Climate Action Hackathon

Leveraging Weather and Climate Data to Create Solutions for Adaptation
Bonn, Germany, 24 May, 2016

Adaptation to climate change requires an effective system for weather observation, forecasting and communication. A modern system must provide weather information in a timely, reliable and readily understood form, including early warnings of extreme events. Unfortunately, in African Least Developed Countries (LDCs), this basic level of information is largely lacking. The failure to provide these services is even more striking as innovative technologies widely used in developed countries enable weather observation, analysis and communication at much lower costs, with reduced human resource requirements and greater reliability.

In response to this urgent need, in 2014 UNDP initiated its **Programme on Climate Information for Resilient Development in Africa (CIRDA)** with $50 million from the GEF Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF). CIRDA supports 11 African LDCs to produce and deliver weather and climate information to protect lives and livelihoods, enable long-term planning and guide development and adaptation to ongoing climate change.

The Programme is exploring the potential to link weather information to the growing availability of mobile phone services allowing automated communication directly to end users, tailored to location and differing user needs. This year the number of cell phone contracts in Africa will exceed the size of the population, and cell phone towers have become increasingly ubiquitous. In order to take advantage of this development, the CIRDA Programme hosted a Climate Action Hackathon inviting young software developers from around the world to develop innovative data and communications technologies to share weather and climate information to enable better responses to the realities of climate change.

A further objective of the Programme is to promote opportunities for public-private partnerships that benefit from the availability of reliable low-cost technologies linked to cellular phone communication, with opportunities for revenue generation to improve the sustainability of poorly funded hydromet agencies.

With dozens of local languages, high-levels of illiteracy, and limited electricity and access to media, vulnerable communities in Africa do not receive reliable weather reports, and only a few nations possess the ability to issue early warnings. The hackers looked for innovative solutions to bridge the last mile and create African-built, high-tech means that enable adapting to climate change. Looking for solutions via the use of mobile communications, text messages and other new-generation technologies, the hackers worked around the clock to create prototype models, data visualization tools and end-to-end product designs.

Data sets, a key enabling factor for app developers, were provided to the hackers by private companies, universities and public agencies, including aWhere, Earth Networks, Geonetcast, the International Research Institute for Climate and Society's Data Library, Ubimet, and the Zambia Meteorological Department.

The side event will present a sampling of these innovative solutions to increase resiliency amongst the most vulnerable with a live demonstration by one of the winning prototypes developed during the Hackathon.

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www.adaptation-UNDP.org/projects/CIRDA
http://www.adaptation-undp.org/climate-action-hackathon
www.undp-cirda.blogspot.com

Tuesday, 24 May, 2016

Event Chair: Bubu Pateh Jallow, Head of Climate Change and Research Services at the Ministry of Environment and Meteorological Services in Malawi.

18:30-18:35	**Chairman's Welcome Opening Remarks**	
18:35-18:45	**A New Vision for Climate Services: The CIRDA Programme** - Bonizella Biagini, CIRDA Programme Manager, UNDP	
18:45-18:55	**The Process Behind the Climate Action Hackathon: Identifying new tools to communicate climate information to end users** - Michael Kirsch, Deputy Director of the Brown Institute for Media Innovation, Columbia University	
18:55- 19:05	**The Apps (brief introduction by Michael Kirsch)** *Video presentation of the apps developed in the Climate Action Hackathon*	Room: Bonn I/II (89)
19:05- 19:20	**Demonstration of the #mLisho App: Communicating Rainfall Data to Increase Rangeland Forage Productivity** - Robert Ouko Ohuru, Team Leader of the #mLisho Team	
19:20-19:30	**Implementation in the Ground: Malawi** - Fred Kossam, Head of Climate Change and Research Services at the Ministry of Environment and Meteorological Services in Malawi	
19:30-20:00	**Moderated Question and Answer Session** *Moderator: Alan Miller, Private Sector Advisor, C4 EcoSolutions*	