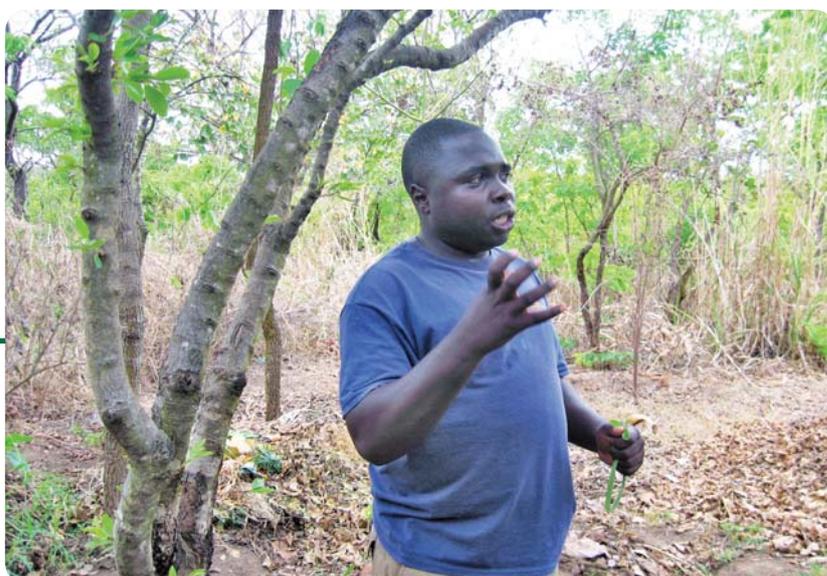


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Gender and climate change



A community leader stressing a point at a Nature's Gift permaculture project meeting in Malawi.
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

KEY POINTS

- Climate change policy and strategy documents in Malawi are not gender responsive despite the fact that women disproportionately bare the brunt of climate change.
- The Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance Network is campaigning for an Addendum to the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development on gender and climate change. They have used the draft Addendum to begin tracking country progress on mainstreaming gender in the sector.

Regional context

There is no doubt that the overall climate is changing, and this poses serious global challenges. This is because climate change is an environmental, social, economic, energy, food, political, ethical and moral challenge. It is a crisis perpetuated by the endless pursuit of growth and prosperity.

Ultimately, the world faces not just a climate crisis, but also a crisis of sustainability. The key contributor to global warming is human-induced climate change, because of exploitative, unsustainable economic growth, consumption and production patterns, applied especially by the global North and the elites in developing

countries. Women in the south contribute the least to climate change yet feel its effects the most.

SADC states are committed to addressing climate change. Malawi is among countries that have identifiable adaptation and mitigation programmes. Others include

Botswana, Namibia, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles and South Africa have. Malawi, Mozambique, Madagascar, Namibia, and Seychelles have National Action Programme(s) for Adaptation in line with the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCC).



COP17 marchers in Durban, South Africa.

Photo: Trevor Davies

SADC Ministers responsible for environment and natural resources management approved the "SADC Support Programme on Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+)" at a meeting held in Windhoek, on 26th May 2011. This groundbreaking initiative to support member states in their efforts to combat climate change and achieve their development goals through reduced emissions in the forestry sector is the first of its kind by a regional organisation in Africa.

Against this background, the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance has embarked on a campaign for an Addendum on Gender and Climate Change. This underscores the fact that like a constitution, a protocol is a living document that should be open to amendment, reflecting specific needs and concerns at any given time. This is yet another example of how - by being organised and strategic - civil society is prying open democratic spaces and getting gender into key areas of the regional agenda.

There are precedents in the region to governments elaborating on gender instruments in response to civil society demands. In 1998, a year after the signing of the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development, Heads of State adopted an addendum on violence against women and children. Just as women's organisations drafted this addendum, so the Alliance has drafted an Addendum on Gender and Climate Change for consideration by Heads of State through their ministers.

Even before the adoption of this addendum, the Alliance decided in 2012 to track SADC governments' response to gender and climate change in the regional and country Barometers. This measures the performance of governments against the draft provisions of the Addendum. The message is simply that there is no time

to waste. While governments prevaricate on legal niceties, citizens - especially women - demand accountability.

Gender and climate change

The increase in natural disasters and extreme climate variations in the SADC region have already begun to point to serious threats to the livelihoods of Southern Africans. Coupled with increased income inequalities, unemployment, skyrocketing inflation and depressed production levels because of the global financial

crisis, the effects on women and other vulnerable groups are severe. It is therefore impossible to imagine a SADC that has achieved economic justice for women outside of considering climate change and sustainable development imperatives.

While climate change affects everyone, it does not affect everyone equally. The poor and vulnerable in Africa and other developing countries that have the least responsibility for climate change suffer the most as they experience violence, exclusion and loss of sovereignty over natural resources. Women make up 70% of the world's poor and this places them on the frontline of coping with disproportionate climate impacts on their livelihoods.

Of the people who die in climate-induced natural disasters 85% are women, while 75% of environmental refugees are women. Owing to these and other vulnerabilities that emerge from women's social role and status, their voices and interests need amplification within policy-making around climate change.

Peace begins @ home



Gender and climate justice by 2015!

It is important to understand the human face of climate change, not least because climate change has particular gender characteristics. Women suffer more from the impacts of climate change because of their limited access to services and goods. A growing body of literature on the gendered impact of climate change highlights aspects such as:

- Food insecurity - the stresses placed on women to provide sufficient food for their families;
- Water - the added effort required to secure sufficient water for family and access to clean water to prevent water borne diseases;
- Health - interruptions to health services delivery for example anti-retroviral treatment or TB treatment,

and impacts on those caring for the terminally ill (unpaid care work);

- School drop out - girl children who drop out of school because of responsibilities on the home front; and
- Migration and displacement - threats to women's safety and security because reliable water sources are further away or forced displacement owing to natural disaster. In the case of floods and tsunamis, for instance, women are the majority of victims because they stay to protect children.
- Women are more likely to be the unseen victims of resource wars and violence as a result of climate change.

Impact of climate change in Malawi¹

Action Aid Malawi conducted a study on the Impact of Climate Change on Women Farmers as one way of developing evidence based messages for COP 17. It is notable that women in Malawi are bearing the blunt of climate change impact. Women have given their say on how climate change is affecting their farming.

Eleanor Kenti, a 55-year-old mother of five has experienced the combination of floods and drought in Nsanje District that has resulted in the disruption of people's livelihood and ability to produce adequate food for their families.

"I used to grow maize, beans, rice and vegetables twice a year during the rainy and winter seasons. In the past, I was able to harvest food with a lot of surplus that I could sell for income to meet other needs like sending my children to school.

"Things began to change in the late 1980s and it got worse in the early 1990s when we experienced frequent floods and droughts. These changes have disrupted my ability to farm.

"Although I manage to find food to feed the family every day, it is barely enough. We manage to eat three

meals a day but we get no surplus to sell. We now have floods every rainy season. The river banks burst and the fields get destroyed. Government and other organizations like Action Aid Malawi come to our aid but it is never enough." says Kenti.

Because of these problems, the food production in her house dwindled from all year round to four to six months. Kenti, a mother of five, worries about the welfare of her family. Because of the high interest rates in lending institutions, Kenti is unable to borrow money to support the needs of her family.

According to Kenti, the families that live too close to the river banks face far worse problems during the rainy season. Their children are unable to go school and when they do go, they sometimes go without breakfast. Kenti belongs to a Community Based Organization and they managed to express their grievances to the District Assembly.

"What I want the most is to be self reliant even if the climate is changing. I want to grow rice, maize and keep poultry, so that I am able to feed my family. I also need subsidized fertilizers to supplement the compost manure I make," says Kenti.

Policy

Bolstered by a multi-stakeholder approach **Malawi** has embarked on several initiatives in response to the country's climate change challenges. The Malawi Climate Change Programme (CCP) (2010) is aimed at mainstreaming climate change issues in the national development agenda through: National Programme for Managing Climate Change in Malawi, and part of the regional response, Africa Adaptation Programme Building Capacity for Integrated and Comprehensive Approaches to Climate Change



Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Adaptation in Malawi (AAP - Malawi).

The aim of these programmes is to develop a national climate change response framework and strategy to support national and local government institutions in delivering long term climate resilient and sustainable development. There are no gender considerations within these policies. The National Environmental Policy (NEP)

¹ <http://www.actionaid.org/malawi/stories/climate-change-malawi>

holds government and other stakeholders responsible for a decrease in gas-house emissions.

The Malawi National Strategy on Sustainable Development (MNSSD) compliments NEP and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) focuses on protection and preservation of wildlife and other species. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS II) is an overarching development strategy that prioritises environmental concerns. Malawi has a National Action Programme for Adaptation (NAPA).

Despite these comprehensive policies, no clear indication of the extent of gender mainstreaming within them. References are only made to vulnerable communities and there is a need for monitoring the implementation of these policies.

Women and men in decision-making in environment and agriculture



It is proposed that the Addendum on Gender and Climate Change makes reference to ensuring women and men equal participation in all decisions related to climate change at all levels by 2015, as specified in Article 12-13 of 2008 SADC Gender Protocol.

Environmental affairs affect a range of issues that fall under the responsibility of SADC national governments. It is rare for SADC countries to have government ministries that focus on environmental issues in isolation. In Southern Africa, environmental affairs ministries often fall under tourism, water affairs, fisheries, and wildlife. In other instances environmental affairs cover issues related to energy, mining, natural resources and geological affairs.

Figure 11.1: Proportion of women and men in the environmental and sustainable development sector in Malawi

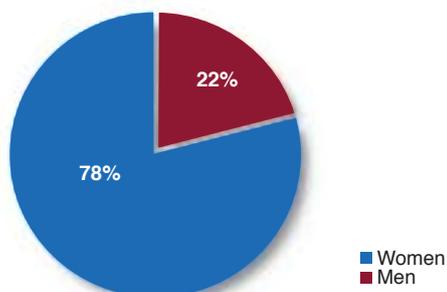


Figure 11.1 shows that women make up only 22% of key decision making positions in the environmental and sustainable development sector. This is far from the 50% target in the SADC Gender Protocol which calls on States to ensure gender parity by 2015. The Draft addendum builds on this already existing provision. This is however, one percentage higher than the regional average of 21%.

Public education and awareness



It is proposed that the Addendum calls on all SADC States to conduct gender sensitive education, training and public awareness campaigns on climate change and sustainable development and; ensure that public media plays a significant role in sharing information on gender dimensions of climate change and sustainable development.

In addition to government efforts, civil society formed the Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONECC) with a goal of building communities resilient to the impacts of climate change. This network focuses on activities including research, policy analysis, lobbying, advocacy, capacity building, information sharing and monitoring and evaluation. The Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA) is a public interest organisation that provides advice and conducts research in climate change. Little to none of these efforts have a specific gender focus

Gender and climate change financing



It is proposed that the Addendum calls on member states to ensure that women and men can equally access climate change financing vehicles available to SADC.

Based on available information Malawi is yet to successfully collect or collate comprehensive sex disaggregated data on effects of climate change or natural disasters. In order to develop robust systems for collecting gender disaggregated data the following are key: Co-ordination of all relevant government institutions, humanitarian agencies and UN agencies; emphasis on protection of individuals; and development of effective early warning mechanisms.

Sustainable technology



It is proposed that the Addendum calls on all SADC States to develop, deploy and disseminate sustainable technology that is responsive to women and men, for example, promoting cleaner burning fuel for household use that will reduce air pollution and cut annual cooking costs for women by 25%.



Energy saving stoves promoted by ADRA in Malawi. adramalawi.blogspot.com

In the majority of SADC countries women and men have traditionally relied on wood for cooking: Campaigns are underway to shift citizens to use cleaner energy sources but success will clearly depend on the extent of populations' involvement and interest in the initiatives in

addition to the associated costs of these alternative sources. In Malawi initiatives include: eradication of the use of wood for cooking, a shift to use of gas, use of solar heating systems, and research on large scale renewable energy sources. This will however take a long time given the limited resources and the high price of alternative technologies. The African development Bank Interim Country Strategy Paper (ICSP) 2011-2012 notes that biomass fuel use is widespread because only 7% of households have access to grid-supplied electricity in Malawi and that in rural areas where 85% of the population lives, access to electricity is less than 1%.

Climate adaptation

In light of the commitment for all Least Developed Countries to receive support from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in 2006 Malawi prepared its National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA). The NAPA sought and continues to seek to increase the adaptive capacities of vulnerable communities to adverse effects of climate change. In summary; the adaptation focus areas include:

- Improving community resilience to climate change through the development of sustainable rural livelihoods;
- Restoring forest in Upper, Middle and Lower Shire Valleys catchments to reduce siltation and the associated water flow problems;

- Improving agricultural production under erratic rains and changing climatic conditions;
- Improving Malawi's preparedness to cope with droughts and floods; and
- Improving climate monitoring to enhance Malawi's early warning capability and decision making as well as sustainable utilisation of Lake Malawi and lakeshore areas resources.

Financing climate change in Malawi

A study of Malawi's 2012/2013 national budget by the Centre for Environmental Policy Advocacy (CEPA) and the Malawi Economic Justice Network revealed a general stagnation in the allocation of public resources towards Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Environment and the Department of Environmental Affairs.

There is no indication of resources earmarked for addressing the gender dimensions of climate change. More advocacy in the area of financial allocation to climate change interventions is required. The situation is expected to improve following the creation of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Management.



- Lobby for the Addendum to the SADC Gender Protocol on Gender and Climate Change and nominate gender, climate change and sustainable development champions and ambassadors amongst relevant government ministers to run with the campaign for an Addendum.
- Increase women in sustainable development decision-making through partnerships with the women already occupying strategic positions, for example in agriculture and rural development and land resettlement.
- Map climate change effects on women through an initial qualitative study that can be developed into country and region specific quantitative frameworks.
- Intensify public awareness campaigns.
- Build capacity of women from different contexts on climate change issues; and
- Together with women from communities, develop adaptation and mitigation programmes that are replicable.
- Governments to commit to gender concerns in national budgets with specific regard climate change and environmental affairs.
- Set clear short and long-term targets for reducing carbon emission that keep average global temperature increases well below 1.5 degree Celsius, and support a shared vision that enables gender equality and avoids adverse effects on vulnerable groups - especially women.