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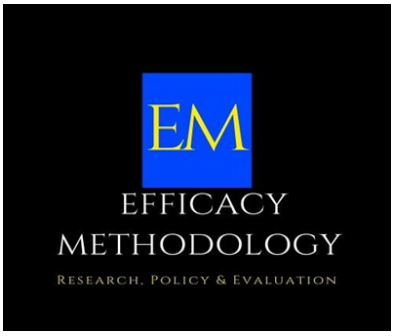

Introduction

It is now five years and three months since the signing of the Paris Agreement in 2015. Our attention in this paper is to revisit the world's commitment and progress towards combatting climatic change given that life on earth is increasingly becoming risky for humans, flora and fauna. According to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (2020)[1], 2020 was the second warmest year recorded in terms of temperature on land since 1880 which saw the Earth's temperature rise by 0.14° F (0.08° C) per decade. The rate of warming over the past 40 years is more than twice at 0.32° F (0.18° C) per decade since 1981. A trend which is being projected to increase by several degrees by 2030 if the world doesn't double its efforts on reduction of carbon emission. Therefore, it is imperative that the world doesn't lose site on war against the common enemy **"Climate Change".**

In the recent past, the world has witnessed drastic changes resulting from climatic change effect. For instance, the California[2] wild fire that killed 31 people, more than 10,000 buildings destroyed and a staggering 4.1m acres of tree cover burnt down.

The extreme wild fire in Sakha, Russia and the Greenland ice sheet experienced higher ice loss which is melting much faster leading to the rise in the sea level (Arctic Report card, 2020)[3].

In Africa, there has been prolonged drought stemming from high temperature, upsurge in the sea/lakes water levels, desert locust invasion and severe floods which indicates that climate change is grossly affecting the continent. The East African nations have also experienced their fair share of climate change negative impact in recent years. Thus, this has prompted the researcher to revisit the extent of implementation of the Paris Agreement among the East African Countries.

The Paris Climate Change Accord

In 2015, the World leaders converged in Paris, France in what was termed as "a meeting to safe the future of the Globe". And true to the cause, the future of the world rested on that deliberation which led to the Climate Change Paris Agreement[4]. This is an international legal binding treaty on climate change adopted by 196 parties at COP 21 in Paris on 12th December 2015 and later became effective on 4th November 2016.

1 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (2020). State of the Climate: Global Climate Report for Annual. https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/global/202013.

2 The Guardian (2020). California's wildfire hell: how 2020 became the state's worst ever fire season. https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/dec/30/california-wildfires-north-complex-record

3 Arctic Report Card (2020). Tracking recent environmental changes relative to historical records. https://www.arctic.noaa.gov/Report-Card

4 United Nation Climate Change (2015). The Paris Agreement. https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement

The international accord rest the on pillars of keeping the rising global temperature below 2°C and pursue further reduction to 1.5°C. Each respective country ought to make contribution to greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction. The cities were also invited to scale up their efforts and support actions to reduce emission by cutting down pollution and building resilience to decrease vulnerability to the adversity of climate change. Furthermore, the accord was cognizant that developing countries have limited capacity to deal with climate change effectively and developed nations would support developing economies to build capacity.

However, according to Falkner (2016)[5], the strategy of **"name and shame"** against countries that failed to reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emission. This approach was insufficient in stimulating countries to action as per the agreement. He further noted that the states would opt to deal with the domestic economic priorities and ignore their international reputation putting the commitment at limbo. Accordingly, in a study by Watson et al. (2019)[6], 75% of climate pledges are partially or totally insufficient to contribute to greenhouse gas reduction.

East African Response to the Paris Climate Accord and Climate Change Mainstreaming

A focused analysis of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda was used in this paper.

Kenya

Kenya is one of the most active participant on international climate change mitigation efforts. On 28th December 2016, Kenya was ratified to the 2015 Paris Accord. It is also a signatory to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 1997 Kyoto Protocol which permits her as an established actor in the climate change arena[7]. Since the ratification, it has taken several policy reforms to ensure maximum contribution. Although, it still struggles with limited public awareness which is affecting her climate change mitigation and carbon emission reduction.

According to USAID factsheet (2017)[8], Kenya's total greenhouse gas (GHG) emission in 2013 was at 60.2 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO2e), totaling to 0.13% of global greenhouse gas emission and the most emissions were from the agricultural sector (62.8%) of total emissions,

5 Falkner R. (2021). The Paris Agreement and the new logic of international climate politics. [Google Scholar]

6 Watson R., McCarthy J., Canziani P., & Nakicenovic N. (2019). The Trust behind the Climate Pledges. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nFx8UKTyjEteYO87-x06mVEkTs6RSPBi/view

7 Onencan A. M. & Van de Walle B. (2018). From Paris Agreement to Action: Enhancing Climate Change Familiarity and Situation Awareness. https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/10/6/1929/htm#B6-sustainability-10-01929

8 USAID factsheet (2017). Greenhouse Gas Emissions Factsheet: Kenya. https://www.climatelinks.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/2017_USAID_GHG%20Emissions%20Factsheet_Kenya.pdf

followed by the energy sector (31.2%), industrial processes sector (4.6%), and waste sector (1.4%). A reduction which is still below the pledge of 30% reduction by 2030 though it is considered among the highest contributors in Africa.

Currently, according to the Climate Action Tracker (2020)[9], Kenya's target is among the few in Africa that are within the "2°C compatible". This indicates that Kenya's current policies are within the range of what is considered to be a fair share of global effort. Though, it is not yet consistent with the Paris Agreement. The report further indicates that the progress on mainstreaming of climate change into sectorial policies and plans are slow.

A study by Ageyo and Muchunku (2020)[10], confirms that the current dissemination practices of climate change information in Kenya were not reaching grassroots community adequately due to socio-economic challenges and language barrier. Most Kenyans live in the villages and cannot access the Climate Change Resource Centre in Nairobi owing to rural distance and limited access to the internet. However, according to a study by Chaudhury et al. (2020)[11], Kenya is making progress in mainstreaming especially with the adoption of the County Fund Approach which has ensured funding at the lower levels.

Tanzania

On 18th April 2018, Tanzania committed herself to the Paris Agreement. This made them to adopt a number of reforms which include; strengthening natural resource management, prevention of environmental degradation and emphasizing emission reduction among others (The National Republic of Tanzania, 2016)[12].

According to Tuvako (2018)[13], Tanzania is committed to keeping its forestry cover of 48.1 million hectors. This make it to have a high stock of carbon in addition to the substantial investment in natural energy sector. However, many scholars have viewed Tanzania's efforts as modest. According to Nachmany (2018)[14], Tanzania has not prioritized climate change mitigation in her national agenda despite submitting Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC).

9 Climate Action Tracker (2020). Kenya submitted a new NDC.https://climateactiontracker.org/countries/kenya/

10 Ageyo J. and Muchunku I. G. (2020). Beyond the Right of Access: A Critique of the Legalist Approach to Dissemination of Climate Change Information in Kenya. file:///C:/Users/hp/Downloads/sustainability-12-02530.pdf

11 Chaudhury M., Tonya S., &Namrata G. (2020). Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation In Kenya: Lessons from Makueni and Wajir Counties.

12 The National Republic of Tanzania (2016). National Development Plan: Nurturing Industrialization for Economic Transformation.

13 Tuvako. N. Manongi (2018). Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nation. https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/TanzaniaE.pdf

14 Nachmany M. (2018): Policy brief Climate change governance in Tanzania: challenges and opportunities: Center for Climate Change and Economic Policy. https://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Climate-change-governance-in-Tanzania-challenges-and-opportunities.pdf

In accordance to World Data Atlas (2019), Tanzania has been ranked as low as 165th country on greenhouse gas reduction efforts.

A study by Ampaire et al. (2016)[15], highlighted that low adaptation response to climatic change concerns among stakeholders and lack of effective national finance mechanism to direct climate funds slow down implementations. Furthermore, poor coordination of climate change action right from the national level to the local level remains a top challenge to climate change mainstreaming. A risk assessment report by the Irish Aid (2018)[16], indicates that Tanzania will require about USD 500 million annually for mitigation and building resilience to climate change and could increase to USD 1 billion per year by 2030. This financing gap will continue to affect the climate change mainstreaming and subsequently affects Tanzania's response to the Paris Agreement.

Uganda

In October 2018, residents of Kasese district in western Uganda woke up to floods that wreaked havoc on livestock, crops and left 8,000 people displaced. In addition, a report by Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2017)[17], indicates that more than 80% of Uganda's rural households use firewood for cooking leading to an annual 2.6% reduction in the forest cover. The rising of Lake Victoria water levels and the desert locust invasion are among the indicators that climate change is hitting Uganda hard. Therefore, it is not surprising that UN Environmental Programme (2018)[18] noted that Uganda is struggling to handle climatic changes.

Uganda joined the Paris Agreement and subsequently ratified on 21st September 2016. According to the World Data Atlas (2019)[19], Uganda is still ranked among the low performing countries in the world in regard to the carbon emission reduction. Most of Uganda's carbon comes from burning of fossil fuels and manufacture of cement. The carbon dioxide produced during consumption of solid, liquid, gas fuels and gas flaring which ought to be reduced if Uganda is to move towards meeting the Paris Accord national target.

According to the Ministry of Water and Environment (2019)[20], Uganda still

15 Ampaire E., Okolo W., Acosta M., Jassogne L., Twyman J., Muindi P. and Mwongera C. (2016). Barriers to successful climate change policy implementation in Tanzania.

16 Irish Aid (2018). Tanzania Country Climate Change Risk Assessment Report. https://www.climatelearningplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/tanzania_country_climate_risk_assessment_report_-final_version.pdf

17 UBOS (2017). Uganda National Household Survey 2016/17.

18 UN Environmental Programme (2018).Climate change takes a toll in Uganda. https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/when-it-rains-my-heart-sinks-climate-change-takes-toll-uganda

19 World Data Atlas (2019). CO2 emissions per capita. https://knoema.com/atlas/ranks/CO2-emissions-per-capita?baseRegion=UG

20 Ministry of Water and Environment, Climate Change Department (2019). Uganda's First Biennial Update Report to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

faces a number of challenges ranging from limited finance, technology gaps that affect data tracking, limited capacity building and technical skills. Other constrains to implementations are limited capacity in undertaking mitigation assessment, absence of formalized relations with the private sector and disclosure of emission reductions in sectors like transport, charcoal production and industrial processes. However, according to Conservation International (2020)[21], Uganda recently received greenhouse gas inventory and Monitoring Reporting Verification (MRV) system. This system will allow easy data tracking and improve effort towards the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) of 22% greenhouse gas reduction by 2030.

Global Comparative Review of the Paris Agreement and Mainstreaming Climate Change Interventions to the EAC.

World over, there are inadequacies in attaining the Paris Agreement pledges. In a study by Watson et al. (2019), about 130 nations are far short on contributing to meeting the 50 percent global emission reduction required by 2030 to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. However, some nations like the European Union countries, Iceland, Monaco, Norway, Switzerland and Ukraine are sufficiently contributing to greenhouse gas reduction. Other countries like Australia, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Korea and San Marino are making good progress while all African countries are making insufficient contribution (Watson et al., 2019).

China and the United State of America, the world's largest economies are also making insufficient contribution to the greenhouse gas reduction. As for the United State, their pledge was first withdrawn by President Donald Trump (45th President of US) before they rejoined the accord on February 4th under the leadership of President Joe Biden.

The issue of countries only focusing on emission reduction within their territorial boundaries have become short in many aspects and disingenuous. For instance, the UK, Canada and Norway who are now considered to be champions in greenhouse gas reduction do not actually take responsibility for their emissions caused by burning of their oil, gas and coal in other places around the world which challenges the contexts of the Paris Agreement.

21 Conservation International (2020). GHG Inventory and Monitoring, Reporting Verification (MRV) systems.https://www.conservation.org/gef/news/2020/06/22/major-boost-for-ugandas-capacity-to-track-greenhouse-gas-emissions

Nonetheless, the global low level of progression pose a huge risk and create uncertainty of what the future holds. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all respective countries to make best efforts to mitigate climate change and greenhouse gas reduction. For the case of East Africa, three policy recommendations are critical for its effective contribution.

Policy Recommendations

The existence of the East African Community Climate Change Master Plan 2011 – 2031[22] are based on eight key pillars namely; Adaptation Intervention, Mitigation Interventions, Technology Development and Transfer, Capacity Building, Education, Training and Public Awareness, Climate Risk Management and Disaster Risk Reduction. Therefore, we recommend the following policy alternatives to advance performance of the EAC to attain the Paris Agreement commitment and develop an effective mainstreaming alternatives.

(1) For effective mainstreaming, each of the East African states ought to ensure that there is effective communication flow to the grass roots and in the language that is understood. In Tanzania, it was noted that language barrier was the major impediment to the citizen's response to averting climate change. Therefore, translating the awareness campaigns, policy documents and localizing access of materials will create significant impact in mainstreaming climate change. According to Tomedes (2020), translations are the bridges that make cross-cultural and cross-linguistic communication possible since the earliest days of human history and can help effectively in the fight against climate change.

(2) There is need for a strong leadership within the EAC in order for the region to make progress. Improving climate change mitigation efforts, awareness and mainstreaming requires a strong coordination among the stakeholders right from the top leadership to the grassroots. A study by K4D (2019)[23], suggest that there is need to emphasize strong national leadership rightly linked to the grassroots. Therefore, it is imperative that the EAC establish a strong leadership to oversee the implementation of the EAC climate change master plan.

(3) The global community ought to be committed to fund the East African countries adequately.

22 Climate Change Master Plan (2011). East African Community Climate Change Master Plan 2011 – 2031. https://www.meteorwanda.gov.rw/fileadmin/Template/Policies/EAC_Climate_Change_Master_Plan.pdf

23 K4D (2019). Knowledge, Evidence and Learning for Development. Mainstreaming climate and environmental considerations into existing development programmes. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c8645a7ed915d07cb04cf80/541_Mainstreaming_Climate_Change_into_Development.pdf

Africa's financial strength is low and it is hard to diminish industrialization and fossil fuels at the expense of economic growth and development. Therefore, in order for the EAC to effectively implement its agenda on climate change reduction funding is critical and needs to be immediately addressed.

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