

# Comments on the National Climate Change Response White Paper

by Oxfam in South Africa

Submitted to Parliamentary Committee on Water and  
Environmental Affairs

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## Introduction

Oxfam welcomes the South African Government's White Paper for a Climate Change Response policy. Introducing and implementing a comprehensive plan of this ambition and scale is vital in order for the Government to meet objectives to reduce emissions in line with its national and global responsibility and to adapt to climate change whilst meeting the needs of poor and vulnerable communities who will inevitably be hit the hardest. As a middle-income country, and President of COP 17, leadership by South Africa in its domestic policies will demonstrate global leadership and the commitment required to build the political will required for a comprehensive climate deal.

The general principles outlined in the policy to uplift the poor and vulnerable as well as consider the needs of vulnerable groups, particularly poor and rural women are promising but can be built upon. Furthermore the approaches outlined to be needs-driven, developmental, empowering and participatory can be used to ensure poor and vulnerable communities are prioritised in policy and decision making.

While the White Paper does contain a number of useful proposals, the principles and approaches do not always follow through into concrete strategies. The following is a brief review owing to the limited time allowed for submissions and covers core the specific areas of participation, gender, finance and adaptation but recognises there are other areas in the White Paper of significant importance, particularly the mitigation efforts needed to limit global emissions to 1.5C that other civil society partners will review.

To strengthen its current approach, and ensure South Africa has a Climate Change Response Strategy that is effective in supporting the poor and vulnerable communities Oxfam believes that the Government should:

1. Significantly increase the meaningful participation of poor and vulnerable communities, particularly small scale producers and women in policy making at national, provincial and local levels.
2. Include and mainstream a gender-balanced principle that is reflected throughout the policy, ensuring that women are at the heart of decision making.
3. Demonstrate strong support for global climate finance from budgetary contributions that are additional to Overseas Development Assistance from developed countries.
4. Show strong support for supplementary sources of global climate finance nationally and in global forums such as the UNFCCC and G20.
5. Include the full participation of people living in poverty, vulnerable communities, civil society and particularly rural communities and women, in the strategy for national level adaptation funding, ensuring full accountability and transparency to them.
6. Develop more thinking on how farming practices can fundamentally shift away from current input-intensive agriculture and support small scale production that is more aligned to sustainable practices.
7. Explicitly detail the important role of local communities, particularly small scale producers and women in formulating adaptation strategies.

are now mentioned, as being particularly vulnerable to climate impacts. However the Paper fails to set out how a fundamental shift in farming practices will take place to address these.

In some areas, the Paper relies on policy mechanisms, outlining for example how the private sector will be involved in mitigation measures, "requiring companies to develop mitigation plans". Similar mechanisms would strengthen the section on adaptation.

Oxfam notes the support of "climate smart agriculture", a scheme widely promoted by the World Bank and FAO. We believe, however this support has been pronounced without adequate consultation with small scale producers who have significant concerns on the impact that such an approach could have on them. To address some of these issues, Oxfam recommends the policy should:

1. Explicitly detail the important role of local communities, particularly small scale producers and women in formulating adaptation strategies, to include support for the use of indigenous knowledge and mandate departments to include this approach in their sectoral planning.
2. Develop more thinking on how farming practices can fundamentally shift away from current input-intensive agriculture and support small scale production that is more aligned to sustainable practices that will benefit South Africa's increasingly threatened food security.
3. Include specific policy mechanisms for sectors to undertake to create systematic changes in practices, such as requiring water intensive industries to develop water use efficiency plans.
4. Consult widely with small scale producers on the "climate smart agriculture" approach before adopting it as national policy.

END

