

NAPE LOBBY

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Climate change: Vulnerability and community efforts to address impacts

Uganda's Experience



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Climate change is one of the most hotly debated issues of today. Increasing global temperatures will impact all of us. There are more questions than answers, however, and sweeping statements on the subject made by public figures, often with little scientific understanding and or indigenous knowledge, only further confuses public opinion.

There are many theories pointing to the current climate crisis –lifestyle and over consumption, industrialization, technological advancement, energy choices. Some industrialized nations live in denial of the cause of climate crisis. The greatest challenge however, lies in evaluating the various theories. Many questions have been asked -Is the current climate crisis completely human-induced, as some very credible sources say, or only partly human-induced.? Is carbon dioxide even the real threat? If not, what is?

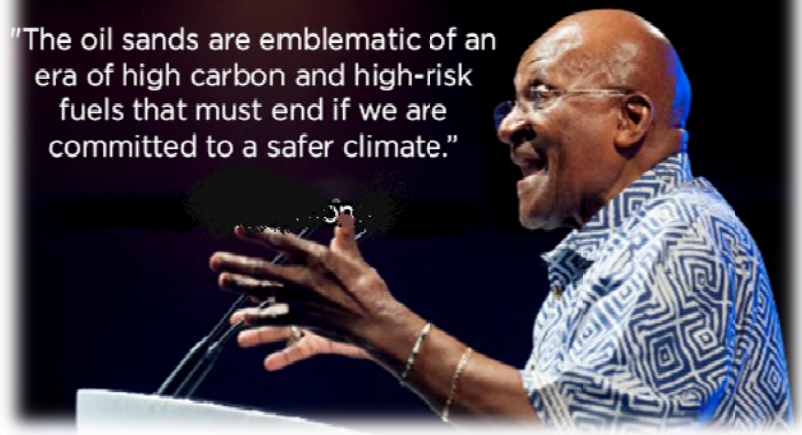
There however, good feasible policy options suggested for dealing with the climate crisis, and these include: carbon taxes, investments in renewable energy, green technology and infrastructure, and wiser lifestyle choices. These options are already being adopted in some parts of the world. But in Uganda, change is hinged on the deeper problem of governance. The big question is: Can we solve climate change within our current political systems?

As we brace for another general election campaign in 2016, will Uganda persist in the divisive, zero-sum partisan politics that enables climate inaction?

Often times, politicians have short time horizons that make it difficult for them to see beyond election cycles. Competitive electoral campaigns unfortunately create incentives for candidates to offer short-term benefits at the expense of the longer-term public good. It is NAPE's hope that Ugandan politician this time round will focus on long-term benefits that will transform the livelihoods of their electorates.

"Climate change is the moral struggle that will define this century."

"The oil sands are emblematic of an era of high carbon and high-risk fuels that must end if we are committed to a safer climate."



*Archibisho Desmond Tutu talks on Climate Change
During COP 17 in Durban, South Africa 2011*

A nation that destroys its

SOILS

destroys itself.

**Forests are the lungs of our land,
purifying the air and giving fresh
strength to our people.**



*Unsustainable human activities have been blamed for degradation of
their ecosystems and provide a recipe to climate change impacts*

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LET'S SAVE THE



**WE MUST ALL CARE FOR OUR
COMMON HOME, THE PLANET**



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Editorial

Climate change is one of the most hotly debated issues of today. In Uganda these changes are already influencing many systems essential for human livelihood, including water resources, food security and health. This causes a great challenge for sustainability of life, ecosystems, livelihoods and indeed the development of the economy.

Sadly, the biggest sections of the Ugandan populace are not pro-actively involved in activities that aim to address climate change phenomenon currently experienced in the country. Some of the individuals and groups involved in activities to address climate change effects do it with limited climate knowledge.

It is important now, more than ever, to involve all Ugandans in climate change debates and advocacy to ensure that all sectors of the society are climate sensitive and are involved in implementing climate-smart projects.

To sustainably steer the country along a climate-smart path, government must work with civil society, communities and businesses to ensure that all investments undertaken enable longer-term sustainable prosperity. In Uganda, government has been promoting multilateral interests and competitiveness at all costs by signing contracts / trade agreements that limit the ability of government structures to effectively protect the environment. Uganda needs regulations and measures to guide market forces toward a more sustainable future.

The implementation of the Climate Change Policy for Uganda must promote and advance community climate change adaptation and mitigation.

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Climate change and vulnerability in Uganda

By Geoffrey Kamese

Climate influences all life on Earth, human health and well-being, water and energy resources, agriculture, forests and natural landscapes, air quality. Understanding climate change and variability is vital for society and ecosystems, particularly with regard to complex changes affecting the availability and sustainability of natural resources. Climate change and its impacts are already being felt in Uganda in the form of erratic rains, drought, famine, floods and landslides causing severe social, economic, health and environmental devastation.



In the recent past, erratic rainfall destroyed food crops in some parts of the country

A man walks through his banana plantation that was destroyed by heavy rainfall and hailstones



Prolonged dry spells in some parts of Uganda like Sembabule will likely result in food

Vulnerability from the food security point of view is the presence of factors that place people at risk of becoming food insecure or malnourished. Increased extremes and or temporal or spatial shifts in climatic conditions can worsen food security of individuals or households leading to decreases in overall agricultural productivity projected.



A family in Ntoroko district, Western Uganda ponders on how to access their houses that were half-submerged with flood waters

Late last year, heavy rains caused floods in many parts of Uganda with Ntoroko district in Western Uganda being the most affected. According to local news reports, the floods displaced over 300 cattle farmers and destroyed several crop gardens. Some roads leading to schools were also submerged by the water forcing some schools to temporarily close.

Vulnerability to climate change is closely related to poverty, as the poor are least able to respond to climatic stimuli. Many rural communities in Uganda are poor, and yet most affected by extreme climate events.

Erratic torrential rains in the recent times in Uganda have caused land and mud slides on hilly slopes in some parts of Uganda. Communities living on sloppy areas need to be helped to understand better management of delicate ecosystem like theirs to minimize such climate events



Some residents of an area that was affected by mudslide in Kabale, Western Uganda look at what remains of a home of one community member

Vulnerability and community capacity to respond

By Shillar Kyomugisga

Uganda is vulnerable to climate change effects. Vulnerability to climate change is the degree to which geophysical, biological and socio-economic systems are susceptible to, and unable to cope with, adverse impacts of climate change. Vulnerability depends not only on a system's sensitivity, but also on its ability to adapt to new climatic conditions.

Many communities that are vulnerable to climate change impacts have been dealing with climate variability for decades and have a wealth of knowledge about how to adapt. Community-based adaptation to climate change focuses on empowering communities to use their own knowledge and decision-making processes to take action.

NAPE, through her Sustainability School program has been working with communities in the different sustainability Villages (SV) in effective and sustainable use and management of their natural resources –land, water, forests etc to help reduce their ecosystems susceptibility to impacts of climate

NAPE's training and sensitization builds on community's wealth of knowledge on local adaptation measures to adverse climatic conditions

Experience and knowledge sharing deepens individuals and community understanding of the impacts of climate change to their livelihoods

Communities sharing their experiences and knowledge on natural resources management



Community-based adaptation to climate change impacts

By Betty Obbo

Adaptation to climate effects is the process through which people reduce the adverse effect of climate on their health and well-being, and take advantage of the opportunities that their climatic environment provides.

Adaptation involves adjustments to enhance the viability of social and economic activities and to reduce their vulnerability to climate impacts, including its current variability and extreme events as well as longer-term climate change. These adjustments, whether passive, reactive or anticipatory, that is proposed as a means for alleviating the anticipated adverse consequences associated with climate change. It includes all adjustments in behavior or economic structure that reduce the vulnerability of society to changes in the climate system.

NAPE has been working with communities in the various project areas to introduce and promote the concept of local (indigenous) and effective natural resources conservation: rain water harvesting, planting of indigenous tree species for multiple local consumption, identifying and conserving indigenous seed

NAPE's efforts to promote rainwater harvesting



A woman stands in front a water tank construct on her house in Namulanda, Wakiso district

NAPE has worked with communities in water stressed areas of Kashari in Mbarara, district and also promoted rain water harvesting technologies in Namulanda, Wakiso district near Kampala.



Communities in Kashari constructing a water recover with support from NAPE

***NAPE's work with communities to
indigenous tree species***



Communities of Mangira participated in the restoration of their natural forest. When communities are sensitized and they appreciate the importance of their resource, they take the lead in its protection and conservation

NAPE has worked with the cultural institutions in Buganda and communities in Mangira, Mukono district near Kampala to re-store a degraded natural forest, conserve and promote indigenous tree species.



The care-taker of Mangira Community Forest talking to Shillar Kyomugisha of NAPE about the progress of the forest

***NAPE's work with communities to
conserve indigenous seed varieties***



NAPE has worked with the cultural institution and community custodians in Bunyor sub-region to identify indigenous seed varieties that are threatened with extinction and suggesting ways to conserve them.



Raising awareness on climate change impacts on livelihoods and the environment nationally

By Allan Kalangi

NAPE has been working with government, local partners and communities to raise awareness on the impacts of climate change.

NAPE's work with government

NAPE also works to influence policies that promote development models whose activities negatively impact the natural environment and create a recipe for climate change effects. NAPE participated in national policy dialogue on climate change and contributed to civil society recommendations in the Uganda climate Change Policy.



Often times, enforcement of government policies have been ineffective. Rich individuals and big companies have degraded fragile ecosystems like wetlands which are highly susceptible to climate change



NAPE also acts as an environmental watchdog and raises issues of violation of natural resources that have a bearing on people's livelihoods

Multinational Companies like Lafage have been for many years extracting limestone in a sensitive ecosystem in Dura, Western Uganda. The activities of Lafage have a negative impact on the environment of the areas and contribute to climate change

NAPE's work with local partners: Local governments, Cultural institutions, Religious institutions, Schools & Universities

NAPE recognizes local partners as key stakeholders in climate change advocacy and command substantial respect and trust from the people they lead. Their active participation in climate change advocacy can go a long way to change the thinking perspective of people whose activities contribute to the degradation of the environment. Unsustainable human activities are blamed for climate change effects.



NAPE organized an inter-religious dialogue and training on climate change to empower religious leaders with climate knowledge and enable them educate their constituencies effective and good practices can build-on increase the concerted local effort to address climate change challenges at different levels



NAPE encourages everyone to actively get involved in climate change advocacy because climate change affects everyone and well all need to take responsibility for what we do in our respective capacities

NAPE has involved young people from universities and tertiary schools in climate change advocacy. Participation of the youth in climate change discussions is important to increase local efforts to address climate impacts and increase sustainable use and management of natural resources

NAPE's contribution to climate debates at regional and international level

By Geoffrey Kamese

For more than a decade, NAPE has been participating in United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations alongside other civil society organizations, and big non-governmental organizations like Friends of the Earth International, World wide Fund for Nature, Climate Action Network to mention but a few. NAPE and other global civil society climate actors have been participating in international climate negotiations to advocate for legally binding commitment by governments to reduce carbon emissions.

CSOs / NGOs work closely with grassroots people who are vulnerable and most affected by climate change, and voice the concerns of climate-affected people in the climate change negotiations. Governments are unlikely to commit to ambitious emission reduction targets unless their citizens push them to do so.

Civil society makes an important contribution to the global debate about future challenges related to climate change. To strengthen the global debate about climate change and encourage everyone to take part in the common challenges related to reducing carbon emissions. This international space provides for debates and exchanges linked to the ecological transition on the one hand and the discovery of solutions to address climate disruption, provided by civil society, on the other.

NAPE and other global climate actors influence policies and policy dialogue that aims to ensure that rich industrialized Annex I countries commit to agreed carbon emissions reductions, appropriate and sufficient financing and transfers of technology to help developing countries mitigate and adapt to climate change and allow a just transition to sustainable fossil-free societies.



Geoffrey Kamese of NAPE displays a campaign banner during the COP18 negotiations in Doha, Qatar, 2013



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