

Nature's voice



Volume 4 Issue 2 December, 2008

**Tips on tree
planting and
management**



**New meaning of
urgent and immediate**



**Promoting adaptation
through farmers' rights**



About CEPA

Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA) is a not for profit public interest non-governmental organization registered as a company limited by guarantee in 2002. CEPA seeks to contribute to the development of environment and natural resources management best practices in Malawi and the Southern Africa Region.

As a think tank organization, CEPA provides advice and conducts research in environment and natural resources management policies and legislation with a view to designing appropriate interventions for promoting sustainable environment and natural resources management.

Our work concentrates on sound environmental governance; in this respect, issues of accountability, institutional strengthening and representation are at the core of our activities.

Our Vision

An equitable and just society that values sustainable environment and natural resources management

Our Mission statement

To be a think tank for ideas and action oriented research institution of first choice to promote sustainable environment and natural resources management in Malawi and Southern Africa

Our Goal

To facilitate policy formulation and implementation for sustainable environment and natural resources management.

PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

CEPA is currently implementing a number of projects and these include:-

Policy and Practice Around Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in Malawi

The project is being implemented within the framework agreement between CEPA and Action Aid International Malawi. Its objective is to influence policy and practice around disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in Malawi

Enhancing Capacity for Sustainable Environment and Natural Resources Management Policy Making and Implementation

The overall goal of the project is to achieve sustainable development through sound management of the environment and natural resources.

Southern Africa Biodiversity Policy Initiative (SABPI)

The main mandate of the initiative is to im-

plement complimentary activities pertaining to national policy on biodiversity, biotechnology, food security, international trade and intellectual property rights including the linkages between and among these.

The Land and Agrarian Reform Initiative

The project seeks to influence land and agrarian reform in Malawi to address several existing imbalances in land ownership, advocate for pro-poor land policies, appropriate institutional frameworks to support people centered land and agrarian reform, and share best practices on land and agrarian reform with other countries in southern Africa.

The Access Initiative (TAI)

TAI is an initiative of a global coalition of NGOs that seeks to enhance implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration 1992, to which the state parties re-committed themselves in Johannesburg 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Under this initiative, CEPA is currently working in enhancing access to environmental information and justice in matters relating to the environment by facilitating enactment of the revised framework of the Environment Management Bill and the Access to Information Bill.

Publications

CEPA produces Nature's Voice, a newsletter which contains policy related issues in climate change, biodiversity, environment and natural resources management. CEPA has also published a wide range of reports, policy briefs and other publications on the work it implements and electronic copies of these are available on its website.

Resources

CEPA maintains a resource centre of journals, books, newsletters and related materials which is constantly updated. These materials can be accessed by the public at CEPA premises at any time.

Contact Us

Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy
Plot No. 163
WICO Premises
Johnstone Road
Off Masauko Chipembere Highway
P O Box 1057
Blantyre
Malawi.
Tel: (+265) 1 914 554
Fax: (+265) 1 830 587
E-mail: cepa@cepa.org.mw
Website: www.cepa.org.mw

From the editor

Balancing Thought and Action

We do not inherit the earth from our grandparents, we borrow it from our grandchildren.



The proverb makes sense, especially in the context of environmental degradation. We need to leave the earth at least as we found it, at most better than we found it. Which is why Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA) has taken up the challenge of ensuring the formulation of policies that respond to modern day environmental challenges.

And we advocate for such policies. The environment has become the greatest story of our time. Everything else, from agriculture to health, is dependent on environment. Medical workers have realised that the health of people is directly connected to the environment; agricultural experts accept that pests and droughts are linked to the environment.

Somehow, perhaps in a big way, economists thought their field is away from the environment, but now the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development is realising that economic growth depends on a vibrant environment. International finance institutions have also adopted the environment.

Which is why this newsletter becomes important now. We are determined to do the best we can to share knowledge, advocate for, and invite your participation in environmental affairs.

The media all over the world has made the environment the greatest story too, hence this newsletter. Our cover story is on promoting adaptation through farmer's rights which is one area that must be addressed in our age which is also an era of climate change, which is why we have a story on change of climate.

Beyond this we have a piece on policy and practice paradox. It is the same people who flout environmental laws that suffer from the consequences.

Finally, we have a piece on food aid. And yours truly writes on profiting from floods. It is time to use what we have. Remember we do not inherit the earth from our parents, we borrow it from our grandchildren.

Contents

Promoting adaptation through farmers' rights—
Page 8



Food aid and food security—
Page 12



Can Communities Ever Profit From Recurring Floods—
Page 6



Tips on tree planting and management
—Page 14



Editorial team:
George Phiri
Mzati Nkolokosa
Chisimpika Mphande
Taona Buleya

Design and Layout
Andrew Mtupanyama
Chisimpika Mphande
Taona Buleya

Contributors:
Mzati Nkolokosa
Gracian Banda
William Chadza
Sigurd Jorde
Patrice Nkhono
Gloria Kamalizeni
George Phiri
Chisimpika Mphande
Amos Ntonya
Gary Munthali

Published by the Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy
P O Box 1057, Blantyre, Malawi.
Tel: (+265) 1 914 554
Fax: (+265) 1 830 587
E-mail: cepa@cepa.org.mw
Website: www.cepa.org.mw

Articles in this newsletter are not the views of CEPA, but of the authors.



Climate change and weather monitoring

Amos Mtonya

amosmtonya@yahoo.com

Meteorological services



and Gray Munthali

gmunthali@metmalawi.com

Meteorological services

Climate change has recently become a much debated subject, not only in Malawi but in all parts of the world as its impacts become increasingly prominent. Among some people however, the subject is still new and difficult to understand. We will therefore begin by explaining what climate change is all about.

Climate change is the permanent departure of existing weather conditions from average conditions. The weather elements of main concern in this are temperature and rainfall pattern changes that determine changes in other elements such as humidity and cloud cover.

There are natural and anthropogenic (human induced) causes of climate change. Natural climate change is mainly due to solar radiation and occurs over a long period of time.

The cause of climate change that is of greatest concern is that resulting from human activities which largely depend on the burning of conventional energy resources (fossil fuels) and biomass. Green house gases (GHGs) are released during the combustion of these fuels. These gases

in the atmosphere trap outgoing heat released by the earth, preventing it from leaving the atmosphere. This results in temperature increases (greenhouse effect). Main GHGs include carbon dioxide, water vapor, methane, nitrogen dioxide and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). The loss of vegetation due to deforestation for charcoal burning, firewood or for agricultural use particularly reduces the absorption of carbon dioxide and increases its concentration in the atmosphere.

The long term effect is rising global temperatures and erratic precipitation distribution. Figure 1 shows 1910, or thereabouts, as the turning point in the global temperature trend. One can observe that this trend follows from the escalation of GHGs' emission through industrialization.

Temperature and rain are the main causes of extreme weather events such as heat waves, tropical cyclones, droughts, heavy storms and floods. For Malawi, these events cause threats to food security, energy availability, human and animal health, economy and communication.

Monitoring Weather and Extreme Weather Events

Weather monitoring becomes very important if the impacts of extreme weather

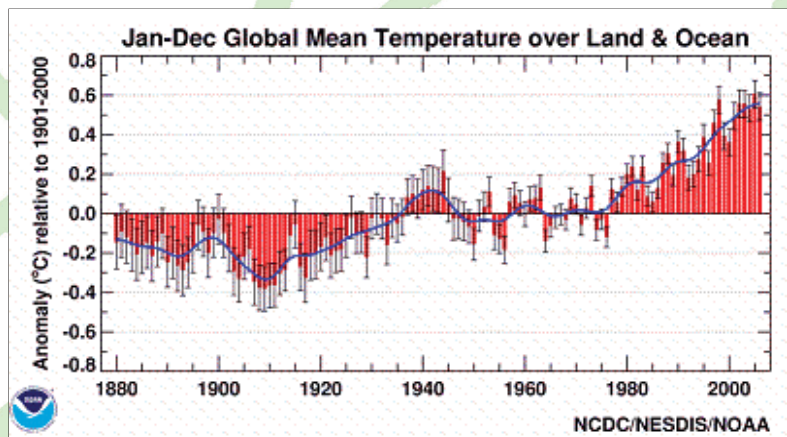


Figure 1: Line plot of global mean land-ocean temperature index from 1880 to present. The blue line is the 5 year mean. (Source: epa.gov/climatechange/science)



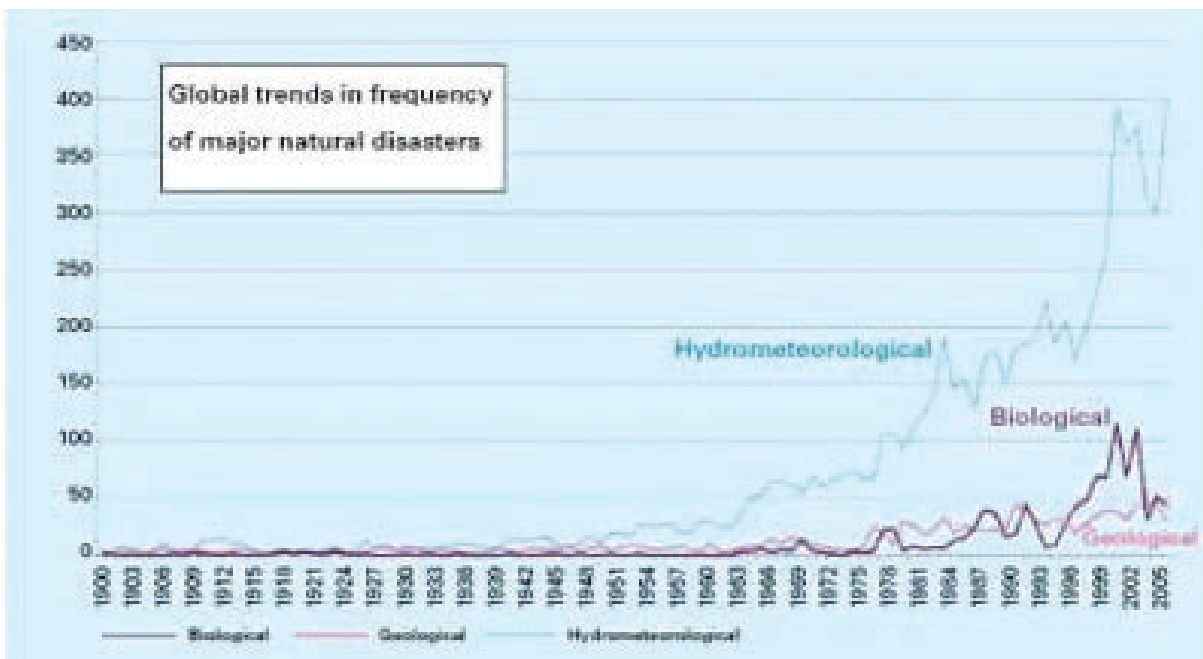


Figure 2: Frequency of major disasters from 1900-2005. Weather related disasters have increased since 1950. (Source: www.em-dat.net)

events are to be reduced. Recent findings warn the world of increases in frequency of occurrence and intensity of weather related disasters. From figure 2, one can observe that weather related disasters account for about 80% of natural disasters occurring at present.

Reliable weather and climate monitoring can help equip Malawi in advance to fight impending extreme weather events. Monitoring of sea surface temperatures' variation, tropical cyclone's movement and el-Niño conditions assist the meteorological services in predicting pending storms and resulting floods, dry spells, droughts and hail storms. Reliable weather monitoring is a good early warning system tool that makes risk monitoring possible.

Seasonal Forecasts for Malawi

In Malawi, seasonal forecasts give prediction of rainfall distribution at the onset, from October to December, and deep into season, January to March. If done on a relatively larger scale, drought prone areas can be identified and it is possible to predict whether this will occur at the onset of the rainy season or after.

Use of satellites imagery to monitor the Inter-tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) improves forecasts of rainfall intensity and distribution. In Malawi heavy rains are associated with the ITCZ lying over the

country and tropical cyclones in the Indian Ocean. When the cyclones move closer or into Africa mainlan, they result into floods that are often disastrous.

Challenges of Climate Change and Weather Monitoring

Accurate and timely weather forecasts in Malawi are required now that a lot of life and property is at risk due to climate change effects. Early warning is needed in order to prepare for pending disasters. Main challenges to Climate change and weather monitoring include:

- Inadequate meteorological observation stations to provide weather information that is representative for the country;
- Lack of capacity
- Lack of reliable data; and
- Inadequate coordination with key stakeholders – to enable correlation between weather prediction and life and property loss

Furthermore, studies need to be done particularly at regional and national levels in order to obtain reliable forecasts that will enable implementation of disaster risk reduction measures.





Environmental degradation caused by flooding

Can Communities Ever Profit From Recurring Floods

They are a yearly visitor, but anger towards floods and its victims is not a solution. We need to think through the floods and find short and long-term solutions and benefits.

Mzati Nkolokosa
mzatinews@yahoo.com



Floods, of whatever type, have become a norm and being inseparable from climate change, it seems, we cannot stop them. We just have to adjust to and manage them, and where we can, profit from them while reducing hazards they bring.

“With the floods we learn not only how to deal with the land, the water and the grass, but also how to think of the use of physical space for economic growth,

and reorganise the community in terms of the challenges and opportunities that arise...” the late Dr José Negrão told his audience at Mozambique’s Eduardo Mondlane University in 2001.

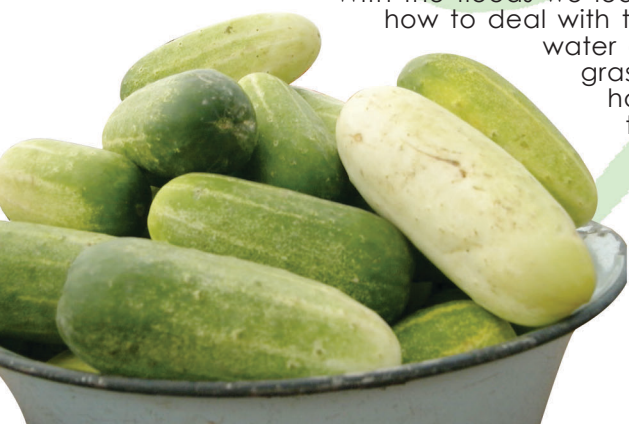
This was instructive because the previous year, Mozambique had suffered its worst floods since the mid-1970s. Floods have been hitting Southern African countries throughout the Zambezi River basin. Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe seem to be the most affected.

Warnings were aplenty: last year regional meteorologists had forecast above normal rainfall for most Member States of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC).

Now the rainy reason is here again in Malawi. The forecast this year is for normal rains and inevitably, floods will hit some parts of the country, especially the Shire Valley: Chikwawa and Nsanje.

The journey from Fatima to Makhanga in Nsanje, over floods, feels like Israel at the Red Sea. The Nsanje journey raises the question, “Why did I come here?”

The people in the Lower Shire are stuck not between water and Pharaoh’s soldiers,



but between water and lack of a solution to their problems.

But are floods all curse? No. This answer, however, can become true if people prepare for floods. This means working to stop floods from causing damage and utilising them where possible.

The floods that hit Makhanga and surrounding areas in January this year, for example, are a new story, not the same, old story of floods in Nyachikadza area. Makhanga has not been flooded since 1989. In the years between 1966 and 1989, there was an agricultural research project at Usiyani Village.

The researchers diverted some water from Ruo River for irrigation. The water channels were protected by trees and reeds. There were all kinds of vegetative cover.

Once the research was over in 1989, the trees were cut and the land was exposed to the speedy waters of the Ruo.

Heavy rains in Thyolo Escarpment result into rising levels of water in Ruo, a river whose source is in Mulanje Mountain. Ruo flows down the mountain through Thyolo highlands down to Nsanje at greater speed than the Shire River which is in a valley. This is the water that caused floods at Makhanga. That place at Usiyani Village where water was diverted for irrigation is now turning into an outlet that has turned into a destroyer, displacing 340 families in January. The solution is to plant vegetation at the outlet and prevent water from flooding.

Member of Parliament for Nsanje North Esther Mcheka-Chilenje, whose area has been hit hard, is worried as well. "We need a permanent solution," she said in an interview in January.

"The solution is simple," says Roben Chisale, a man who has lived in the area for over 50 years. "Government should dig deep the Shire River, so that the water from Ruo does not displace the water in Shire."

One way is to work the Ruo River at Usiyani Village. The place where there was a research project needs to be reforested. Government, on its part, can construct structures to prevent the water from flooding. The Shire-Ruo confluence needs to be worked on as well.

The Shire, at the confluence, is a wide, tired river that flows slowly, the way a hungry person walks home from the garden. The Ruo is a strong-flow river with a great speed. The result is that when the two rivers meet, the water from the Ruo cuts into the Shire and takes over the space down the



A maize field washed away by floods

Shire. Meanwhile, the water from Shire stops and keeps accumulating. The result is floods.

The moment this happens, says Chisale, floods in the Makhanga-Chiromo areas will be history. So, it is not a question of people moving from Makhanga. No. How can they? There are dozens of government institutions. People have lived here for decades. Should government abandon its hospitals, prisons, schools and offices?

That is one part of the solution. Another is to use flooded land and the residual moisture for meaningful agriculture. It will not pay to just look at floods as a curse. We must wake up and define them as a blessing, a way to get fertile soils from elsewhere. After all a loss here is a gain there.

We need to use such flooded land to grow vegetables and maize and all kinds of crops. If this is done with the due seriousness, we can benefit a lot. Such flooded land can also be used as pasture.

What we need is a cost-benefit analysis of the Lower Shire. We need to work out a plan that will benefit the country because, as tax payers, we cannot afford to lose the economic gains of the Lower Shire and we cannot afford to be funding relief work every year when there are other pressing issues like health and education.

Once more, José Negrão said what we need now is to learn to "deal with land, water and grass, but also how to think of the use of physical space for economic growth, and reorganise the community in terms of the challenges and opportunities that arise..." Our challenge is floods. This is what our communities are yet to benefit from.





Farmers inspect a field

Promoting adaptation through farmers' rights

Gracian Banda,
CEPA
gracian@cepa.org.mw



Introduction: Financial and Climate Crisis

The turmoil in the world economy and the impacts of climate change have underlined more than ever before that local solutions to local problems stand a better chance of success and sustainability. The credit crunch has struck at pillars of capitalism in the western world leading to what is being called the unprecedented "global economic meltdown". This financial depression manifested through the fall of giant financial institutions and the precarious state of the stock markets raises fears of repercussions in the developing world, who have modeled and structured their economic systems on western capitalism and solely depend on them for their own financial lifeline in the form of aid. It threatens the supply of key inputs for

agricultural production including fertilizers, chemicals and seed on which many developing countries rely for food security and the export market for foreign exchange.

Already, the edifice of capitalist mar-



A farmer poses for a picture in his garden. Is he aware of farmers' rights?



ket was shaken by the impact of climate change. The use of chemical fertilizers, chemical pesticides, herbicides and hybrid seed that are often imported from the west poses considerable economic and environmental risks to agricultural productivity in the face of climate change. These inputs offer very little in terms of capacity to adaptation to the impacts of climate change such as droughts or floods. Once a drought or flood destroys a crop on which these inputs have been applied, the farmer faces not only crop failure but also economic ruin. For countries like Malawi which subsidize these inputs to the most impoverished smallholder farmers, the loss will further increase pressure on the national budget. Government has to import food at very high cost which will make it even more difficult to fund the subsidy programme for the next season.



Proud to be farmers

These challenges arising from the global economic meltdown and climate change impacts should give policy makers clear indications that Malawi can only guarantee sustainable agricultural production, hence sustainable livelihood and food security, by empowering local farming communities. A key component to this empowerment drive is to ensure that the factors of production on which smallholder farmers depend are within the control of the farmers. This brief examines the concept of empowering farmers through implementation of farmers' rights as a mechanism for addressing input costs and therefore shielding against the vagaries of financial volatility and climate change.

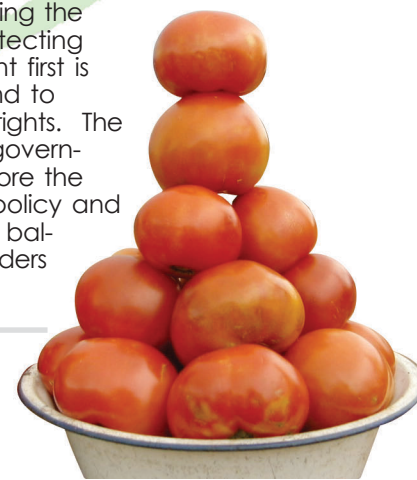
Concept of farmers' rights

The adoption of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IUPGRFA) in 1989 was a milestone. It recognized the historical contribution of farmers to the development and conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and the need to reward this contribution through benefit sharing arrangements and their effective participation in conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. Farmers have over millennia selected, saved, exchanged and shared seed that enhances crop and food diversity at household, community, national, and global levels. These plant genetic materials have been developed and conserved to suit local conditions and climatic changes and are affordable to local farmers. Drought and pest and disease

resistant crop varieties have been developed and conserved by farmers and later saved and exchanged. The IUPGRFA therefore recognized the right of all farmers, to save, exchange, share or reuse plant genetic resources and to participate in sharing the benefits arising from the commercialization of these resources. The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) formalized these rights into a binding framework.

Nevertheless there is continuing resistance to implementation of farmers' rights especially from the breeders' point of view. Commercial breeders do not consider that farmers have rights akin to breeders' rights. This perception emanates from the communitarian nature of farmers' rights. These rights have arisen from collective efforts, hence are considered incapable of individual entitlements as the law normally requires. No single individual or innovative act can be identified, save for a series of incremental improvements, attributable to various communities. Unlike commercial breeders' rights, farmers' rights do not have a claim to any paper trail through which innovation can be traced. The law is not comfortable with protecting group entitlements considering how frequently group interests and dynamics change over time.

Yet it is hardly in dispute that breeders derive their materials from the efforts and innovation of small holder farmers. It is also indisputable that these breeders owe their innovations to the knowledge of the same small scale farmers. Plant breeders must therefore acknowledge farmers' rights and share the benefits arising from the efforts of farmers. Whether or not a scheme can be devised for sharing the benefits has little to do with protecting farmers' rights. What is important first is that a mechanism must be found to recognize and protect farmers' rights. The ITPGRFA leaves this to national governments. The key question is therefore the formulation of a farmers' rights policy and legal framework that effectively balances the interests of plant breeders and those of farmers.



New Meaning for

Urgent and



William Chadza, CEPA,
william@cepa.org.mw



Sigurd Jorde,
Development Fund,
sigurd@utviklingsfondet.no

at the UNFCCC in Poznan,
Poland

October 2008: A Malawian Government official searches around his desk for a while and pulls out a printed copy of the Malawi National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA). He puts it down on his overcrowded desk with a sigh. The NAPA was presented to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2006. Up until now, none of the proposed climate adaptation actions have been funded either by donors or the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

December 2nd, 2008: In the plenary Subsidiary Body of Information discussions on 14th session of the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC, Malawi Government officials loudly complained about the delay in processing applications for GEF to support NAPA-implementation. Malawi, together with several fellow



People walk on a flooded road in Chikwawa

least developed countries, is in need of urgent and immediate actions to prevent consequences of climate change.

Apart from Malawi, other country delegates at the conference expressed their frustrations regarding the whole process of accessing funds for NAPA implementation. While northern countries are dragging their feet on achieving actual reductions of



Immediate

– the reality of NAPA



emissions of greenhouse gases, they are unwilling to speed up the process of fulfilling their pledges of funding climate adaptation in developing countries.

Delegates from various countries also expressed concerns regarding the level of funds pledged or made available under the Least Developed Countries Fund; they are inadequate. However, it was surprising to

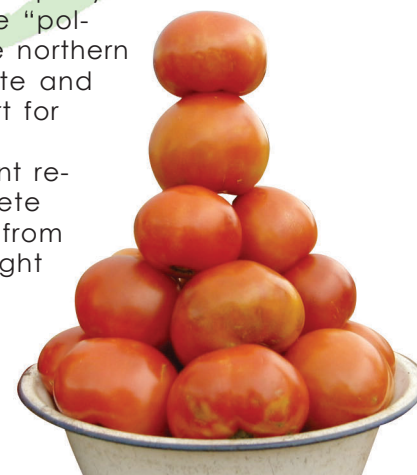
hear from the United States of America and Japan that the gap between demand and supply of funds could be filled by the recently initiated World Bank Climate Investment Fund.

Adding insult to injury, Japan, while discussing a shared vision for a better future, insisted that Japanese campaign of reducing the personal amount of daily showers from 7 to 3 a day was a positive step towards reducing energy consumption and climate change. While this indeed is a more than 50 % reduction of Japanese showers, it is not really helpful in the larger picture and an insult to the population in developing countries without access to water and sanitation.

If you leave the urban areas of Malawi and move into the countryside, the consequences of global climate change is evident as soon as you start talking to people. Malawi is already experiencing the effects of climate change: increased flush floods, increase in temperature, unpredictable rainfall patterns, long dry spells – and sometimes a region can experience both floods and drought within the same year. The consequences are poor harvests, soil erosion and damage to infrastructure among other things. The secondary consequences are increased pressure on urban areas and overexploitation of natural resources.

For the people of Malawi and other developing countries present at the UN climate conference in Poland, there is an urgent need to stop polluting countries from emitting greenhouse gases. Equally important is also to follow up the “polluter pays” principle and pressure northern governments to provide adequate and easily accessible financial support for climate adaptation.

Malawi's people need an urgent response to climate risk and concrete activities to reduce vulnerability from changing weather, rainfall, drought and temperature.



Food aid and food security in Malawi

Patrice Nkhono

Mbendera Nkhono Associates
pnkhono@globemw.net



Food Aid and Food Security

Malawi's population is, by recent census, just reaching the 14 million mark. For a country of Malawi's territorial size and industrial development, that is a very high population density. Given the state of human development, feeding the people becomes a tricky exercise for government. In the last few years Malawi has been touted to have attained self-sufficiency in food, thanks in large measure to the government's Input Subsidy Programme. It is debatable to what extent Malawi has thereby set up systems for sustaining self-sufficiency in food and the efficacy of the interventions that government has put in place. Perhaps one disadvantage that any discussion of food security in Malawi suffers from is that food is such an intensely partisan political subject and its discussion is readily couched in emotive terms.

For a considerably long time, however, Malawi has been a consistent recipient of donor food aid. This immediately raises the question whether food aid has enhanced the drive towards the attainment of food security in Malawi.

A considerable wealth of literature suggests that food aid has, in fact, significant potential for harming efforts to attain food security in any developing country let alone a Least-Developed Country (LDC) such as Malawi. This suggestion perhaps sounds paradoxical because after all food aid is presumably intended to alleviate the suffering of the hungry; that is until one looks at the way that the international food aid regime is structured.

Evidently, not all food aid has a philanthropic purpose.

Food aid



Healthy maize crop courtesy of Targeted Input Programme

has been acknowledged to be a powerful tool for economic re-structuring when its delivery into a recipient country is accompanied with economically or market oriented conditionality. The recipient country is probably at its lowest capacity for resistance to donor conditionality when it fails to feed its people.

Given the wide variety of forms in which conditionality comes, considerable harm may be done to a food aid recipient country's agricultural policy. The common concept of food aid belies a whole political economy in which food aid is delivered. It is essential to explore these for essential policy making.

How Food Aid May Affect Food Security

Any discussion of food aid policy benefits from an understanding of the human rights and constitutional framework relevant to Malawi. On the human rights front Malawi is a member of a whole raft of international human rights instruments which have stipulated the right to food. These international agreements place a duty on Malawi to conduct its affairs so as to enhance the welfare of its people generally and in particular to ensure that people enjoy freedom from hunger and malnutrition.

The reality is that food aid, as most other things in life, is not what it seems to be, and that recipient governments must tread care-





Men head home after receiving maize donations during lean times

fully and guard against the deleterious effects of food aid.

International Food Aid Governance

A consideration of the international food aid governance probably, more than anything else, makes a good case for a diligent policy engagement with food aid. Food aid originated with the US and Canada in the early 1950s at a time when a policy of price support for agricultural commodities generated large surpluses of cereals so that giving food aid was a way to dispose of excess cereals produced by their agricultural industry, to reduce food storage costs and to open up overseas markets. And food aid has come with conditions attached and therefore been used as a donor instrument of agricultural and trade policy

One negative effect of food aid is that it distorts the supply of food on the market such as depressing the price of food. Therefore, the local producer of food does not find it cost-effective to produce food.

To date food aid continues to be delivered on donor conditionalities such as the compelled acceptance of genetically modified in-kind food aid as happened during the 2002 Southern African drought that affected Malawi as well. Food aid has, as pointed out earlier, also been used as a donor instrument of agricultural and trade policy. It requires no divination to realise that the long term food security goals and food sovereignty of food insecure southern countries may negatively be affected by injudicious compliance with such conditionalities.

Food Aid and Policy in Malawi

There is no stand-alone or deliberate policy in Malawi on food aid. Statements have been made in the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy (MPRS), the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy(MGDS), the Food

Security Policy, and the National Nutrition policy, but these statements stop just short of setting out a policy on food aid. The MGDS, a market oriented policy, replaced the MPRS. The latter was a pro-poor policy. The MGDS sets out policy goals with a view to improving agricultural productivity and growth and enhancing food security in Malawi. The National Biotechnology Policy acknowledges the benefits of biotechnology on food security and nutrition but does not address the challenges that arise in the wake of biotechnology-related food aid.

It may, legitimately, be argued in that regard however, that sometimes the mere knowledge by an LDC of the pitfalls that food aid presents will not always be sufficient to allow the LDC to resist the downside of the pre-dominant food aid regime.

Food aid and its international governance have an obvious impact on the attainment of food security in Malawi, as in any other LDC. Rather than proceed on an adhoc basis Malawi should develop a deliberate policy regarding its engagement with food aid and its international governance in order to obviate the domestic self-interest aspect of international relations and the sometimes harmful motives of donors. International food aid governance poses significant pitfalls for the unwary. The international food aid governance is not a case study in philanthropy and there are obvious dangers to ignoring that cold fact. Food aid is fertile ground for trade, agricultural and economic re-structuring. The obvious advantage of a food aid policy is that Malawi would be able to attempt to derive the greatest benefit from food aid and minimise its negative impacts.



Tips on **TREE PLANTING** and Management

Gloria Kamalizeni
NASFAM, Lilongwe
gkamalizeni@nasfam.org

1. Introduction

Transplant seedlings with the start of the rains in wet soils in prepared pits. This encourages good root development for survival over the dry season. Choose a wet day for planting, preferably early morning or late afternoon to avoid midday heat.

2. Preparation

Out-plant trees with care to minimize damage to young, delicate seedlings, and to ensure optimal growth and survival. Most seedlings are ready when the shoot (the part that grows out from the ground) development is roughly equal in length to the roots. For example, with proper management of the seedlings, seedlings with shoots 20 cm long should have a root system 15 to 20 cm long. Seedlings with shoots much longer than the roots may dieback during a dry spell because the root system is not sufficient to support the water and nutrient needs of the plant.

Overgrown seedlings with damaged or deformed roots have a lower chance of survival than smaller seedlings with normal root systems. Thus avoid seedlings that have not been root-pruned, or whose shoots are taller than 20 cm. This may indicate that the tap roots have grown too deep, risking damage when lifted, and reducing survival after out-planting.

3. Bare rooted seedlings

This is where the seedlings were planted on beds and not in tubes. Carefully slice up the bed so that each seedling is extracted with its cube of soil to protect the roots from damage and drying out. Seedlings may also be lifted with their root/soil mass wrapped in large leaves, wet newspapers, Hessian cloth or other mate-



For the future: A woman plants a tree to mitigate the effects of deforestation

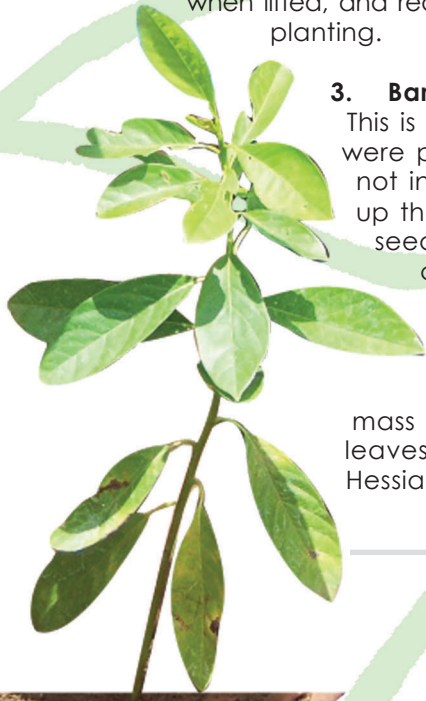
rial for transport to the planting site.

To reduce damage and wilting, remove only sufficient seedlings at a time to out-plant in one to two hours. If the seedlings cannot be planted right away, keep them shaded and covered with wet straw and grass.

The message on transportation of seedlings to the planting site is clear; any method will do, as long as water loss and disruption of the root/soil mass is minimized.

4. Potted seedlings

Do not allow seedlings to overgrow in their containers, especially plastic ones, which may lead to root deformities such as J-shaped or spiraling roots. This increases the susceptibility of seedlings to root diseases, causing slow growth and poor



development form. A general guide is to out-plant when seedlings are the same height as the container (i.e. equal to root length), with a stem at least the thickness of a pencil.

5. Planting

a) Planting Pits

As advised earlier, planting pits are supposed to be dug before rains start. The size of the pits must range from 30 x 30 x 30 cm to 60 x 60 x 60 cm depending on the size of tree to be planted. The soils are placed back into the pits starting with the top soils and finish with sub-soils.

b) Method of Out-Planting

For both types of seedlings (bare-rooted and potted) use a basket or box or basin to carry seedlings to the planting sites. Make a hole in the loose soil of your planting pit large enough to fit in the seedling. Remove the tube for potted seedlings and place the seedling in the hole so the root collar is level with the ground; then firm the soil around the seedling with the heel of your foot. If the bottom of the tube is closed, cut the bottom off with a sharp knife, and then cut the pot lengthwise. Remove the container only after placing the pot correctly in the prepared hole.

Add a double handful of manure to the soil surface around each seedling to encourage good growth and establishment.

c) Replanting

Replant any seedlings that have died. Do this within 2 weeks of first planting to ensure a good stand of trees.

6. Weeding

Remove weeds one metre around the base of each seedling. Weed 3 times during the first season to improve growth, and to reduce risks of fire damage. Crops may be grown with the trees during this season to ensure weed-free conditions and efficient land use.

7. Protecting your trees

Trees need to be protected against fire, animals, wind, people and all other things that can damage them. Below are some of the ways on how to protect trees from the different damaging effects:

a) Fire Prevention

Fires destroy trees in less time than it takes to raise them. Farmers are advised to make fire breaks around the woodlots.

b) Animal and Human Control

Domestic and wild animals can cause damage to trees. Farmers should therefore protect their trees from animals by constructing a fence around their tree woodlot or individual trees by basket type of fencing using dry grass and thorny shrubs. Living fences or protective structures may be used. A living fence is a fence that is constructed using plants that are living and will grow to provide a mesh that would keep out animals from entering the woodlot. Otherwise if farmers have not put a fence around the trees, scaring the animals away is another option. Mark other seedlings with stakes to minimize accidental weeding or trampling.

c) Pest and Disease Control

Diseases, particularly fungal diseases can kill trees. Early attacks can not be easily noticeable and it is at this stage of attack that damage can be caused. Damage can be through root rot, killing the bark or drying of leaves.

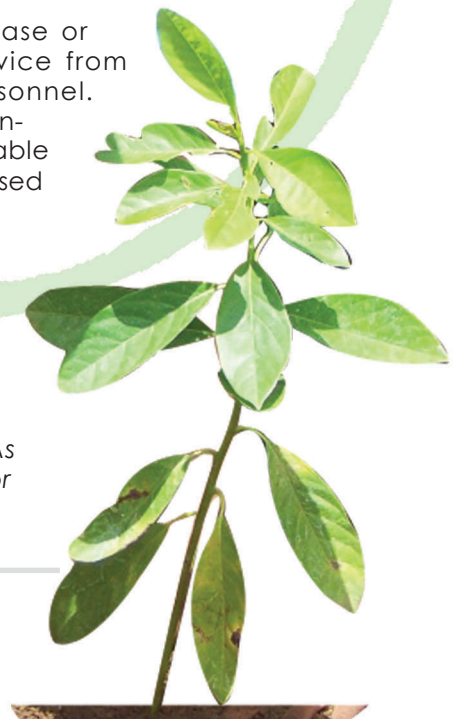
Pests such as termites, weevils, grasshoppers, beetles, caterpillars and aphids can damage the woodlot and should therefore be controlled. Farmers should inspect often for presence of any pests.

However termites are also beneficial to crop production in that they aerate, loosen and enrich the soil by assisting in litter decomposition and recycling of organic matter. They are also a delicacy as people eat the winged form of termites and sometimes people eat the worker and soldier types in times of hunger/famine.

In the event of disease or pest attack, seek advice from the local forestry personnel.

Local methods of controlling pests are available though they must be used under advice from the local forestry office or research institutions especially for Moringa, fruit trees and other trees whose products are edible.

*Wishing Good Luck As
You Plant Your Trees For
A Better Tomorrow!!!*



Policy and Practice Paradox

in Environmental and Natural Resources Management

by **Chisimpika Mphande**
CEPA
chisimpika@cepa.org.mw



& **George Phiri**
CEPA
george@cepa.org.mw

Most rural communities in Malawi are engaged in subsistence farming for their livelihoods. Unfortunately, most farmers employ unsustainable farming practices that degrade the environment and natural resources base. Paradoxically,

the environment and natural resources represent key medium for implementing sustainable economic growth envisioned in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS). Furthermore the contribution by rural communities to this degradation reflects a significant failure to implement, at this level, key environmental, land, water and infrastructure policy instruments. This failure is depicted through the excessive soil erosion and siltation of major water bodies, including the Shire River where the bulk of electricity that drives the country's economy is generated from; bare soils, and increased hazards of flooding expected to worsen with greater impacts from climate change. We summarize below key actions by rural communities that have worked to their own disadvantage



Charcoal burnt from indigenous trees is one of the major cause of excessive deforestation



A bare mountain depicts severe deforestation by communities

and to the greater disadvantage of the national economy.

How rural communities are contributing to environmental degradation

- Clearing catchment, reserve and conservation land for cultivation;
- Excessive and unregulated deforestation for charcoal and firewood related trading;
- Clearing and cultivating in marginal land such as steep slopes and wetlands;
- Cultivation in the shoulders of key infrastructures such as the country's network of roads which in essence means that customary land-use is rapidly encroaching into public land;
- Cultivation of river banks; and
- Uncontrolled bushfires.

How rural communities are affected by environmental degradation

- Increased disaster risk from floods;
- Drying up of ground water resources with repercussions to availability of potable water;
- Reduced productivity of agricultural land resulting into increased food insecur-

ity and poverty;

- Damage to infrastructure such as roads which are important to communities' livelihoods and economic development;
- Loss of biodiversity, including medicinal plants, fruits, and other useful flora and fauna; and
- Loss of livelihood.

The first paradox is that community livelihoods are increasingly being threatened by degradation caused by communities themselves. The second is the manifestation of failure of government policy, yet government seems unaware that it has to pay billions of kwachas every year for fertilizer subsidies to improve production from degraded soils; to dredge the river Shire and to maintain damaged hydro power machin-

To page 18



Policy and Practice Paradox in Environmental and Natural Resources Management

From page 17

ery; and to pay for relief for victims of flood and hunger.

The environmental and natural resources policy and practice paradox highlighted here puts the country at the cross-road where critical decisions have to urgently be made and implemented to quickly address the prevailing policy implementation failures in land, water, environmental and infrastructure sectors. Inability to address these critical issues will continue to undermine the environment and natural resource base with far-reaching effects on productivity, food security and overall socio-economic development. The inevitable consequence will be futile national development efforts and rapid descent into a failed economy and a failed nation.

Some of the critical questions that need urgent responses are: when and where did policy implementation failure start? Can anything be done to rectify the situation for the benefit of the current and future generations of Malawians? How best can we articulate the inseparable link



Wilting maize in the 2007/08 growing season which saw some parts of Malawi facing dry spells: Consequence of poor soil and water conservation practices

between environmental and natural resources sustainability, growth-led economic development and poverty reduction? Who will listen and act? Who will facilitate rural communities to reverse the worrying levels of environmental degradation and avert the prevail-

ing anarchy in environmental and natural resources management? Addressing these questions will provide synergy to the implementation of the MGDS and ensure sustainable environmental and natural resources management at the rural community level.

Malawi's participation at the 14th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

**Held in Poznan, Poland
1-12 December 2008**

William Chadza
CEPA,
william@cepa.org.mw



The national Focal Point for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Environmental Affairs Department, organized a preparatory meeting in the run-up to the 14th Conference of Parties (COP 14) which took place in Poznan, Poland 1-12 December, 2008. National preparation for this meeting needed a comprehensive national consultative process given global and national importance of climate change. Nonetheless, several issues on the conference agenda were selected and agreed upon to require setting up of national positions.

The Malawi delegation to CoP 14 was led by the Deputy Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, Honorable Rashid Gaffar, MP. It comprised of Government officials and representatives of civil society organizations, academia and media. There were a number of *ad hoc* briefing meetings for the delegates throughout the conference.

Negotiations at the COP 14 mainly centred on the five pillars of the Bali Road Map (after the UNFCCC COP 13 held on the Bali island in Indonesia, December 2007). The five pillars are:

- a) A shared vision for long-term cooperative action to achieve the ultimate objective of the UNFCCC (to stabilize atmospheric concentrations of green house gases at a level that would prevent human-induced interference with the climate system);
- b) Enhanced national/international action on mitigation of climate change;
- c) Enhanced action on adaptation;
- d) Enhanced action on technology development and transfer to support action on mitigation and adaptation; and

- e) Enhanced action on the provision of financial resources and investment to support action on mitigation and adaptation and technology cooperation.

The conference adopted a number of decisions on adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and financing.

Several observations could be made on the level of preparations and participation at the COP 14 respectively. It is necessary to make thorough preparations at both national level, and if possible, even at the regional level as a Member State of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Such a preparation would enable formulation of national and common regional positions likely to have greater influence on the negotiation process than happened during COP 14. Secondly, it is important to continuously engage the National Focal Point and head of delegation during the negotiations in order to provide further input into their respective presentations in *ad hoc* working groups based on emerging texts formulated at the conference. It is also useful to follow up on specific issues throughout the conference and in the specially organized side events. Upon return from the conference, it is recommended that the National Focal Point immediately convenes feedback meetings to stakeholders who contributed to the preparatory process and those likely to be affected by the decisions made at the COP.

Based on the decisions that were made at the COP 14, a number of issues need to be taken up such as holding feedback sessions with stakeholders on the outcomes of the conference as highlighted earlier; intensifying public awareness as there still is a knowledge gap at the local level on climate change; develop capacity building programmes for institutions and communities involved in climate change management; and continued collaboration with the National Focal Point during preparations for the fifteenth session of the COP which will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark from 30 November-11 December 2009.

