



YOUNG FARMERS FEDERATION OF UGANDA (UNYFA)

Policy Position Paper

**Climate Change Patterns Leading to
shortage of rains, prolonged drought,
floods and landslides**

November 2020

INTRODUCTION

This is a policy position Paper of the Young Farmers Federation of Uganda (UNYFA) on Climate Change Patterns Leading to shortage of rains, prolonged drought, floods and landslides. It brings out the concerns of the youth of Uganda on the subject and proposes alternatives for improved adaptability and coordination of climate change related interventions in Uganda.

Acknowledgements

This paper was developed with the support of Agriterra and the participation of the UNYFA members.

Overview:

This policy position paper highlights key challenges and issues for consideration in policy development and planning processes at community, local, national and regional levels towards creating awareness and building resilience to climate change impacts in Uganda. It's an output from a review of various documents and literature on climate change impacts and responses in Uganda and elsewhere. Furthermore, it's informed by UNYFA's experiences and lessons generated through facilitating initiatives to support climate smart agriculture at community and local levels particularly across 6 regions of Uganda (West Nile region, Northern region, Eastern Region, Karamoja Region, Central and Western regions) of Uganda; and also targeted engagement with key policy and decision makers at all levels including local, national, regional and international on issues of climate change. It is targeting key stakeholders at all levels (including local leaders, Government, Development Partners, Civil Society, Policy Makers, Political Leaders, Private Sector, Academia, Research

, Cultural and Faith Based Leaders and Communities among others; to mainstream, prioritize and support climate change adaptation actions at all levels of planning and development.

A brief about UNYFA

UNYFA is an umbrella body for young farmers in Uganda started in 2016 and launched in June 2017 as a duly incorporated member-based organization, with a registration number 80020000478713 under section 18(3) of Companies Act 2012. It has over 60 members which are district young farmers associations, farmer youth groups and school agricultural clubs totaling to over 31,000 individual young farmers. UNYFA is driven by the desire to have a holistically transformed youth in agriculture for a sustainable economy: its target group is of youth between 12 to 39 years of age who are rural and/or urban agro-based and young farmers in and out of school/Institutions. Due to diverse interests of farmer groups/farmers'-based organizations, young farmers need specific training; UNYFA provides platforms for these youths where they can express and acquire tailor-made training.

Youths have the propensity to move with the changing dynamics of the world and are capable of formulating and taking lead in farmer-based organizations. UNYFA believes that if Uganda is to realize development, the youth need to be involved in development programs so as to reduce the dependency syndrome and to transform youth groups into a productive force.

Why Youth advocacy for Climate Change?

The youth fit into the climate change and development equation, both as victims and also as solution providers. The youth are victims to climate change because current effects of climate change are a result of current and past human activities.

The youth run the risk of them also contributing to climate change and failing to mitigate it, just as past generations have been doing. In order for the youth to actively and meaningfully participate and influence development into the direction of climate resilient development it is important that they understand climate change issues and the challenges to their achievement. Given this scenario, the youth have chosen to actively participate in addressing the climate change problems, not as victims but more importantly as solution providers. Besides the enormous challenges that the youth face, the youth can meaningfully contribute towards a climate resilient development, provided an enabling environment is created.

Salient aspects on climate change discourse at national and local level

The following sections present some of the key processes and actions that have been undertaken and or still on going towards combating the climate change challenge and impacts at national and local levels.

National

Uganda being signatory to the UNFCCC is obliged to develop and implement strategies at local and national levels to contribute to the overall goal of the combating climate change. In this respect, the following initiatives have been

undertaken by the Government and other stakeholders at the national level.

Addressing climate change in Uganda; Key issues for policy and practice change

This section presents salient issues for consideration by key stakeholders to advance responsiveness and adaptation to climate change impacts at household, community, local, national and international levels in Uganda. Each issue is diagnosed to clarify the root causes and associated implications to livelihoods and economic development.

Climate change variability and uncertainty

Uganda is highly vulnerable to climate change and variability. Its economy and the wellbeing of its people are tightly bound to climate. Human induced climate change in the coming century has the potential to halt or reverse the country's development trajectory. In particular, climate change is likely to mean increased food insecurity; shifts in the spread of diseases like malaria; soil erosion and land degradation; flood damage to infrastructure and settlements and shifts in the productivity of agricultural and natural resources. It will be the poor and vulnerable especially youth, women, PWDs and Children who feel these impacts the hardest, though climate change has serious implications for the nation's economy. Exacerbating poverty and triggering migration as well as heightened competition over strategic water resources, climate change could also lead to regional insecurity.

In the recent past, residents of Kasese District in Western Uganda have faced challenging times arising from the persistent floods that have wreaked havoc on livestock, crops and human life.

In May 2020 alone Local media reports indicated that over 10 lives were lost and thousands displaced across the district. Since 2013, the district has been grappling with floods that often cause river banks to burst. The increase in heavy rainfall is attributed to the changing climate patterns and rapid loss of forest cover, due to trees being cut down to be used as fuel.

In Mbale, residents have encroached on mountainous areas which they consider more fertile, and cleared its vegetation cover for agriculture and even settlement. The Natural Resources Officer for Mbale District Local Government notes that the destruction of forests explains the climate variability that the district is facing, evidenced by prolonged periods of drought, heavy rains, irregular rain and dry season patterns.

Climate change manifesting as prolonged droughts, unreliable rainfall patterns and floods has exerted more pressure on natural resources and has had implications to the Ugandan economy, which largely depends on rain-fed agriculture which is more vulnerable to climatic variability. In Uganda especially in Eastern and Northern parts of Teso and Lango, floods have often cut off the road network making communication difficult; submerged crop fields and destroyed crops and this has resulted into long term famine and increase in cost of food. Over all, given that the national budget projections are heavily reliant on export revenue from agricultural produce, this poses a challenge of where such revenues will be generated from when climate change unfolds its implications on the agricultural sector as discussed above.

Limited awareness/knowledge and information about climate change and associated impacts

Various stakeholders (such as natural resource users, political leaders at all levels and technical leaders at all levels among others) are at different levels in terms of understanding climate change issues e.g. climate change impacts, appropriate response actions to adapt to the impacts among other aspects. Yet at whatever level, they make decisions and undertake actions which may aggravate, address, prevent or maintain the impacts of climate change. It's therefore important to advance awareness on climate change through innovative means targeting all categories of stakeholders so that they can make decisions and take actions from an informed point of view for adaptation to climate change impacts. For instance, due lack of access to weather information, farming communities in West Nile still plan their farming systems and management in the context of two rainy seasons per year yet they are currently receiving one long rainy season throughout the year.

Weak climate change adaptation capacity at all levels

Climate change adaptation capacity at all levels among various stakeholders is still very weak. This is partly due to limited options for livelihood; lack of support to climate change adaptation actions (community, local and national levels) in policies and program implementation; limited knowledge on climate change adaptation options; and poor planning in the usual way without consideration of the current climate change variability and impacts.

The impacts climate change brings are so big, at extremes result in loss of property, lives and livelihood. Communities are very vulnerable to these impacts and hence are most affected. In order to survive, communities have resorted to various coping mechanisms, some of which are detrimental to their livelihoods and long-term survival e.g. stealing, prostitution, selling/ marrying off daughters at an early age. At the community level, there is hardly any economic activity that can go on when climate change impacts bite. For instance, when the roads have flooded and bridges swept away, communication and movements within such areas are totally cut off. Hence the impacts affect economic development directly and instantly.

Inadequate policies and strategies to guide and support climate change adaptation

Because of the adverse effects of climate change, the country has had to come up with the National Climate Change Bill 2020. This has been informed by biting impacts that are evident yet more are anticipated to come. This Bill seeks to provide the nation with a comprehensive policy on climate change to guide all sectors to mainstream and or become climate sensitive.

This Bill has taken long to be passed simply because of the limited prioritization and appreciation by key policy and decision makers for the need to develop a national comprehensive policy on climate change; limited funding for facilitating the policy making processes, limited participation and productive involvement of all stakeholders (including the most vulnerable categories) in the policy making processes; limited and varied understanding of climate change by different policy and decision makers at all levels to mention but a few.

Poor coordination of climate change adaptation initiatives

Climate change being a cross sector issue calls for adequate and effective coordination of all actions towards addressing it at all levels. The Climate Change Unit (CCU) in the ministry of water and environment is mandated to coordinate climate change adaptation and mitigation actions in all the sectors and actors.

At the local government levels, the situation is even worse. For there is hardly any effort to coordinate integration climate change adaptation and mitigation actions in local government development planning process. If they exist they are adhoc actions responding to climate change impacts and disasters which have already happened and destroyed property and lives. This could partly be attributed to limited awareness on climate change issues and also lack of implementation of the national program for climate change adaptation (NAPA) and associated weak linkages between national level institutions working on climate change and local government stakeholders. These and other ideas need to be thought through to come up with practical solutions to ensure that climate change adaptation actions are integrated in local government development plans.

Limited research on climate change

Responding to climate change impacts through appropriate adaptation and mitigation mechanisms requires practical resilient solutions in form of technological, social and economic aspects. These can be developed through systematic research on climate change and associated impacts. Apparently, in Uganda there is limited research on climate change and related impacts on livelihood, natural resources.

This is partly attributed to limited funding for research on climate change impacts, adaptation and mitigation; limited focus and prioritization by researchers to study climate change; inadequate facilities for collection of weather information on climate change by region. Overall, this has an implication of limited knowledge and information on appropriate options to support climate change adaptation and mitigation thereby increasing vulnerability to climate change impacts at all levels.

Climate change sensitivity and vulnerability

Climate change impacts affect various gender categories differently. Particularly, the most vulnerable gender categories include children, women, and people with disabilities. At household level in most Ugandan societies, women are charged with a major responsibility of caring for the rest of the family members. For instance, fetching water, cooking food, housekeeping, and caring for the children, the old and the sick among other household chores. Hence, women in Uganda provide 70-80% of the agricultural household labor (Nabuumba, 2008).

Impacts of climate change manifesting as drying of rivers, springs and bore holes means that they have to move longer distances to look for water. Hence they are most affected by the impacts of climate change. On the other hand, given that men are the bread winners in the households and also charged with providing for all and ensuring security in the home, they are overburdened by impacts of climate change. Therefore, climate change adaptation actions should target both men and women as part of the solutions to leave with it.

Impacts:

Climate change is likely to have a wide range of interrelated impacts for the environment and economy of Uganda and the well-being of its people. Whilst many of these are negative, there may also be potentially beneficial outcomes such as increased grazing area for livestock in the cattle corridor with increased rainfall or opportunities to grow more profitable crops. Climate change impacts are also likely to exacerbate some existing stresses, for example land degradation. The headline impacts however are likely to be:

- Increased food insecurity;
- Shifts in areas affected and increased incidence in some areas of diseases, such as dengue fever, malaria and water borne diseases associated with floods;
- Elevated rates of erosion and land degradation because of increased mean rainfall or higher intensity events;
- Greater risks of flood damage to infrastructure, property and settlements;
- Shifts in the viable area for coffee cultivation with increased temperature;
- Reduced output of the maize crop;
- Reduction in grazing potential within the cattle corridor;
- Biodiversity loss and extinctions as niches are closed out by temperature increases and pressure on natural resources;

Practical Recommendations towards climate change adaptation in Uganda

UNYFA members using their experience and after thorough analysis and discussion proffer the following recommendations targeting key stakeholders at village, local and national levels. They should proactively consider them in development planning and implementation to address the critical issues towards long term adaptation to climate change impacts in Uganda for improved livelihood and sustainable development.

Stakeholder at village level	Key Practical Recommendation
Individual young farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Participate in decision making and implementation of climate change adaptation initiatives/programs at community level. (b) Diversify livelihood opportunities for household income generations especially off-farm activities.
<i>The Local Government</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Strengthen coordination of climate change activities and initiatives in the districts. This could be through establishing effective local multi-stakeholder committees to provide appropriate strategic and policy guidance

Stakeholder at National level	Key Policy Recommendation
Climate Change Unit under the Ministry of water and environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Spearhead, coordinate and fund implementation of the Ugandan National Adaptation Programs of Action on climate change. (b) Consider providing technical guidance to the different sectors to develop competitive proposals to attract funding.
Uganda Cabinet	(a) Fast-track the development of a national Climate Change Policy to guide effective responses to climate change impacts and Environment, Development in Uganda at community, local and national levels.
Government of Uganda through Ministry of Water and Environment and the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Local Government.	(a) Strengthen human resources and logistical capacity at the Climate Change Unit and local government levels initiatives in the country. This could be through establishing effective national multi-stakeholder committees to provide appropriate strategic and policy guidance.
National Planning Authority, All Ministries, All Government parastatals, Civil Society Organizations, Academia	(a) Mainstream climate change adaptation actions in development planning, programs and implementation informed by the anticipated climate variability.
MoES, Research Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Promote Climate Change Education right from primary school level. b) Strengthen coordination of climate change research activities. Utilize the Makerere University Climate Change, Resilience and Innovation (MUCCRI) which is involved in research and innovations work
Meteorology department, Ministry of Water and Environment, Ministry	(a) Strengthen the generation and dissemination of accurate climate change information and early warning systems through providing

of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries	adequate equipment and facilitation to mandated institutions.
Religious and cultural institutions, Parliamentary Forum on Climate Change among others	(a) Deepen the awareness for adaptation actions on climate change impacts, at the local and community levels through influencing behavior change for better environmental management and stewardship among Ugandans at all levels.
Private Sector e.g. Bottling companies like Water Processing, soda companies, beer companies, Cement and other manufacturing Companies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Undertake and implement environment and climate impact assessment prior to engaging in business; (b) Explore mechanisms for innovative development of technology applications on climate change; (c) Support access of micro finance to farmers and natural resources dependent communities (d) Provide financial support for climate change actions both adaptation and mitigation as part of their social corporate obligation and responsibility
Media Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Enhance collaboration and partnership with lead agencies and development institutions working on climate change to simplify and relay accurate information on climate change to masses; (b) Strengthen reporting and coverage of climate change events/impacts/climate information at community, national, regional and international levels
Legislators and Councilors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) To enact regulations, legislation, bylaws and ordinance which will promote and support climate adaptation. (b) Ensure that budgeted plans have adequate resources allocations for climate change adaptation.

Civil Society Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Advance awareness creation about climate change, associated impacts among stakeholders to illicit appropriate climate change adaptation actions;b) Conduct Policy advocacy for integration of climate change in development planning and policy processes at national and local levels to support climate change adaptation actions.c) Pilot and upscale climate change adaptation actions at community levels to reduce vulnerability of communities to impacts of climate change;d) Strengthen partnerships and networking on issues of climate change at local and national levels among key stakeholders
-----------------------------	--

An Appeal

Business as usual is not a solution to the uncertainties and risks associated with climate change variability and impacts. Leaving with the impacts of climate change requires building resilience through short term and long-term climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives. Youth must be supported in their efforts to raise awareness of the urgency to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions in line with what science says is needed to avoid the worst consequences of climate change. Leaders must take this seriously, move quickly, and ensure our children have the secure future they are asking for. This is because the future we hope for is only a result of the today we strive for. Without urgent attention by our leaders to sharply reduce emissions, we face devastating consequences. We must secure tomorrow from today.

References

- Bali Action Plan, (2007). http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_13/items/4049.php
- EAC, (2010). East African Climate Change Policy, EAC Secretariat, Arusha, Tanzania. http://www.eac.int/environment/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=159
- Environmental Alert, (2007). Climate Change: The time to act is now. Environmental Alert, Kampala Uganda. <http://www.entalert.org>
- Environmental Alert, (2009/2010). Activity reports on facilitated actions for supporting community climate change adaptation in West Nile region by Environmental Alert
- FAO, (2000). Food and Agriculture Organization Forest Resources Assessment 2000 definitions. Conservation for the Sustainable Development of Forests World-wide: A Compendium of Concepts and Term. The Forestry Chronicle Vol. 70 (6): 666-674. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/x6896e/x6896e0e.htm>
- Kabat Panel, (2009). Should the uncertainty in climate scenarios limit adaptation? A paper discussed during a East Africa Regional training workshop on mainstreaming climate change adaptation in Agriculture and Natural resources management at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. Organized by Wageningen University and Research Centre, Addis Ababa University, RUFORUM, ASARECA and IUCN
- Nabumba Nayenga Roseffi, (2008). Gender dynamics in Agriculture in Uganda; what are the key policy considerations? http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:0tT9FFYsqWgJ:www.finance.go.ug/docs/Policy%2520brief%2520on%2520Gender%2520Dynamics%2520in%2520Agriculture%2520in%2520Uganda.pdf+what+is+the+percentage+of+women+involved+in+farming+in+Uganda&hl=en&gl=ug&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEE5Jf7rLGzbNXPBH0lw_3dqMVNGPHGltjdX8PW4R3-Z6oW_G8CCihhXUqsy5rwC65OflwE2ux4yylEcpXqvi7-Zn0UczyVODB2Hx35dQIZUthbPO2k8MknRF1cSBTCIEacpW_sm1&sig=AHIEtbQt0j1-_dz4PRRGGT_d91G68ZnBhg
- NDP (2010/11-2014/15). The National Development Plan for Uganda. National Planning Authority, Kampala, Uganda <http://www.npa.ug/docs/finalndp.pdf>
- NAPA. (2007). National Adaptation Program of Action on Climate Change in Uganda. <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/policies/v.php?id=8578&cid=180>
- <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/05/31/ugandan-government-steps-up-efforts-to-mitigate-and-adapt-to-climate-change>