Pre-CCDA VIII
Media Training
August 28th 2019
The Journalists’ Training was held in Ethiopia on August 28th, 2019, on the sidelines of the CCDA VIII. The training had been set to take place on August 27th but changed due to unforeseen circumstances.

Up to 22 journalists attended, with representation from at least 12 countries where PACJA has platforms.

Most of the participants were members of the media section of PACJA called PAMACC. PAMACC officials representing at least 4 regions participated in the training.

The training held at Kings Hotel in Addis Ababa took a whole day. A lot was covered in spite of the hick-ups and considering that some of the trainers wanted to give their presentation via Skype, but did not make it due to lack of Wifi at the hotel.

Nonetheless, the training went on well, and the trainees appreciated. It had English and French speakers, and there were translators provided by PACJA.
Objectives

Some of the key objectives of the training were:

- To strengthen the journalists’ capacity on climate change reporting, with the aim of ensuring the right information is always passed to the intended audience
- To help the journalists identify and spread the news on the opportunities in the climate crisis
- To enhance journalists’ understanding of the UNFCCC processes and other international multilateral dialogue processes
- To reinforce journalists’ skills on simplification of complex issues and jargon in climate change reporting
- To improve the African journalists’ ability to follow new developments in the climate change discourse
Trainers

The trainers were
1. Michael Simire
2. Eugene Nforngwa
3. Frank Otieno
4. Lilian Odera
5. Kioko wa Kivandi
6. Research scientist George Wamukoya (AGNES), despite planning to train us, did not make it to the venue because he had a presentation to make the same day at the CCDA VIII event that was ongoing. This was one of the effects of changing the training date from August 27th (when he prepared to train) to August 28th.

Training approach

The training was done through Power Point presentations, with trainers inviting questions and engaging the trainees.

The trainees were later taken through an open session, with a lot of brainstorming on a raft of issues before they could be divided into four groups, each given a topic.

It was from the groups that recommendations and ways forward for the journalists and such trainings in future were made.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics Covered</th>
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<tr>
<td>The topics covered included:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Unpacking the linkages between Climate Change and Development (Eugene Nforngwa)</td>
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<td>• What does this mean for reporting Climate Change</td>
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<td>• How best can media be involved?</td>
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<td>• This was followed by a Question and Answer session</td>
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<td>2. Global Climate Change conversations: Key issues and challenges for Africa (Michael Simire and Kioko Kivandi)</td>
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<td>• Focus on the latest discourse and exploring challenges for Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How best media can be involved</td>
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<td>• Question and Answer Session</td>
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<td>3. Emerging issues from Climate Change research. Discussed as general topic.</td>
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<td>• How best can media be involved?</td>
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<td>4. Africa in Climate Change negotiations (Lilian Odera as an open session)</td>
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<td>• Climate discourse in the past five years</td>
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<td>• What is the African position and priorities for the continent?</td>
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<td>• How have the African negotiators been able to shape the global climate change discourse?</td>
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<td>• What is the role of media in communicating climate change?</td>
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<td>• How can the media be involved before, during and after negotiations?</td>
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<td>5. Group discussions - From climate science and policy to climate stories</td>
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<td>a) Lessons Learned from presentations (3-4 groups, each to discuss one of the presentations and come up with story ideas)</td>
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<td>b) Group leaders to present resolutions</td>
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What makes it difficult to run climate change stories in African Media?

The following were found to have hindered continuous running of climate change stories in media houses within Africa.

• The jargon that come with climate change stories. The terms sound so big a lot of the time they are likely to put off readers
• Climate change sounds scientific, with a specific target market that may not be your usual reliable news consumer, so it makes no business sense running such stories. Environment and climate change-related stories are therefore not a priority for many in the newsrooms
• Conflicting individuals’, media owners or specific editors’ interests
• Minimal or inadequate tips on tackling climate change stories
• Lack of specialised reporters, editors or desks focusing on environment and climate change. All may fall under science desk
• Cultural influence and stereotypes that limit the thinking of untrained reporters and news consumer, making them not see the human activity contribution towards effects of climate change, such as unpredictable rain patterns or some natural calamities
• Limiting editorial policies
• Lack of finances to sponsor newsrooms to publish well researched climate related stories
• Government bureaucracies and legislations that limit access to information.

Eugene Nforngwa, Cameroon  
Zaina Kerekere, DRC  
Sellina Nkowani, Malawi
Recommendations

What can be done to change how climate change stories are viewed

1. The journalists agreed that there was need to break down scientific jargons by journalists for easier understanding of the climate change issue by laymen. This, it was said, was possible only if the journalists wrote with the particular target audience in mind.

2. The journalists agreed that there was need for more training on how to simplify scientific data and jargons.

3. They said there was need for specialised reporting and establishing an environment and climate change desks in newsrooms.

4. To penetrate the individual editors, media owners or editorial interests that prevent the visibility of climate change stories, lobbying was recommended within the newsrooms.

5. It was also found to be necessary to have media owners make declarations on how they plan to deal with the climate crisis.

6. To address limited access to key legislations on climate change, which came up as an issue during discussions, it was agreed that journalists evoke other existing laws, or circumvent governments’ bureaucracies by nurturing sources outside the official ones.

7. Social media was found to be a good alternative to publish articles or tell the good and bad climate change stories.

Suy Kahofi, Ivory Coast  Lynet Otieno, Kenya  Chimeme Okome, Gabon
As had been envisioned, the training got several story ideas that were necessary in fighting the climate crisis from the media front. They include:

• Explore positive issues that come with climate change and development as opposed to just highlighting negative areas.

• Energy supply. With increasing drought, the rivers relied on for Hydro-electric power supply can no longer sustain supply. This brings about energy crisis, hence need for Energy Governance, for adaptation of renewable energy source such as solar.

• Ban on charcoal burning. What’s the alternative for the common man? Are there efficient cooking stoves for them?

• Amazon crisis. Forest depletion is a reality in the African most cherished forests. Encroachment of the forests is a concern.

• Livestock keeping communities. Need for gazettlement of grazing lands

• Journalists agreed that they were capable of doing climate-related stories without mentioning “Climate” in their stories, since some editors were easily repulsed by the term. Such stories could focus on development, infrastructure, food security, population growth, public health, migration, conflicts, terrorism/insecurity, natural calamities, agriculture, deforestation, all which can be linked to climate change.