

Volume 10

Issue 1: January – June 2014



Nature's Voice

World Environment Day 2014:
Vulnerable Ecosystems and
Climate Change



Centre for Environmental
Policy and Advocacy



A word from the Executive Director

WILLIAM CHADZA

World Environment Day, which falls on June 5th each year is commemorated by the United Nations as a special day to encourage worldwide awareness and action for the environment, stimulate political attention and action, and strengthen personal commitments to environmental preservation. The day was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 and is annually commemorated.

On the same day, the General Assembly created the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which is now the United Nations' principal agency for environmental action. The UNEP annually decides on an international theme under which UN member states are expected to celebrate World Environment Day (WED). In 2014 the international theme is "Small Island Developing States and Climate Change". In Malawi, the international theme gets translated into a local theme by the Environmental Affairs Department. For this year, WED's theme is "Vulnerable Ecosystems and Climate Change" or in the national language (Chichewa), "Tisamale chilengedwe kuti tipewe mavuto akudza kamba ka kusintha kwanyengo".

As its contribution to WED, the Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA) compiled articles relevant to its advocacy for sustainable environment and natural resource management and has published these as a supplement of a major Malawi newspaper daily.

As a follow through to that contribution, we are publishing this special international edition of Nature's Voice containing articles and blogs written by our colleagues from Kenya, Senegal, Nepal, Philippines and other parts of the world who have adopted environmental protection as their main advocacy.

As CEPA continues its work in helping build a Malawi that one day will hopefully become a just and equitable society promoting sustainable development, we are strengthened and inspired, knowing that like-minded individuals and institutions thousands of kilometers away have been relentlessly plodding on with our cause, despite what sometimes seems to be a thankless task of saving the environment.

Because humankind has been remiss in taking care of its environment and has caused it to wreak havoc, we should work even harder to correct these wrongs before it is too late. We are after all one world; a world whose fate we hold in our hands.



From the Editor's Desk

DORIS S. NUVAL

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As we celebrate World Environment Day, we are pleased to present to you Nature's Voice's first international issue with pieces written by CEPA's counterparts abroad who responded to the call for informative and educational articles for publication.

In this issue, we learn about how Senegal has pioneered in accessing international adaptation funds by establishing its own national implementing entity (NIE); leading the way for almost all their African colleagues who should take the cue from them and make NIE a reality in their own countries. Shweta Dhoubhadel of CARE Nepal takes us to the foothills of the Himalayas to a village which built bio engineering embankments, thereby successfully minimizing and increasing the adaptive capacity of the local people to the adverse impacts of climate change. From the Philippines, netizens tell us what they'll do for the environment to celebrate World Environment Day as their contribution to the event.

On the local front, we have a wealth of materials informing our readers of the activities CEPA and its partners here in Malawi are doing in the sections "On the Ground Running" and "Advocacy and Policy Front"; and a special feature on how President Mutharika is expected to walk his talk in his pursuit of a sustainable environment.

On World Environment Day, we dedicate this international issue to Mother Earth and her inhabitants who have made it their business to care for and nurture her; that she may care and nurture them in return.

Yours,

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Cepa and ECRP Contribute to Development of Malawi's Climate Change Policy

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Climate change is manifested in various ways in Malawi; major among these extreme weather events being floods, droughts and dry spells. Floods and droughts have alternated along the lakeshore and in the Shire Valley; flooding often caused by heavy rainfall over a short period of time. In most instances, villages not directly affected by the heavy rainfall may also flood because they are located downstream from the rain catchment. These floods are exacerbated by heavy deforestation that has taken place in most parts of the country. Droughts and dry spells have resulted in poor yields or total crop failure, leading to serious food shortages, hunger and malnutrition. The unpredictable rainfall patterns are increasingly putting the viability of upland field cultivation in danger; driving farmers to cultivate in low lying dambos where they exist. Tragically, floods and droughts have resulted in overall reduction of community resilience; making the already disadvantaged and marginalized sector even more so.

In 2009, the Government of Malawi added Managing Climate Change and Natural Resources and Environment as one of the nine priorities in its medium-term strategy for reducing poverty and achieving growth-led economic development. In addition, Malawi has made a number of climate change adaptation policy statements under various existing sectoral policies. However, these sectoral policy instruments neither provide a broad overview of the impact of climate change nor a coordinated policy response.

As climate change impacts worsen, measures to address these impacts are now increasingly becoming important areas of work which require policy direction. Overall, climate change brings with it a whole range of new governance and management challenges; economic and financial mechanisms, and community action needs.

In 2012, the Government of Malawi commenced the process of developing a National Climate Change Policy. To contribute to this process, the Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA) found it imperative to review the existing climate change related policy instruments and the institutional framework. This was done as part of the Enhancing Community Resilience Programme (ECRP) which is supported by UKaid, Irish Aid and Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition to the review, CEPA conducted consultations with relevant civil society organizations to identify the policy priorities that National Climate Change Policy could address.



A villager from Chapananga, Chikwawa braves the floods to take home firewood.

The policy priority areas that were proposed by CEPA included:

Adaptation and Mitigation

The policy must enhance adaptation and mitigation in agriculture, energy, industrial processes, waste management, forestry, water resources and wildlife sectors. The current draft of the policy highlights measures such as climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy, clean development mechanisms (CDM), voluntary carbon markets, reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) to address impacts of climate change. By providing policy direction on adaptation and mitigation in the stated sectors, the draft policy will help to reduce impacts of climate change.

Awareness, Education and Human Resources Development

Climate change is a relatively new concern in Malawi. While many stakeholders are making efforts to address the issue of climate change, there is still a limited understanding of adaptation and the various strategies amongst government agencies, civil society and local communities. The policy must identify this area to raise the necessary public awareness and undertake capacity building efforts to improve understanding, build skills and develop, transfer or exchange knowledge, expertise and technologies to effectively address climate change impacts. The current draft policy strives to enhance research, technology and systematic observation for climate change management, supported by appropriate capacity development and dedicated financing.

Climate Change Financing

Climate change imposes additional costs on development budgets. It is imperative that the policy must mainstream climate change adaptation and mitigation costs into the national budget and ensure that funding from development partners provides new and additional resources. In addition, the policy should establish a climate change fund at a national level for better coordination and implementation of climate change commitments, policies, programmes and projects. Adequate financing for climate change will enable implementation of activities aimed at addressing the impacts of climate change. The draft policy prioritizes financing of climate change management activities through increased national budgetary allocation, improved capacity to access to international climate financing (both multilateral and bilateral) and involvement of the private sector.



*Conservation
Agriculture: One of
the strategies being
promoted to adapt
to climate change
impacts*



President Arthur Peter Mutharika

Expected to Walk the Talk Towards a Sustainable Future

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His Excellency, Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika was among the twelve presidential candidates who committed to sustainable climate change, environment and natural resources management. A week before the tripartite elections last May, the Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA) and Association for Environmental Journalists (AEJ) engaged all the presidential candidates on specific environmental related priority areas.

The commitment document signed by all the presidential candidates included that the new government should:

- Strengthen operations of local government institutions to manage waste and implement public private partnership arrangements to improve waste management;
- Not to sign mining contracts that DO NOT have a transparent environmental and social impact assessment;
- Invest in research and strengthen linkages between climate change, environment and natural resources management and academia and development;
- Create a SEPARATE VOTE for disaster risk management in the national budget;
- Functionalize ADMARCs to improve farmers access to agricultural markets;
- Support practical climate smart technologies to enhance community resilience to climate change effects;
- Provide alternative income generating sources to charcoal producers, plant more trees and monitor the survival of planted trees;
- Reduce tariffs on solar energy devices to promote localized renewable energy which is currently a major setback to environmental sustainability and community resilience to climate impacts;
- Improve budget allocations to all climate change, environment and natural resources related sectors; and
- Introduce, strengthen, implement and enforce effective environmental policies and laws.

This initiative was informed by the reality of worsening environmental degradation despite the existence of good policies and legal frameworks to conserve and manage natural resources in Malawi and by the country's vulnerability to adverse impacts of climate change and related extreme weather events.

The impacts of climate change are manifested through dry spells, seasonal droughts, intense rainfall and riverine and flush floods. These have adversely impacted food security, water quality, energy and the sustainable livelihoods of rural communities. Although the government of Malawi and non-governmental organizations are supporting climate change adaptation interventions, the impacts of climate change are still significant and continue to affect livelihoods. This is partly due to limited prioritization of climate change management in terms of resource allocation and implementation despite its acknowledgement



The president-elect signing the commitment in May 2014.



The President-elect handing over the signed commitment to CEPA and AEJ a few days before elections.

in policy and planning documents. This contributes to uncoordinated efforts among players. Currently, Malawi has not yet finalized its climate change policy and continues to rely on sectoral policies and on an old National Adaptation Programme of Action which has suffered from non-implementation.

To support the initiative, CEPA and AEJ quote former UN chief Kofi Annan who once said the process begins with political parties. “We have the means and ways of dealing with the challenges we have but only if there is political will”. CEPA and AEJ are therefore hopeful that His Excellency the President, Arthur Peter Mutharika will walk the talk. Professor Mutharika said that the country’s environment has been abused and needs to be restored. He also said it is high time Malawians learned from rather than condemn the Kayelekela issue. While signing and before turning over the document, then President-elect Metharika said “mining is a public issue and every citizen is supposed to be updated on such projects. I promise not to keep such deals a secret.”

Presidential candidates of United Democratic Front, Peoples Party, Malawi Congress Party, People’s Transformation Party, New Labour Party’s, People’s Progressive Movement, Tisintha Alliance and Mafunde, National Salvation Front, Umodzi Party’s, Chipani cha Pfuko and United Independent Party also signed the commitment. The aspiring presidential candidates told the press that the country needed laws with stiffer penalties for the perpetrators causing environmental degradation and that mining contracts needed closer scrutiny. Almost all candidates promised to support environmental management regardless of the outcome of the elections.

CEPA and AEJ together with other stakeholders plan to engage His Excellency to ensure that the signed commitment is implemented. While this does not undermine the role of Malawians in managing their environment, it behooves national leadership to shape a sustainable future for the country.

CEPA and AEJ join the nation in congratulating Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika on his election as President of the Republic of Malawi. We would also like to extend our gratitude to all the presidential candidates who made the commitment. We believe that we can work together for the future of our nation.



NAPs: An Opportunity for Adaptation Financing and Key Entry Point for Scaling-Up CBA Approaches

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It is indisputable that climate change heavily affects peoples' livelihoods and countries' economies. Malawi for instance faces climate related disasters every year which include droughts, floods and landslides. These have over the past two decades resulted in destruction and loss of crops and properties leading to hunger, famine, diseases and loss of life. Various efforts have been undertaken to revert the impacts of climate change, most of which have generally focused on climate change mitigation rather than adaptation. Such interventions include construction of water conservation structures, improved food storage, improved energy saving stoves and introduction clean energy technologies. These interventions are arguably more short term focused than long term in nature.

It is a timely and welcome idea that countries globally are embracing the idea of focusing on the long-term plans for mitigating and adapting to the changing climate. Recent efforts on the policy front have leaned towards adaptation to climate change rather than mitigation. This comes from the understanding that we are living in the world where climate change is a reality and that there is need to initiate measures to ensure that people live with the current conditions by adjusting their forms of livelihoods practices to suit the changing climate. Since climate change cannot be easily reverted therefore the world should accept the reality and adjust their way of living accordingly.

Climate change adaptation efforts have been initiated by various countries in the recent past through the development of national climate change policies and National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA). Malawi is in the process of developing the climate change policy which is aimed at coordinating Malawian efforts towards addressing the impacts of climate change. The policy is currently in draft form and awaits approval by Parliament. The NAPA outlines immediate adaptation needs for the country for immediate action. However, Malawi's NAPA outlived its usefulness by end 2012 and therefore needs a review and a set of new priorities; having arguably failed to come up with successful local or community based adaptation projects or programmes or let alone provide for the coordination of local stakeholder development efforts towards climate change adaptation.

While there is a great need for meeting the immediate adaptation needs for a country through NAPAs, efforts also have to be directed towards addressing the long term needs. In this regard, there have been recent calls on the international scene for countries to consider developing National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) which will highlight the long-term adaptation needs of a country. The idea is that the development and review of the NAPAs will be guided by the NAPs thereby easing the process of developing NAPAs since the new set of immediate adaptation needs will be drawn from NAPs. The NAPs form a good basis for sustainable development of local or community adaptation projects or programmes which assist in building community resilience to climate change. The United Nations Framework Convention Climate Change (UNFCCC)

produced guidelines for developing NAPs which to some are generally regarded as complex. However, efforts have recently been made by various international organizations to simplify the guidelines for easy understanding and following by countries.

NAPs have turned out to be one of the prerequisites for accessing some adaptation funding mechanisms under the UNFCCC set-up. NAPs also are regarded as a benchmark for designing, evaluating and scaling up local climate change adaptation efforts. In her message during the Community Based Adaptation (CBA8) conference held recently in Kathmandu, Nepal, Christina Figueires, the UNFCCC Executive Secretary emphasized the need for countries to develop NAPs. She informed the CBA8 participants that NAPs are a key entry point for scaling up community based adaptation approaches into the broader policy framework of governments. She therefore urged countries immediately embrace the concept and start making plans and efforts towards developing the NAPs.

Some Least Developing Countries (LDC) such as Nepal and Senegal have already worked on the development of their respective NAPs and stand to benefit from the LDC adaptation funds and other such benefits in the near future. These countries have made strides in terms of community based adaptation projects and programmes, having been developed and implemented with the proper resources. It is therefore important that Malawi, which is also a party to the UNFCCC, increases and fast tracks its moves towards not just embracing the necessity of having a NAP, but more importantly of completing its NAP in order to afford the country a better chance of benefiting from available international adaptation initiatives.



Rural Villages Adapt to Climate Change in Nepal

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Farm Tole of Basudevpur Village Development Committee (VDC), Banke district in Nepal on the banks of Duduwa River is highly vulnerable to inundations and siltation due to floods, as well as to river bank erosion and shifting canals of the river. On 26th August 2006, 11 houses in the village were washed away by the floods while most of the agricultural fields were lost being covered by sand. Floods have occurred nearly every year since the last five years and are increasing in frequency forcing most of the residents to be displaced at least part of the year. In 2011, out of the 31 families that resided in the village, only three families used to live there permanently due to the flood hazards especially during the monsoon season.

Under the Hariyo Ban Program, CARE Nepal conducted an Underlying Causes of Poverty and Vulnerability Analysis (UCPVA) of the VDC and identified Basudevpur Village as the most vulnerable in the VDC and intervened first with a Community Learning and Action Center (CLAC). In this intervention, 25 women from the poorest and most vulnerable families in the village met for 16 weeks for sensitization and discussions on the contemporary and local issues such as climate change, conservation, sustainability, human rights and local development. The inhabitants of Farm Tole, with support and facilitation from Hariyo Ban Program, CARE Nepal then prepared a Community based Adaptation Plan of Action (CAPA) identifying vulnerabilities, vulnerable and adaptation options with their prioritization and implementation of those adaptation options.

Integrated Community Based Adaptation Plan of Action was prepared and implemented with support from Hariyo Ban Program to minimize and increase adaptive capacity of the local people to adverse impacts of climate change. The process of preparation and implementation of the adaptation plan consists of awareness building, followed by vulnerability assessment, preparation of adaptation activity plan based on identified vulnerabilities with a monitoring framework. Relevant stakeholders from different sectors such as forest and biodiversity, agriculture and food security, water and energy, infrastructure, health, public services, and climatic induced disaster risk reduction are consulted during adaptation plan preparation. The adaptation plans are then endorsed by the general assembly of the CFUG before implementation.

Bio engineering embankments were prepared during the process as part of the CAPA of the Farm Tole community and with social mobilization for volunteer labor to minimize the risk of flooding, siltation and river bank erosion. Cactus and bamboo along the whole stretch of the river bank beside the settlement area of the community were planted as a bio engineering setup. Besides these, alternative energy technologies such as Improved Cook Stoves (ICS) or biogas have been installed in each of the households in the village. This has led to a drastic decrease in the consumption of fuel wood or the dependence on forest resources. The costs for the installation of the alternative energy technologies were leveraged from Alternative Energy Promotion Center, a government



Mushroom produced in Basudevpur, Banke



Women of Huslangkot now collect water from taps close to their homes.

institution and WWF TAL. CARE Nepal assisted the community in approaching and managing the resources leveraged from different sources to implement different activities planned under the CAPA.

Likewise, the members of CLAC have conducted numerous campaigns and successfully raised the school enrolment of the children to 100 percent and constructed a toilet in each household in the village. They have also completed the maintenance of the road which links the village with Nepalgunj as well as improved the only irrigation system in the village with installation of irrigation pump provided by the District Plant Resources Office.

In addition, after receiving specific trainings and support for some machinery for processing and packaging from CARE Nepal, each household in the village has started diversifying their livelihood activities to adapt to climate change. They have already started commercial mushroom farming, cultivation of different vegetables and non-timber forest products (NTFP) as asparagus (with technical support by District Plant Resource Office) and organic farming.

Farm Tole was declared on June 11, 2013 as a model village in Banke District for other communities trying to adapt to the changing climate by representatives from District Development Committee office, District Forest Office, District Agriculture Development Office, Federation of Community Forest User Groups (FECOFUN), CARE Nepal, Hariyo Ban Program Consortium and community.

Collaborating and coordinating with different government line agencies, not-for-profit organizations, private and public institutions have become the norm to finance technically and socio-culturally sound initiatives to enhance adaptive capacity and resilience of the most vulnerable communities.

CARE Nepal has once again proven that active participation and ownership of projects by the communities are essential ingredients for the success of any development initiative.



Senegalese NIE Makes Direct Access a Reality

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“It is important that the National Implementing Entity is an independent institution but at the same time good at collaborating with both governmental bodies and NGOs.”

- CSO stakeholder-

Senegal, located in the inter-tropical area, is a flat country with an average altitude of 200m. It is bordered to the west by the Atlantic Ocean, to the north by Mauritania, to the east by Mali and the south by Guinea. It is a Least Developed Country (LDC) with a GDP estimated at US\$ 1,600 in 2008 (UNDP, 2008). Its economy, essentially agricultural, has been subject to heavy constraints such as desertification and climate variability which are compromising its sustainable development prospects. These last three decades it has experienced cycles of drought which have led to a significant loss of vegetation and a drastic drop in groundwater levels that have created a strong shift in isohyets (map coordinates) towards the south. To that can be added coastal erosion which affects strategic sectors of the Senegalese economy (fishing, agriculture and tourism). Large cities along the Atlantic coast (Dakar, Saint-Louis, Rufisque, Saly, Joal, etc.) are concerned with the encroachment of the sea. For these areas, the rates of recession vary substantially between 1 and 2 m per year (Unesco-loc, 2012).

The Centre de Suivi Ecologique (CSE- Ecological Monitoring Centre) was nominated by the Supervision Authority on a proposal from the Designated National Authority (the Directorate of Environment) as the Senegalese candidate for the accreditation as National Implementing Entity to the Adaptation Fund after a skills assessment on the fiduciary plan and project management; examination of how the institution fights against fraud and corruption and a study on institution partnerships with governmental structures and development partners. The CSE accreditation process lasted 6 months.

Designated as a national entity for accreditation in order to gain direct access to the financial resources of the Adaptation Fund, CSE becomes at the same time, the implementing institution responsible for receiving project proposals and submitting them after verifying their compliance with the priorities, policies and strategic direction of the Fund. It is also responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of projects funded through the Adaptation Fund and ensures that projects comply with all the administrative, financial and technical requirements.

The accreditation of the first National Implementing Entity at the 9th Adaptation Fund Board Meeting in March 2010 – The CSE – was a historic milestone. It marked the first concrete achievement of the direct access approach in climate financing. The Approval of the first projects followed shortly afterwards marking the beginning of the implementation phase. The CSE successfully supported the submission by Senegal of a project on ‘Adaptation to Coastal Erosion in Vulnerable Areas’ which is one of the projects developed to reduce the incidence of coastal erosion on tourism and fishing infrastructures, as well as on habitats and the environment.

The project on ‘Adaptation to Coastal Erosion in Vulnerable Areas in Senegal’ is in line with the national priorities as identified under the National Adaptation Program Action (NAPA).



“Direct access is an unprecedented act of empowerment and ownership, by giving to vulnerable countries the chance to take over the management of their climate development resources and the implementation of programs in their own hands.”

- Senegal NIE Contact Person -



Woman processing fish in new facilities in Saly

The NAPA Senegal identified and prioritized three vulnerable sectors to climate change which are water resources, agriculture and coastal areas. Adaptation options have also been identified for these sectors such as the battle against soil salinity with anti-salt dikes; construction of coastal protection facilities, the adoption of legislative and institutional measures and capacity building.

This project is implemented along the “Petite Côte” in Joal, Rufisque and Saly. The “Petite Côte” includes the country’s largest tourist infrastructure which is located at Saly and the major national fishing port of Joal which is surrounded by a rich mangrove ecosystem. This ecosystem serves as both a potential source of energy (food, wood, etc.) for the population and of biodiversity for many species of animals and fish. It also helps mitigate the rising levels of salinity that are harmful to agriculture.

The main activities identified in this project are the rehabilitation of the anti-salt dike at Joal to boost rice production and reduce salinization of arable lands, the creation of fish smoking facilities suitable for reducing pollution and pressure on timber resources, the restoration of the infrastructure around the fishing port

of Joal-Fadiouth, the awareness raising and capacity building for local people on adaptation techniques concerning climate change in particular, in relation to coastal erosion.

CSOs have not fully participated in the implementation of the project and the involvement of recipient organizations as executing agencies was not visible throughout the whole process. The execution of the project is undertaken by different organizations with diverse backgrounds: government, CSOs, CBOs, research institutions, etc. The different entities chosen as implementers (the Department of Environment and Classified Institutions (DEEC) under the authority of the environment ministry, the NGO Green Senegal and Joal’s association called “Dynamique Femme”) work closely with the local communities which undertake several tasks in the implementation of the project with respective capabilities.

The approval of the Senegalese project was a significant test for the direct access mechanism to Adaptation Fund resources. And experiences developed by the NIE could very well serve as an institutional mechanism in decentralizing management of Climate Finance. That said, it is most important for the project’s viability and success to increase its ownership by local people. There is also a need to strengthen capacity on local communication and create opportunities that benefit communities and the environment.



Women cultivating rice in Joal, Senegal



The Mainstreaming of Participatory Scenario Planning in Kenya

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Editor's Notes:

Last March, the Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONECC) flew in two experts from Kenya who conducted a workshop for CISONECC on participatory scenario planning (PSP) for climate adaptation which has been mainstreamed and is yielding positive results in Kenya. In a nutshell, PSP is a practice which uses climate information in order that communities and local governments may:

- Make more informed anticipatory and flexible decisions
- Enable effective and timely risk management,
- Develop adapted and diversified livelihood options,
- Reduce vulnerability

This inter-country knowledge transfer was a first for CISONECC (www.cisonecc.org) and clearly one of the most productive and stimulating workshops the network has gone through.

Emma Bowa and Joseph Ndiritu of CARE Kenya which implements PSP through its Adaptation Learning Program (ALP) share their PSP success stories with CEPA.

Learning what to plant and when... Using climate forecasts for early decision making and contingency planning

Noor Jelle is a 30 year old man from the Somali community living in Fafi District, Garissa County. Garissa is located in the north eastern part of Kenya where communities have traditionally survived as pastoralists. Noor is married with children and lives with his extended family including his ageing father. For centuries, Noor's community has used indigenous methods to predict seasonal weather patterns. This information is based on changes observed in the behaviour of birds and insects, the condition of plants, temperature changes and wind patterns among other things. However, with the changing climate patterns, it is becoming more and more difficult for the community to accurately predict and plan for the coming seasons. Prolonged droughts and unpredictable rainfall patterns experienced over recent decades have resulted in Noor's family losing their once large herds of camels and cattle.



Noor Jelle at his home in Guyo - Garissa County

The family has since been forced into an agro-pastoralist way of life, keeping a few goats and practicing rain fed crop farming, growing mainly maize. In 2011, the Horn of Africa experienced a food crisis that was described as one of the worst in the last 60 years. Noor's family was hard hit by the crisis, which followed two consecutive poor rainy seasons and rising food prices. Aid agencies working in the area including CARE, responded by providing short term humanitarian assistance to help the community survive the drought. Although the community expressed much appreciation for this support, what

they really need are longer term initiatives that will strengthen their ability to cope with the increasingly frequent and prolonged droughts as well as the changing climate pattern in the area.

“When we receive temperature and rain information in degrees and millimetres, for most of us it makes no sense as we don’t really know what it means. It would be better if the information was more focused on letting the community know what we could grow, when. .” says Noor.

ALP Community Stories

For many years in Kenya, CARE has been championing the empowerment of vulnerable communities, supporting them to take their destiny into their own hands and maintain their dignity. In 2011, the Adaptation Learning Programme (ALP) in CARE discovered that climate information was not being used effectively in planning for agro-pastoral activities and that this was contributing to higher drought and climate related losses. Community members expressed a real need for simple and relevant climate information for their use.

ALP in Kenya is using Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP) workshops as an innovative and inclusive way of communicating climate information to communities and government departments. One and a half day workshops are carried out twice a year just after the national seasonal forecast has been released by the Kenya Meteorological Department (KMD). Workshop participants include the meteorological department, community members, local government departments and local NGOs who share their knowledge about past and future climate forecasts.

The workshops integrate scientific forecasts and local community knowledge to produce simple and locally relevant climate information that is then shared throughout the community through local communication channels such as mosques and chief’s meetings. “We have been struggling with the concept of climate change but when ALP interacted with us and talked to us about it, we gained some interest in better understanding and using climate information from the Kenya Meteorological Department” reports Noor, “from the workshops we received information on rainfall and temperature, additional advice on what to plant, when, where to get inputs and technical support and information on storage and even marketing in case the harvest was really good.



*Elba Ali, Noor Jelle’s wife,
preparing her produce*

The information is communicated in Somali, our local language, for the two main livelihoods groups- pastoralist and agro-pastoralist.’

According to Noor, at the end of the Oct-Dec 2011 rainy season, the community received a bumper harvest and minimal losses because they had received relevant information on storage and preservation of their harvest. They also received information that has enabled them to plant more drought resistant and early maturing seed varieties of maize, sorghum and cow peas as well as fodder which they can later sell to the pastoralist groups. Noor has continued to use climate information, and instead of selling as he had planned, he is now storing the remaining maize to provide food security during the coming season of predicted low rainfall. Elba, Noor’s wife agrees, ‘it is amazing how much difference the seemingly little information we received at the community bazaar [meeting] is making in our lives- our diet is now varied, we are not struggling as much to educate our children and we are even discovering new markets for what we grow- such as the fodder for the pastoralists. We don’t depend solely on relief food as in the past and we have been sharing whatever reaches us with the more needy families.’

ALP in Kenya is facilitating better use of climate information to strengthen the ability of individuals like Noor Jelle and other members of the Guyo community to make more informed livelihood decisions and cope with drought and climate related disasters. Through the program the community has discussed and agreed on its development goals, analysed its vulnerability and capacity to cope with climate related disasters and developed plans for adaptation. In north eastern Kenya, CARE is supporting this community and others to take advantage of emerging opportunities and to strengthen their resilience to recurrent droughts and other climate related threats to food security.



Public Pressure Yields Positive Results for Environment

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At a time when the country is facing several challenges including the adverse impacts of climate change, Malawi has in the recent past faced other environmental challenges which should have been avoidable. The past six months have kept environmental practitioners extremely busy as they had to deal with issues which could easily have been prevented. Such issues include the logging of trees in Luwawa Forest in Mzimba, the fire incident of Farmers Organization Limited in Blantyre and the cutting of historical M'bawa (mahogany) trees along Zomba road done on the pretext of road construction. Environmentalists strongly feel that if the law was enforced, these disasters-in-the-making could have been prevented.

First on the list is an agricultural chemical storage facility of Farmers Organization Limited in Chitawira which caught fire around mid-March 2014 in Blantyre. According to the organization's officials, the fire which gutted the building was caused by an electrical fault. Because firefighters were unable to extinguish the fire, it took more than three days to quell it and much longer for the smell of burning and harmful agricultural chemicals to disappear.

Because these chemicals find their way to the Naperi River located behind the burned office, residents in the surrounding areas were warned not to drink the infected water.

The second incident involved the rude awakening of the public to the unprecedented logging of trees of Luwawa Forest in Mzimba which covers 8933.5 ha. The loggers claimed that they had been granted a logging licence to cut the trees by the Department of Forestry. Alarmed stakeholders found this unusual as the area has for years been considered an amenity area - an important water catchment area and an area of outstanding natural beauty in a government forestry reserve. According to George Wardlow, Managing Director of the Luwawa Forest Lodge "if the logging is allowed to continue, it will seriously affect tourism and threaten the environment around the dam which is an important wetland area providing habitat to a number of animal, birds and plant species".

Bewailing the fact that a license was given without an environmental impact assessment, George Wardlow with support from passionate co-environmentalists, managed to obtain an injunction to stop the logging. As a response, an emergency meeting was called by the Mzimba District Commissioner's Office on April 24th. Eventually, the cutting of trees was stopped.

Lastly, in April 2014, African mahogany or Mbawa trees planted during colonial times were being cut down in Zomba due to "road improvements". Mbawa trees take 60-100 years to mature to their full size.



Some of the mahogany trees cut down in Zomba last April



Some trees cut outside the peg mark in Zomba.

The concern arose from the realization that more trees were been felled than was previously agreed on by the Zomba Stakeholder Environmental sub-committee of the Zomba City Council; with some trees being cut down outside the marked road boundary. In addition to this, the recommendations contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the project had not been followed; e.g, “the general public expressed concern not to cut the historic Mbawa trees (*Angolensis* sp.) growing along the M3 road in the City.” The EIA further says “the contractor was advised to among others: reroute if possible to avoid sensitive areas, minimize the cutting of trees and vegetation and avoid areas of historic interest”. The EIA report clearly states that Mbawa trees should NOT be cut and no historical buildings should be destroyed.

Two days after this development, environmentalists united to immediately stop this malpractice and to remind the road contractors of the initial agreement in the EIA. Leadership for Environment and Development for Southern and Eastern Africa (LEADSEA) led stakeholders in the battle which included sending numerous text messages and emails, and barraging the Zomba City Council with calls to stop this unlawful tree cutting. An injunction was obtained and a meeting between stakeholders and the Zomba City Council took place to discuss pertinent issues.

Within three days of that meeting, a significant portion of the general public became aware of the issue and joined the bandwagon to stop the senseless cutting of historical trees. Eventually, it was decided to abort the felling of trees ... but only after thirteen of them had been killed.

The positive results from two of these three incidents brought about largely by dissenting public opinion and vigilant stakeholders only proves that when properly informed and enlightened, collective action is the key to saving the environment.



Universal Natural Resources Bylaws Drafted for Mwanza District

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The Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA) with funding from Christian Aid under Community Economic Improvement Project (COMEIP, 2011-2014) conducted a baseline survey on the status of natural resources in Mwanza District. The results of the survey indicated that the district had enormous challenges in the safeguarding and management of these precious resources vital for sustaining people's livelihoods.

COMEIP project aims at building a community resilient to shocks and threats either from climate or market forces by improving household income for marginalised small scale producers such as women, the elderly, orphans and other vulnerable groups, mainly through on-farm activities; but also from facilitating improved management and use of land and water resources at community and household levels. In line with COMEIP objectives, CEPA organised dialogue sessions in Senior Chief Kanduku, Senior Chief Nthache and Sub TA Govati in order to give a chance to the communities to identify gaps in the management of natural resources. The communities were also tasked to identify practical and acceptable mechanisms that would help arrest and contain the deteriorating situation of natural resources in the area.

CEPA in collaboration with Mwanza District Forestry Office (DFO) and Community Development Office (CDO) organised two dialogue sessions at Khudzi Telecenter and at Thambani Agriculture office in the area of Senior Chief Kanduku. The participants to the two sessions included Senior Chief, Sub-TA, the Group Village Headmen, Village Headmen, representatives from different local development committees and local community members from within COMEIP impact areas. The dialogue sessions were graced by the presence of the Members of Parliament (MP) for the two Mwanza constituencies; Hon. Nicholas Dausi, MP for Mwanza North; and Hon. Paul Chibingu, MP for Mwanza Central.

One of the major outcomes of the dialogue sessions indicated that there are massive lapses in the policies and regulations that govern natural resources utilisation and management in Mwanza District. The sessions also revealed that there is lack of capacity in the community development structures to enforce policies and regulations in managing natural resources in the district.

A consensus was later reached by the session participants to formulate universal district natural resources bylaws to be used by them to reduce and eventually reverse the degradation of natural resources. Participants also drafted the roles of various stakeholders which included the Mwanza District Council, Chiefs as custodians of the land, the local development committees, and the local communities in the management of the endangered natural resources in the district. The participants developed guidelines for controlling access and utilisation of natural resources by individuals or any organisation in the district in order to curb overexploitation of natural resources and hold the responsible culprits accountable.



District Community Development Officer making remarks during a dialogue session at Thambani Agriculture Conference Centre Hall in Sub-TA Govati in Mwanza District



A participant making a point during a dialogue session at Khudzi Telecenter in Senior Chief Kanduku

The draft bylaws were handed over to a legal expert for further review and harmonisation and later presented to Mwanza district stakeholders for familiarisation in ensure smooth implementation. The bylaws will subsequently be presented to Mwanza District Council and the Director of Forestry for validation before being enforced.

The developed universal natural resources bylaws Mwanza is the first ever initiative done by the locals for implementation in a district in Malawi. The bylaws will assist in managing the degraded natural resources and eventually effectively improve water availability in rivers, improve rainfall availability, increase forest cover and enhance management of proposed mining activities in Mwanza which will initially affect people's livelihoods positively and therefore ensure that the objectives and goals set by COMEIP in the district are met.



Cowfa Trained on Budget and Policy Analysis

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Budget and policy processes are key elements that drive the socioeconomic development of countries. A policy is a principle or protocol that guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. A good policy is a tool which makes administration easier and allows people to get on with the organizations or institutions core business more efficiently and effectively. Policy analysis defines policy related problems and the goals, examines the arguments, and analyzes implementation of the policy. Budget, on the other hand, is a statement in monetary terms of resources required to support organizational or institutional operations or expected to be raised and to be used for specific activity items during a given period of time. Budget can be used to compel planning, co-ordinate activities, as a basis for control and accountability, and authorization of expenditure. Budget analysis is a tool for understanding the intent and possible impact of government's plans for raising and spending public resources. Understanding the policy and budget process by different categories of people especially women in the country is necessary in finding gaps relevant for advocacy and lobbying.

From this understanding, ActionAid through the Ready for Anything Project engaged Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONNECC) to train women leaders in Malawi on policy and budget analysis. Ready for Anything project is an initiative by ActionAid Malawi to strengthen the advocacy capacity of Coalition of Women Farmers (COWFA), their organisations and communities in the four districts of Rumphi, Neno, Chiradzulu and Machinga in Malawi. The project aims at designing and implementing resilience building interventions and policy advocacy initiatives. The

project builds on existing work in the four Local Rights Programmes (LRPs) of Rumphi, Neno, Chiradzulu, and Machinga and draws on and feeds into the international project.

The project has three outputs:

- output 1 aims to ensure that 840 women in poor and vulnerable communities are able to identify risks and implement risk reduction plans;
- output 2 aims at ensuring that 28 communities adopt food security and sustainable livelihoods strategies that enhance their resilience; and
- output 3 aims at ensuring that the government behavior, practice and policy respond to the identified needs of the communities, with women playing an active role in influencing decision making.

In line with output 3 of the project, CISONNECC organized and conducted a workshop to train women farmers in conducting reviews of governments' budget and resilience policies and practices. The main objectives of the training was to enhance participants' understanding upon review of governments' resilience policies and practices; and to impart knowledge on the link between budget, policy and practice review to advocacy and lobbying. Trainees included 10 COWFA members: 6 COWFA NEC members and 4 District COWFA representatives, from Neno, Machinga, Rumphi and Chiradzulu. The training held in Lilongwe equipped the women with knowledge and understanding on the Malawi government's budget; its framework; Malawi budget processes and calendar; budget systems and approaches; budget monitoring and evaluation; and the elements of budget analysis. The women were taken through the practical example of district budget analysis study on climate change that was conducted by CEPA in 2012 in order to ensure they acquire skills on policy and budget analysis.



A Blog on Malawi Mining

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Mining billboard in Lilongwe

Earlier this year at the Great Rift Valley Mining Summit held in Lusaka, Zambia, Malawi's Minister of Mining John Bande stated that Malawi's mineral base is very diverse and its mining sector is relatively young. Bande indicated that companies are presently prospecting for radioactive minerals, rare earths, platinum group metals and gold, among other minerals and metals. Over the next decade, interest and investments in Malawi's mining sector are expected to grow along with the sector's contributions to the economy as outlined in the Mines and Minerals Policy introduced in 2013.

To inform exploration activities, a countrywide airborne geophysical survey was launched at the end of 2013 by the Government of Malawi with support from the World Bank and European Union under the Malawi Mining Governance and Growth Support Project. As a billboard in Lilongwe's City Centre declared, this survey is "unveiling the true mineral potential of Malawi". As of May 2014, 75 per cent of the country had been mapped.

Acquiring geological data from across Malawi is crucial. As Tom Butler, Global Head of Mining at the International Finance Corporation, explained during the annual Investing in African Mining Indaba held in South Africa in February 2014, "accessible information about geology is a public good, useful to investors and explorers, but also to policy makers and regulators and the public at large".

Accessible information about Malawi's mineral base must go hand in hand with greater access to information about the activities of all stakeholders in Malawi's mining sector. This includes sharing information on the reconnaissance, exploration and mining operations of companies, on the management, regulation and promotion of the sector by government, and on the work of civil society in ensuring Malawi's minerals benefit all Malawians.

For this reason, the blog Mining in Malawi (www.mininginmalawi.com) was started in November 2012. The aim is to help provide greater coverage of the extractive industries within Malawi, using an open online space. Ghana (Reporting Oil and Gas, <http://www.reportingoilandgas.org/>) and Uganda (Oil in Uganda, <http://www.oilinuganda.org/>) have similar online hubs which started as funded projects. Hitherto, Mining in Malawi is neither affiliated with nor funded by any entity.

When the blog was started, I explained that:

"We will be collecting, collating and commenting on news, research and initiatives in Malawi's extractive industry so that information is more widely and easily available for interested investors, concerned citizens, present political leaders, agitated activists, etc.

"With more information at our fingertips, we will be better placed to drive debate, inform policy, push for improving the investment climate and transparency in the sector and make progress in maximising the much-touted potential of the industry for national, community and household socio-economic growth."

Over the next few months, this space will be opened for other contributors. The hope is that those working in the sector will engage with Mining in Malawi to see that their activities and efforts are recorded online.

If you would like to contribute information or a post to Mining in Malawi, please email mininginmalawi@gmail.com. We welcome your feedback.



RIMES'

Commitment to Climate Change Adaptation

TANIA OUARIACHI

Information, Communication and Knowledge Management Specialist at the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia

Posted on:
Wednesday, March 19th, 2014

Regional and global assessments of climate change have revealed a trend of higher frequency of extreme climate and weather events. Since 2000, about 2.7 billion people in Asia and East Africa alone have been exposed to climatological and hydro-meteorological hazards (EMDAT).

The Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES), aiming at communities that are forearmed, forewarned and resilient to climate-related hazards, works on capacity building of: National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) in providing locally relevant prediction and forecast products; institutional users in translating information from these products into potential impacts and impact management options; and of end users in the application of these options.

RIMES, an international and intergovernmental institution owned and managed by its member States, evolved from the efforts of countries in Africa and Asia, in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, to establish a regional early warning system within a multi-hazard framework for the generation, communication, and application of early warning information and to build capacity of its member States.

In building climate resilience, RIMES works at three different levels: capacity building of NMHSs in the generation of downscaled climate projections, seasonal outlooks, and long-lead weather forecasts; training of institutions in climate-sensitive sectors in analyzing likely impacts, for use in developing adaptation and management options; and guiding end users, such as farmers and local water resource and disaster managers in implementing these options within a risk management framework to deal with the uncertainty that is inherent in climate projections and weather forecasts.

For example, in 2011 in Maldives, RIMES assisted the Maldives Meteorological Services in generating downscaled climate and sea level projections for use in national and local level planning, and facilitated the participatory identification of likely impacts based on these projections. In Bangladesh, Maldives, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka, RIMES trained sectoral users in 2013 on translation of forecast information into potential impacts, in collaboration with these countries' NMHSs, under the ESCAP-supported project on reducing risks of tsunami, storm surges, large waves and other natural hazards in low elevation coastal zones. Under the same project, RIMES established Climate Risk Management Field Schools (CRMFFS) in Tamil Nadu, India, facilitating farmers' experiential learning on crop-weather interaction and forecast application in farming decisions. These schools are also avenues for climate change risk and adaptation awareness. Demonstrations of climate information application are central to RIMES projects to advocate with end users and communities the benefits from application.

RIMES also facilitates the establishment and institutionalization of Monsoon Forum, a platform for NMHS-users dialogue, for increasing access to usable climate and weather information and for providing feedback on their application. Forums have been established in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam.

The efforts are matched with research, to increase understanding of climate change impacts on the local climate and risk patterns. Finally, RIMES aims to influence policy to consider climate risks in development planning. For example, in Tamil Nadu, India, RIMES has influenced the State's five-year planning process, with the consideration of climate risks in the identification of development targets.

In all these, RIMES has shown that building climate-resilient communities is possible through committed involvement of the NMHS, user institutions at national down to local levels, and communities

[read more: http://climate-l.iisd.org/guest-articles/rimes-commitment-to-climate-change-adaptation/](http://climate-l.iisd.org/guest-articles/rimes-commitment-to-climate-change-adaptation/)



Climate Change: A Challenge For Our Times



From CEPA's Facebook page, some posts answering the challenge: what are you going to do for Mother Earth on June 5th, World Environment Day:



Mikee Fajardo
Yes one of them is by helping plant trees by using Ecosia as our internet search engine
May 29 at 1:40pm



Patience Turyareeba
I think Zomba District is planning a local event in Malosa
May 29 at 2:31pm



Tom Arroyo
Why only 1 day in 365? Do something EVERY day!
May 29 at 2:37pm



Jerome L. Montemayor
For World Environment Day, I will contribute in our country's effort to protect and rehabilitate mangroves, beach forests, and other forests formations in the Yolanda (Haiyan) Corridor.
Because of climate change, she won't be the last big storm, so we all need to do our share in helping Mother Earth restore the balance of life.
June 1 at 5:52am

A BLOG FOR HUFFINGTON POST BY IAN SOMERHALDER

We are but two short weeks away from the UN's global World Environment Day celebrations on the 5th of June. This year, the theme focuses on the impacts of climate change on Small Island Developing States, our "canary in the coal mine" for what all low-lying and vulnerable areas will face in the not too distant future.

I am really looking forward to heading to Barbados, this year's WED host country, to witness firsthand the problems the island is facing and the creative solutions it is coming up with to adapt to these challenges. Barbados, a 430-square kilometer nation with a population of 270,000, is considered to be highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change -- from agricultural impacts to the destruction of its coastal ecosystems.

However, this small nation has taken big steps to reduce its climate footprint and to provide clean, renewable energy, and opportunities for green economic growth, to its people. Among other things, it has pledged to increase the share of renewable energy across the island to 29 percent of all electricity consumption by 2029. This would cut total electricity costs by an estimated \$283.5 million USD and reduce CO2 emissions by 4.5 million tons, according to the government.

World Environment Day 2014

The UN General Assembly declared 2014 as the International Year of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). World Environment Day (WED) 2014 was celebrated under the theme of SIDS, with the goal of raising awareness of their unique development challenges and successes regarding a range of environmental problems, including climate change, waste management, unsustainable consumption, degradation of natural resources, and extreme natural disasters

read more: <http://climate-l.iisd.org/events/world-environment-day-2014/>

Published by:
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