

Reinforcing Climate Diplomacy for Development

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Kariuki Muigua

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Reinforcing Climate Diplomacy for Development

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Abstract

Tackling climate change has become a top policy agenda, at local, national, regional and global levels due to the ongoing threat of climate change throughout the world. Climate diplomacy has emerged as one of the key tools in the global response towards climate change with the ability to strengthen climate governance throughout the world. This paper critically examines the role of climate diplomacy in the global fight against climate change. It defines climate diplomacy and analyses its salient components. The paper further discusses progress made towards embracing climate diplomacy and responding to climate change. It also points out some of the key concerns in the area of climate diplomacy. The paper further suggests proposals towards reinforcing climate diplomacy for development.

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1.0 Introduction

Climate change continues to be a major threat to the international community¹. It is a global emergency that goes beyond national borders. It has been identified as one of the greatest challenges of our time whose adverse impacts undermine the ability of all countries to achieve Sustainable Development². Climate change has been described as the main global challenge that is affecting both developed and developing countries in their efforts towards realization of the Sustainable Development agenda³. Its impacts such as intense droughts, water scarcity, severe fires, rising sea levels, flooding, melting polar ice, catastrophic storms and declining biodiversity are being witnessed across the world⁴. Climate change therefore presents a major threat to long-term growth and prosperity, and it has a direct impact on the economic and social wellbeing of all countries⁵.

Due to its ongoing threat, tackling climate change has become a top policy agenda, at local, national, regional and global levels⁶. There have been global calls on governments and all other stakeholders to put in place measures towards responding to the threat of climate change and ensuring that economies are climate resilient⁷. Tackling climate change is one of the fundamental goals under the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with Sustainable Development Goal 13 calling upon countries to take urgent actions towards combating climate change and its impacts⁸. Climate

¹ United Nations., 'Climate Action.' Available at <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange> (Accessed on 12/02/2024)

² United Nations General Assembly., 'Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.' 21 October 2015, A/RES/70/1., Available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf> (Accessed on 12/02/2024)

³ Muigua. K., 'Achieving Sustainable Development, Peace and Environmental Security.' Glenwood Publishers Limited, 2021

⁴ United Nations., 'What is Climate Change?' Available at <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/whatis-climate-change> (Accessed on 12/02/2024)

⁵ Ibid

⁶ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs., 'Forum on Climate Change and Science and Technology Innovation.' Available at <https://www.un.org/en/desa/forum-climatechangeandscience-and-technology-innovation> (Accessed on 12/02/2024)

⁷ Muigua. K., 'Achieving Sustainable Development, Peace and Environmental Security.' Op Cit

⁸ United Nations General Assembly., 'Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.' 21 October 2015,' Op Cit

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diplomacy has emerged as one of the key tools in the global response towards climate change with the ability to strengthen climate governance throughout the world⁹.

This paper critically examines the role of climate diplomacy in the global fight against climate change. It defines climate diplomacy and analyses its salient components. The paper further discusses progress made towards embracing climate diplomacy towards responding to climate change. It also points out some of the key concerns in the area of climate diplomacy. The paper further suggests proposals towards reinforcing climate diplomacy for development.

2.0 Defining Climate Diplomacy

Diplomacy refers to the art, the science, and the means by which nations, groups, or individuals conduct their affairs, in ways to safeguard their interests and promote their political, economic, cultural or scientific relations, while maintaining peaceful relationships¹⁰. It has also been defined as a method that governments use to influence the actions of foreign governments through peaceful tactics such as negotiation and dialogue¹¹. It has been pointed out that diplomacy has often been used as a soft skill to shape mindsets and influence international and national agendas as well as the workings of governments¹². It has been argued that with the application of political support and concerted diplomacy, international cooperation can be forged to handle both longstanding and emerging global challenges¹³.

⁹ United Nations., 'Africa: Making the Most out of the Climate Negotiations' Available at <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2023/africa-making-most-out-climate-negotiations> (Accessed on 12/02/2024)

¹⁰ What is Diplomacy? Available at <https://www.cyber-diplomacy-toolbox.com/Diplomacy.html#:~:text=Diplomacy%20is%20the%20art%2C%20the,relations%2C%20while%20maintaining%20peaceful%20relationships>. (Accessed on 13/02/2024)

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Mabey. N., Gallagher. L., & Born. C., 'The Evolution of Climate Diplomacy and the International Climate Regime.' Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep17706.6?seq=1> (Accessed on 13/02/2024)

¹³ Ibid

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Climate diplomacy refers to global climate negotiations aimed at formulating a common response to the problem of climate change¹⁴. Climate diplomacy has also been defined as the use of diplomatic channels and strategies to address global climate change and its impact on international relations¹⁵. It involves negotiating and implementing climate-related policies, treaties, and agreements at the international level, as well as cooperation between countries and other stakeholders to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the impacts of climate change, and promote Sustainable Development¹⁶. Climate diplomacy can also be understood as the practice and process of creating the international climate change regime and ensuring its effective operation¹⁷. Further, climate diplomacy can also be described as the process of advocating for actions to respond to climate change in diplomatic dialogues, public diplomacy, and policy instruments, and of contributing to public awareness about climate actions needed to effect change¹⁸.

It has been pointed out that the idea of climate diplomacy entails certain fundamental elements which include: committing to multilateralism in climate policy, particularly to the implementation of the Paris Agreement¹⁹; addressing implications of climate change on global peace and security²⁰; accelerating domestic action and raising global ambition on climate change²¹; and enhancing international climate cooperation through advocacy and outreach²². In addition, it has been posited that there are three critical stages to

¹⁴ Dimitrov. R., 'Climate Diplomacy' Available at https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Radoslav-Dimitrov-4/publication/322404819_Climate_diplomacy/links/5c89597b299bf14e7e7acf9c/Climate-diplomacy.pdf (Accessed on 13/02/2024)

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Mabey. N., Gallagher. L., & Born. C., 'The Evolution of Climate Diplomacy and the International Climate Regime.' Op Cit

¹⁸ African Development Bank Group., 'Is Climate Diplomacy Holding its Promises with the Paris Agreement, Especially for Africa?' Available at <https://blogs.afdb.org/a-race-against-time/post/is-climate-diplomacy-holding-its-promises-with-the-paris-agreement-especially-for-africa-17699> (Accessed on 13/02/2024)

¹⁹ Katja. B., 'The European External Action Service and EU Climate Diplomacy: Coordinator and Supporter in Brussels and Beyond' Available at <https://lirias.kuleuven.be/3394994?limo=0> (Accessed on 13/02/2024)

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid

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delivering effective climate diplomacy²³. The first stage involves negotiating a global climate agreement, a process that seeks to deliver effective representation into the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process²⁴. The second stage involves building international political conditions for climate negotiations through avenues such as specialist divisions inside Ministries of Environment or Ministries of Foreign Affairs with broader diplomatic efforts to influence country positions in climate negotiations²⁵. The third stage entails implementation and integration of climate change goals in national, regional and international development agendas²⁶.

Climate diplomacy is an essential tool for Development²⁷. It has been argued that countries' implementation of climate actions on the ground cannot be achieved without multilateral climate diplomacy²⁸. In addition, it has been pointed out that climate diplomacy has the potential to advance multilateral action on climate change, outside of the UNFCCC process²⁹. Climate diplomacy can also ensure that national priorities are reflected in the often abstract world of international climate negotiations, and that these negotiations promote additional domestic climate actions³⁰. It is therefore necessary to reinforce climate diplomacy in order to foster development.

²³ Mabey. N., Gallagher. L., & Born. C., 'The Evolution of Climate Diplomacy and the International Climate Regime.' Op Cit

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ African Development Bank Group., 'Is Climate Diplomacy Holding its Promises with the Paris Agreement, Especially for Africa?' Op Cit

²⁹ Climate & Development Knowledge Network., 'Climate Diplomacy: Seeing the Bigger Picture' Available at https://cdkn.org/sites/default/files/files/CDKN_Climate_diplomacy_PolicyBrief_final_web.pdf (Accessed on 13/02/2024)

³⁰ Ibid

3.0 Embracing Climate Diplomacy: Progress and Challenges

It has been observed that climate diplomacy has been at the forefront of shaping the world's response to climate change³¹. The idea of climate diplomacy emerged from environmental diplomacy which is a concept that appeared in the late twentieth century associated with events (conventions) promoted between states and transnational organisations to discuss aspects related to regulating the use of natural resources and curbing environmental challenges such as pollution and climate change³². It has been pointed out that Environmental diplomacy truly came of age at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (also known as the "Earth Summit"). The Summit led to the adoption of Agenda 21³³ a daring program of action calling for new strategies to invest in the future to achieve overall sustainable development in the 21st century and the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*³⁴ which seeks to balance the interests of states in exploiting their natural resources for development and environmental conservation with the aim of achieving Sustainable Development³⁵.

The growth of environmental diplomacy permeated the field of climate governance as was evidenced by negotiations which led to adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)³⁶. The UNFCCC is the primary international,

³¹ African Development Bank Group., 'Is Climate Diplomacy Holding its Promises with the Paris Agreement, Especially for Africa?' Op Cit

³² Sebastiao. S. P., & Soares. I., 'Environmental Diplomacy: from Transnational Policies to the Role of Ambassadors - The contribution of David Attenborough (2018–2020).' Available at <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JCOM-04-2022-0030/full/html#:~:text=The%20concept%20of%20environmental%20diplomacy,natural%20resources%20and%20regulating%20pollution> (Accessed on 13/02/2024)

³³ United Nations Conference on Environment & Development Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3 to 14 June 1992., 'Agenda 21.' Available at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf?_gl=1*9uipp7*_ga*MjA2NDk2MDMxMS4xNjcxMjU5NTEw*_ga_TK9BQL5X7Z*MTY5NDU5NjE3MS41NS4xLjE2OTQ1OTgzODUuMC4wLjA (Accessed on 13/02/2024)

³⁴ United Nations General Assembly., 'Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development: Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.' A/CONF. 151/26 (Vol.1)

³⁵ Ibid, Principle 2

³⁶ African Development Bank Group., 'Is Climate Diplomacy Holding its Promises with the Paris Agreement, Especially for Africa?' Op Cit

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intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change³⁷. The UNFCCC entered into force on 21st March 1994 as the first international legal instrument that focuses on climate change and sets out measures towards addressing the problem³⁸. The objective of the UNFCCC is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic (human induced) interference with the climate system³⁹. Since its adoption, the UNFCCC has been the primary multilateral vehicle for international cooperation among governments to address the threat of climate change⁴⁰. It has promoted climate diplomacy and laid a global foundation of climate decisions to effect needed change at all levels⁴¹. One of the climate diplomacy instruments that emerged as a result of the UNFCCC is the Conference of Parties (COP), the supreme decision-making body of the Convention that gathers all States that are Parties to the Convention⁴². The COP meets annually unless the Parties decide otherwise (e.g. the 2020 meeting was postponed due to the global COVID-19 pandemic)⁴³. One of the main tasks of the COP is to review the information sent by the Parties to assess the effects of the measures adopted in pursuing the objectives of the Convention⁴⁴.

The COP has strengthened climate diplomacy and is the pinnacle of global climate change negotiations that discusses climate ambition and measures aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change⁴⁵. It has shaped global climate response and led to the adoption of global instruments and commitments

³⁷ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change., United Nations, 1992., Available at <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf> (Accessed on 13/02/2024)

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ African Development Bank Group., 'Is Climate Diplomacy Holding its Promises with the Paris Agreement, Especially for Africa?' Op Cit

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² United Nations Climate Change., 'Conference of the Parties (COP)' Available at <https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/supreme-bodies/conference-of-the-parties-cop> (Accessed on 13/02/2024)

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ United Nations., 'Africa: Making the Most out of the Climate Negotiations.' Available at <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2023/africa-making-most-out-climate-negotiations#:~:text=The%20COP%20is%20the%20pinnacle,the%20impacts%20of%20climate%20change.> (Accessed on 13/02/2024)

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on climate change⁴⁶. For example, climate diplomacy initiatives led to the adoption of the Paris Agreement and COP 21. The *Paris Agreement*⁴⁷ is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, France, on 12th December 2015 and entered into force on 4th November 2016⁴⁸. Its overarching goal is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of Sustainable Development and efforts to eradicate poverty through holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels; increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production; and making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development⁴⁹. It has been argued that the Paris Agreement is a major success story of climate diplomacy and managed to change the paradigm of climate diplomacy⁵⁰. It established the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), balanced by reporting and review⁵¹. NDCs are at the heart of the Paris Agreement and the achievement of its long-term goals⁵². NDCs embody efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change⁵³. The Paris Agreement requires each Party to prepare, communicate and maintain successive NDCs that it intends to achieve⁵⁴. Parties

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change., 'Paris Agreement.' Available at https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf (Accessed on 13/02/2024)

⁴⁸ United Nations Climate Change., 'The Paris Agreement' Available at <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement> (Accessed on 13/02/2024)

⁴⁹ Paris Agreement., Article 2 (1)

⁵⁰ Tskipurishvili. A., 'New Climate Diplomacy under the Paris Climate Agreement' Available at https://ceje.ch/files/8616/4450/0110/University_of_Geneva_-_GGPB_N1-2022_-_A._Tskipurishvili.pdf (Accessed on 13/02/2024)

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² United Nations Climate Change., 'Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)' Available at <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs> (Accessed on 13/02/2024)

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Paris Agreement., Article 4 (2)

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are required to pursue domestic mitigation measures, with the aim of achieving the objectives of such contributions⁵⁵.

In addition to the adoption of global climate change instruments such as the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, climate diplomacy has played a critical role in establishing the base for climate finance⁵⁶. Climate finance refers to finance directed towards activities aimed at mitigating or adapting to the impacts of climate change⁵⁷. It involves local, national or transnational financing drawn from public, private and alternative sources of financing that seeks to support mitigation and adaptation actions that will address climate change⁵⁸. Climate finance can therefore be understood as the flow of funds to all activities, programmes or projects intended to help address climate change through both mitigation and adaptation across the world⁵⁹. It is very essential in enhancing the global response to climate change since both mitigation and adaptation activities require large scale financial investments⁶⁰. Climate diplomacy has played a key role in unlocking climate finance⁶¹. For example, it has been pointed out that through climate diplomacy, developing countries have been advocating for their priorities which has seen climate finance move to the front burner of the climate change negotiations⁶². It has been pointed out that through climate diplomacy, African countries have advocated the need to address the financial imbalance and inequity in accessing climate finance⁶³.

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ African Development Bank Group., 'Is Climate Diplomacy Holding its Promises with the Paris Agreement, Especially for Africa?' Op Cit

⁵⁷ The London School of Economics and Political Science., 'What is Climate Finance?' Available at <https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/explainers/what-is-climate-finance-and-where-willitcomefrom/> (Accessed on 14/02/2024)

⁵⁸ United Nations Climate Change., 'Introduction to Climate Finance.' Available at <https://unfccc.int/topics/introduction-to-climate-finance> (Accessed on 14/02/2024)

⁵⁹ Muigua. K., 'Unlocking Climate Finance for Development.' Available at <https://kmco.co.ke/wpcontent/uploads/2023/08/Unlocking-Climate-Finance-for-Development.pdf> (Accessed on 14/02/2024)

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ African Development Bank Group., 'Is Climate Diplomacy Holding its Promises with the Paris Agreement, Especially for Africa?' Op Cit

⁶² United Nations., 'Africa: Making the Most out of the Climate Negotiations.' Op Cit

⁶³ Ibid

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Climate diplomacy initiatives have to a certain extent borne fruit and contributed to the development of the field of climate finance. For example, at COP 15, states adopted the *Copenhagen Accord*⁶⁴ which saw developed countries committing to a goal of mobilizing jointly USD 100 billion dollars a year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries⁶⁵. *Further, climate diplomacy initiatives led to the activation of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) which is mandated to support countries particularly those that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including least developed countries, small island developing states, and African nations⁶⁶. GCF is the world's largest climate fund and plays a fundamental role in helping developing countries raise and realize their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) ambitions towards low emissions and climate-resilient pathways as envisaged under the Paris Agreement⁶⁷. It has been pointed out that since 2015, GCF has approved over \$12 billion for projects across more than 125 developing countries to accelerate clean energy transitions, build resilience in the most vulnerable countries, and catalyze private investments⁶⁸.

Most recently, climate diplomacy initiatives resulted in setting up the Loss and Damage Fund at COP 27 towards responding to loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including a focus on addressing loss and damage⁶⁹. The objective of the Loss and Damage Fund is to establish new funding arrangements for assisting developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, in responding to loss and damage, including with a focus on addressing loss and damage by providing and assisting in mobilizing new and additional resources, and that these new arrangements complement and include sources, funds, processes and

⁶⁴ United Nations., 'Copenhagen Accord: FCCC/CP/2009/L.7' Available at <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/l07.pdf> (Accessed on 14/02/2024)

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Green Climate Fund., 'About GCF.' Available at <https://www.greenclimate.fund/about> (Accessed on 14/02/2024)

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ UNFCCC., 'Decision -/CP.27 -/CMA.4: Funding Arrangements for Responding to Loss and Damage Associated with the Adverse Effects of Climate Change, Including a Focus on Addressing Loss and Damage.' Available at https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma4_auv_8f.pdf (Accessed on 14/02/2024)

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initiatives under and outside the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement⁷⁰. It has been pointed out that the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund was as a result of climate diplomacy initiatives and the culmination of decades of pressure from climate vulnerable developing countries⁷¹. At COP 28, parties of the UNFCCC reached a historic agreement on the operationalization of the Loss and Damage fund and its funding arrangements⁷².

Climate diplomacy therefore plays a key role in enhancing the global response to climate change. It has led to the adoption of key instruments on climate change such as the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement⁷³. In addition, it has contributed to unlocking climate finance as evidenced by the adoption of the Copenhagen Accord, the Green Climate Fund, and the Loss and Damage Fund among other climate finance initiatives⁷⁴. However, despite its efficacy, climate diplomacy has been associated with certain challenges.

There is some concern that climate diplomacy generates more talk than action and that its impact is still not visible, while the negative impact of climate change continues to accelerate⁷⁵. For example, the decisions arrived at in the field of climate finance as a result of climate diplomacy initiatives are hardly met⁷⁶. It has been pointed out that developed countries have failed to deliver on an agreed climate finance target of \$100 billion annually as per the Copenhagen Accord⁷⁷. This results in inadequacy, imbalance and

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ United Nations Environment Programme., 'What you Need to Know about the COP 27 Loss and Damage Fund.' Available at <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/what-you-need-knowabout-cop27-loss-and-damage-fund> (Accessed on 14/02/2024)

⁷² United Nations Climate Change., 'Operationalization of the New Funding Arrangements, including a Fund, for Responding to Loss and Damage referred to in Paragraphs 2–3 of Decisions 2/CP.27 and 2/CMA.4.' Available at <https://unfccc.int/documents/636558> (Accessed on 14/02/2024)

⁷³ African Development Bank Group., 'Is Climate Diplomacy Holding its Promises with the Paris Agreement, Especially for Africa?' Op Cit

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Kone. T., 'For Africa to meet its Climate Goals, Finance is Essential.' Available at <https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/africa-meet-its-climate-goals-finance-essential> (Accessed on 14/02/2024)

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unpredictability of climate finance flows to developing countries⁷⁸. This has affected implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures in developing countries⁷⁹.

In addition, it has been pointed out that the split between developed and developing countries has always been an obstacle in climate diplomacy, given the diversity and divergence of views of countries involved⁸⁰. As a result, climate diplomacy still remains polarized as a result of diverging ideological views held by parties, even within country groups which sometimes do not share common views in the climate negotiations⁸¹. For example, it has been pointed out that developing and developed countries have divergent assessments in climate finance as evidenced in the negotiations leading to the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund⁸².

In addition, it has been observed that developing countries face certain challenges to effective climate diplomacy⁸³. These include limited resources and capacity to effectively gather technical and strategic information or to develop the diplomatic skills necessary to engage effectively in international climate relations, lack of influence given their position in the existing geopolitical landscape, and lack of access to influential non-UNFCCC forums such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)⁸⁴. As a result, it has been argued that developing countries have often lacked

⁷⁸ United Nations., 'Accessing Climate Finance: Challenges and opportunities for Small Island Developing States.' Available at https://www.un.org/ohrrls/sites/www.un.org.ohrrls/files/accessing_climate_finance_challenges_sids_report.pdf (Accessed on 14/02/2024)

⁷⁹ Ibid

⁸⁰ African Development Bank Group., 'Is Climate Diplomacy Holding its Promises with the Paris Agreement, Especially for Africa?' Op Cit

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Ciacci. A., 'Understanding the Stakes of Climate Talks for Countries in Conflict' Available at <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/understanding-stakes-climate-talks-countries-conflict> (Accessed on 14/02/2024)

⁸³ Climate & Development Knowledge Network., 'Climate Diplomacy: Seeing the Bigger Picture' Op Cit

⁸⁴ Ibid

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sufficient capacity to engage actively in climate diplomacy and that further, they have had limited influence in shaping negotiations⁸⁵.

Despite the foregoing challenges, it has been argued that effective climate action cannot be achieved without multilateralism.⁸⁶ Climate diplomacy has been hailed for laying the foundation for common agreement and commitments on climate change and to the possibility of effective climate action⁸⁷. It is therefore necessary to reinforce climate diplomacy for development.

4.0 Way Forward

In order to reinforce climate diplomacy, it is necessary for countries to embrace climate action as a core national development agenda⁸⁸. It has been argued that for climate diplomacy to succeed, climate change must become a core national interest⁸⁹. It is therefore necessary for all countries to mainstream climate agenda in their national development plans⁹⁰. Countries should also strengthen their climate action by developing climate resilient economies and communities⁹¹. Strong action at home enhances the position of countries in climate diplomacy by strengthening their credibility in the climate agenda⁹².

In addition, it is necessary to countries to enhance their capacity in climate diplomacy⁹³. It has been asserted that increasing climate experts' capacity to influence others in their

⁸⁵ Jallow. B. P., & Craft. B., 'Engaging Effectively in Climate Diplomacy: Policy Pointers from the Gambia' Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep01588?seq=1> (Accessed on 14/01/2024)

⁸⁶ African Development Bank Group., 'Is Climate Diplomacy Holding its Promises with the Paris Agreement, Especially for Africa?' Op Cit

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ Jallow. B. P., & Craft. B., 'Engaging Effectively in Climate Diplomacy: Policy Pointers from the Gambia' Op Cit

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Muigua. K., 'Enhancing Low Carbon Development for Sustainability' Available at <https://kmco.co.ke/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Enhancing-Low-Carbon-Development-for-Sustainability-.pdf> (Accessed on 14/02/2024)

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ Climate & Development Knowledge Network., 'Climate Diplomacy: Seeing the Bigger Picture' Op Cit

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interactions at home and abroad is key to their role in effective climate diplomacy⁹⁴. In addition, it has been suggested that appointment of climate envoys to raise awareness, influence debates and spur action both nationally and internationally is a key measure of raising the capacity of countries in climate diplomacy and a strong signal that climate change is a diplomatic priority⁹⁵. Further, it has been suggested that mobilising capacity and strategic focus for effective engagement in climate diplomacy requires reform of internal strategic decision-making systems, significant reallocation of human and funding resources, training and coordination of generalist diplomats and a strong central capacity to provide support and timely content for influencing⁹⁶. It has also been pointed out that enhancing diplomatic capacity needs to go beyond the current norm of building technical knowledge on climate change and environmental law and policy to also entail skills needed to coordinate and manage political trade-offs while also balancing conflicting economic, energy, climate change and diplomatic goals⁹⁷.

It is also imperative for developing countries to speak in one voice in climate negotiations⁹⁸. It has correctly been observed that developing countries often fail to engage effectively in climate diplomacy due to limited influence in global affairs⁹⁹. This position could jeopardize their climate agenda since it can result in decisions that are in favour of developed countries and contrary to the development needs of developing countries¹⁰⁰. It is thus necessary for developing countries to speak in one voice and develop a common position on climate change in order to strengthen their position in climate diplomacy¹⁰¹. It has been argued that with improved coordination, increased resources, and streamlining of the key priority issues such as energy transitions,

⁹⁴ Ibid

⁹⁵ Ibid

⁹⁶ Jallow. B. P., & Craft. B., 'Engaging Effectively in Climate Diplomacy: Policy Pointers from the Gambia' Op Cit

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ African Development Bank Group., 'Is Climate Diplomacy Holding its Promises with the Paris Agreement, Especially for Africa?' Op Cit

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ Climate & Development Knowledge Network., 'Climate Diplomacy: Seeing the Bigger Picture' Op Cit

¹⁰¹ African Development Bank Group., 'Is Climate Diplomacy Holding its Promises with the Paris Agreement, Especially for Africa?' Op Cit

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financing, and adaptation within the climate negotiations, the influence of developing countries on the global stage on the climate agenda will become even more pronounced and effective¹⁰².

Finally, it is vital to accelerate international, continental and regional cooperation towards climate action¹⁰³. It has been argued that the success of climate action across the world will depend on the delivery of adequate means of implementation, including climate finance, technology development and transfer, and capacity building¹⁰⁴. Reinforcing climate diplomacy can raise awareness on the importance of delivery of means of implementation for climate change mitigation and adaptation including climate finance, and technology development and transfer¹⁰⁵. It is therefore necessary to reinforce climate diplomacy in order to mobilise climate finance to enable climate change mitigation and adaptation measures and to facilitate the development and transfer of technology necessary to strengthen climate action¹⁰⁶.

The foregoing measures among others are key in reinforcing climate diplomacy for development.

5.0 Conclusion

Climate diplomacy is an essential tool for development since it enables the implementation of climate actions on the ground¹⁰⁷. It has led to the adoption of key instruments on climate change such as the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement and also contributed to unlocking climate finance¹⁰⁸. However, climate diplomacy is associated with several challenges such as inadequate implementation of

¹⁰² United Nations., 'Africa: Making the Most out of the Climate Negotiations.' Op Cit

¹⁰³ African Development Bank Group., 'Is Climate Diplomacy Holding its Promises with the Paris Agreement, Especially for Africa?' Op Cit

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

¹⁰⁶ Ibid

¹⁰⁷ African Development Bank Group., 'Is Climate Diplomacy Holding its Promises with the Paris Agreement, Especially for Africa?' Op Cit

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

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climate decisions including climate finance and inequalities between countries with developing countries facing challenges in shaping climate negotiations at the global stage¹⁰⁹. It is necessary to address these challenges in order to reinforce climate diplomacy for development. This calls for countries to embrace climate action as a core national development agenda¹¹⁰; enhance their capacity in climate diplomacy¹¹¹; developing countries to adopt a common agenda and speak in one voice in climate negotiations¹¹²; and accelerating international, continental and regional cooperation towards climate action¹¹³. Reinforcing climate diplomacy for development is a key agenda that needs to be realized.

¹⁰⁹ Climate & Development Knowledge Network., 'Climate Diplomacy: Seeing the Bigger Picture' Op Cit

¹¹⁰ Jallow. B. P., & Craft. B., 'Engaging Effectively in Climate Diplomacy: Policy Pointers from the Gambia' Op Cit

¹¹¹ Climate & Development Knowledge Network., 'Climate Diplomacy: Seeing the Bigger Picture' Op Cit

¹¹² African Development Bank Group., 'Is Climate Diplomacy Holding its Promises with the Paris Agreement, Especially for Africa?' Op Cit

¹¹³ African Development Bank Group., 'Is Climate Diplomacy Holding its Promises with the Paris Agreement, Especially for Africa?' Op Cit

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