiences from other networks, a.o. from PAEPARD – the African-European partnership on agricultural research for development. PAEPARD witnessed an unbalanced participation of African countries as well as unbalanced participation of institutions within the countries. Gaps were identified between the thematic interest areas of the Framework Programme and the actual needs of African countries, and also gaps between research staff/institutions and mechanisms for mobilising EDF at national and regional levels were experienced.

SJ concluded that SACCNET should complement (and differ from) other networks, take rapid action and have a focused effort.

Introduction to the discussion round

By Miriam Feilberg, Network coordinator, DWF

MF initiated the discussion round by highlighting some of the key challenges for SACCNET. The need for sensitivity with regards to South Africa and its role in the SADC region was stressed; South African *dominance* could be problematic. MF also underlined that there is a basic need to get more information on the actual implications of climate change on the region. Furthermore, linking policy to practice will be a challenge.

Subsequently, participants were separated into two groups in order to discuss the potentials of SACCNET.

Group discussion sum-up

After the discussions in the two sub-groups, participants from each group were asked to share key discussion points.

Group 1 started out by highlighting that there was a consensus amongst the participants to join and participate in the network. It was underlined that there was a need for cross-disciplinary rather than thematic work. As the group consisted of participants from NGO's and the private sector, a question was raised with regards to how to incorporate NGO's and other organisations and institutions. Overall it was highlighted that research should be demand-led with respect to what is desired locally in the South.

MF remarked that a working group within SACCNET could look at how to establish linkages between researchers and the communities: policy makers, local communities or NGO's, in order to facilitate the uptake of research and science based knowledge into practice.

Group 2 mentioned that researchers within SACCNET could look into *scenarios*. It was underlined that there needed to be more discussion on the scope of SACCNET research, e.g. how much it should address climate change and how much interlinkages. The topics should be kept flexible for now and a few other research possibilities were put forward, such as climate change in relation to rural-urban dynamics, the magnitude of climate change and the impacts of extreme weather events. It was also stressed that SACCNET at this stage is an academia-to-academia network and that there is a need to look into how to establish connections to civil society. The group also suggested that the network link up to leading institutions in the SADC regions.

Consequently the floor was opened for comments. The participants confirmed their interest in the network and supported the idea of having a working group to focus on linking research and practice. Funding was mentioned as an important issue for the future of the network and MF explained that the Danish research networks dispose of small funds to support the initial phase. A strategy for longer term funding should though be elaborated.

Participants also suggested to link up to other networks and organisations in the North (e.g. Tindall Centre) and to ensure that SACCNET does not duplicate already existing networks. It was also suggested to investigate how the network can be used to promote cooperation at a researcher-to-researcher level by supplementing possibilities already available through the Danish research networks.

List of participants

Nr.	Name	Institution/organisation
1.	Torben Birch-Thomsen	Dept. of Geography and Geology, KU
2.	Ole Mertz	Dept. of Geography and Geology, KU
3.	Jens Raunsø Jensen	LIFE, KU
4.	Walter J. Sanchez	Energy Ethics
5.	Ransom Lekunze	
6.	Michelle Greve	Dept. of Biological Science, AU
7.	Wilhelm May	Danish Climate Centre, DMI
8.	Kjeld Rasmussen	Dept. of Geography, KU
9.	Abbas Salum	UNEP Risoe Centre on Energy, Climate and SD (URC)
10.	Sven Jacobi	Niras A/S
11.	Torsten Mandal	PhD. Student
12.	Lieke van Roosmalen	GEUS
13.	Anne Sørensen	DDRN
14.	Peter Furu	DBL – Centre for Health Research and Development
15.	Ole Fryd	LIFE, KU
16.	Sven-Erik Jacobsen	LIFE, KU
17.	Jens Raunsø Jensen	LIFE, KU
18.	Thomas Birk	Dept. of Geography and Geology, KU
19.	Hans-H. Christensen	Christensen & Co.
20.	Marianne Forti	DDRN
21.	Lise Rosendal Østergaard	ENRECA Health
22.	Miriam Feilberg	DWF
23.	Elena Custura	Energy Ethics
24.	Brita Dahl Jensen	LIFE, KU
25.	Anne Mette Meyer	Dansk Røde Kors
26.	Kris Prasada Rao	DDRN
27.	Iona Eberle	DDRN