



**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY
EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, TOURISM AND NATURAL RESOURCES

**REPORT ON THE REGIONAL PARLIAMENTARIAN'S POLICY WORKSHOP ON
CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENDER**

27TH-28TH MARCH 2015, BUJUMBURA, BURUNDI

**Clerks Chambers
EAC Headquarters
EALA Wing, 3rd Floor
Arusha – TANZANIA**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Parliamentarian workshop on Climate Change and Gender was held from the 27th - 28th March 2015 in Bujumbura, Burundi in accordance with the EAC and EALA Calendars of Activities for the period January-June 2015. The aim of the workshop was to deliberate on policy issues related to climate change and gender in the context of sustainable development in the EAC region.

The workshop was attended by Members of the East Africa Legislative Assembly including Members of the EALA Women's Forum, Members of the Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources Committee, Members of the General Purpose Committee, EALA staff, EAC and COMESA Secretariats, and Regional Climate Change and Gender Experts. The workshop was chaired by Hon. Bazivamo, Chair of Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources and Hon. Zein, representing the Chair of the General Purpose Committee.

Participants discussed among others, existing international and regional policies, strategies and regulatory instruments and frameworks on climate change and gender, the critical linkages between climate change and gender, and the role of Parliamentarians in implementation of Gender Sensitive Climate Change Policies and Practical measures.

1.1. Rationale of the Workshop

As part of enhancing the legislative, oversight and representation roles of parliamentarians in the critical sector of environment and natural resources, the EAC Secretariat has been engaging with EALA through the Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources. Several Reports and Resolutions on Climate Change, Climate Change and Forestry, have since been prepared and presented to the Assembly for debate and adoption. In the past, EALA has passed several environmental Bills including the Trans-boundary Ecosystems Management Bill (2010), the EAC Polythene

Material Control Bill and the EAC Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill (2014) which is undergoing the process of consultation. The work has also began to establish the Climate Change Fund and fortunately the EAC Climate Change Bill.

As representatives of the citizens of the East African Region, the Members of East African Legislative Assembly Women's Forum had a keen interest in the regional environmental threats that pose a challenge to environmental management and sustainable development. The Parliamentary Forum therefore sought for technical understanding on the matter with a view of enhancing the role of parliamentarians in legislation as part of contributing to finding a lasting solution. The EALA Women Forum sought to gain better understanding on the subject of climate change and gender within the context of the ongoing climate change international policy negotiations and also from a programming perspective.

The Regional Parliamentarian's Policy workshop on Climate Change and Gender has therefore been jointly convened by the EAC Secretariat and the EALA Women Forum. The policy dialogue took place at a very critical point in time when Climate Change is a global problem with disproportionate effects on people and economies with serious socio-economic implications. There is therefore need for all stakeholders to engage in finding lasting policy and practical solutions including consideration of gender implications and mainstreaming of Climate Change and gender in sustainable development planning.

The 20th Conference of Parties (COP20) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), also serving as the 10th Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP10) held from 1st -12th December 2014 in Lima, Peru established the Lima Work Programme on Gender. Parties are expected to implement the programme of work and further expected to make submissions on climate change and gender. The contribution of regional parliamentarians is therefore welcomed towards the implementation of the above decisions.

1.2. Objectives of the Workshop

The overall aim of the workshop was to deliberate on the threats of climate change in the context of gender with a view of integrating climate change and gender dimensions in the sustainable development of the EAC region. The specific objectives include:

- (i) create awareness amongst Members of EALA on the critical cross-cutting subjects of climate change and gender;
- (ii) consideration of existing international and regional policies, strategies and regulatory instruments and frameworks on climate change and gender; and
- (iii) identify the role of Parliamentarians in implementation of Gender Sensitive Climate Change Policies and Practical measures.

2.0. METHODOLOGY

The workshop was carried out in a participative manner. It entailed technical presentations by experts in the subject matter, introduced by welcome and opening remarks, followed by interactive sessions and ended by closing remarks.

3. 0. OPENING REMARKS

3.1 Welcome Remarks by the EAC Secretariat

The **Principal Environment and Natural Resources Officer**, Ms. Wivine Ntamubano, on behalf of the Deputy Secretary General for Productive and Social Sectors, Hon. Jesca Eriyo, noted that the region is endowed with a variety of natural resources: Water resources, biodiversity and Forestry resources, mineral resources, land, etc in both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems some of which being trans-boundary in nature. Management of Environment and Natural Resources is provided for under chap. 19 of the EAC Treaty where Partner States recognize that a healthy and clean environment is a pre-requisite for sustainable development and agreed to foster cooperation in the management of shared resources. She appreciated the support by EALA in the Environment and Natural Resources Sectors in several occasions including;

i) The Trans- boundary ecosystem legislation; ii) Pollution and chemical controls; iii) Bill on polyethylene materials; iv) Disaster Risk Reduction and Management legislation, making the region, the first to legislate on Disaster Risk Reduction Management Matters; iv) The initiation of the Forestry Bill and the EALA Resolution on Climate Change which was the basis of the development of the EAC Climate Change (EACCC) Bill recently initiated.

She regretted that the EAC Climate Change Fund despite being established, there were no funds and one relied on Donor budget to undertake Climate Change activities with many limitations like e for instance f the EACCC Policy and Food Security which is one of the global priorities for EAC but with only 2% of the total budget.

2.2 Remarks by Chair of the EALA Women Forum

Hon. Valerie Nyirahabineza, Chairperson of the EALA Women Forum emphasized the need for all stakeholders to engage in finding lasting policy and practical solutions including consideration of gender implications and mainstreaming of climate change and gender in sustainable development planning. There is a need to identify key entry points engagement on Climate Change and Gender at the national, regional and international level as well as ensuring proper understanding of the concept of Gender. Everyone has a great role to play in addressing climate change issues with regard to Gender at community, national, regional and international levels and there is a need to understand the political dynamics associated with these issues at these levels and a need to be assisted with up-to date and accurate information on the types of interventions for climate change and gender so as to enhance representation, and oversight roles in this area.

Climate change impacts on women is an area of focus and there is a need for EALA to play in its r representation role keeping in mind the fact that women are the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climatic changes and climate change. She noted that our Community and governments are sometimes constrained in their efforts in these areas due to lack of experiences in methodology for assessing the physical and economic impact of climate change at local and regional levels and for developing

appropriate responses. Information exchange is also a problem. Further, she stated that, the EAC Treaty offers a conducive environment for gender mainstreaming into regional policies and programmes; overall, providing in some of its articles, an enabling environment for promoting gender equality principles in the integration process.

4.0. TECHNICAL PRESENTATIONS ON CLIMATE CHANGE, DISASTERS AND GENDER

The following technical presentations were made to the audience as part of knowledge empowerment and sharing:

4.1 Climate Change, Disaster and Gender

Climate variability and change is the biggest threat to sustainable development and poverty reduction in the 21st Century as it continues to have disproportionately negative impacts in Africa due to the continent's high vulnerability and volatile adaptive capacities (political, institutional, technical and financial). The Impacts are largely evidenced in the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme events (climatic disasters) often leading to massive damage to both public and private investments including loss of lives with women and children most affected while retarding and reversing development gains with the average cost of Climate Change on African economies estimated at 1.5 -3% of GDP by 2030 and projected to rise. With these natural disasters, over 70% are climatic in nature and are of development concern with huge social and economic costs with potential to stunt and reverse development gains (MDGs). It was noted that, there are close similarities and differences between climate change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), both seeking to build resilience of communities and economies to hazards in the context of sustainable development and both intending to reduce people's risk to climatic disasters before, during and after such disasters.

4.2 Gender and Natural Disasters

Women have a great role to play in addressing Climate Change issues at both national, regional and international levels, given that, primarily they constitute the majority of the world's poor and are more dependent for their livelihood on natural resources that are threatened by climate change. Furthermore, they face social, economic and political barriers that limit their coping capacity and particularly in the rural areas where they are more vulnerable by virtue of being highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood and yet they own less than 2% of land.

However, women play critical roles in responding to Climate change disasters, among them:

- Responding to disasters:
 - Building houses; digging wells and ditches; hauling water and building shelters, considered as "male" tasks
 - Forming groups and networks which is essential in disaster preparedness and mitigation;
- Playing critical decision-making roles on disaster issues, and young girls playing an important role in their families and communities such as in health, education and childcare.

Thus, to ensure women's full participation in Climate Change initiatives, there is a need to look at climate change from a gender perspective through;

- Ensuring women's access to policy-making, information and knowledge on disaster reduction;
- Responding to women's needs and concerns;
- Increasing efforts in promoting gender equalities;
- Acknowledging women's vulnerable status;
- Strengthening the dialogue within and between communities and the national government as well as capacity-building;
- Assuring women's access to relief resources.

4.3 Climate Change and Gender: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Perspectives

It is necessary to have specific interventions to redefine gender. The definition of climate change and gender was the first thing by UNFCCC, to the countries and from 2013 to date gender and climate change progress was based on that redefinition. There was therefore need for a concrete action to redefine gender and Climate Change through documented research on issues within the African context to inform on specific interventions. It was further pointed out that, even though there are facilitated case studies in Malawi and Kenya on issues of Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), sustainable land use, etc., there is still need to commission continental case studies to redefine that further.

4.4 Framework for Gender and Climate Change for Africa

Women are very vulnerable and disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of Climate Change. By virtue of their traditional roles as the primary users & managers of natural resources mean they are involved in and dependent on livelihoods & resources that are put most at risk by climate change. However, they lack rights & access to resources and information vital to overcoming the challenges posed by Climate Change which imposes them further to the impacts on climate change. Further, there are innumerable global mandates calling for integrating a gender perspective that apply to climate change including; instruments that deal with humans, gender equality, sustainable development and environment, and disaster risk reduction. The first adopted decision of the 2001 COP 7 in Marrakesh, was a recognition of gender equality at the UNFCCC, particularly women's participation as needed to achieve progress on mitigating and adapting to climate change at all levels, with gender equality also introduced as National Adaptation Plan of Action guidelines. The Decision 23/Conference Of Parties 18 further intensified the Promotion of gender balance and improvement of participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and in the representation of Parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol". Further, the 20th Conference of Parties at the Lima Climate Change

Conference provided a platform and opportunity to critically examine the implications of the post-2015 climate change agreement for the continent and how to enhance the involvement of women and youth in climate change adaptation.

4.5. Climate Change, Gender and Sustainable Development

Climate change impacts vary between different places, gender, age and class. Africa, though being the least contributors to the global climate change emissions, is the most vulnerable to climate change impacts due to poverty, high dependency to rain fed agriculture, deforestation, weak governance systems, technological and poor infrastructural development, population growth, environmental degradation, persistent conflicts and more importantly weak adaptive capacities to the impacts of climate change. Eastern Africa, is one of the most volatile regions in the continent with a total population of over 327million, which is about 5.15% of the global population. Further, the effects of climate change are not equally felt across the populations and studies have shown that they disproportionately affect women.

4.6. Emerging issues from discussions and General Observations

The following general observations were made by the Members:

- Efforts to adapt to the changing climate are intricately linked to the broader challenges of sustainable livelihoods, disaster risk reduction and natural resources management;
- domestication of international frameworks (UNFCCC and others) must be implemented at national and local levels;
- all stakeholders must participate in addressing the challenge posed by climate change and natural disasters;
- Risk Reduction provides excellent opportunities for building community resilience and building adaptive capacity to Climate Change, and it can be considered as the first line of defence while building long-term adaptation strategies.

The main emerging issues include the following:

- Members of Parliament have a role in reducing impacts of climate change and its closely linked disasters in the region which have been a cause of most problems, this can be done through advocacy and awareness creation;
- Sustainable development must recognize specific gender role in mitigating climate change and reducing its effects;
- Information available is not disseminated and women are not adequately empowered, thus the need for building more capacity for women and men to be able to deal with the effects of climate change and to build resilience;
- In order to ensure sustainable development, Partner States should target both women and men;
- EAC should develop policies and strategies with a gender perspective in mind that will help in cushioning the effects of climate variability and change. Climate change policies made should be on women's own interests first.
- It was noted that the Disaster Risk Reduction Bill had not been reintroduced back to the House despite the Commitment by Council of Ministers and despite a further Directive from the Summit of EAC Heads of States. The Assembly has a duty of making sure that the bill goes through to the Summit.
- There is need to collect and regularly update data on Climate Change and to strengthen institutions to prevent and avert disasters.
- The cross cutting nature of climate change demands for a comprehensive and integrated approach. Therefore, there is also a need to sensitize the whole House to be involved in the whole process.
- Need for the development of climate change responses (adaptive and mitigation) which are gender responsive as well as inclusion of human rights perspective on climate change to not only address gender mainstreaming but also include urban slums where women and children are the major culprits of climate change disasters as well as address the underline courses of gender disparity.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends the House to urge:

1. Partner States to invest in eliminating the underlying causes of disasters to address marginalization and social exclusion..
2. Partner States to promote pro-active approaches through preparedness such as early warning systems, flood and drought management.
3. Partner States and the Community to advocate for strong institutional and governance structures.
4. The EAC secretariat to Co-ordinate efforts across different stakeholders.
5. Partner States and the Community to mainstream Climate Change Advocacy and Disaster Risk Reduction into development.
6. The EAC Secretariat to invest in climate/disaster focused research and tools- Participatory Capacity and vulnerability analysis (PCVA).
7. Partner States to target both women and men in order to ensure sustainable development.
8. The East African Community secretariat to advocate for international financing and budgetary allocation for Climate Change
9. Partner States to enforce sensitization programmes for the Communities in order to reduce their vulnerability;
10. Partner States to identify, develop and implement gender-sensitive strategies to respond to the environmental and humanitarian crisis caused by Climate Change;
11. Parliamentarians to play their roles in ensuring that their governments implement gender-sensitive climate change policies and practical measures including galvanising political will on the ongoing climate change negotiations with due consideration of gender related issues;
12. The House to build capacities for all EALA Members on Climate Change and its effects.
13. Partner States and the EAC Council of Ministers to ensure that Funding for Climate Change do not depend only on donors as development Partners have their own priorities.

14.The Council of Ministers to fast-track the process to reintroduce the Disaster Risks Reduction Bill (2014)

Mr. Speaker Sir, I beg to move.