

# POLICY BRIEF

## NATIONAL ADAPTATION PROGRAMME OF ACTION (NAPA)



Volume 6, Issue 4



This Policy Brief has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union, through the Capacity Building Programme for Non State Actors in Malawi. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA), Coordination Union for Rehabilitation of the Environment (CURE) and the Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM) and can under no circumstance be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

## Background and Introduction

Climatic hazards, caused by climate change and extreme weather events, are a threat to economic growth and development of Malawi. Droughts and floods, in particular, adversely impact on food, water, health, energy and the sustainable livelihoods of rural communities especially women, children, female-headed households and the elderly. With about 65% of the population living below the poverty line, Malawi's vulnerable communities do not have sufficient capacity to cope with, or adapt to, the adverse impacts of extreme weather events. The loss of human, natural, financial, social and physical capital, caused by the climate change adverse impacts, especially floods, drought and landslides, among many others is of great concern to the Malawi Government. In view of these adverse impacts and as part of the commitment for all Least Developed Countries to get support from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in 2006 Malawi prepared its National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA). The NAPA seeks to increase the adaptive capacities of vulnerable communities to adverse effects of climate change. It was developed by evaluating the impacts of adverse climatic conditions in eight important sectors of economic growth. The sectors analyzed were agriculture, water, human health, energy, fisheries, wildlife, forestry and gender.

## Impacts of Climate Change in Different Sectors

**Agricultural sector:** Droughts and floods have resulted in poor crop yields/ total crop failure, leading to serious food shortages, hunger and malnutrition. To improve the agriculture situation, interventions such as improved early warning systems, improved crop varieties, livestock breeds are proposed.

**Human health sector:** Infant malnutrition and chronic

ailments associated with malaria, cholera and diarrhea as a result of droughts and floods. Some of the interventions to improve the situation include prevention of diseases and crop diversification and food supplementations for the under-fives.

**Energy sector:** The hydro-electric power generation has been negatively affected by the droughts and floods. Diversification of energy sources, reforestation of the Upper, Middle and Lower Shire Valleys catchments arresting siltation would be ideal for reducing the effects.

**Fisheries sector:** Droughts and floods are the major climatic hazards affecting the fisheries sector, and have been responsible for the declining, drying up, of water bodies resulting in low fish production and loss of biodiversity. The proposed interventions include fish breeding to restock water bodies and mainstreaming climate change into fisheries strategies.

**Wildlife sector:** Droughts are the major effect to wildlife by affecting the animal reproduction systems and migratory habits. The proposed adaptation measures include improving fire management in wildlife reserves and construction of watering points.

**Water sector:** Increasing droughts and floods seriously disrupt water availability quantitatively and qualitatively. Some of the proposed interventions would include demand side management through water allocation and flood management.

**Forestry sector:** Forestry sector is affected by extended droughts resulting in land degradation and loss of soil fertility, as well as forest fires. Improved extension services to ensure sustainable land and forest management, forest fire

management at the community level would improve the situation.

**Gender:** Women bear most of the burden in activities that are most impacted by adverse climate, including collection of water, firewood and ensuring daily access to food. In addition, the changing demographics due to impacts of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, is forcing women to become household heads. Ensuring easier access to water and energy sources by drilling boreholes and planting trees are some of the interventions being proposed in the NAPA.

### Developing the NAPA

Through a consultative process, thirty one adaptation options were identified to address the urgent adaptation needs, with emphasis on vulnerable rural communities in Malawi. The list was further analyzed, ranked and prioritized for urgency, and categorized as high, medium or low. The urgent activities which were rated high were combined into project clusters for the purposes of developing a shortlist of five project profiles, as provided in box below.

- 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 and sustainable utilization of Lake Malawi and lakeshore areas resources.

### **Implementation arrangements**

The lead implementing agencies are the responsible ministries depending on the project profiles. These ministries will be assisted with related subject stakeholders including government departments, non-governmental organizations; community based organizations, academic and research institutions. While monitoring is left to the lead government agencies, overall evaluation is expected to be done by the Environmental Affairs Department.

Government through the Ministry of Development Planning and Cooperation and the Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Environment recently completed the formulation phase of the National programme for Managing Climate Change in Malawi. This document provides a strategic framework for responding to the challenge that climate change poses for sustainable economic growth and development, and national food security in Malawi.

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