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**Making the transition to low carbon  
societies in a changing world:  
Why and How? African perspectives**

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# Developmental challenges in Africa

- **Poverty and achievement of the MDGs**
  - Almost half of the African population is living on less than \$1.25 dollar per day as at 2008
- **Energy transition**
  - Only about 31% of the population in Sub-Sahara Africa has access to electricity with about 14% electrification rate in the rural areas
  - Traditional biomass accounts for between 70-85% of primary energy supply in many Sub-Sahara countries
- **Economic growth and employment**
  - The economic growth experienced in the last decade has failed to generate significant employment
- **Infrastructure, urbanization and industrial development**



Source:  
<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>

Africa needs to grow in order to meet these challenges and improve our performance against the MDGs

Thus for Africa development is an appropriate point of departure



# Imperative for a new direction

- Developmental challenges coupled with the impacts of climate change pose a significant threat to socio-economic development in Africa
- The imperative for Africa is to follow a development pathway that promotes:
  - Poverty reduction, economic growth and enhancement of human wellbeing
  - Increased resilience to the physical impacts of climate change
  - Mitigation and/or avoidance of potential increases in GHG emissions that will arise from future development

**Green Economy or a Low Carbon Development pathway offers an alternative route to meeting these objectives**

# What is a green economy?

- “Economy that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities” (UNEP)
- A low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive economy
- A way of achieving the move towards Sustainable Development path or making development more sustainable



# Greening could generate

- Increase in wealth and produce higher GDP growth
- Gain in ecological commons and natural capital
- Positive link between poverty eradication and better maintenance and conservation of ecological commons
- Substitute renewable and low carbon technologies for fossil fuels



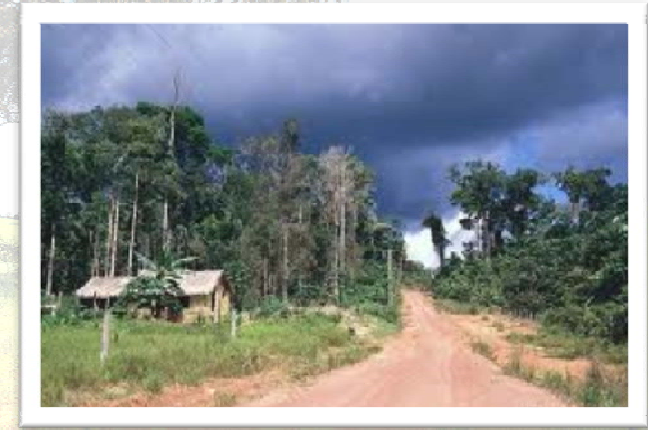
# Low Carbon Development

## But what is Low Carbon Development (LCD)?

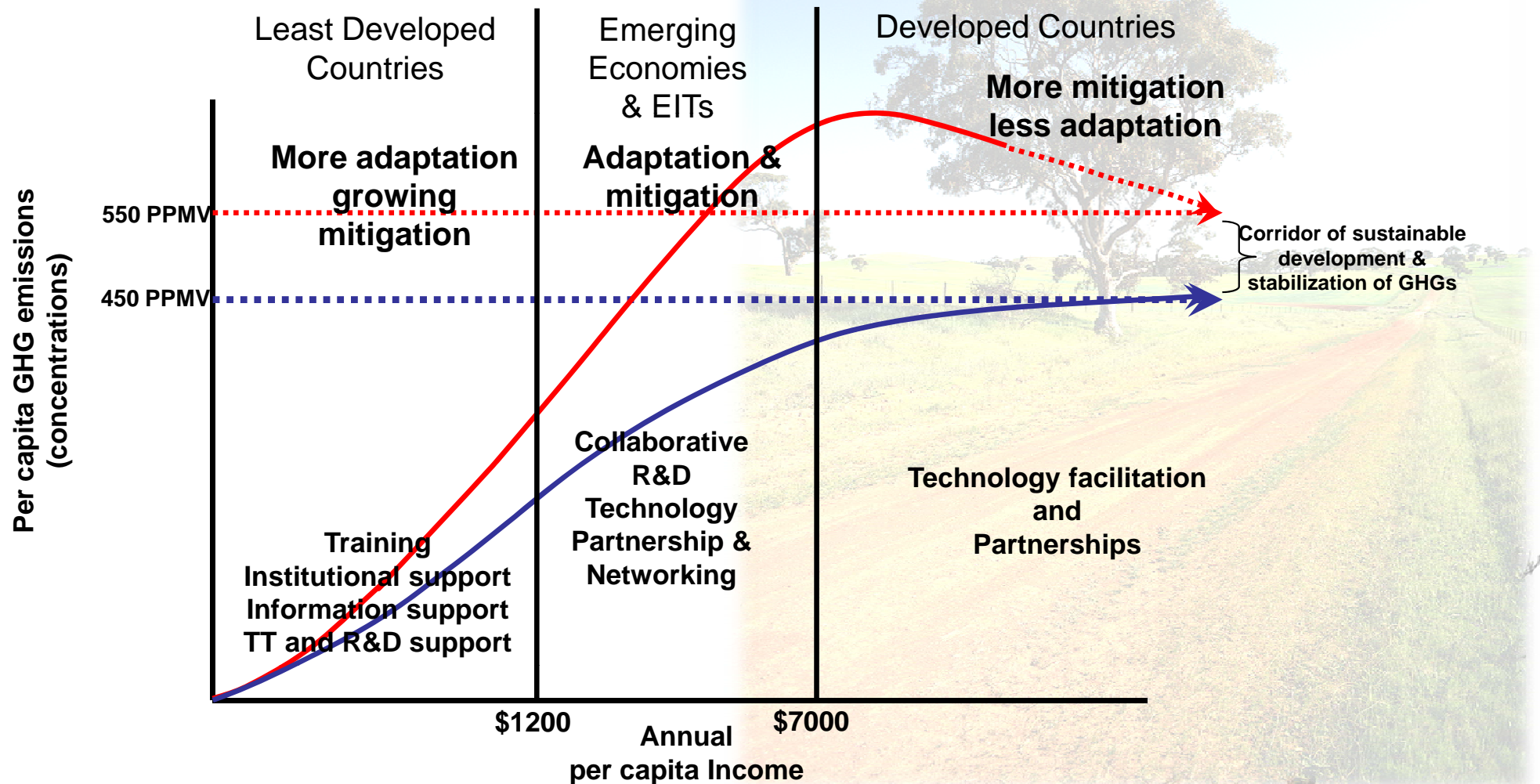
- There is currently also no internationally agreed definition of LCD
- Most existing definitions of LCD focus on mitigation of GHGs
- More recently, adaptation is increasingly recognised as an important issue in LCD
- This is particularly important for low-income countries including African countries
- Thus, LCD in the context of Africa involves integrating climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies into development activities

# Low carbon development

**LCD in its most basic sense, is a balance of development options in terms of carbon**



# LCD pathways differ each country and income group as there is no one size fits all





# Low Carbon Development (LCD)

## Why low carbon development in Africa?

LCD will offers Africa a range opportunities:

- Opportunity to avoid ‘locking-in’ carbon-intensive technologies into future development
  - Opportunity to ‘tap’ into global climate funds, which will provide the much needed finances for its development
  - Opportunity to utilise vast renewable energy potentials to improve energy access through low-cost and low polluting technologies
  - Opportunities to diversify the energy mix and reduce dependence on expensive fossil fuels
  - Opportunity to build its own technical capacity and join the ‘new development’ race as a competitive player
- In Africa, LCD is about the opportunities and benefits that could be derived from LCD in meeting its developmental challenges

# Low Carbon Development (LCD)

## Mapping out the LCD pathway:

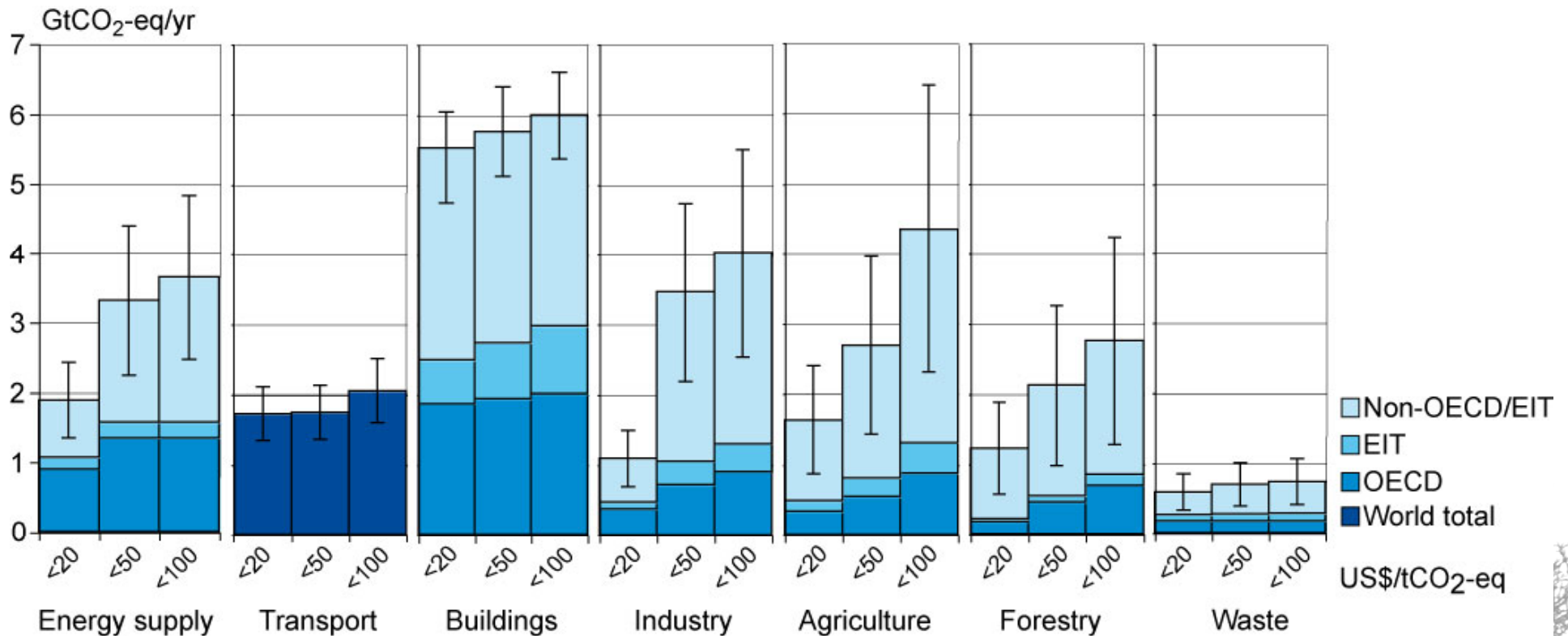
- LCD frameworks should focus on:
  - Specific economic and social development needs of the country
  - Tackling climate change
- LCD by its nature is cross-sectoral
  - Sectoral (and cross-sectoral) approach offers an integrating agenda
  - Strengthen cross-sectoral linkages and impacts
- Not all trade-offs can be avoided
- Low-carbon development strategy should embrace all key infrastructure beyond the energy
- Agriculture, forestry and land-use change - most important source of GHG in low-income countries
  - Prioritising will be critical
  - But need to be guided by future development needs too
- Moving on to LCD pathway is likely to entail higher resource costs initially
  - On grounds of equity, those extra costs should be borne largely by today's rich countries until a new internal investment dynamics is created. But are they willing?

# Low Carbon Development (LCD)

## Mapping out LCD pathways:

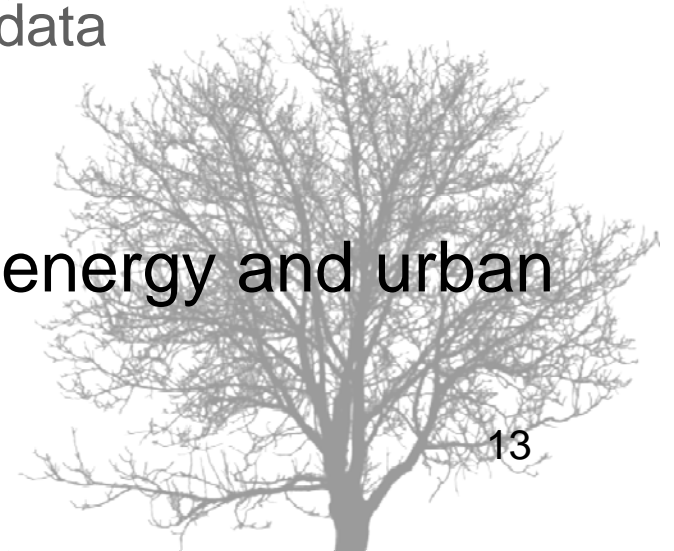
- LCD pathways depend on what natural resources are available
- Countries with high fossil fuels usually concentrate on 'cleaner' fossil fuel technologies
  - e.g. CCS, ECT, low-emission vehicles, etc
- Countries with low fossil fuels usually promote renewable energy
  - e.g. bio-fuels, solar, hydro, etc
- Countries with huge forest resources concentrate on sustainable forestry and land management
- Countries with low agricultural productivity concentrate on improving agricultural land efficiency

# All sectors and regions have the potential to contribute to GHG mitigation/avoidance and transition to low carbon economy



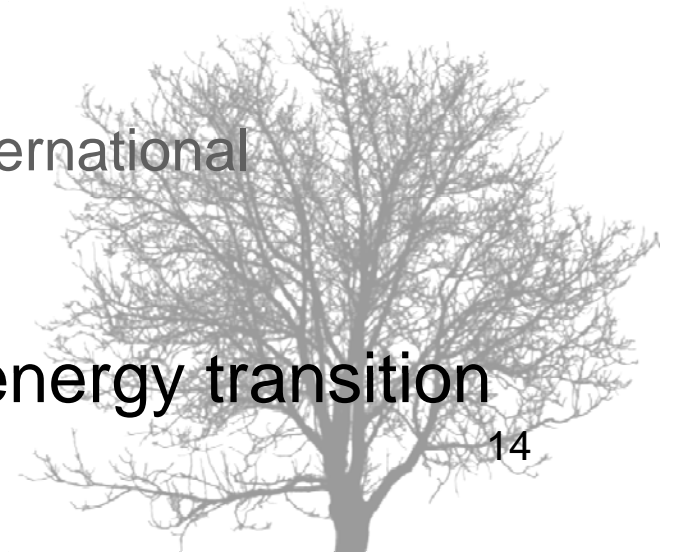
# Rural development and land use

- Agricultural policies including climate variability/ climate change help ensuring food security (MDG 1)
- Bio-fuels as a new opportunity that could be mutually reinforcing with food production  
(similar conditions needed, but trade-offs need to be acknowledged)
- Scaling-up through:
  - Providing guidelines, practical standards and data
  - Capital for large scale biomass
- Better coordination between agricultural, energy and urban policies needed



# Energy

- Energy transition, security and access to modern energy are key concerns
  - Can be realised while also reducing health risks, create employment opportunities and lower emissions
  - Increasing attention for role energy in MDG agenda
- Use local political economy and involve private sector
- Scaling up through:
  - Large scale energy projects
  - Replicating small scale initiatives through international programmes (energy efficiency, renewable)
- Capacity building and development for energy transition



# Transport

- Urbanization comes with increase in mobility
- New infrastructure, modal shift and alternative fuels can help to improve quality of life, health, security of energy supply and lower emissions
- Ethanol/ biodiesel (Brazil) is good example, but might be difficult to replicate
- Scaling up through:
  - Documentation of case studies, development of guidelines and cooperation
  - Integration in infrastructure investments
- Lack of international organisations, programmes, partnerships for sustainable transport



## 1. Lets start with development priorities, and:

- aim to meet development and poverty eradication objectives
- use strategies that transform threats to opportunities

## 2. Lets explore existing development initiatives that are climate resilient and friendly:

- there exist a diversity of local actions, national policies that have delivered positive development and climate outcomes
- we can explore such options at various levels
- we can scale them up coupling with international initiatives to enhance their impacts

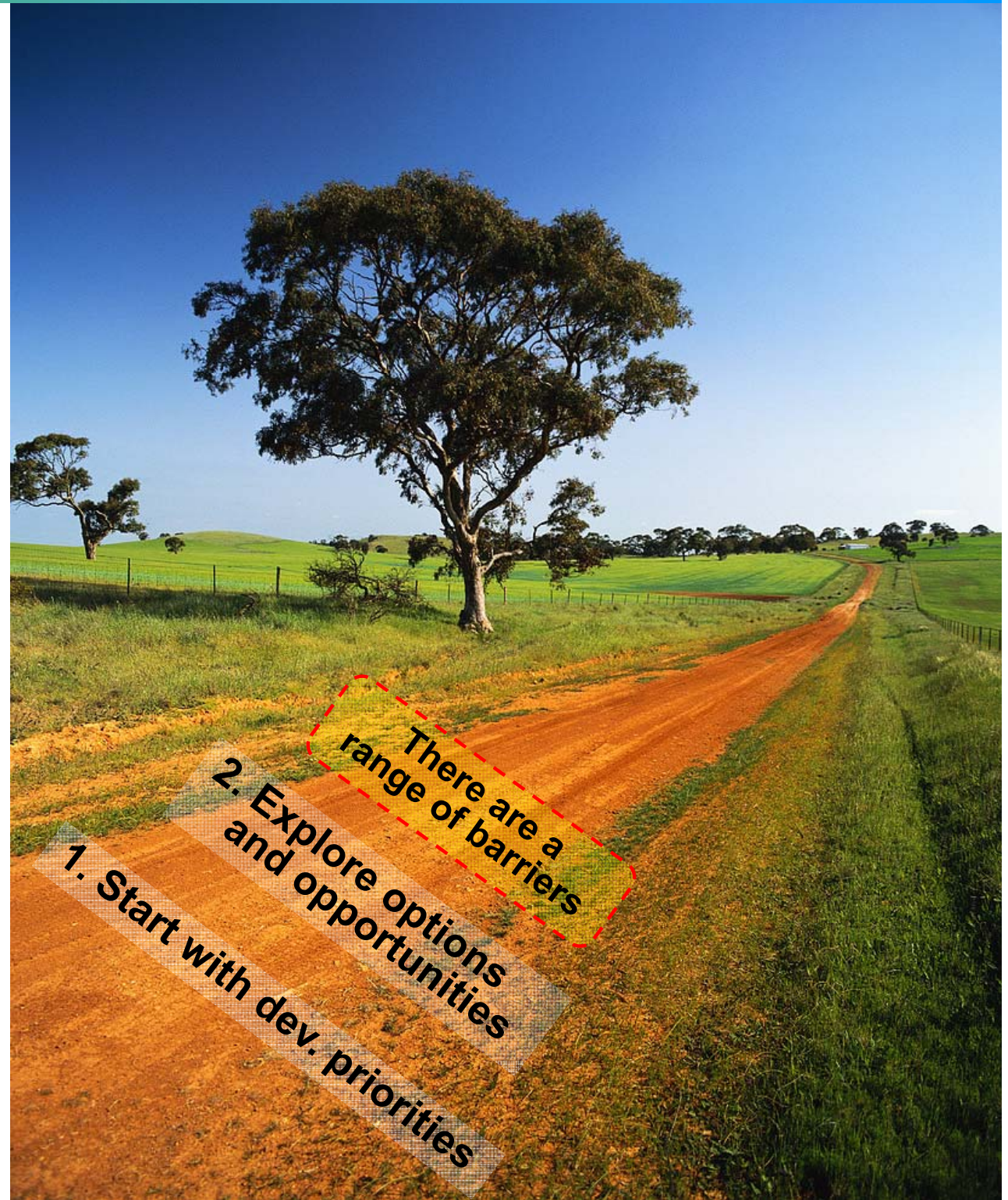
## This is “development first”:

An approach that stimulates concrete actions, mainstreaming, strong and inclusive accelerated transition towards a more sustainable future and cooperation at global, regional and local levels

- 
1. Start with dev. priorities
  2. Explore options and opportunities



- **Policy barriers**
  - Lack of policy responses
- **Regulatory & Institutional barriers**
  - Lack of effective regulations
  - Low capacity to manage climate risks
- **Financial barriers**
  - Poverty
  - Insufficient capital flow
  - High initial capital costs
- **Market barriers**
- **Technical barriers**
  - Low technical skills and capacity
- **Information barriers**
  - Low public and institutional awareness
  - Lack of climate information



There are a  
range of barriers

2. Explore options  
and opportunities

1. Start with dev. priorities



Economic Commission  
for Africa

ACP·C  
African Climate Policy Centre

- **Policy**

- Mainstream climate change policies into development activities

- **Regulatory & Institutional**

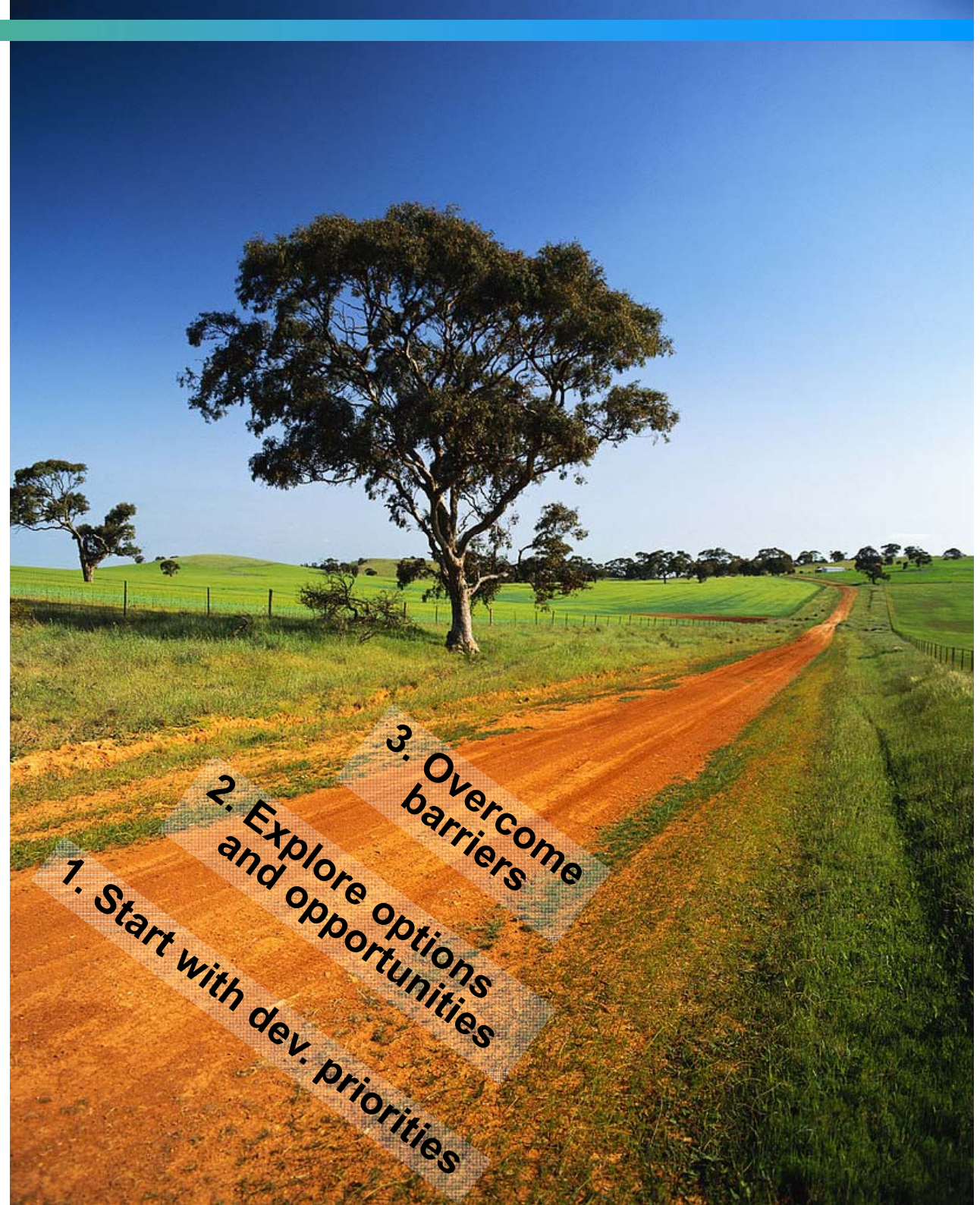
- Establishment of standards e.g. emissions and efficiency standards
- Climate proofing investments
- Capacity building in the public and private sector to assess and manage climate risks

- **Financial**

- Strengthen financial and capital markets
- Capacity building for international finance sourcing

- **Market**

- Improve investment climate
- Creation of new markets (e.g. CDM)
- Adequate pricing of energy, water and agricultural products
- Tax incentives



1. Start with dev. priorities

2. Explore options and opportunities

3. Overcome barriers

# We all have a role to play

## Low Carbon Development

### Policy Community

*Elected officials, ministries, community representatives, researchers etc*

- Set the vision for a LCD future
- Set the LCD pathway
- Set legislation across different sectors
- Set National Development Plans
- Develop infrastructure
- Support climate change negotiations

### Practice Community

*Businesses, communities and civil society incl'ing NGOs, community orgs*

- Undertake economic, social and environmental activities
- Contribute to development through practical action
- Respond to laws, opportunities and other changes... leaving a footprint

### Research Community

*Universities, research institutes, researchers, consultants etc*

- Explore society, the economy and the environment, including climate
- Study interactions between society, the economy and the environment
- Generate knowledge on LCD options

# Thank you

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