



**The role of government, donors, civil society and
the private sector in climate change adaptation in
Malawi : Scoping Study**

DISCUSSION PAPER

by

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Summary

A scoping study was carried out in Malawi to establish the extent to which the Malawi national sector policies incorporate strategies for mainstreaming or supporting climate change issues. The analysis involved review of the existing policy frameworks and stakeholder consultation on the various aspects of climate change adaptation and mitigation. Focus group discussions were also conducted with three rural communities that were adversely affected by floods in the Northern Region.

One of the major findings from the consultative process is that almost all the stakeholders are aware of the climate change impacts on different sectors of the national economy. A number of stakeholders including the donor community are in the process of implementing different climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions. For example USAID, Norway, World Bank, and the EU have planned to allocate significant resources to support programs that will help the rural communities to contain and reduce the impact of climate change through direct interventions and other NGO partners.

However, during the consultations, a number of policy suggestions were proposed on how the country could enhance climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives. Some of the suggestions were: (i) adaptation measures that could indeed provide resilience to rural communities for sustainable development; (ii) protection measures of forests, woodland and watersheds; (iii) strict laws which penalize illegal cutting of trees and consultations are on-going on whether to completely ban charcoal production or intensify use of other sources of fuel for energy; amongst others.

In light of the foregoing, the big question for Malawi is how it can develop its capacity to effectively and efficiently implement policy recommendations made by different stakeholders. While some capacity enhancing activities may require significant amount of resources to operationalize others like government/donor Working Group on Climate Change, the National Task Force on implementation of Climate Change related activities in Malawi, and strengthening the proposed Civil Society Network on Climate Change may not require huge resources. These could be prioritized.

This study presents several options as a way forward on climate change. The first option is to improve the institutional/ regulatory framework for climate change issues in Malawi. Both donors and government have formed working groups and task forces on climate change. These need support and strengthening. There is also the need to build capacity within the NGOs on climate change through short courses (preparedness, resilience, mitigation, adaptation etc) to bring NGOs and CBOs up to date on climate change issues.

There is need to mainstream climate change activities at the district and local level. While there is awareness on climate change at the operational level of

NGOs, this awareness has yet to trickle to local communities. Advocacy and sensitisation campaigns in vulnerable areas would raise the profile of climate issues in the local community.

Stakeholders should consider establishing multi-stakeholder climate change forum to bring all stakeholders annually together on climate change issues through a series of workshops and seminars. .

There is also room for some stakeholders to play an advocacy role to ensure that the government develops clear policy guidelines on climate change issues and an enabling act/regulation for mainstreaming climate change in government programs.

There is need to localize climate change research within the context of Malawi through perhaps research endowment fund anchored to either MEET or ARDEP. More research is required on resiliency of communities to climate shocks; livelihood strategies within the climate change environment; mitigation and adaptation activities lessons learned.

1.0 Introduction

Climate change has been recognized as a potential problem by the United Nations as early as 1979 which resulted in the establishment of the UN framework convention on climate change (UNFCCC). From the IPCC report (2007), the general consensus now is that climate change is unequivocal, and is significantly as a result of human activities and that delays in reducing emissions significantly constraints opportunities to achieve lower stabilization levels and increases the risk of more severe climate change impacts (IPCC, 2007).

Malawi has not been spared from the adverse impacts of extreme weather and climate variability such as floods and droughts. In the last 15 years, there has been no less than 6 episodes of drought that has affected agricultural production. In addition, rainfall has been erratic with frequent dryspells. The 1990s were the driest period in recent memory and the worst drought occurred in 1991/92.

For an economy of Malawi which is very dependent on rain-fed agriculture and other primary rural industries, additional uncertainties on temperature patterns; ultra violet radiation levels, rainfall patterns and wind patterns pose a major challenge to livelihood options for the rural people (NAPA, 2007). These extreme climatic events cause loss of life, damage property and infrastructure, affect food security and hinder efforts in poverty eradication.

The country's vulnerability to climate change and our low economic base has necessitated the development of the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) as a first step in developing long-term adaptation programs for Malawi. The NAPA has evaluated the impacts of adverse climatic conditions in eight important sectors of economic growth, and ranking the identified activities using

multi-criteria analysis to arrive at a list of fifteen urgent and immediate priority needs for adaptation. The sectors that were analyzed are agriculture, water, human health, energy, fisheries, wildlife, forestry and gender.

The impacts of climate change such as droughts and floods affect communities in their livelihoods. Adaptation is thus necessary to assist the affected communities adapt to the effects and disasters arising thereafter. Adaptation and risk reduction management should be part of the development agenda. NAPAs are enabling activities that aim at communicating priority activities of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) like Malawi in addressing urgent and immediate needs relating to adaptation to adverse effects of climate change and climate variability (LEG,2002).

2.0 Scoping Study Objectives and Methodology

Christian AID with funding from Innovative Fund for Africa engaged CARD to undertake a scoping study on climate change issues in Malawi. The scoping study sought to establish the extent to which the Malawi national sector policies incorporate strategies for mainstreaming or supporting climate change issues. Further, the study carried out stakeholder mapping and consultations on climate change with the view of knowing who the stakeholders are and what their current activities and challenges are.

This scoping study has been necessitated by evident climate change developments in Malawi and its implications for various sectors of the economy. The analysis involved review of the existing policy frameworks and stakeholder consultation on the various aspects of climate change adaptation and mitigation. The review of the policy framework saw a total of 3 anchor national policies and 23 sector policies. The stakeholder consultation process involved discussions with a wide cross-section of stakeholders in the public and private sectors, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and vulnerable rural communities all of whom are key actors in areas of climate change activities in Malawi. Focus group discussions were also conducted with three rural communities that were adversely affected by floods in the Northern Region.

3.0 Major Findings of The Climate Change Scoping Study

Malawi Focus areas for adaptation to climate change

The focus areas for climate change adaptation in Malawi has to address the threat provided by increased frequency of droughts and floods. For flood control, afforestation and reforestation activities are promoted to allow better catchment management that encourages more water to infiltrate the soil while reducing the surface runoff component. To reduce deforestation given Malawi's over-

dependence on wood fuels, the use of energy –efficient stoves is being promoted and alternative sources of energy for domestic use is being promoted.

To address problems of drought and dryspells, water harvesting technologies are being promoted along-side soil and water conservation (on and off farm). Drought tolerant crops such as cassava, sweet potatoes, sorghum and livestock are being promoted. Drought tolerant varieties of maize are also being investigated. Advocacy campaigns to raise awareness of climate change are being intensified by government and civil society organizations.

Major Players in Climate Change in Malawi

There are several players in climate change adaptation in the country. These include:

- **Research Institutions** (CARD-Bunda College; Leadership in Environment and Development, LEAD chancellor College)
- **Government ministries** (Environment, Lands, Forestry, Fisheries, Agriculture, Meteorological Services, Energy, Mines, City Assemblies, National Herbarium & Botanic Gardens).
- **Development partners** (UNDP, World Bank, DfID, Norwegian Govt)
- **Civil society** (Cisanet, MEJN, religious organisations),
- **NGOs** (CURE, MEET, WESM, CEPA, Action Aid, Concern Universal and ACT Group) -
- **Academia** (Universities of Malawi (Bunda, Chancellor & Polytechnic) and Mzuzu University)
- Private sector – ESCOM, WICO, Water Boards

Climate change adaptation Approaches in Malawi

Several stakeholders are carrying out a number of adaptation activities in Malawi. These include government ministries, civil society, religious groups , NGOs, academic institutions and development partners. Government is undertaking several environment microprojects in forestry (afforestation, reforestation), fisheries (re-stocking campaigns, aquaculture) and energy sectors (use of mini hydros, off-grid electricity, energy-efficient technologies).

Civil society, religious groups, NGOs with funding from outside (bilateral and other partnership means) are doing policy advocacy with government and other stakeholders. Development partners are providing funding to government, NGOs, civil society and communities directly. Lastly, academic tertiary institutions are

carrying on limited research on adaptation technologies and how these can be replicated elsewhere.

Role of Civil Society on Climate Change

Various civil society organisations are engaged in implementing activities that address climate change adaptation. The activities include advocacy, public awareness campaigns on impacts and effects of climate change, the impact of environmental degradation on global warming and subsequently climate change. Some have programmes on the radio and television. The notable organisations are WESM, CEPA, various church organisations, Action Aid, Care Malawi, Evangelical Association of Malawi, WESM, Livingstonia Synod of the CCAP, Eagles Relief of the Living Waters. These organisations are all under the umbrella of CURE and provides an opportunity for joint advocacy and programming under the tutelage of CURE.

Advocacy on climate change

Civil society organisations are now taking a recognisable role in implementing programmes advocating for climate change adaptation. In December 2007, the following civil society organisations were in the Malawi delegation that participated at the 13th session of the UNFCCC Conference of Parties in Bali, Indonesia: Action Aid, Care Malawi, Evangelical Association of Malawi, Coordination Unit for the Rehabilitation of the Environment (CURE), Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy. Others such as the Wildlife Environmental Society in Malawi (WESM) also play a role on advocacy for climate change issues in the country. MEET is providing small grants for micro projects on environment that includes climate change.

Information collection and dissemination- The role of media

Efforts have been made before by the Environmental Affairs Department in its capacity as UNFCCC Focal Point to disseminate information on issues of the environment and natural resources in general, and on climate change in particular. This was done during Malawi's preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development that was held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002; through the DANIDA Capacity Building project, UNDP-funded Environment and Natural Resources Management Project, and various climate change enabling activities including the formulation of the National Adaptation Programmes of Action report. CURE and other NGOs have also conducted seminars and workshops on climate change. There is however a gap in the dissemination of information on climate change whereby the general public are not getting more and frequent information on climate change. There is need for the media to prioritise articles on climate change issues in the press and electronic media.

Review of Government Policies and Climate Change

Climate change issues are not adequately mainstreamed in government policies and acts. A number of key government policies have mentioned climate change issues. These include the Malawi Growth & Development Strategy (2006) ; The Agriculture Development Program (ADP, 2007) and the National Water Policy.

While climate change is mentioned in some key government policies (e.g ADP, Forestry and Water Policy), no specific strategies have been developed for climate change adaptation sector activities. In addition, no specific activities or implementation time lines are given. Even more, most of Malawi policy documents are not costed and as such suggested activities do not come with a budgetary allocation vote. This makes implementation difficult in the absence of resources and competing priorities.

Increased Awareness and Coordination on Climate Change Issues

Based on observations and public announcements, there is **increased awareness of climate change issues** within government ministries and departments at policy level. There is evidence that government, development partners, civil society have started mainstreaming climate change into their sectoral plans but it is in the early stages. Increased awareness of climate change issues is yet to filter down to district, communities and grassroots. More effort in raising awareness is required.

There is need for a central office to coordinate, provide sector guidelines, monitor and marshal resources for climate change activities. Worth noting is that there is now a **Government of Malawi/Donor Working Group on Climate Change**. This group comprises representatives from the donor community and principal secretaries from government meant to have a cohesive approach in implementation of climate change activities. EP & D, UNDP and EAD are championing this effort.

Further, a **national task force on climate change** comprising government, civil society and development partners has been formed to develop a climate change implementation action plan for Malawi. This will allow stakeholders to have a common approach and possibility of pooling resources for implementing various programs.

There is **weak interministerial coordination and arrangements** on climate change. While EAD is the focal point on climate change, its role and visibility has yet to be raised among stakeholders. The responsibilities of other ministries and departments on climate change are equally less clear.

Climate Change Gaps and Challenges

There are still a number of gaps and challenges on mainstreaming of climate change in government programs. There are no specific adaptation programs on climate change and most of the donors are yet to embrace adaptation activities. Most development partners are still in mitigation mode looking at the carbon side of the equation through such activities as control of deforestation. Funding levels on adaptation activities are still low. Climate change issues need to be streamlined in all sector activities of government at all levels.

Some of the notable gaps noted include:

- Climate change issues are not adequately represented in government policies and acts.
- While climate change is mentioned, no specific activities or implementation time lines are given. Even more, most of Malawi policy documents are not costed and as such suggested activities do not come with a budgetary allocation vote. This makes implementation difficult in the absence of resources and competing priorities.
- While climate change is mentioned in some key government policies (e.g ADP, Forestry and Water Policy), no specific strategies have been developed for climate change adaptation sector activities. There is need to translate policy statements into strategies and strategies into budgetary allocations.
- Lastly, climate change issues are currently not specifically a budgeted item in the national budget. Even within ministerial budgets, there is no specific budget item for climate change activities. There is need to urgently remedy this by (a) mainstreaming climate change into sector activities and (b) providing a budgetary line on climate change for each sector.

The role of parliamentarians on climate change

The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi mentions sustainable utilisation and the preservation of the environment for future generations. Because of this, our National Parliament has a standing committee called “Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources” which deals with issues of the environment and natural resources including climate change. In addition, there is

also a Cabinet Committee on Environment. Furthermore, the Minister responsible for the Environment is required, under the Environment Management Act, 1996 to give the state of the environment report to the National Assembly once every two years. These fora could be used to sensitise legislators on developments in climate change and lobby for increased funding or policy changes/legislation on climate change.

Furthermore, Parliamentarians have a role to inform their constituents on the dangers of bush fires, land clearing and deforestation as they contribute to human-induced emissions of greenhouse gases which leads to global warming.

Parliamentarians have in the past participated in regional and international forums on issues of climate change including in Abuja, Nigeria in September 2006 and in India in September 2007 during the 52nd and 53rd sessions of Commonwealth and Parliamentarians Conference, respectively.

Role of Donors on Climate Change

The review of donor policies and strategies have revealed that for most donors the emphasis is on mitigation measures to reduce carbon emissions mostly in developed countries and some in developing countries (mostly combating deforestation). The exception has been USAID and World Bank. Currently, donors support communities directly or through local organisations (CBOs), NGOs and through government sanctioned projects.

Donors have a role to provide more financial resources for climate change adaptation activities. There is need to provide research funding on climate change issues and build capacity of civil servants and the academia on climate change. While current emphasis seem to be on mitigation activities, for countries in Africa and in particular Malawi, there is need to pump more funding on adaptation activities and raising awareness on climate change. There is need to build resiliency in communities against adverse climate change effects.

The Donor/ Government Coordination Working Group on Climate Change has been resuscitated to deal with issues of environment in general and climate change in particular.

Role of the Private sector on Climate Change

The private sector have yet to embrace fully climate change issues in Malawi. Some private companies like ESCOM, The Water Boards are undertaking adaptatioin activities to safeguard hydro electricity generation capacity and water supplies. Others are into research on alternative fuels (biodiese from jatropa and ethanol powered vehicles). There is a role for the priivate sector in this as well as in production and marketing of drought-resistant activities.

Further, City Assemblies like Blantyre are engaged in adaptation activities such as the promotion of alternative fuels for urban areas and urban farming. The Malawi Environment Endowment Trust (MEET) is a financing mechanism for environmental micro projects in biodiversity, climate change, land degradation and it has so far been instrumental in assisting communities implement such micro projects.

Public-private partnership in climate change adaptation

The study has established that there is not much collaboration between the public and private sectors when it comes to issues of research on climate change issues such as greenhouse gases, vulnerability, mitigation and adaptation. Scientists do research that is academic-based not necessarily what government and other stakeholders would immediately use in the implementation of the UNFCCC.

One memorable example of a case of public-private partnership that has ever happened in Malawi in the area of climate change mitigation, and not adaptation, is when Mark O Ltd were working on the Blu-wave technology using ethanol when they engaged Chancellor College, University of Malawi's Professor John Kalenga Saka; and just recently in 2007 when the GEF through the UNDP has initiated engagement of the private sector in sustainable land management of the Shire River Basin catchments. The hope is that private companies such as ESCOM, Water Boards and WICO plus the civil society will join government in its efforts to implement programmes initiated for adaptation. There is need for more innovative public-private partnerships on climate change for which government has to take the lead.

4.0 Major Conclusions

The analysis shows that while the country has sufficient policy framework to address climate change issues, commitment to implementation is challenged by inadequate human and financial capacities. On the other hand, poverty has been blamed as the prime causal factor for pervasive environmental damage contributing to climate change as well as incapacitating the rural communities to participate climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives.

On the positive note, the analysis has shown that a number of other stakeholders, besides government are in one way or another involved in climate change adaptation in Malawi. This notwithstanding, the commitment from the stakeholders is equally weak and easily challenged as is the case with the public sector.

5.0 Recommendations

In view of the foregoing, the following specific recommendations are hereby being made to address the policy gaps and stimulate stakeholder participation in climate change mitigation and adaptation in Malawi.

- Serious implementation of the NAPA priority actions such as reforestation, early warning systems, drought mitigation measures, amongst others. This would demonstrate high level government commitment to climate change issues.
- More civic education on the causes, implications and adaptation measures on climate change
- Support the EAD build its capacity as the lead agency in the National task Force on Climate Change.
- Build research capacity on climate change adaptation for rural communities. Bunda and Chancellor college of the University of Malawi can take a lead role. Currently, there is very little research being carried out on climate change in Malawi. Donors can come in with the required resources to support different research activities linking poverty and climate change.
- Support for commemoration of the World Environment Day and other commemorations. A sensitisation workshop for journalists and editors will go a long way in bringing to the fore climate change issues. This should be prioritized.
- Support operations of the Government/Donor Working Group on Climate Change and Support operations of the National Task Force on Implementation of Climate Change related activities in Malawi. The need to join the proposed Civil Society Network on Climate Change with the Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA)
- There is need to support Malawi's participation of Malawi in sessions of the subsidiary bodies and the Conference of Parties.
- Lobbying parliamentarians to make them realise that issues of climate change are important just like any other budget items, and approve justifiable funding to fight climate change. Again, they must appreciate that climate adaptation is about development and should go hand in hand with all development plans. Politicians must assist in advocacy especially telling the communities that climate change is inevitable and hence the need for adaptation.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

“Climate change” means a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.

“Adverse effects of climate change” means changes in the physical environment or biota resulting from climate change which have significant deleterious effects on the composition, resilience or productivity of natural and managed ecosystems or on the operation of socio-economic systems or on human health and welfare.

Human-induced climate change is caused by the emission of GHG gases, which trap long-wave radiation in the upper atmosphere and thus raise atmospheric temperatures, as well as produce other changes in the climate system.

“Emissions” means the release of greenhouse gases and/or their precursors into the atmosphere over a specified area and period of time.

“Greenhouse gases (GHGs)” means those gaseous constituents of the atmosphere, both natural and anthropogenic, that absorb and re-emit infrared radiation.

“Reservoir” means a component or components of the climate system where a greenhouse gas or a precursor of a greenhouse gas is stored.

“Sink” means any process, activity or mechanism which removes a greenhouse gas, an aerosol or a precursor of a greenhouse gas from the atmosphere.

“Source” means any process or activity which releases a greenhouse gas, an aerosol or a precursor of a greenhouse gas into the atmosphere.

Adaptation: Adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.

“Adaptation” is also defined as “re-shaping and re-designing development, social and economic practices in response to the impact of actual or anticipated climate change. Focussing on environmental sustainability, it builds community resilience in order to maintain development gains”

Adaptive capacity: *The ability of a system to adjust to climate change (including climate variability and extremes) to moderate potential damages, to take advantage of opportunities or to cope with the consequences.*

Vulnerability: *The degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes. Vulnerability is a function of the character, magnitude, and rate of climate variation to which a system is exposed, its sensitivity, and its adaptive capacity.*

Technology: *A piece of equipment, technique, practical knowledge or skills for performing a particular activity.*

Environmentally sound technologies *are technologies that protect the environment, are less polluting, use all resources in a more sustainable manner, recycle more of their wastes and products, and handle residual wastes in a more acceptable manner than the technologies for which they were and substitutes and are compatible with nationally more acceptable manner than the technologies for which they were substitutes and are compatible with nationally determined socio-economic, cultural and environmental priorities. The term includes hard and soft technologies.*

Technology transfer: *The broad set of processes covering the exchange of knowledge, money, and goods among different stakeholders that lead to the spreading of technology for adapting to or mitigating climate change. The word “transfer” encompasses both diffusion of technologies and cooperation across and within countries.*

Discussion questions for Regional Workshops

Some questions that could be discussed during the consultative workshops are suggested below:

Capacity Building Issues

- Which are the areas of work within climate change where our partners have more experience/commitment?
- What are the main constraints or barriers for climate change adaptation activities?
- What are the capacity building needs of our partners to implement adaptation in communities, and to advocate successfully at local and national levels?
- How best to raise awareness on climate change issues at grass roots and district levels.

Policy & Coordination

- How best can we foster collaboration and coordination on climate change issues? Are the existing institutional arrangements proper for implementation of adaptation programmes in the country? What could be the best proposed arrangements?
- Which policies are key for successful climate change adaptation? Are there areas that need policy/legislative lobbying to address climate change issues in Malawi? Does Malawi need a separate policy on climate change?
- What roles should government, donors, civil society and NGOs play in climate change adaptation?

Vulnerability to Climate Change Impacts

- What are the current coping strategies for climate change impacts in Malawi? Which communities are most vulnerable? Which groups/livelihoods will be most affected by the impacts of CC? Which communities show early resiliency to climate change shocks?

Lessons Learned in Implementing Climate Change Activities

- What are the key challenges and constraints met in implementing the adaptation programmes? Lessons learned.