

COVENANT OF MAYORS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

A sharing of lessons by CoM SSA cities

September 2019



This project is funded by the European Union



About CoM SSA

The Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA) is an initiative launched by the European Union (EU) to support local authorities in Sub-Saharan Africa in their fight against climate change and in their efforts in ensuring access to clean energy. Started in 2015, the initiative is shaped by local authorities for the local authorities to reflect the local context and specifics.

Under the CoM SSA, local authorities are invited to make a voluntarily political commitment to implement climate and energy actions in their communities and agree on a long-term vision to tackle 3 pillars, namely access to energy, climate mitigation and climate adaptation.

In order to translate the political commitment into practical measures, CoM SSA signatories commit to produce and implement a Sustainable Energy Access and Climate Action Plan (SEACAP).



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This publication was developed by Sustainable Energy Africa under the framework of CoM SSA. We would like to thank the CoM SSA partner teams and all the pilot and other signatory cities who contributed to the project and those who attended the lessons exchange workshop held in Cape Town.

We would also like to thank Andy Mason (N.D.Mazin) for his cartoons.

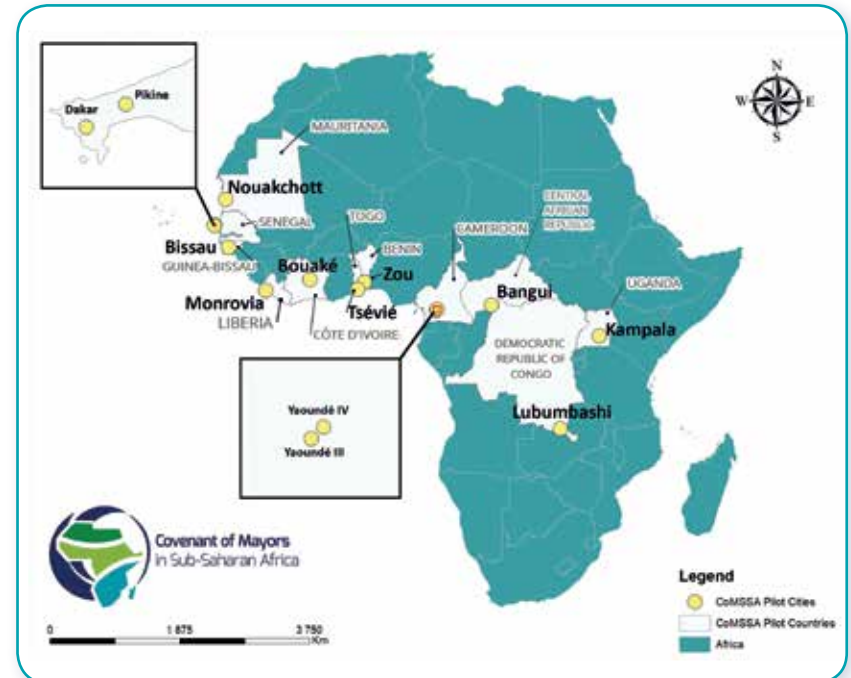


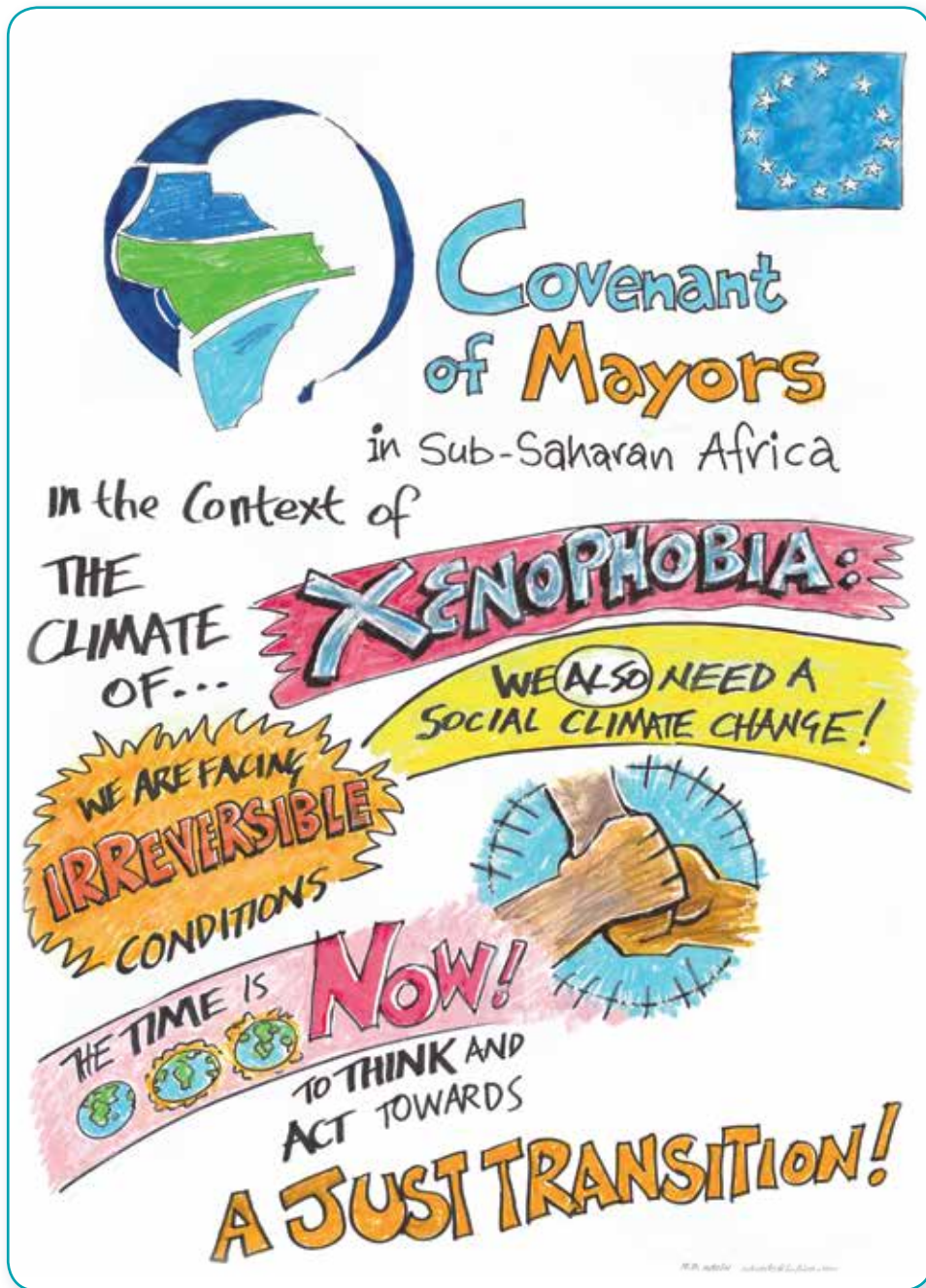
1. Introduction

The **Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA)** is an initiative launched by the European Union (EU) in 2015 to support local authorities in Sub-Saharan Africa to redress the impacts of, and mitigate against, climate change, and at the same time ensure access to clean energy. A consortium of 10 partner organisations were engaged to support the initiative. Subsequently, 201 cities have signed up to the CoM SSA, 13 of which were selected as pilot cities and, as such, received funding from the EU.

The CoM SSA aims to assist cities in the development of Sustainable Energy Access and Climate Action Plans (SEACAP). This involves a bottom-up approach, bringing together local and regional authorities to implement climate and energy objectives. The process includes planning, target-setting and implementation, with a clear focus on three pillars, namely (1) mitigation, (2) adaptation and resilience, and (3) access to affordable and sustainable energy. Over the past four years, the consortium members have supported the pilot cities in developing SEACAPs, through providing capacity-building, training, technical support, and assisting in data collection.

In September 2019, a concluding lessons exchange workshop was held in Cape Town (South Africa) bringing together some of the pilot cities, as well as three South African cities and one South African provincial / regional representative (all of which are signatories to the CoM SSA, but did not receive funding). The purpose of the workshop was to exchange important lessons learnt from the work undertaken during the project, and to use this as a platform to inform the next phase in a city's work in implementing climate action plans. This booklet captures the substance of those discussions as well as the lessons gained throughout the project, and complemented by illustrative cartoons produced during the course of the workshop by cartoonist Andy Mason.





2. The time for action is now

The climate agenda is accelerating globally and much has taken place since the start of the CoM SSA project. In 2015, the Paris Agreement established a global warming goal of well below 2°C warmer than pre-industrial averages. It defined a universal legal framework and recognizes the different starting points and responsibilities of countries. Nationally Determined Contributions were established; to be revised every 5 years. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals were adopted in 2015, which highlighted the need for sustainable cities, climate action, and access to affordable and clean energy.

Of particular importance was the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change's Special Report 2018. The report emphasised the urgency of avoiding the severe impacts of climate change by limiting warming to 1.5°C. We are already facing irreversible damage and seeing more frequent extreme weather conditions. It is clear that, globally, the phasing out of coal is beginning to happen and that countries are talking about a "just transition", whereby the poor and disadvantaged should not shoulder the burden of the transition to a low-carbon future.

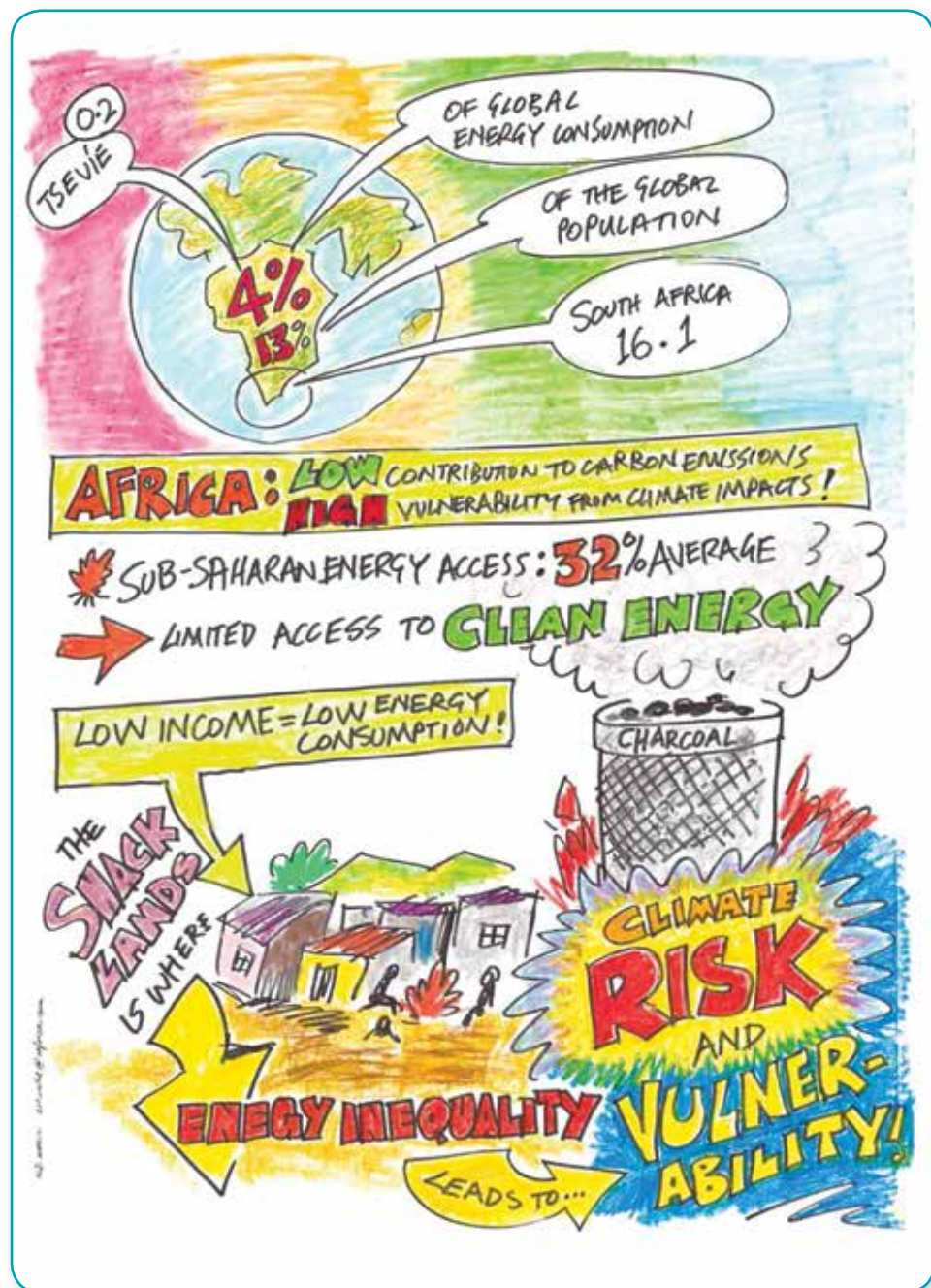
The need for climate change response is not just about the environment, but also intricately linked to social conditions, such as xenophobia. This was raised due to recent events in South Africa, which meant that some participants were not given authorisation to attend the workshop.

The time to act is now for a just transition.

Energy demand is growing rapidly across Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), yet in 2014 it accounted for only 4% of the global total demand, despite the region's population comprising 13% of the world's population. Energy modelling for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) indicates that urban energy use can be expected to double by 2025 under a business-as-usual scenario, and quadruple by 2040. Transport shows high energy consumption rates in the region largely due to the sprawling and congested nature of cities.

Mitigation is often directed at lowering emissions, yet per capita emissions in SSA are very low, at 0.8 tCO₂e compared to 6.2 tCO₂e (World Resources Institute 2013) for the world average. Access to electricity is low, at 32% (16% rural, 59% urban) ((World Bank, 2017). The predominant energy source for household cooking remains biomass, with 730 million of the current 1 billion population relying on biomass (largely charcoal), which has toxic health, as well as environmental implications.

Whilst SSA consumes less energy per person than the world average and has a very low contribution to carbon dioxide emissions (with the exception of South Africa), the region has very high levels of poverty and vulnerability to climate impacts. Cities need to be able to adapt and respond to risk, as well as improve and grow their economies, hence to develop.





3. SEACAP development to date

The pilot cities are at different stages of the SEACAP process of development. Some have hired consultants to assist them, while others have aligned the SEACAP with their national development plans or with their own climate change strategies. It is clear that the SEACAP does not always align with the city's development priorities, nor their planning processes. An emerging solution was the need to engage with a cross-cutting approach and with all key stakeholders.

Many city officials found the issue of integrating sustainability into their daily work a challenge. Cities are often hamstrung by governance processes when developing climate action plans and initiating implementation. It is clear that when developing SEACAPs, all stakeholders ranging from politicians, business, communities through to municipal and national departments need to be engaged and committed to the process. The SEACAP also needs to evolve and be dynamic as the context and policies change.

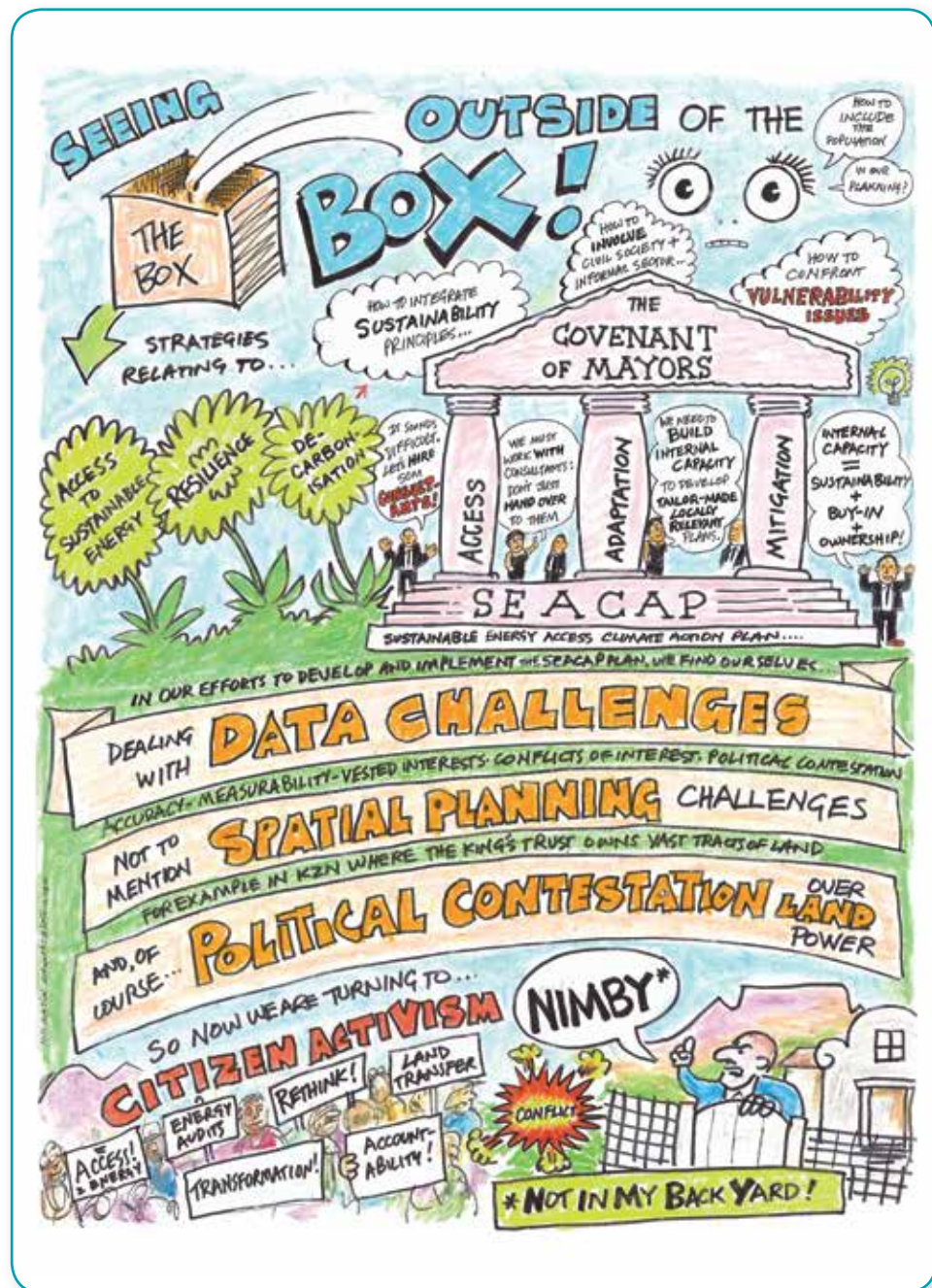
It is essential to be able to monitor and measure/ track progress in order to deepen awareness and understanding of what is happening and be able to see the trends so as to enhance the design of action plans if necessary – hence the need for data. Data availability and sourcing was identified as the biggest challenge for SEACAP development. There is a need for a SEACAP management system and for data collection to be integrated into the day-to-day work of a city and aligned to national data processes. Linked to this is how cities develop targets, if there is no national or

local policy based on modelling or what is actually possible within their context, then how they develop targets for the SEACAP is challenging.

There are many consultants working with cities. The question was how to work with consultants in a manner that would enable capacity building within the city, and avoid consultants working in isolation of the city. Collaboration between stakeholders was identified as key. Moreover it was emphasised that when cities draw on external consultants they should ensure that there is a transfer of skills and that replicability and sustainability of energy and climate action planning and implementation is strengthened. To this end, engaging with support organisations such as civil society organisations is important.

The SEACAP template does not always reflect the reality in the city or region. It therefore needs to build in flexibility and seen as a dynamic living document that can adapt to high and differential priorities relevant to the cities and regions. Tailor-made and locally appropriate plans should be developed, rather than following a specific methodology. The frameworks are seen as useful, but need to allow for flexibility to be responsive to the differential specificities of cities and the challenges experienced.

Everyone talks about thinking outside of the box, but it is essential to look inside the box and be aware and understand what is there first, in order to create a space for change to take place.





4. What are the key lessons?

- formalise and **institutionalise** climate change response, which means working across different levels of government and authority. This will assist in preventing delays.
- City officials identified a gap between the work they are doing on the ground and level of political support they therefore need to **engage** with the politicians to build political awareness and commitment when developing projects and strategies.
- Political **champions** will help a project succeed.
- Cities need to **involve** all potential partners and stakeholders at the inception of planning, in order to ensure that plans are locally relevant and appropriate.
- Institutional players protect their turf, and so need to be **included** from the outset.
- Data collection** is key, but there are challenges that must be managed. It is important to find a way to unblock the hurdles to data collection.
- Demonstrate/showcase** visible value, even for small actions, to those who participate and engage.
- Awareness** and behaviour change are crucial within government, and amongst stakeholders and communities.
- Journalists need to be **capacitated** to convey the right story and understand the issues.
- It is essential to develop the right **messaging**, so that the plans and projects are understood by all involved.
- It is also essential to ensure that municipal officials have the appropriate **skills** and, if not, develop training packages.
- Important to seek **locally appropriate** solutions and determine a course of action to implement solutions.

5. Evaluation of CoM SSA programme

City participants in evaluating the support they received from the CoM SSA team and outside consultants they used, identified the following key opportunities and challenges:

- An acknowledgment of the diverse complement of profiles and expertise of partners involved and the technical support they received.
- While the project provided participants with numerous networking opportunities, there is a need to operationalise the anticipated Local Authority Platform.
- In Europe, cities were given long timeframes to develop SEACAPs, 10 years in some cases, while in SSA the cities were expected to develop SEACAPs in a substantially shorter period of time of 4 years or less for some.
- There was much discussion about the use of consultants and the need to integrate them into the work of the city notably how consultants could potentially build capacity within the city rather than come in, do their job, and leave, with no understanding by city officials of how to action the SEACAP.
- There is a need to build on the successful pilot actions and activities.
- More support was required in developing Terms of References for separate studies, such as the modelling that cities might need.
- The EU procedures were onerous and complex, which often slowed down the implementation of pilot projects.
- A need for further technical and financial support in the implementation phase of action plans was strongly identified.
- The SEACAP workshop process was recognised as a positive way to improve capacity and share experiences among cities.
- There is a need to consider adapting the data requirements of the SEACAP process to take into consideration the data resources available within the region.
- CoM SSA provides good exposure for the SSA cities at the international level.
- But for many the question was: what next?

MOVING FORWARD

FROM
PLANNING TO IMPLEMENTATION



6. Way forward

Much anxiety was expressed about going it alone. Participants stated that they still need close support and capacity building, as they are not quite ready to stand independently.

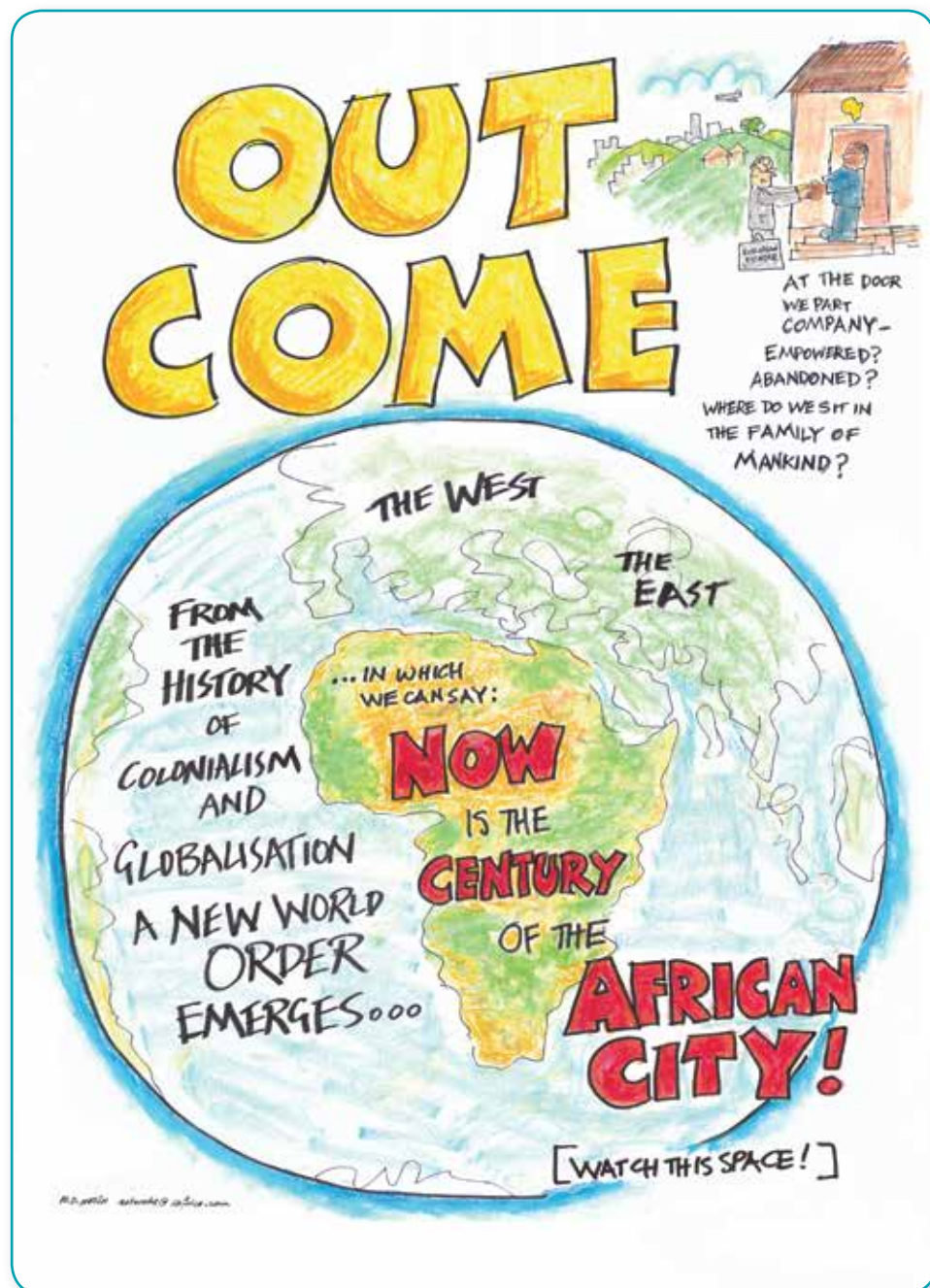
It was recognised that the first component of the CoM SSA programme is reaching conclusion and that other signatory cities within the Programme need to be supported and funded as part of the next phase which is about to commence. However many participants expressed the need for continued support in particular where there remains a need to complete the SEACAP and move to implementation. Participants articulated the need for continued support in managing data collection challenges as well as additional capacity-building and training opportunities.

They identified the need for funds to enable implementation. Some suggestions pointed to a

dedicated fund for climate change actions, or being creative in raising funds, through vehicles such as levies and green procurement.

Overall the participants pointed to a large gap between what cities are doing on the ground in terms of service delivery and what they are expected to fulfil as per their service delivery mandates. This discrepancy is largely due to the very limited human and financial resources available to them, to deliver services and implement climate actions. Another reason is the lack of political and institutional support available at the national and international level. Whilst future climate action support must address the challenge of facilitating mitigation, access and adaptation from the bottom up, the larger top down issues must also be tackled.

The essential question is “Where do we in Sub-Saharan Africa sit in the global family?”





This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union.
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