

## UPDATE on

### **“Climate Change and its Impacts on human health, water and food security in the SADC region” knowledge network initiative/ Jan09**

#### **Background**

Adaptation to climate change is closely linked to issues of sustainable development. Climate change and variability is an additional hindrance and a serious threat to achieving the MGD's in Africa. Given its low income, weak institutions limited knowledge, responding to the impacts of climate change will be a huge challenge for southern Africa. Current climate predictions for southern Africa foresee increased variability and changes of different climate factors. These changes are expected to impact on human health, water and food security through modifications of environmental and socio-economic determinants.

Detailed and context specific knowledge of the consequences of climate change at global, regional, national and local levels is vital for overcoming the negative effects of climate change in southern Africa, and to secure the most needed and efficient adaptation to climate change.

The “Climate Change and its Impacts on human health, water and food security in the SADC region” network initiative is a joint DWF, DBL (ENRECA Health) and DDRN initiative with links to the Danish climate task force. The main purpose of the initiative is to start a process towards creation of a regional knowledge sharing network on these issues within the SADC region, and between the SADC region and Denmark. Besides knowledge sharing it is also the intention that the network will facilitate development of joint project applications and other research cooperation within the thematic field.

It is envisioned that establishing a formal, sustainable research network will facilitate cross-disciplinary cooperation for evidence-based actions in response to climate change. Furthermore, the network aims at contributing knowledge and research input to conferences and activities within the area of climate change, facilitating the development of joint research proposals, and informing developing practices and policies within the areas covered by the network.

#### **Where are we now?**

The first steps in the process of establishing and developing the network was a planning workshop held in Botswana 11-13 November 2008 and the commissioning of three desk studies focusing on mapping: (i) Research projects on climate change and human health (responsible: DBL (+ENRECA Health)); (ii) Research projects on climate change and water (responsible: DWF); and (iii) Research projects on climate change and food security (responsible: DDRN). The overviews are currently being conducted by researchers from SADC and the reports from the overviews will be presented at a North-South-South regional knowledge sharing workshop on “Climate Change and its Impacts on human health, water and food security in the SADC region” to be held in Cape Town, South Africa 18-20 February 2009. The overviews will also provide inputs to forthcoming climate change events in Denmark in 2009 in connection with preparing for COP 15, including the university conferences in Copenhagen and Århus in March 2009. An abstract submitted to the first mentioned conference by the core group of initiators who met in Botswana in November has been accepted by the conference organisers.

Global Water Partners (GWP) a Southern based organisation and one of DWF's collaborators, will be responsible for organising the workshop in SA. Participants for the workshop will be drawn from all SADC countries (around 30 people) and Denmark (total of 10-12 people). The Danish participants will be selected by the organising group among researchers who have contributed to the “Overview of Danish research competences and research projects - with regard to climate change impacts, mitigation and adaptation in developing countries” that was commissioned by the three networks in 2008 and researchers who have engaged in new projects related to the themes of the initiative after completion of the overview.

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