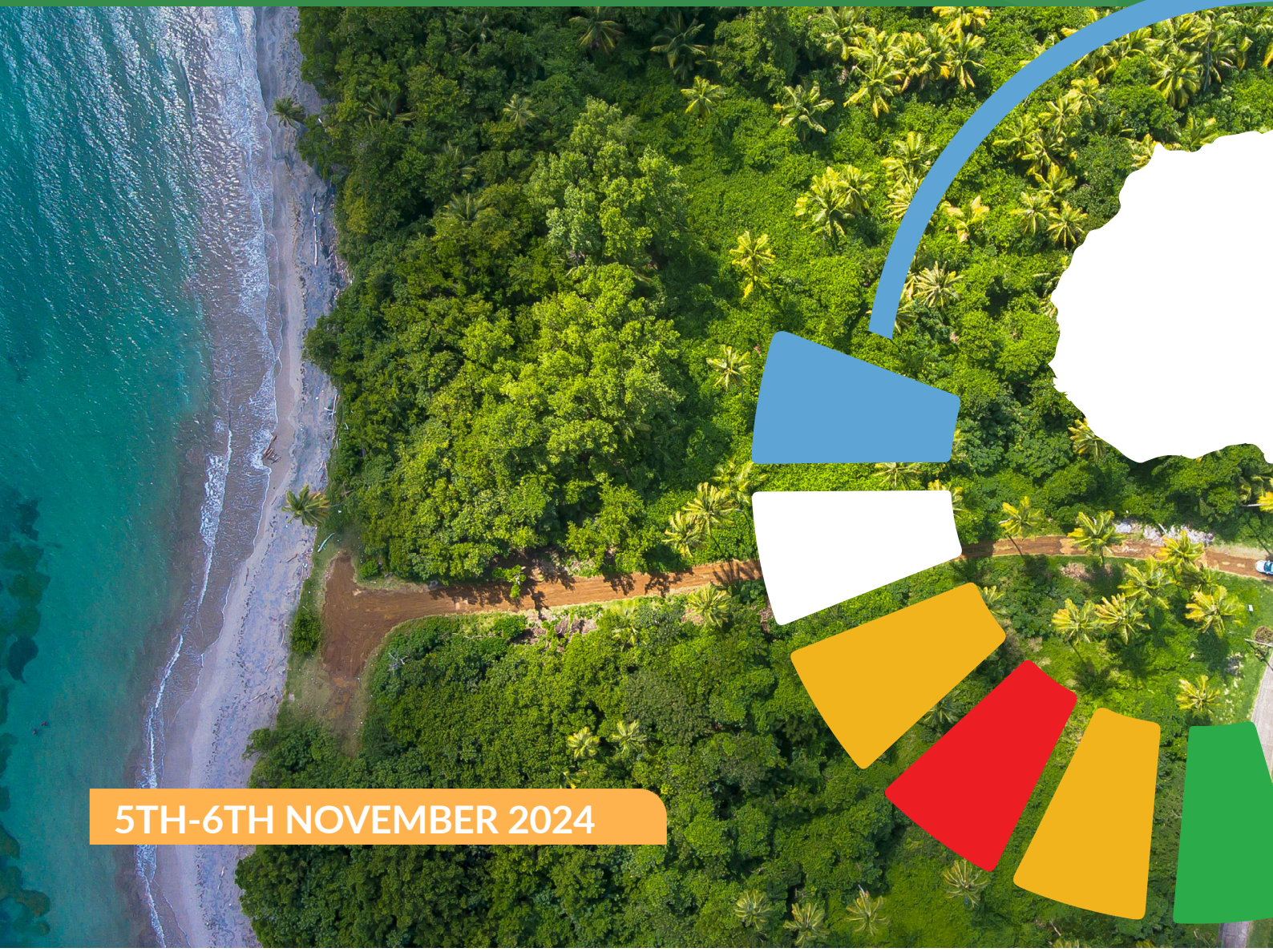
CS4RRA
Climate Services for Risk Reduction in Africa

STOCKTAKING CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE SERVICES FOR RISK REDUCTION IN AFRICA (CS4RRA)

Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Conference Centre, Banjul, The Gambia



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome addresses

The welcoming remarks of the stocktaking conference focused on the importance of climate services for risk reduction in Africa (CS4RRA), emphasising collaboration between African and European partners. Key points included the need for innovative funding strategies, inclusive participation, and sustainable mechanisms to ensure long-term climate resilience. The conference highlighted the completion of a three-year WASCAL Research Action Plan 2.0 and the importance of addressing climate change challenges in West Africa, such as rising sea levels and shifting rainfall patterns. The German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research were acknowledged for their financial contributions and support. The goal is to build regional resilience through knowledge exchange, innovation, and capacity building.

OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION OF KEY DIGNITARIES

Prof. Emmanuel Ramdé, Executive Director of WASCAL

Prof. Emmanuel Ramdé, Executive Director of WASCAL, welcomed dignitaries, including The Gambia's Vice President, ministers, and ambassadors, expressing gratitude for their support. He emphasized the conference's goal of tackling climate change and fostering resilience, highlighting partnerships with the German and French ministries. Prof. Ramdé urged stakeholders to act collectively on climate risk reduction and adaptation and thanked institutional collaborators and the organizing committee for their efforts in advancing the initiative.

Prof Philippe Charvis, Director for Science of IRD

Prof Philippe Charvis, on behalf of Prof. Valerie Verdier who sent her apologises for her absence and also joined Prof. Ramde in expressing gratitude to the government and people of the Gambia for their hospitality and highlights the impact of climate change in West Africa. He also emphasised the importance of collective resilience and the role of the conference in addressing climate change challenges. He highlights the need for gaining knowledge, innovation and capacity building as strong pillars in the combat against climate change. He thanked the participants and wished them a successful conference.

Mr Stéphane Dover, Head of French Diplomatic Mission in Gambia

Mr. Dover expressed gratitude to The Gambia and the organizing committee for hosting the event and shared insights on the country's rapid population growth, from 500,000 in 1974 to over 2.5 million today, highlighting challenges like resource depletion, salinization, floods, heatwaves, and declining agricultural productivity. Representing France, he emphasized the importance of collaboration between nations and institutions to tackle these climate challenges, acknowledging France's Ministry of Higher Education and

IRD for their contributions. He underscored two key challenges: ensuring long-term sustainability through innovative funding mechanisms and promoting inclusive stakeholder participation. Reaffirming France's commitment to North and West Africa, he urged participants to pursue actionable outcomes and wished them success.

Video Message: Ms Corine Borel, Vice DG for Ministry of Research and Innovation (MESR)

Ms. Corine Borel, Deputy Director at the French Ministry for Higher Education and Research, addressed the stocktaking conference, thanking The Gambia, WASCAL, and IRD for their efforts. She highlighted the success of the CS4RRA initiative in fostering knowledge exchange and identifying critical gaps in climate services. Stressing the importance of aligning strategies with national and regional priorities, she called for mobilizing stakeholders and funders to scale up accessible and impactful climate services. Ms. Borel reaffirmed France's commitment to research, innovation, and capacity building, emphasizing the need for co-created solutions to address climate challenges, particularly for vulnerable communities. She urged strengthened South-South and North-South cooperation and integrating climate services into decision-making frameworks. Concluding, she emphasized solidarity and collaboration for a resilient future.

Video Message: Her Excellency, Minister Bettina Stark-Watzinger, Federal Minister of Education and Research, BMBF Germany.

Her Excellency Bettina Stark-Watzinger welcomed participants, expressing regret for her absence. She emphasized Africa's vulnerability to climate change as a global warning and stressed the need for collective action to reduce risks and enhance adaptation. Highlighting Germany's decade-long support for WASCAL, she introduced the CS4RRA initiative, focusing on gaining new knowledge to establish a reliable data base, technological and social innovation, and capacity building for young African researchers. She invited participants and particularly funders to become part of this unique collaboration between Africa and Europe. She thanked key partners, including the French Ministry of Education, WASCAL, and IRD, for their contributions and invited participants to strengthen European-African collaboration to address climate challenges through shared effort and innovation.

His Excellency, Muhammed B.S. Jallow, Vice President of The Republic of The Gambia

The Vice President of The Gambia, representing President Adama Barrow, opened the Climate Services for Risk Reduction in Africa stocktaking conference, aligning it with The Gambia's 2023-2027 National Development Plan and the centenary of Sir Dawda Jawara's birth. He emphasized the government's focus on

climate resilience through initiatives like the National Disaster Reduction Policy (2024-2033) and disaster risk financing. Highlighting the conference's goals of strengthening climate knowledge, early warning systems, and regional cooperation, he urged participants to align efforts with development plans and mobilize donor support. Stressing tangible outcomes, including funding for innovation and support for vulnerable communities, he reaffirmed The Gambia's commitment to climate adaptation and resilience before officially opening the conference.

SESSION 1: HIGH-LEVEL SPEECHES ON ACHIEVEMENTS IN CLIMATE RISK REDUCTION IN WEST AFRICA

Speaker 1: Dr. Odile Ndoumber Faye, ECOWAS Commission, Department of Human Development and Social Affairs, (Representing the Honourable Commissioner)

Dr. Odile Ndoumber Faye thanked The Gambia for excellent working conditions and acknowledged key partners like WASCAL and IRD for their efforts in tackling climate change. She introduced the conference theme, emphasizing the gender dimension in climate risk reduction, noting that women, 52% of the population, are central to responses yet underrepresented in leadership roles. Highlighting climate risks in West Africa—droughts, desertification, food insecurity, and rising temperatures—she stressed their severe impacts on vulnerable groups, including women, children, and the elderly. She warned of future challenges like reduced agricultural yields, water scarcity, migration, and health risks by 2050. Dr. Faye called for an accelerated transition to tackle these issues and achieve sustainable development goals by 2030. In addition, she stressed that climate change adaptation and mitigation must be considered together with economic development fostering a transition to green economy.

Speaker 2: Prof. Ibidun Adelekan, AU-EU CCSE Partnership WG, local capacities in urban areas (Uni. Ibadan, Nigeria)

Prof. Adelekan highlighted West Africa's high vulnerability to climate risks, emphasizing urban areas' increasing exposure to floods, droughts, and extreme heat due to urbanization and limited adaptive capacity. By 2050, Africa's urban population will exceed 60%, with coastal and urban areas facing significant risks. She noted that only 2.5% of Africa's climate investments target urban development, despite projections of increased flooding and extreme temperatures in over 25 cities. Prof. Adelekan stressed the need for tailored climate services, innovation, and research, particularly for small towns, to enhance resilience. This means to consider the needs, but also the capacities and knowledge of the users. She called for greater EU climate project focus in West Africa, improved infrastructure planning, and investment in disaster risk reduction to address urban climate challenges effectively.

Speaker 3: Prof. Laurent Bochereau, Research and innovation counsellor at the EU Delegation to the African Union (Addis Ababa, EU Ethiopia)

Prof. Laurent Bochereau emphasized the conference's significance in light of COP29 and recent events like the Fauci conference in Valencia, highlighting inclusive webinars with 600 participants, mainly from Africa. He underscored the EU and African Union's collaborative efforts in climate risk reduction and sustainable development, tracing milestones from the first African-European summit in 2000 to ongoing partnerships like the Joint Africa-Europe Partnership and the High-Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology, and Innovation. He detailed thematic platforms such as the €1.6 billion EDCTP for infectious diseases, the €10 million NIPSUR for sustainable energy, and the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy platform, initiated in 2000 to address climate risks and promote innovation. Prof. Bochereau highlighted programs like GMES Africa, which uses satellite data to tackle environmental and climate security issues, and CCSE, supporting 17 projects since 2017 with €10 million focused on sustainable energy and climate services. He emphasized equal partnership and mutual funding between Africa and Europe and outlined plans for further development under Horizon Europe and beyond. He called for African participation in upcoming proposals and noted commitments under the EU's Climate and Energy Union and Africa's Agenda 2063 to foster science, technology, and innovation for sustainable growth.

SESSION 2: CLIMATE SERVICES FOR RISK REDUCTION IN AFRICA

Speaker 1: Prof. Dr Daniela Jacob, Director of GERICS, the German Climate Service Centre Hamburg, Germany. (Virtual)

Prof. Jacob highlighted the importance of climate services for risk reduction in Africa, emphasizing advancements in climate science over the past 10-15 years. She stressed the need for integrating global-to-local climate information with local knowledge to assess risks effectively. Successful projects like Pascal and Saskia were discussed, alongside the introduction of the "Earth Virtualization Engine" initiative, aimed at distributing data equitably, connecting observation scenarios with climate and non-climatic knowledge, and engaging societal actors in adaptation efforts. She noted the role of the World Climate Research Program (WCRP) in delivering actionable climate information and emphasized engaging both the global south and north in co-creating and using this information for risk assessment and adaptation. Prof. Jacob advocated for integrating observations, simulations, and AI to enhance interactivity across information systems, making climate data accessible to all. She underscored the initiative's goal to provide tailored support for communities and computing groups in adaptation efforts.

Speaker 2: Dr. Titike Bahaga, IGAD, CONFER & ACACIA (Nairobi, KE) (Virtual)
Dr. Titike Bahaga from ICPAC in Nairobi highlighted their role in enhancing climate resilience and mitigating climate-related hazards through climate monitoring, forecasting, and projections across sectors like agriculture and water resources. ICPAC also manages disaster risk management, capacity building, user engagement, and media dissemination. He discussed the EU-funded CONFER project, which focuses on co-developing climate services for water infrastructure, improving seasonal forecasts, and advancing hydrological modeling. Future initiatives include the Anticipatory Climate Adaptation for Communities in Africa (ACACIA) project, which will target pluviometric forecasting in Ethiopia and cyclone forecasting in Madagascar. Dr. Bahaga emphasized the importance of strengthening climate services in East Africa through advanced training and research opportunities, particularly PhD programs. He highlighted ICPAC's commitment to building local capacity and fostering innovation in climate services to address regional challenges effectively, contributing to improved decision-making and resilience across East Africa.

THE CS4RRA INITIATIVE: PRIORITIES AND PERSPECTIVES FOR A JOINT RESEARCH AGENDA FOR WEST AFRICA:

Speaker 1: Prof Arona Diedhiou IRD, Climate Nexus Laboratory Co- Director Abidjan, Cote D Ivorie

Prof Diedhiou introduced the multilateral CS4RRA initiative by illustrating activities (4 co-designed webinars in different West African countries) and outcomes. The initiative reflects the need for a collective action and long-term cooperation to successfully reduce risks caused by climate change. His presentation covered the challenges of long-term project sustainability and the need for international cooperation. He elaborated on the effort of the European Union in funding climate service research projects through their partnership with African Union. He further emphasized on the need for a real understanding, and support from our policymakers. Research program should be related to national development programs and their priorities. Prof Diedhiou discussed the importance of research, innovation, and capacity building in tackling climate change, with a particular emphasis on the African continent. He also discussed the need for sustainable financing and the importance of involving local communities in the development of climate services. The conversation ended with a call for action and a commitment to work together to address the challenges posed by climate change. Prof Diedhiou highlights that CS4RRA webinars underscored the importance of climate-smart agriculture and sustainable land management as essential tools to combat climate change and land degradation in West Africa, emphasizing the integration of traditional knowledge with modern technologies. He also indicated the critical role of

strengthening early warning systems and improving the communication of climate risks to enhance disaster risk reduction, while stressing the need to bridge the gap between scientific research and policy implementation for effective adaptation. Additionally, the webinars emphasized the significance of innovative water management strategies and regional cooperation to address challenges such as flood risks and excessive water, particularly in the context of climate variability.

Speaker 2: Prof. Kehinde Ogunjobi, WASCAL Deputy Executive Director & Director Competence Centre, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Prof. Ogunjobi illustrated the CS4RRA initiative as a basis for a joint research agenda in West Africa, addressing the region's climate challenges, including rising temperatures (+0.8 to +1.2°C), increased rainfall variability, intensified heatwaves, coastal flooding risks, and declining crop yields (e.g., maize -11.6%, soybean -16.7%). The initiative, funded by France and Germany, aims to develop tailored climate services, improve data sharing and modelling capacity, and enhance disaster risk reduction through advanced forecasting and communication strategies. He highlighted CS4RRA's focus on knowledge, innovation, and capacity building for climate services. He thereby stresses the opportunities given by advanced technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, big data analyses or Internet of Things. Key outcomes from CS4RRA webinars include advancing early warning systems, impact-based forecasting, climate-smart agriculture, and sustainable funding, while addressing challenges like data scarcity and poor computing infrastructure. Prof. Ogunjobi emphasized co-developing climate services, incorporating local knowledge, and improving communication to end users. He advocated for long-term partnerships between researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to ensure sustainable, impactful climate actions in West Africa.

Speaker 2: Dr. Patrick Monfray, CNRS & AU-EU CCSE Partnership WG, (Paris, FR)

He discussed the evolution of the Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) on Climate for the development of climate services in Africa, and the European Commission's support for projects like CSA SINCERE with the African Academy of Science. A key highlight of Dr. Monfray's presentation was the importance of multilateral cooperation, creating synergies between bilateral efforts, with initiatives such as Climate Services for Risk Reduction in Africa (CS4RRA) and the AU-EU Partnership on Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (CCSE). These programs aim to foster synergies for long-term climate policies and enhance resilience, particularly in West Africa. The CCSE partnership, launched in 2017, has achieved significant progress in renewable energy and sustainable climate actions. Dr. Monfray underscored advances in satellite observation and the need for integration of socio-economic data with climate services, stressing for

ambitious collaboration with and across stakeholders. He highlighted the African Union and European Union Innovation Agenda, launched in 2023, which focuses in particular on reducing inequalities and promoting local climate resilience.

Future perspectives include strengthening regional cooperation, defragmenting networks, and linking scientists, funders, and stakeholders to national disaster risk reduction strategies and national adaptation plans. Dr. Monfray emphasized the need for continuous dialogue and collaboration to upscale innovative climate services, promote citizen science and transdisciplinary approaches, engage youth and women in research, and prepare for expanded European Commission support in coming years. The presentation concluded with a call to develop integrated, user-centered climate services and enhance local development to mitigate the impact of climate change and inequality, ensuring sustainable adaptation practices across Africa.

HIGHLIGHTS AND LESSONS-LEARNT FROM RECENT EC FUNDED PROJECTS ON CLIMATE SERVICES IN AFRICA

Speaker 1: Prof. Michael Bliss Singer, (Virtual), DOWN2EARTH, Santa Barbara Uni. (USA) and Cardiff Uni. (UK)

Prof. Singer highlighted the achievements of an EC-funded project on Climate Services in Africa, focusing on capacity building and adaptation to climate change. Key outcomes include embedding impact-based modelling at ICPAC, developing training materials, and launching a Somali-language MOOC to train journalists on climate issues. The workflow for impact-based modelling is now integrated into ICPAC for broader use in climate outlook forums. He mentioned the creation of films under the BBC Media Action series "Living with Climate Change", documenting rural climate impacts. Additionally, automatic weather stations have been established, forming the foundation of Somalia's new Meteorological (MET) Service, addressing critical data gaps. Prof. Singer also discussed the development of climate adaptation policy frameworks, derived from agent-based models and community research, emphasizing the urgency of implementing interventions.

Speaker 2: Prof. Laura Sandra Leo, (Virtual), ALBATROSS, (Uni. Bologna, IT)

Prof. Laura Sandra Leo presented the ALBATROSS project, an EC-funded initiative focused on developing long-term climate adaptation plans in Africa through perspective-based solutions and co-creation with local communities. The project integrates indigenous knowledge to deliver tailored climate data, addressing gaps in localized climate risk information and usability of existing services. Key activities include climate risk assessments, developing guidelines for nature-based solutions, and engaging in policy dialogue to ensure knowledge uptake. Prof. Leo emphasized evaluating the performance of current climate services and tailoring them to community needs to promote

sustainable development and enhance the impact of climate adaptation strategies.

Speaker 3: Dr. Stefan Ligtenberg, SAFE4ALL (Weather Impact, NL) Presentation by Ms. Mónica Estébanez Camarena

Ms. Estébanez Camarena introduced the SAFE4ALL Project, aimed at integrating European climate services with African knowledge to support climate-smart decision-making across diverse actors, including smallholder farmers and policymakers. The project involves 15 partners across Europe and Africa, with case studies in Kenya, Ghana, and Zimbabwe, working closely with local meteorological offices and stakeholders like the Zimbabwe Farmers Union. Emphasizing user-centered design, the project tailors services to local needs, prioritizing sustainability through capacity building and country-specific business models. Ms. Estébanez Camarena highlighted leveraging existing networks, cross-border collaboration, and treating local partners as collaborators to ensure long-term impact and adaptability.

Speaker 4: Prof. Kranjac-Berisavljevic, TEMBO-Africa, (University of Development Studies, Ghana)

Prof. Kranjac introduced the TEMBO Africa Project, a key EU Horizon initiative focused on cost-effective environmental monitoring in Africa, targeting Ghana, Zambia, and Kenya. With a consortium of 12 European and African partners, the project aims to reduce the cost of measuring key hydrological variables—such as rainfall, soil moisture, river flow, and bathymetry—by 90%. This data underpins initiatives like flood early warning systems for small and medium-sized towns (populations under 700,000) and improved reservoir management for dams in Ghana and Zambia. TEMBO Africa also addresses climate challenges faced by African farmers, aiming to mitigate crop yield declines (10% or more) by enabling robust insurance options during critical growth periods. By integrating ground-based observations with satellite data, the project enhances data accuracy for applications in food security, water management, and agricultural resilience.

Dr. Joshua Ngaina gave a complementary contribution on-line on FOCUS Africa Project, from WMO Regional office for Eastern and Southern Africa, Nairobi (Kenya).

SESSION 3: PERSPECTIVES AND FEEDBACK TO WEBINAR OUTCOMES FROM POLICY? SCIENCE AND INVESTORS: INTERVENTIONS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AROUND THE WORLD

Prof. Akiça Bahri Member of the IWMI Board of Governors: Prof. Bahri highlighted the importance to link climate change and conflicts, capacity development and to involve policy makers from the start. She noted that addressing climate-related security threats and fostering collaboration can be achieved through governance. Prof

Bahri stated that its necessary to translate climate-related security threats into the language of local policies and link them to local goals. Responses to conflicts should strengthen how people organize, govern, and adapt while addressing fundamental human security concerns and climatic vulnerabilities. She concludes that building capacity in local research, identifying, connecting, and scaling up resilience-building and peacebuilding successes, and adjusting funding to match changing difficulties are all necessary to close the existing gaps.

Mrs. Pia Seidel, Global Change; Climate Research, Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bonn, Germany). Mrs. Seidel said there are many diverse challenges related to climate change in West Africa and many ways climate research could contribute. We need to decide on what to tackle first. She therefore stressed the importance of climate services and climate research as a highly valuable foundation for sound decision making. The need for reliable climate services in the region was underlined by the CS4RRA webinars. Joint initiatives of African and European partners such as CS4RRA were appreciated. She stated that will continue its support and will continue to be a partner in future steps. CS4RRA is an important flagship for the preparation of a long-lasting partnership in the field of climate resilience research of European and African partners. Stocktaking Conference another important step to establish a long-term multinational cooperation. She welcomed interested organisations including funding parties from Africa and Europe to join the initiative and contribute funds for a long-term cooperation aiming at increasing climate resilience in West Africa.

Prof. Chinedum Nwajiuba, WASCAL Governing Board Chair, AE-FUNAI (Ikwo, Nigeria): Prof Nwajiuba noted that from the webinars, the focus of the CS4RRA and timelines for calls seem largely defined. He observed that action research, and practical climate services, are critically based by past experiences from the two countries–Germany and France and possibly the EU. He further noted that funding opportunity is desirable to, among other reasons, enhance ownership. Collaborative funding is equally relevant for co-production of innovation and provision of services.

Christophe Lavaysse, Director of Research at IRD: Dr Lavaysse speaks on COSAV CLIMAT and the role of IRD in addressing Climate Challenges in Africa. He presented the IRD Tools for Climate-Society Challenges which includes Identifying needs, assessing vulnerabilities, and supporting the co-construction of projects. Dr Lavaysse outlined the Objectives of COSAV CLIMAT and also the challenges. Part of the objectives are: bringing together IRD staff and partners to address societal challenges, paying focus on climate challenges and impacts, organize webinars, workshops, and communication for the and Low-Carbon Research.

Dr. Anne- Hélène Prieur Richard, Belmont Forum co-Chair, French National Research Agency (Paris, France): Dr Anne-Hélène Prieur Richard said the Belmont Forum (BF) supports international transdisciplinary research providing knowledge for understanding, mitigating, and adapting to global environmental change. The BF system allows existing funding mechanisms to come together at an international level, within existing funding policies and frameworks. Projects of the Global Network ARC2024 involved researchers from 62 countries, demonstrating global collaboration on Africa research. Finally, she said there are still opportunities to welcome members, funders, and partners to participate in the open and upcoming CRAs and Belmont look forward to explore opportunities to continue collaboration worldwide in the future.

Speech H.E. Mr. Botzet, German Ambassador in The Gambia

H.E. Mr Botzet expressed his thanks to the participants for traveling to The Gambia highlighting the importance of the issue of climate resilience. He appreciated the interest of so many important institutions in CS4RRA. In addition, he acknowledged CS4RRA is an important flagship for the preparation of a lasting partnership in the field of climate resilience research between European and African partners. He expressed his conviction that with such joint activities, we can help to improve living conditions and protect livelihoods in the long term. For all future undertakings, the involvement of African organisation and people will be the key of success, he noted. African scientist as well as politicians, civil organisations, enterprises and funders are needed to sustainably strengthen climate resilience of the continent. Every contribution and engagement are welcome. Finally, he thanked BMBF and MESR for funding this great initiative and WASCAL and IRD for the implementation.

KEY NOTE: CHALLENGES FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN WEST AFRICA. TOWARDS LONG-TERM COOPERATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Prof. Benjamin Lamptey, Challenges and ways forward for sustainable weather and climate services in Africa (Uni. Leeds, UK)

Prof. Benjamin Lamptey addressed the challenges and strategies for achieving sustainable weather and climate services in Africa. He emphasized the importance of decision-making across all time scales, mainstreaming climate services, and fostering collaboration between scientific, user, and provider communities. Key strategies include local capacity building, strategic investments in data and observations, and leveraging the WMO multi-hazard early warning system

blueprint for co-produced, community-scale services. He highlighted the potential of the WMO Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF) to address data gaps in Africa and stressed the need for African-led socio-economic and impact-based evaluations of modelling solutions in collaboration with the Global North. Prof. Lamptey underscored the need for improved governance, partnerships, and innovation to ensure sustainability, urging donors to enforce governance standards from project inception and promote African leadership in projects.

The presentation also focused on the significance of high-performance computing (HPC), enhanced observation systems, and addressing the challenges of inadequate weather system representation in African models. He emphasized the role of ACMAD in data rescue and digitization and called for capacity building using a "training of trainers" approach to create a critical mass of skilled personnel. Finally, Prof. Lamptey underscored the need for mainstreaming climate services into broader development, fostering corporate collaboration, and promoting climate resilience through anticipation, adaptation, response, and recovery. He emphasized moving beyond individual projects to achieve long-term impact through integrated governance and regional coordination.

NEXT STEPS AND FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Part I on West Africa Call 2025: Co-chaired by MESR, Dr. Jean Albergel and BMBF, Pia Seidel

In this part the main outcomes of the CS4RRA conference from the funder's perspective MESR and BMBF, emphasizing the importance of women, gender, peace, climate justice, and African ownership were illustrated. Key points included the commitment of European countries like Germany, France, Belgium, Norway, and the UK to fund a joint call, with a potential launch in April 2025. The aim is to engage West African funding agencies or organisations in participating in this collaborative call to ensure a shared leadership between Western Africa and Europe. The initiative aims to boost climate services, build capacities, and fill data gaps. Challenges include limited funding and the need for innovative approaches. The goal is to create long-term African-European partnerships and ensure continuity beyond the initial pilot phase in West Africa.

Climate Services for Risk Reduction in Africa (CS4RRA) Conference Insights

The representatives from BMBF and MESR highlighted the importance of climate services and the lack of data as key takeaways from the conference. They emphasised the role of women and gender, peace, climate justice, and the momentum created by the previous meetings in Ivory Coast, Togo, Senegal, and Ghana. There is need to for African ownership of the initiative and the commitment of various European countries to fund a joint call.

Funding and Partnerships for a Joint Call

The representatives from BMBF and MESR presented the commitment of Germany, France, and Belgium to fund this call and the potential involvement of other European countries like Italy, Norway and the UK as well as West African countries like Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Burkina Faso. They mentioned the possibility of in-kind or cash contributions. The panellist highlighted the unique opportunity to speak with funders in a closed session and emphasised the goal of long-term African-European partnerships and the need for improved networking and collaboration among stakeholders.

Timeline and Objectives for a Joint Call

The representatives from BMBF and MESR outlined the timeline for a joint call, with the call expected to be launched by April 2025 and the project potentially starting in 2026. Timetable for Call for Proposals: Outline of key deadlines and milestones for proposal submission and review. Plans for establishing secretariat to oversee coordination between stakeholders. African-European partnerships: Focus on fostering long-term partnerships that include African Funders and local communities.

They listed the main objectives of a first joint call: boosting climate services, building capacities, and filling data gaps.

Ensuring Long-Term Continuity and Innovation

The representatives from BMBF and MESR acknowledged the need for continuity and long-term partnerships, emphasising the goal of building on existing networks and avoiding short-term pilot projects.

COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

- Participants discussed the importance of strengthening the network and ensuring that the initiative evolves beyond its initial phase.
- Suggestions of innovative approaches, such as citizen science and co-design, to make the initiative more impactful.
- Highlights on the potential for shared resources and platforms to enhance collaboration and support the initiative's goals.
- Smart-agriculture is too narrow as it covers not all relevant aspects related to climate risk. For this reason, it was suggested and agreed to focus on Food Security or even better Climate Security as in comprises important issues such as fishery or migration.

Part II on next steps beyond West Africa: Co-chaired by AUC (Dr Leah Wanamba Naess) and EC (Dr Laurent Bochereau)

Dr. Naess and Dr. Bochereau discussed the expansion of long-term STI partnerships between Europe and Africa. Key points included the establishment of a high-level policy dialogue (HLPD) with bi-annual meetings and three thematic platforms, including one on Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (CCSE) with others on

health and infectious disease and on food nutrition security. The platform has funded numerous projects on renewable energy, leading to successful start-ups and a co-fund initiative with African and European States and EC for a €30 million budget. The European Union's Horizon programs has also funded projects involving over 30 countries and addressing climate resilience.

A new co-fund initiative on sustainable energy launched last month was mentioned. The first calls to be launched in January, with an overall budget of 30 million euros. Panellists mentioned the preparation of another co-funded project to support the climate pillar of the climate change and sustainable energy platform.

Climate Change and Sustainable Energy

The panellist explained the two pillars of the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (CCSE) platform: sustainable energy and climate change. The sustainable energy pillar has been more active in establishing long-term partnerships and funding projects with African and European States. Panellist emphasised the importance to develop a long-term partnership in climate risk reduction, resilience, and adaptation. The CCSE platform aims to network key networks in different African regions for co-designing and co-building long-term visions. Such defragmentation would include scientists, funders, and stakeholders like the African Union Agenda 2063, the World Bank, and African Development Bank.

The European Union plans to announce significant support for the next three years to support project research and coordination across Africa.

Funding Mechanism and National Budgets

It was clarified if for instance that Benin participates, the funding agency's contribution stays in Benin to fund local participants. EU money can also be involved, extending funding beyond individual country contributions. Participation in the funding pool increases the chance of securing additional funding, as long as the funding agency is part of a successful proposal to EC. The model involves reserving money for successful proposals, allowing countries to tap into extra funding available.

Example of Successful Platform and Future Initiatives

LEAP-RE was cited as an example of a successful platform for renewable energy developed between the AU and EU, highlighting its merits. It was reported that many funding agencies are interested in joining the new co-funding phase (LEAP-SE) due to their understanding of the rules and benefits. For climate risk reduction and resilience, the focus will be on consolidating what has been done, with West Africa being the initial target for funders, but not the last initiative in Africa. The understanding is that countries will continue to work with West Africa on

targeted, well-justified activities that need speeding up.

Competition Among Funding Agencies

It was explained that the competition for EU co-funding mechanism is between national funding agencies, not individual scientists, leading to a goal of getting one strong proposal rather than multiple ones. Funding agencies sometimes compete, and efforts are made to merge proposals, but this is rare. Thus, the panellists emphasised that the call for an EU co-fund (model Leap-Re) would be opened with the goal to receive one strong proposal with a broad coverage and engaging the key players in the domain.

Building Dynamic Partnerships in Africa

Participants discussed the importance of building consortium with key networks at regional or African levels, involving scientist, funder, and stakeholder communities. These networks should work together to create a joint roadmap and identify priority for actionable steps. The panellists invited interested participants to contact the CCSE working group for further information.

In the discussion, participants also highlighted the need to build something different from "business as usual" with a strong engagement of the Western African communities (in research but also stakeholders and funders). It was also highlighted that the presentations and discussions brought many ideas about others potential outcomes of the conference such as sharing of tools presented during the conference, and importance of continuing the dialog started here through existing networks such as WASCAL.

CLOSING REMARKS

Prof. Emmanuel Ramdé – WASCAL

Professor Ramdé began by expressing gratitude to the organizing committee, particularly Professor Sidat Yaffa and his team, and acknowledged the support from BMBF, France MESR, DLR-PT, and partner organization IRD. He celebrated the conference's collaborative spirit, which brought together over 100 stakeholders from Europe and Africa to Banjul and min. the same number of virtual participants, including policymakers, academia, donors, and international agencies. He emphasized the transformative impact of the conference on resilience and sustainability in Africa, highlighting long-term north-south cooperation. Key gaps identified included data, modelling capacity, climate forecasting, early warning systems, and policy frameworks. Prof. Ramdé stressed the need to integrate scientific and indigenous knowledge to make climate services more actionable and accessible.

Representative of IRD: Prof. Valerie Vierde Closing Statement

Prof. Philippe Charvis from the Institute of Research and Development (IRD) began his closing remarks by expressing gratitude to all speakers, experts, and participants for their contributions to the

workshops and webinars. He highlighted the importance of climate services in climate risk management and the success of the event in mobilizing various stakeholders, including politicians, government associations, civil society, financial stakeholders, and scientists. Prof. Philippe Charvis emphasised Africa's significant climate challenges as opportunities for enhanced regional and international cooperation and innovative solutions. He also noted the necessity of an integrated approach combining scientific information, critical technologies, and the active involvement of policymakers and local communities in sustainability efforts.

Prof. Chinedum Nwajiuba - WASCAL Board Chair

Prof. Chinedum expressed gratitude to colleagues and partners for their hard work and collaboration, highlighting the significant role of partnerships with the Ministries and other stakeholders. He appreciated the participation of multiple countries, acknowledging the opportunities and actions emerging from these collaborations. Referencing SDG 17, he emphasized the importance of global partnerships, particularly in fostering north-south collaborations and robust country-level participation. Prof. Chinedum called for practical steps and actions to build on the momentum created, expressing optimism about the future.

Looking ahead, he predicted that CS4RRA would gain increased prominence as a vital initiative for addressing climate resilience. On behalf of WASCAL, he extended good luck and pledged support for the future endeavors of CS4RRA.

Closure

The Conference declared closed at 6:00pm local time (GMT+0)

ANNEX 1

Summary of the slido Poll Results

The CS4RRA stocktaking conference Slido poll results indicate diverse international participation, as illustrated in Figure 1. Attendees represented multiple countries, including the host nation, The Gambia, alongside Germany, France, Burkina Faso, the United States, the United Kingdom, Tunisia, The Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, and Belgium. This geographical diversity underscores the conference's global relevance and the collaborative nature of the event. The inclusion of both African and non-African nations highlights the cross-regional engagement in addressing shared challenges, fostering knowledge exchange, and strengthening international partnerships in research and innovation. Such representation is critical for advancing collective solutions to regional and global issues.

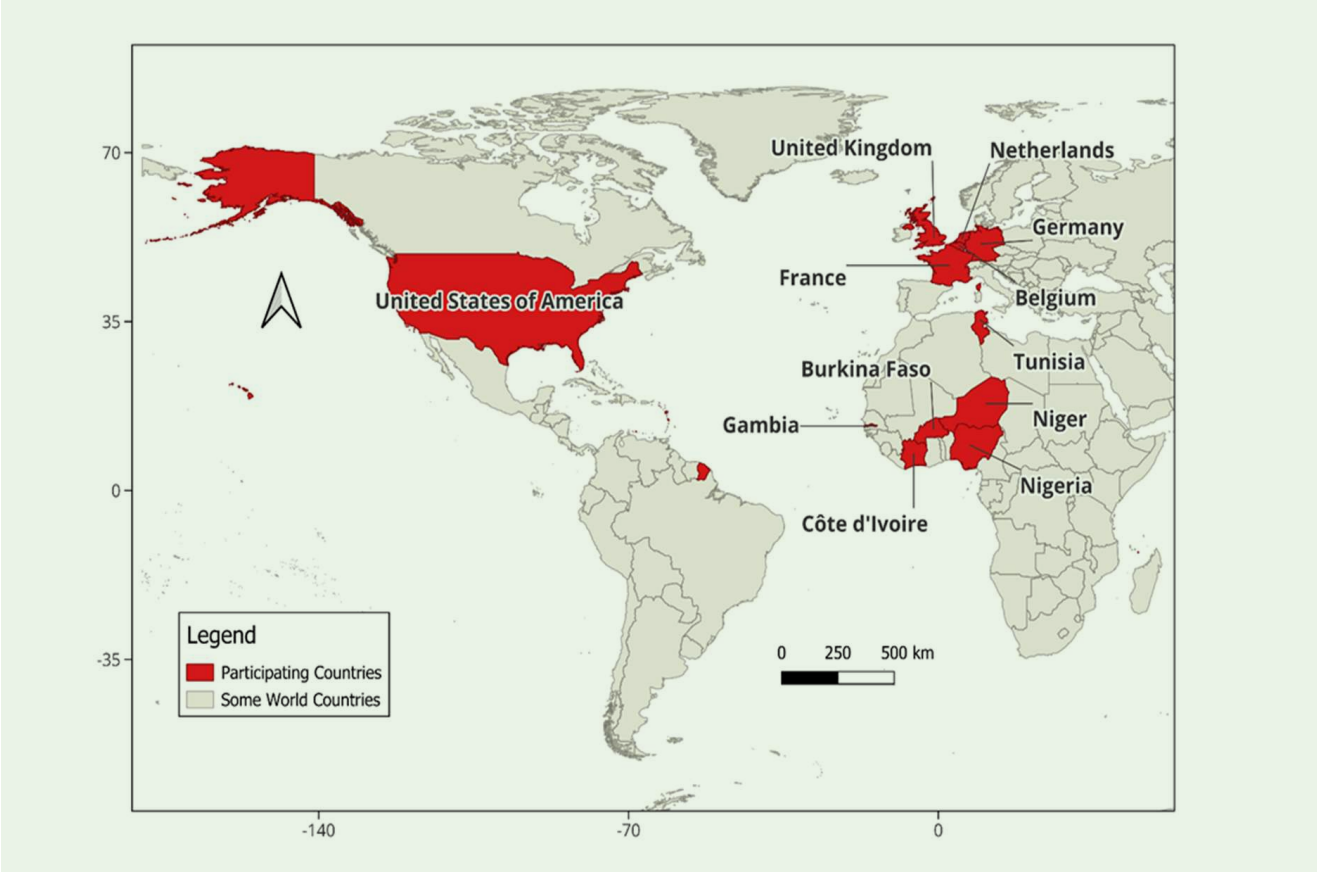

Figure1. A map highlighting participating countries

Professional representation at the stocktaking conference, as depicted in Figure 2, comprised scientists (48%), research and innovation funders (19%), implementation organizations (29%), and civil society (5%). Notably, politicians and private sector representatives were absent. This distribution highlights a strong emphasis on scientific and organizational expertise, with limited inclusion of political or private sector perspectives.

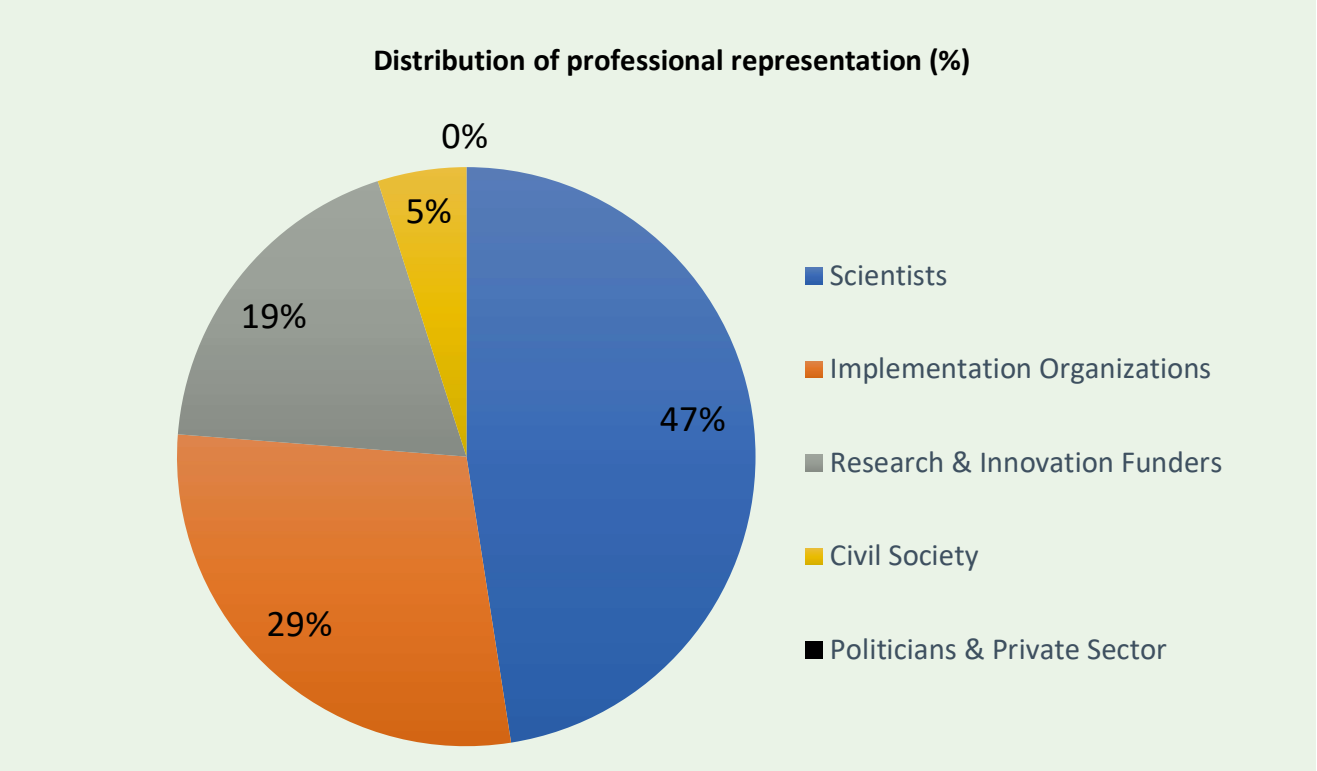

Figure 2. Distribution of professional representation in attendance during the CS4RRA conference

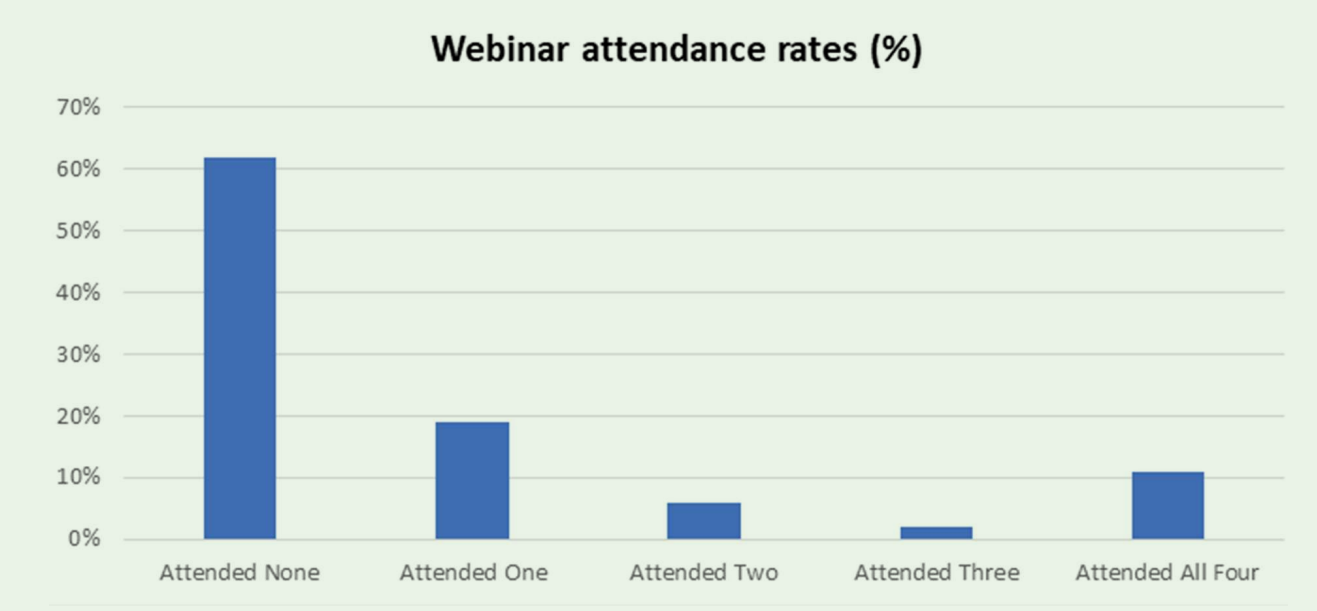

Figure 3: A bar chart showing webinar attendance rates

Regarding participation in four CS4RRA webinars across the region as shown in Figure 3, 62% of respondents had not attended any, while 19% attended one, 6% attended two, 2% attended three, and 11% attended all four. The 11% who did not attend the CS4RRA webinars may have faced barriers such as lack of awareness, scheduling conflicts, technical issues, or perceived irrelevance. Other reasons could include low motivation, overwhelming frequency, language barriers, prior commitments,

insufficient follow-up, personal circumstances, or registration difficulties. To improve participation, organizers should enhance communication, offer flexible timing, provide technical support, emphasize relevance, and ensure accessibility. Recorded sessions, reminders, and incentives like certificates could also encourage attendance. Addressing these challenges can help increase engagement and ensure more participants benefit from the webinars.

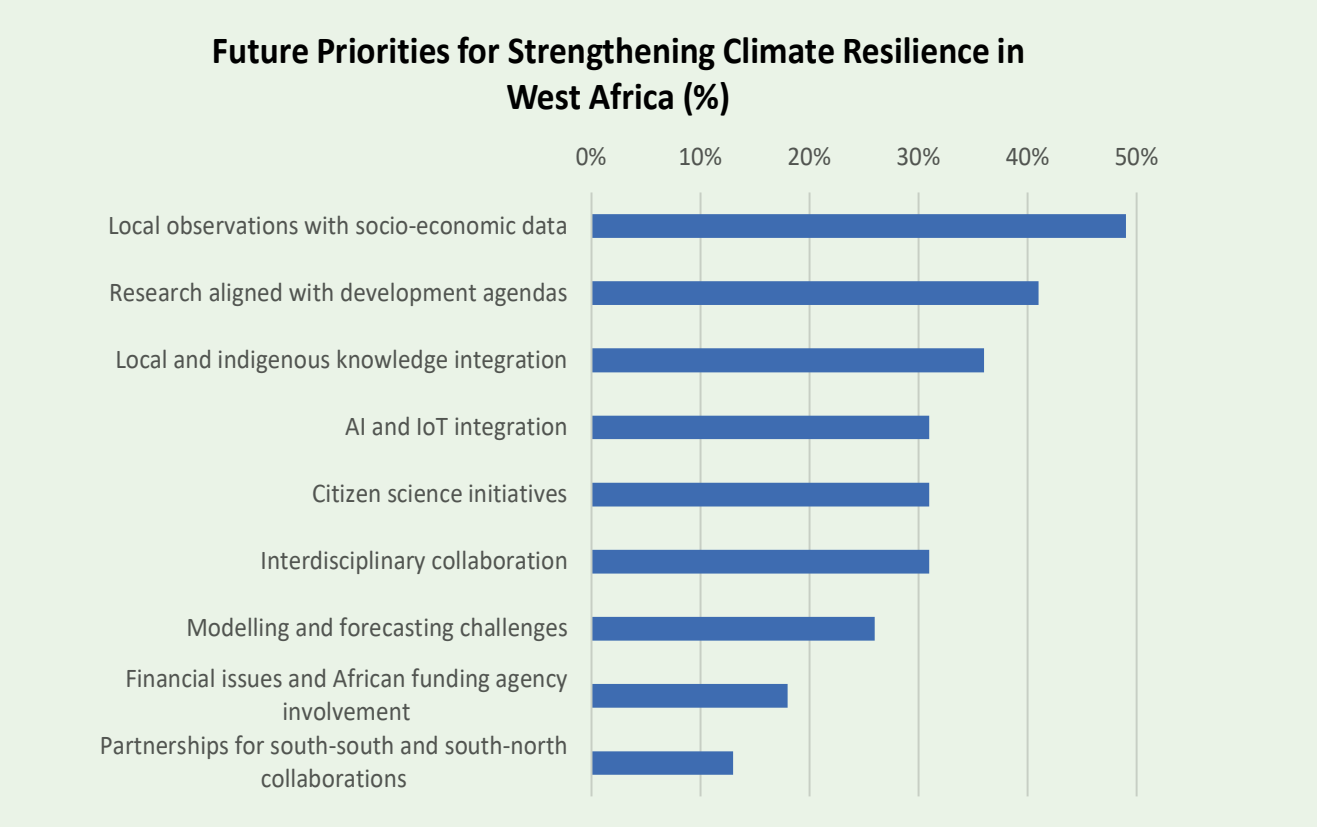

Figure 4: A horizontal bar chart ranking priorities for Future Priorities for Strengthening Climate Resilience in West Africa

Figure 4 highlights future priorities for strengthening climate resilience in West Africa, expressed as percentages. The top priority is integrating local observations with socio-economic data for impact studies (49%), followed by aligning research priorities with development agendas (41%). Other key areas include incorporating local and indigenous knowledge (36%), leveraging AI and IoT for climate services (31%), promoting citizen science initiatives (31%), fostering interdisciplinary collaboration (31%), addressing modelling and forecasting challenges (26%), resolving financial issues and engaging African funding agencies (18%), and enhancing partnerships for south-south and south-north collaborations (13%). These priorities reflect a balanced focus on data-driven approaches, technological innovation, community engagement, and strategic partnerships to address climate resilience challenges in the region.

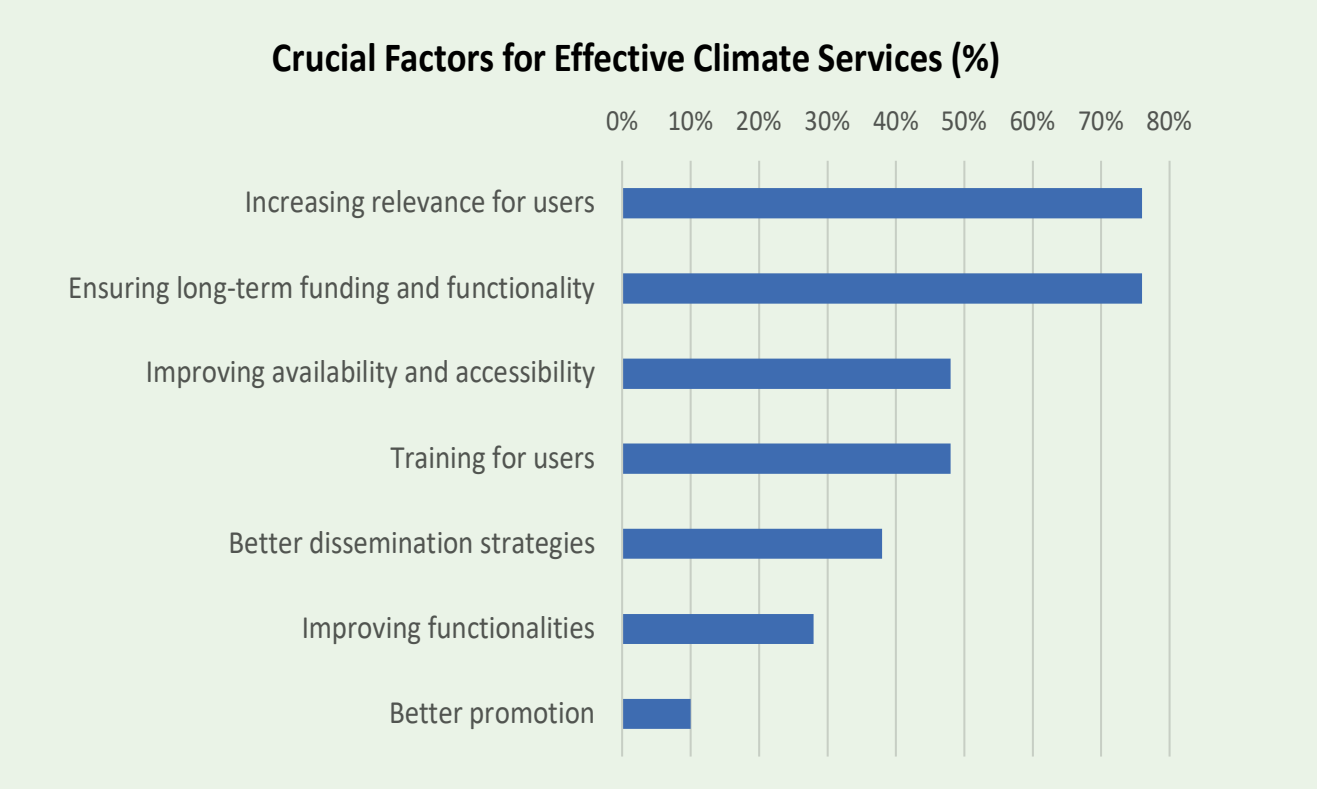

Figure 5. Plot a bar chart showing Crucial Factors for Effective Climate Services

Figure 5 presents the critical factors for effective climate services as identified by participants, expressed in percentages. The most emphasized factors were increasing relevance for users (76%) and ensuring long-term funding and functionality (76%), highlighting the dual importance of user-centric design and sustainable financial support. Other significant factors included improving availability and accessibility (48%) and providing training for users (48%), underscoring the need for both resource availability and capacity building. Better dissemination strategies (38%), enhanced functionalities (28%), and improved promotion (10%) were also noted, though with varying degrees of emphasis. These findings reflect a prioritization of user engagement, sustainability, and accessibility as key drivers for effective climate services.

Figure 6 presents a word cloud summarizing key missing aspects identified by participants in the CS4RRA Webinars and Conference. A central finding was the critical need for enhanced collaboration among countries and stakeholders to address climate resilience challenges effectively. Participants highlighted several gaps, including the absence of clear future implementation strategies and the need for sustainability of climate services to ensure long-term impact. Innovative financing models were also identified as essential to support climate initiatives, alongside stronger regional climate center collaboration to foster knowledge sharing and resource pooling. Additionally, participants emphasized the importance of integrating local knowledge into climate models to improve accuracy and relevance.

The lack of climate services tailored for entrepreneurship was noted as a missed opportunity to drive economic resilience. Furthermore, the absence of public-private partnerships for funding was seen as a barrier to scaling climate solutions. Participants also called for greater attention to the intersection of climate services with migration, conflict, and health issues, which are increasingly interconnected with climate change impacts. Capacity-building programs were identified as crucial for empowering stakeholders, while the scalability of climate services across Africa's diverse climate zones was highlighted as a key challenge. Finally, participants stressed the need for improved awareness-raising initiatives to enhance public understanding and engagement with climate services.

Figue 6. A word cloud highlighting key missing aspects in CS4RRA Webinars and Conference

Participation intentions for the first CS4RRA call in 2026 revealed that 23% of respondents planned to submit a project proposal, while 62% expressed interest but required additional information before committing as shown in Figure 7. A further 8% represented organizations intending to act as funders, and another 8% were interested in funding but sought more details. Notably, 0% declined participation, reflecting strong interest in long-term cooperation. These results highlight a high level of engagement, with the majority of respondents either actively participating or considering involvement pending further clarification. Addressing information gaps and providing clear guidelines could enhance participation rates and strengthen collaborative efforts in the CS4RRA initiative.

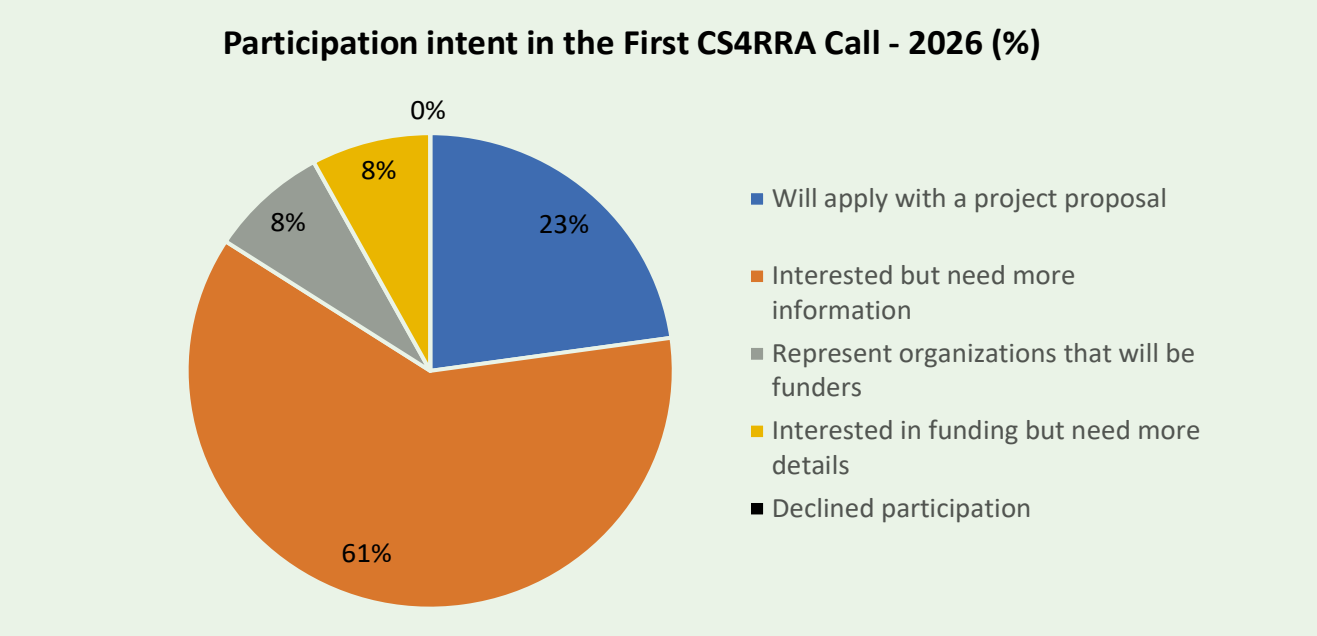

Figure 7. A pie chart showing participation intent in the First CS4RRA Call (2026)

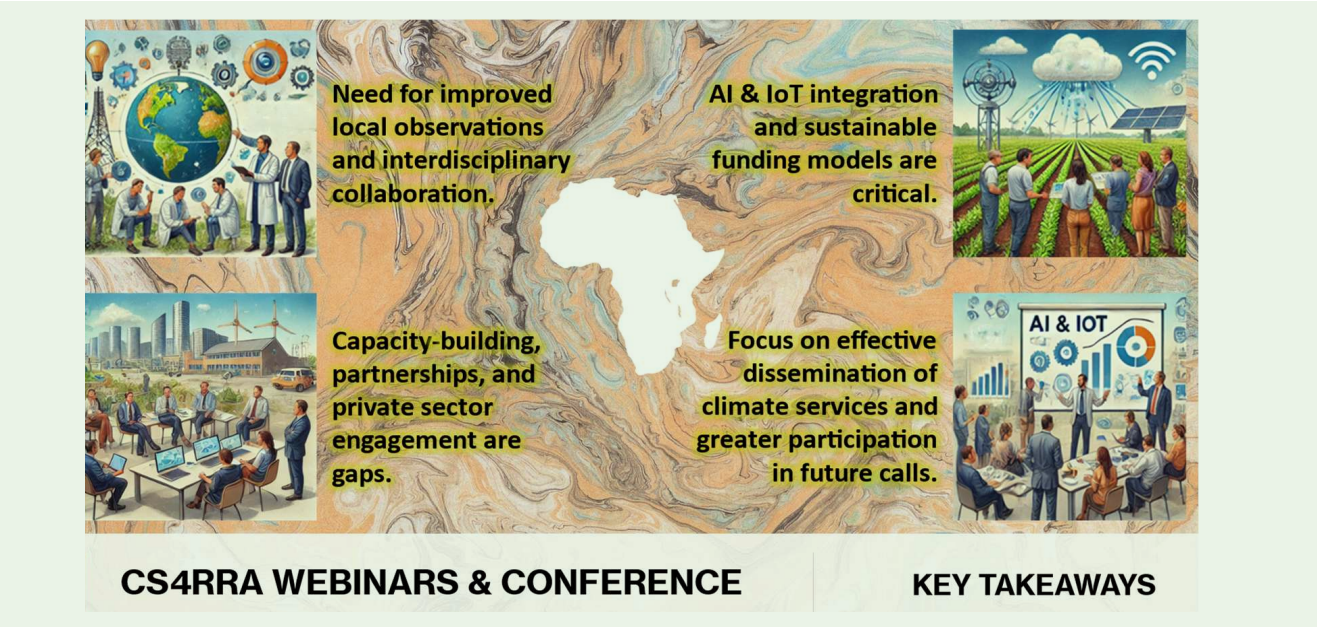

Figure 8. Summary of key takeaways

The poll results highlight key priorities for strengthening climate resilience in West Africa, including improved local observations, interdisciplinary collaboration, AI and IoT integration, and sustainable funding models. Critical gaps identified include capacity-building, partnerships, private sector engagement, and effective dissemination of climate services. To address these challenges, the CS4RRA initiative should focus on fostering collaboration, enhancing technological innovation, and ensuring long-term financial support. Encouraging greater participation in future calls through clear communication and inclusive strategies will also be essential. By addressing these priorities, CS4RRA can better support West Africa in building resilience to climate change and achieving sustainable development goals.

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