

Carbon Pricing to save Green Climate Fund



Picture by: Kristin Palitza

By Kristin Palitza

Carbon pricing will be the core mechanism to finance the Green Climate Fund and, with it, climate change adaptation projects in developing countries.

"If you can establish broader and more comprehensive carbon financing, we will attract more private funding," explained Norway's Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, who co-chairs the United Nations high-level advisory group on climate change financing.

Carbon finance puts a price on emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. According to Stoltenberg, putting a price to carbon emissions will have three key benefits: it will encourage industry to reduce harmful emissions (to avoid being charged for them); it will contribute to the development of clean technologies to reduce emissions; and it will generate revenue, which can be used for government purposes but also to take climate action.

There are already a number of countries that have shown that carbon trading systems or taxes can help reducing emissions while promoting economic growth, said Stoltenberg: "The European Union has a comprehensive carbon trading system through an emission scheme. Australia just introduced a carbon tax. China is introduc-

ing carbon pricing, and South Africa also wants to develop a carbon tax."

It was therefore plausible that carbon pricing could assist in providing urgently needed finance for the GCF as well.

"The beauty of carbon pricing is that you will get less pollution but more finance," Stoltenberg added.

During the past 10 days of the 17th U.N. climate change summit, the question on how to generate funding for the GCF has taken centre stage. The global economic crisis and national austerity measures have reduced the willingness of rich countries to commit to filling the coffers of the fund with public monies.

"The financial and debt crisis, especially in Europe and the United States, have developed further. We therefore have to look for both for public funding but also private sources," stressed Stoltenberg who, as co-chair of the advisory group on climate change financing, recently submitted to the U.N. an analysis of how long-term financing should be generated.

"Our main conclusion is that it is chal-

lenging but feasible to mobilise 100 billion dollars annually," he said, referring to an agreement from last year's climate talks in Cancun, Mexico, that fast-track financing of 10 million dollars per year between 2010 and 2013 should be scaled up to 100 billion dollars annually by 2020.

"There is no sense in having a fund, if you don't have money for it," Stoltenberg said.

United Nations secretary-general Ban Ki-moon agreed that short-term and long-term financing goals could only be reached through a combination of public and private resources. This would not mean governments lose political control over the financing mechanism of the GCF, a point some countries said they were concerned about during the climate negotiations.

"There is a pool of possible financing options, such as carbon taxes, transport taxes, and so forth. It will be up to each country to decide which regulations it wants to adopt and implement nationally," said Ban.

However, this did not let governments of rich nations off the hook. "Industrial countries must show leadership by injecting sufficient capital immediately," said Ban. There will be no forward movement in the fight

against climate change without movement on climate finance. Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi agreed.

"We need to create a price structure that will attract the private sector to invest in climate financing. Carbon pricing will send the signal to the private sector, that green technology will be profitable," said Zenawi. But right now, days of staggering negotiations about the operationalisation and financing of the GCF, have raised doubts among economic experts that governments of industrialised countries are truly willing to make available parts of the finance necessary to fund climate change adaptation in the global South.

"We don't need any more reports, we need the political will," said economist and British government advisor Lord Nicholas Stern.

The faster politicians acted, the cheaper it will cost them, agreed Mexico's president Felipe Calderon, trying to push for the GCF to be operationalised before the end of the climate change summit on Dec 9.

"Low carbon economy doesn't come cheap. It will cost hundreds of millions of dollars a year, depending on how fast we act. The sooner we act, the less it will cost us," he said.

"We don't need any more reports, we need the political will."

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A Global Response

By Stephen Leahy

South African President Jacob Zuma, leading British economist Sir Nicholas Stern, Nobel prize-winning scientists and leading policy experts have urged negotiators to act on the science of climate change at a special high-level event on the sidelines of the United Nations climate change conference here in Durban.

"We want to inject some positive energy into the climate talks which seem paralysed," said Johan Rockström, Executive Director of the Stockholm Environment Institute and co-host of the 3rd Nobel Laureate Symposium on Global Sustainability. The brief invitation-only symposium was an unusual gathering of 35 high-level policy makers and experts from around the world.

"We cannot give up on the U.N. process. The pace of change needed to meet the climate and sustainable development challenge is so large, we need everyone to move together," Rockström told IPS in an interview.

"President Zuma called on delegates and their countries to set aside their individual

interests to realize collective action," said Naledi Pandor, South Africa's Minister of Science and Technology

"Only when we act globally can we respond to the climate change challenge," Pandor said in a press conference.

Climate talks here at the 17th Conference of Parties as well recent past ones seem to be in a state of paralysis Rajendra Pachauri, Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, told IPS. That paralysis stems from political situation within and between nations said Pachauri.

Negotiators here must "get away from short term and narrow interests," he said.

"Leaders and the public need to understand there are huge co-benefits to reducing greenhouse gases -- health benefits, energy security, more employment, ensure food security, and more."

Several government ministers also attended the Symposium, which issued a "Durban Vision" statement.

That statement calls on world leaders to "adopt a new mindset to listen to the voice of science...and address the unavoidable interconnections between global sustainability, poverty eradication, social justice and

"The pace of change needed to meet the climate and sustainable development challenge is so large, we need everyone to move together"



South African President Jacob Zuma visits the Africa Pavilion

economic development in an environmentally constrained world."

"The unsustainable growth path we're on can't continue forever," said Stern.

Stern acknowledged that the current financial crisis is being used by some governments for inaction.

"Finance can be raised using the right kinds of incentives to make the transition to a low carbon economy."

Continuing along the same path makes no sense economically, agreed Pachauri. Extreme weather events cost the world hundreds of billions of dollars a year and it will only get worse. Already some small islands states suffer losses amounting to one to eight percent of their gross domestic product, he said.

"It's time for some nations to wake up to this reality. We have the solutions to address climate change but lack the political will."

Rockström also said emissions reductions alone aren't enough for a safe climate future.

"We now urgently need a world transition to global sustainability. Conserving biodiversity, sustainable management of our landscapes and seascapes, reduction of pollution ... need to be integrated with our responses to climate change," he said.

"Staying below two degrees Celsius global warming is not just an environmental goal but a crucial development goal," said Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, Director of Germany's Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

Kashmiri Farmers Left High and Dry

By Athar Parvaiz *

Sammad Sheikh of Tangchekh village in north Kashmir cannot understand why the rice fields that his family cultivated for generations are drying up.

"It is a mystery as to why water is getting scarcer in summers," he says. "This has been happening for the past few years though there have been one or two good summers in between."

With no assurance of water availability, Sheikh, like his fellow farmers in the region, is looking for alternatives to paddy cultivation.

"I have heard that most of the farmers in central and south Kashmir have switched from agriculture to horticulture. I am now seriously thinking of putting a portion of my seven acres under crops that are not water-intensive," he told IPS.

Farmers in this Himalayan region have heard of climate change and wonder why the government is yet to step in with improved irrigation facilities to help them tide over the summer months.

"The government has constructed water ponds in some

areas for water harvesting, but much more has to be done to cover the entire area," says Mukhtar Naikoo.

According to the study 'Recent Trends in Meteorological Parameters over Jammu & Kashmir (1976 to 2007)', by A. K. Jaswal and G. S. Prakasa Rao of the Indian Meteorological Department, temperatures are increasing over this state, often likened to Switzerland for its alpine charms and snow-capped mountains. The study showed an annual increase in the maximum temperature in the Kashmir region from 0.04 to 0.05 degrees Celsius over the period and a corresponding rise in the minimum temperature in the Jammu region from 0.03 to 0.08 degrees C per year.

"Annual rainfall and rainy days are decreasing in both the regions of the state except at Jammu where rainfall trend is significantly increasing (12.05 mm per year)," says the study.

Scientists in Kashmir are worried at the rapid conversion of paddy lands for horticultural use and the mushrooming of commercial establishments and residential colonies in the areas which were farming lands.

According to official figures, 80 percent of Kashmir's

seven million people are directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture and allied sectors. Much of Kashmir's total area of 2.4 million hectares is mountainous or forested.

Official statistics indicate the 151,352 hectares of land that used to be under cultivation in the state, a few decades ago, has now shrunk to 46,943 hectares.

"This is a dangerous trend," warns Zaffar Ahmad Reshi, a professor in Kashmir University's Botany department. "The government in Kashmir has no land-use policy and has failed to provide proper irrigation facilities to the farmers."

According to Akhtar Hussain Malik, a botanist at Kashmir University, the drop in rice and maize cultivation has resulted in a lack of fodder for cattle. "Our animals are already suffering from insufficient fodder with the degradation and shrinking of pastures in Kashmir."

Farooq Ahmad Lone, director at Kashmir's agriculture department says the state government has plans to provide bore wells to farmers whose lands are dependent on rains.

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Gender Justice

Zukiswa Zimela interviews DORAH MAREMA, coordinator of Gender and Climate Change in Southern Africa

Civil Society organisations are adamant that women are the ones who will be hardest hit by climate change because of the role they play in society as providers for their families. And those in rural areas, who depend on agriculture for survival, will be even worse off.

Dorah Marema, coordinator of Gender and Climate Change in Southern Africa, a network of gender civil society organisations, activists, and experts spoke to IPS about the importance of highlighting gender at the climate negotiations at the 17th Conference of Parties (COP17) in Durban.

Excerpts of the interview follow:

Q: Do you find that enough attention is being paid to gender issues at this year's climate change negotiations?

A: Well there has definitely been a shift when we consider how gender issues have been considered in the previous COP's. At this COP there is a lot of motioning of gender issues, there are over thirty side events focusing on women and climate change. Whether this indicates a substantive positive change we don't know, so we are unable to evaluate whether they are making an impact.

Q: You advocate for climate justice as gender justice. Can you explain why you want to separate gender from the mainstream conversation and place it as a top priority on the climate change agenda?

A: When we talk about climate change and the issue of justice, we talk about the global South being impacted the most. We then zoom in and say that Africa will be the worst affected in the South, simply because it is a poor continent.

...Although climate



"When we talk about climate change and the issue of justice, we talk about the global South being impacted the most."

change will affect all countries, its impacts will be differently distributed among various regions, generations, age and income groups, occupations and genders. The poor, the majority of whom are women, will be disproportionately affected.

Over the past decade, the relationship between climate change and poverty in countries where people's livelihoods depend on natural resources and environmental services has increasingly become a developmental issue.

This relationship between climate change and people's livelihoods is seen to have strong linkages to poverty. To this nexus is an added strong gender component, which if ignored could lead to inappropriate

policy measures and increased poverty, especially amongst the disadvantaged, poor population.

We say that women are poor in those nations and we say that women are the majority of the poor and we know that they are very reliant on natural resources.

They are also the food producers who are very reliant on agriculture. Those two things, including water (scarcity), mean that they are vulnerable because they are dependent on rain, and they are dependent on rain-fed agriculture.

Q: What sort of recourse are you looking for for women and how do you think they can be better empowered to adapt to climate change?

A: One example that I

can give is that now there is the conversation around finance, the Green Climate Fund. What we are asking for is direct access to the funds.

(We want access) not just for countries, but also for organisations with projects that work with empowering women. They need that money so that they can implement adaptation and mitigation projects.

Also in terms of mitigation we need to consider the gender issues there. There are a lot of high-tech mitigation projects, which are not talking about empowering women.

So what we are doing is advocating for jobs that are decentralised so that women would be able to benefit by getting jobs.

Top Climate Protectors

By Kristin Palitza

Sweden, the United Kingdom and Germany are the top countries to fight climate change, according to the 2012 Climate Change Performance Index, whose results were published at the United Nations climate change summit today.

Sweden, the country with the lowest emission levels of 50,600 tonnes of CO₂ emissions, according to the latest data from the United States Energy Information Administration (EIA), and good emission trends worldwide, was ranked 4th.

Experts said they could not award any country with the top three rankings, as no nation was doing enough to prevent climate change.

The three lowest-ranking countries are Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan and Iran. The index is compiled each year by environmental lobby organisation Germanwatch and the Climate Action Network (CAN), which evaluate and compare the climate protection performance of the 58 countries worldwide which are together responsible for more than 90 percent of global energy-related CO₂-emissions.

"This year's results signify that although globally emissions are still growing, none of the big emitters make the real shifts that are needed," said CAN Europe director Wendel Trio. "None of them is considered as doing enough."

Sweden's climate policy was not ambitious enough, while the UK, ranked 5th, had recently shown worrying signs. It had failed to tighten up its carbon budgets, while Germany's emission levels remained too high for a placement higher than rank 6.

"The average grades for the national and international policies are weak," said Germanwatch researcher Jan Burck, one of the authors of the report. "Most experts are not satisfied by far with the efforts of their governments with regard to the 2°C limit", which refers to the rise in global temperatures that scientists have found may not be exceeded if the world wants to win

the fight against climate change.

However, within Europe, countries such as Turkey (58), Poland (56) and Croatia (53) hold some of the lowest positions in the overall ranking. This is partly due to their policy evaluations. During its presidency of the European Council, Poland blocked the proposed European Union's 30 percent reduction target until 2020, for example. Poor emissions trends and poor policy evaluations made the Netherlands (42) lose twelve ranks.

The United States has climbed up two ranks to 52, mainly due to its reduction in emissions as a result of the economic crisis. It remains, however, at the bottom end of the index because of poor policy evaluations and a very high emissions level.

Emerging economy India dropped 13 ranks because of a worse overall performance, especially in terms of its emissions trend.

"The index provides hard data and trends in the context of climate negotiations that often remain vague. We hope countries use the index as a motivation to increase their ambitions to fight climate change," said Trio.

China's climate performance is full of contradictions, the authors said. While China is one of the world's largest CO₂-emitters, producing 7.7 million tonnes of CO₂ according to the EIA.

"China is installing about half of the global renewable energy capacity per year," said Burck. He expects China's ranking to "dramatically improve" as soon as these positive trends will influence its emissions trend.

China, Mexico, Korea and South Africa are the countries with the best policy evaluation. South Africa has been showing an improved performance in the field of national climate policy each year, but is only ranked 38 because their emissions are still relatively high and the country remains addicted to coal. The countries with the worst score in the indicator 'emissions levels' are Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia and Estonia.

Farming By Phone

By **Isaiah Esipisu**

Francis Mburu used to keep indiginous cattle in Entasopia village in the semi-arid Kajiado region, 160 kilometres southwest of Nairobi. However, increasing temperatures and frequent droughts in Kenya have made this difficult in recent years.

But now, in an area that has never had electricity, where education is not a priority or sometimes not an option at all, residents of Entasopia are using a solar-powered internet facility to adapt to the changing climatic conditions.

The Nguruman community, largely composed of the Maasai ethnic group, now has access to an ICT facility locally known as Maarifa ("knowledge" in Swahili) Centre. Here they are able to access climate adaptation information via the internet, videos and books. The Arid Land Information Network (ALIN), in collaboration with the Kenyan government, founded the project.

According to Samuel Nzioka, the field officer for ALIN, most of the videos shown at the centre are practical lessons in local languages aimed at boosting the understanding of the concepts of climate change and adaptation, and basic dry-land farming knowledge.

"From reading agricultural books, listening to advice from field officers manning the centre, and watching video clips that show what other farmers are doing to adapt to the changing climatic conditions in other arid areas, I have learnt more resilient methods of animal husbandry," said Mburu, a 56-year-old father of three.

Because of the project, Mburu now keeps a herd of 45 dairy goats, and has a poultry project. He sells the chickens to the ever-growing indigenous chicken markets in urban centres.

The goat's milk he produces fetches a

higher price compared to cow's milk.

Climate change in East Africa has resulted in higher temperatures and prolonged droughts and has meant that farmers have had to adapt along with these changes.

"We have seen our pastoralists move to higher grounds in Ethiopia in search of greener pastures. We have seen animal species, that we thought could tolerate drought, die as a result of the prolonged drought. It means that it is not business as usual," said Dr. Miano Mwangi, assistant director for Animal Production at the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, and the national coordinator at the Kenya Arid and Semi-Arid Land programme.

It is successes like the one in Entasopia that has experts at the ongoing United Nations 17th Conference of the Parties (COP 17) urging the international community to consider technology transfer as one of the main methods of adapting to climate change.

"In Ghana, we call it climate education, where information communication technology is used to educate people on how to adapt to the new phenomenon," Atsu Titiati, the Tree Programme director at the Ghana office of Rainforest Alliance, an international non-profit organisation dedicated to the conservation of tropical forests, told IPS.

He said that in northern Ghana, communities rely on community-based radio to know what types of seed to plant during a particular season, and for the market value of their crops upon harvest.

"The government also uses community radio to warn people in advance whenever the weather forecast detects floods," Titiati told IPS in Durban.

In Kenya, pastoralist communities use mobile phones to determine the market value of their animals.



In pastoralist communities, mobile phones are crucial for alerting communities to droughts and reducing food insecurity.

Picture by: Isaiah Esipisu

"We have rolled out a project in Isiolo district with an aim of reducing food insecurity among the communities," Rahab Mburunga, the data officer at ActionAid International – Kenya, told IPS.

Through the project, information about the market value of various crops and livestock is sent as short messages to subscribers' mobile phones.

The project has also given mobile phones to community members so that they can distribute the information to other villagers who might not have phones.

"We have tried it and it is working," Mburunga said.

In February, the Kenyan government developed a National Climate Change Technology Action Plan. One of the main objectives of this was to explore technology transfer opportunities and to establish national technology innovation centres.

In Mozambique, the government and non-governmental organisations use mobile phones to warn residents in flood-prone areas about the possibility of floods to ensure the timely evacuation of people.

"We usually send short messages to particular community representatives so that it is broadcasted to the rest of the community regarding floods, delayed rainfall or any other necessary agricultural informa-

tion," said Josh Ogada, the communication expert at Oneworld, a regional environmental organisation based in Cape Town, South Africa.

According to a statement released by the International Telecommunication Union at COP 17, these technologies hold the key to adaptation, but they remain underutilised in most African countries.

"Today's advanced technologies can transform social, industrial and business processes to effect the changes needed to achieve sustainability. But while the potential of ICTs to make a real difference is widely recognised by the technology community and government ICT ministries, it is still far from being understood and embraced by environmental lobby groups and policymakers," the statement said.

Meanwhile, Africa is calling for more funding to implement climate change adaptation programmes.

"We have enough resources for adaptation in Africa, and all we need is the technology transfer backed with scientific evidence. However, our people cannot fully exploit them if we do not have access to proper channels of financing such technology transfers for adaptation," Mithika Mwenda, the coordinator for the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance told IPS.

New Emission Targets could Boost Wind Power

By **Busani Bafana**

A new protocol on climate change, with bigger emission-reduction targets, will boost global investment in wind power, a relatively emission-free energy that can help fight climate change.

This is the view of the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC). The council says wind power could meet up to 70 percent of emission pledges made at Copenhagen in 2009. The projection is based on the growth rates and projections for putting wind power in place around the world in the next eight years.

"A second commitment to the Kyoto Protocol, but with more ambitious emission targets and a continuation of Clean Development Mechanism, will boost investment in wind power," Steve Sawyer, GWEC Secretary General, told IPS on the sidelines of the launch of a new report, Wind Energy and Climate Policy by the European Wind Energy Association (EWEA) at COP17. Sawyer says that while climate change negotiations are slow, wind power is racing ahead. Driven by private sector investment, investment was up 31 percent to \$96 billion in 2010.

According to GWEC, wind energy saved 29 billion tonnes of Co2 in 2009. This corresponds to nearly 21 percent of the Kyoto target for Annex 1 countries. Wind energy is expected

to produce 766 TWh of electricity in 2012, when Kyoto expires. This should take an estimated 430 million tonnes of carbon dioxide out of the air. There are about 160 000 wind turbines producing electricity in 70 states around the world.

The GWEC said science findings leave no doubt that global emissions need to peak and start to decline before 2020. A dramatic increase in renewable energy deployment is urgently required to make this happen.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, industrialised countries committed to cut 5.2 percent of their greenhouse gases emissions, with different targets for individual countries. Success has been mixed and completely off the mark for some countries.

"Wind and other renewable technologies are playing a larger role than anyone could have anticipated a few years ago," Sawyer says. "But we need ambitious emission reduction targets in order to reach our full potential and spur other measures necessary to close the emissions gap."

China was leading wind markets in Asia. There are substantial investments in Egypt, Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia and stronger growth projections for Africa in the long term. South Africa has a lot of potential.

"If the South African market takes off the way ... we do not

see a reason why it should not be one of the big manufacturers. The complicated bit in South Africa is the price of steel ... which makes manufacturing expensive, but it cannot be more expensive than shipping turbines in," Sawyer says.

In its 2011 World Energy Outlook report, the International Energy Agency said the world has five years to turn the tide. If it did not, the two degrees global warming cap could be out of reach. As leaders sit down to the 17th round of global negotiations, the EWEA said wind power alone will contribute to 31 percent of the emission reductions required by the current European Union climate target.

The EWEA has called on the EU and other countries in the negotiations to raise their ambitions, as the contribution of wind power showed that Europe could add 10 percent to its reduction target.

"Ambitious climate targets are key to maintain Europe's leadership in the wind power industry in an environment of fast growing global competition from manufacturers in China, America and Asia," said Remi Guet, EWEA's senior advisor on climate and environment.

"Renewable targets up to 2030 and increased climate targets inside the EU would provide much needed political certainty to energy investors."

COMMUNITY media

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COP 17 / CMP 7 CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE DURBAN 2011



Translating climate change ... MDDA programme manager Manana Stone welcomes everyone at the start of discussions with Ann Lamont, Greenpeace Africa Executive Director, MDDA Board Member Phelisa Nkomo and moderator Advocate Robin Sewlal from DUT. **Pictures by: Khanyisa Sinqe**

Language and climate change

By Ramatamo wa Matamong

How can community media more powerfully convey the message of climate change to the people at the sharp end of this global phenomenon? This was the subject of a roundtable discussion featuring South African industry experts and community journalists meeting on Dec. 6 on the sidelines of the U.N. climate conference.

Panelists agreed that capacity-building and support were key elements. "We are sitting on the deficit of knowledge in terms of understanding the climate change. As the Media Development & Diversity Agency, we are happy to enter the space of ensuring that community media is provided information around the issues of climate," said MDDA Board Member Phelisa Nkomo.

"The language around climate change is very much exclusive and often dominated by white males and business sector with too much technical jargon. It is the duty of community media to interpret this for people at the grass roots level and to show how it impacts their daily lives," she said. "That is why we have partnered with civil society organisations such as Greenpeace as natural allies for language and technical support around climate change."

Nkomo was joined on the panel by Ann Lamont, Greenpeace Executive Director, and Paula Fray, Regional Director of Inter Press Service Africa. Advocate Robin Sewlal,

from the Durban University of Technology where the event took place, served as moderator.

Lamont said that due to what she termed "carbon boredom" - particularly among mainstream media organisations who are the largest presence at major international events such as the 17th Conference of Parties (COP 17) working on the global climate treaty - many stories were being lost in the pipeline.

"We are very impressed to see the presence of community media here at COP 17," she said. "It is at the grassroots level where climate and social justice becomes real. It is for this reason we are strengthening our relationship with community media. We need to demystify the content and take into consideration the cultural dimension."

Nkomo said the community media has a key role to play in transforming the society and facilitating social dialogue. "Community media has the power to take on issues that relate to social and economic rights, and with continuous capacity-building workshops such as this one, we are ensuring sustainable growth."

One question that sprung from the audience was how can community media make climate stories viable and sell advertising - which is crucial to community outlets' own bottom line.

"Our job is not just to write important stories, but to work

out how to make important stories interesting," said Paula Fray of Inter Press Service, quoting one of her own mentors. "COP 17, mitigation, adaptation, the Green Climate Fund - all of these are important stories. You need to know your audience and target market and make these stories interesting and attractive."



Questions ... community reporter Henrietta Mongalo raises the issue of media sustainability.



Farmer Mack Sekete, vice chairperson of the Mopane Farmers Union, and members of Itireleng meaning "Do it yourself", want farmers to be heard. Pictures by: Henrietta Mongalo

Agriculture in, say farmers across the globe

By Henrietta Mongalo

Agriculture is the sector worst affected by climate change and various farmers' groups are here at the global climate conference in Durban, to make sure that their issues are not left out.

On Dec. 5, hundreds of people took part in a march organized by La Via Campesina, which represents farmers and landless people all over the world.

Nqobiziwe Siphwe Mabaso, from South Africa's Landless People's Movement, said they helped to organise the march to put pressure on world leaders.

Braam Fischer Road came to a standstill as hundreds of demonstrators, under heavy police guard, marched from Durban's Botha Park to City Hall, not far from the COP 17 venue at the International Convention Centre, to hand over a memorandum demanding food sovereignty, meaning enough quality food for all, as well as the freedom for producers and consumers to make decisions about how to

get this food, rather than corporations. The marchers also demanded changes to secure land ownership for the poor, especially women, and decent wages and working conditions for farm workers.

Via Campesina is arguing for these changes as part of a shift to agro-ecology, a more sustainable model of farming to replace agribusiness-dominated, chemical-intensive agriculture that is dominant today.

Mack Sekete is a farmer from Mathlomoleng, a village in Mopane District, of the northern South African province of Limpopo Province; he and other members of the Mopane Farmers Union say that as small scale farmers, climate change impacts directly on them and affects their income.

He is in Durban at the 17th Conference of Parties (COP 17) together with members of a group called Itireleng, meaning "Do it yourself" and he explains his demands in simpler terms.

"We do not want genetically-modified seeds, we do not even want fertiliser any more, because it is killing us," Sekete said. "We want organic farming."

While Via Campesina and its allies took to the streets, the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions, a regional grouping of farmers, chose the corridors inside the ICC to lobby for agriculture. SACAUI is pressing for the Green Climate Fund to be established, and to include mitigation finance for farmers.

The idea is that farmers would be paid to use techniques that reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and instead absorb carbon into plants and the soil.

People passing SACAUI's stall are invited to show their support by playing a game, throwing a ball through holes in a makeshift wall that correspond to the various demands.

Many passersby were happy to win a prize. We are yet to see if agriculture will win an instant prize at COP 17.

Descendants of slaves remember Emancipation Day

By Andre Marais

Cape Town couple Johannes and Jolene Beukes travelled across the country to Durban at their own expense to attend an assembly of the world's indigenous peoples at the Peoples' Space, the alternative conference taking place in conjunction with the U.N. Climate Conference.

Dec. 1 had added importance for the Beukes because it marks the day known as Emancipation Day in South Africa – a commemoration of the date in 1834 when slaves in the Western Cape were legally freed from their bondage.

Cape Town was for several centuries a slave port, where the buying and selling of human cargo endured for several centuries.

Many people in the Cape can trace their ancestry to this period, when slaves were brought from places like Indonesia, Malaysia, Ceylon, Mauritius, India and Mozam-

bique and mixed with the original nomadic Khoisan herders. These diverse origins can still be seen in the faces and features of most Black Capetonians who were classified as Coloured or "mixed race" under apartheid.

Commemoration of emancipation has recently been revived, mostly thanks to the efforts of people like the Beukes; there is a renewed determination not to let South Africans forget about this shameful chapter of their history.

People linked to the District Six Museum (itself marking a major forced removal of some 60,000 Black people from near Cape Town's city centre beginning in 1966) have organised an annual vigil and night march through the city, despite regulations prohibiting the event in recent years.

"We insist that this march be held at night, because during slavery, slaves were

subject to curfews and forbidden to venture out at night," Jolene Beukes says angrily.

Turning to the question of climate change, Beukes talks about indigenous people as aardmense – people of the soil – with a strong connection to the land and conservation which has often been broken by dispossession in many places around the world.

Many of the solutions to climate change that have been put forward ignore indigenous people or even worse, threaten them with further dispossession, for example by blocking people's use and access to forests in the name of conservation.

Along with other indigenous people gathered in Durban, Beukes wants to see a restoration of the land and sustainable use of it: an emancipation of the original inhabitants goes hand in hand with an emancipation of ecosystems from destructive development.



Remembering emancipation ... Jolene Beukes (right). Picture by: Andre Marais



Electric cars shrink carbon footprint – and bank balance

By Joseph Bushby

Zero-emission cars on show at the U.N. climate conference are drawing the attention of passers-by. Improved batteries and range make these electric cars more attractive ways to reduce emissions – but their high cost remains an obstacle for potential South African consumers.

TerraViva took an emission-free two-seater Renault Twizy car for a test drive at the Moses Mabhida Stadium. The car was effortless to drive – with its automatic gear box featuring simply forward, reverse and park. The car is fast and nippy and would be suitable for a daily city commute – after work, you can plug it into an electric socket at home and in the morning the battery would be charged and ready to go. This car would be suitable if you are driving between 20 and 50 kilometres per day.

“The Twizy’s range is about 100 kilometres when fully charged,” Caroline De Gezelle, the head of media relations for Renault, told TerraViva. “The car costs about 6,900 euro (around 9,000 dollars) and we will introduce it to the South African market. We are in negotiations with big supermarket chain stores and parking space owners to install the charging infrastructure.”

Another car on display, the Nissan Leaf, has all the features of a similar compact internal combustion engine car, including air conditioning and power steering – and thrilling acceleration, as TerraViva discovered on a trip between the stadium and Durban’s International Convention Centre. The Leaf has two options for charging: an eight-hour full charge, or a quick charge which can boost the battery from 0 to 80 percent full in just 25 minutes.

Improvements in technology, particularly new lithium ion batteries, have been key to building practical, 100 percent

electric cars that are lighter and offer drivers greater range.

However, the price of a Leaf is set at 40,000 dollars while a comparable conventional sedan in South Africa would cost just less than half that amount.

But the electric car has no exhaust pipe, so your carbon emissions are greatly reduced – your overall footprint would depend on the source of the electricity used to recharge. South Africa’s plans for future energy production call for an increasing role for renewable sources like solar and wind, with the country aiming to reduce its overall emissions by 34 percent – compared to business as usual – by 2020.

Both the cars are already available in Europe, but not yet on sale in South Africa. Talks with the government are under way and a joint Renault-Nissan programme intends to introduce both cars to the local market.

The exhibition at the Moses Mabhida Stadium has attracted lots of attention. One visitor, Gary Colby said, “When I saw a 100 percent electric vehicle, I stopped to have a look. This would be really great for your kid who is in university or college. This looks safer than the motorbikes that are on the market nowadays. But the price freaks me out: it is just too expensive. But if government can subsidise this for us, it would be great. I for certain would buy one.”

Nissan South Africa events manager for COP 17, Joey McCall-Peat said, “The future of mobility is electric vehicles. Siemens builds the power electronics and the drive system for e-cars. Our intention is to introduce the zero-emission car to the South African market in the near future. This is a totally new form of mobility and it needs the infrastructure, such as rechargeable stations and service stations.”



The Leaf and the Twizy... zero emissions at twice the price.



Seeding Schools' Kerry Anne Smith and Mugrove Walter Nyika brought 10 primary school learners to COP17.

Picture by: Andre Marais

Is the class greener on the other side?

By Andre Marais

At several sites across Southern Africa, school children are learning the principles of permaculture, a set of agricultural techniques which avoids disturbing the soil, instead keeping it covered with mulch to preserve water and fertility. TerraViva encountered a group of these children who were lucky enough to visit the U.N. climate conference along with two of their trainers.

Kerry Anne Smith and Mugrove Walter Nyika, who work for an NGO called Seeding Schools, brought ten primary school learners involved in the Regional Schools and Colleges Permaculture (Rescope) Programme in Malawi and Zambia to the 17th Conference of Parties to meet other people from like-minded organisations and broaden their exposure to environmental issues.

Q: What is the Rescope programme?

A: We are a project working in the area of permaculture.

We work with communities and particularly with schools with the idea of using the school as a venue and a centre to educate the broader and surrounding communities about the importance of permaculture. In rural areas, the school is often a multi-purpose venue for community meetings and church gatherings.

Q: What is permaculture?

A: It is an agricultural practice and a design system for creating sustainable human environments. It is a framework that farmers and communities can use which mimics the natural rhythms of nature and allows the natural processes to play their roles in the farming process.

In our project, we use a wide range of environmentally-friendly techniques such as agro-forestry and intercropping to build good agro-ecological land use systems that are in harmony with nature.

Q: How do farmers practically apply permaculture?

A: Permaculture farmers don't dig at all but prepare the land with deep sheet-mulch spread onto soil soon after the last harvest. The mulch includes crop residues, leaves, grass, termite mound dirt, compost and manure. Before the rain is expected, they make small holes in the mulch where they plant and cover the seeds. So it is less expensive and also less work. Dry planting also gives seeds the longest possible growing season, while a deep mulch keeps light away from weed roots so fewer weeds grow.

Q: Can you give an example of a success of your programme?

A: There have been many. There is primary school in Malawi which we transformed from a grey mud and cement structure into a beautiful green garden within a year. Complete with trees and plants, thanks to the implementation of permaculture.

Q: How are the schoolkids involved?

A: Permaculture becomes part of their curriculum and subject areas at school - straddling geography, science and life skills - which has real practical value.

They help plant vegetable and fruit gardens. And they in turn educate their parents about using the permaculture method. It makes learning very real.

Q: You brought along a group of young people - what is the purpose of exposing them to the climate conference?

A: The children come from our different projects at schools in Malawi and Zambia. We saved up with the help of some kind individuals and organisations to make this trip.

We think it is important for them to experience this conference and learn more about environmental issues. The trip affords them the chance to be part of so many interesting things going on COP17.



Green Talk



Jane Lapner and Joyful Raven, Human Nature Theatre Company. Picture by: Andre Marais

Theatre for a changing planet

By Andre Marais

Are-working of the Adam and Eve story into a side-splitting farce on the growing environmental crisis and its ramifications is on stage at the U.N. climate conference. This must-see political comedy draws on the traditions of vaudeville and agitprop to unpack many of the urgent issues raised around the negotiations, but with a spunk and humour absent from the ranks of grey suits inside the talks.

Never preachy or didactic, "Tipping on the tipping point", a play by the small U.S.-based theatre company Human Nature, sets out the looming ecological catastrophe and the complicity of unaccountable corporate power with wit, enthusiasm and charm.

Jane Lapner and David Simpson started Human Nature in their home town in northern California about ten years ago. The touring theatre company deals with environmental and social issues. They are performing in South Africa with their daughter, Joyful Raven, playing the earth goddess Gaia, and with Angus Martin, a California musician who composed original music for the show.

The show uses the Adam and Eve story with a twist, combining creation myths, corporate greenwashing and some great music to create theatre that had the audience at the Catalina Theatre on Wilson's Wharf roaring with laughter.

"We travelled to COP 15 in Copenhagen two years ago, but did not perform there," says Lapner. "But we just felt we had to bring this play to South Africa."

She adds that they have tried to adapt it the local context as best they could, using familiar references to popular culture from the U.S. and South Africa.

Corporate fat cat

"This is our first visit to South Africa and although we hoped for larger audiences, it has been a wonderful experience so far," says Simpson, who plays the roles of Adam, a corporate fat cat and an oil rig worker.

What is refreshing about the play is the way it takes the edge off the hard politics and the tendency for green campaigners to get a little high-brow and overly intellectual. That is the true power of good political theatre: to educate and entertain without diluting the central message.

Human Nature will also be staging the play as part of the Climate Jobs Campaign at the People's Space at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on Dec. 6.

Go see it! I hope this production travels post-COP 17. It deserves a wider audience.

Let our voice be heard

Therese Marwel from Harare, Zimbabwe, says climate change is making it difficult for women in rural areas. Khanyisa Sinqe, from Zithethele Community Newspaper in Port Elizabeth spoke to her.

Q. Why are you attending COP17?

A. The reason why I am here is because I am a farmer and climate change and global warming is affecting us very badly. Even as we plant food, we are no longer producing as much because of air pollution, and our cattle are dying because the grass is no longer green.

Q. What do you hope to achieve from being here?

A. We, as woman from all over the world, hope that our voice could be heard. We are not saying that the industries and firms must shut down. All we are asking is they must be environmentally friendly.

Q. Personally, what problems have you encountered in regard to climate change?

A. Tjo! Me, I have 12 children and each and every day I have to walk five kilometers to fetch 40 litres of water because the rivers nearby are dry. I have to save that water so that the entire family will bath all in one and the same water and we will then use that to water our food gardens. It is hectic.

Q. How has climate change change your life?

A. You know what... it changed my life a lot. Starting from my children refusing to go to school because they are hungry, our husbands are angry because they are hungry ... the crime rate is very high... people steal our cattle and some young girl childs prostitute themselves because they are hungry.

Q. How does climate change affect where you live?

A. Because I live in rural Zimbabwe, we all depend on planting food. It is hard for us. We also have a high rate of diseases in our villages because men leave their wives and people are dying with hunger and other diseases.



Therese Marwel says pollution is hampering food production

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Art at the ICC produced by children and artists from across South Africa. Picture by: Tinus de Jager

Scene from COP 17...

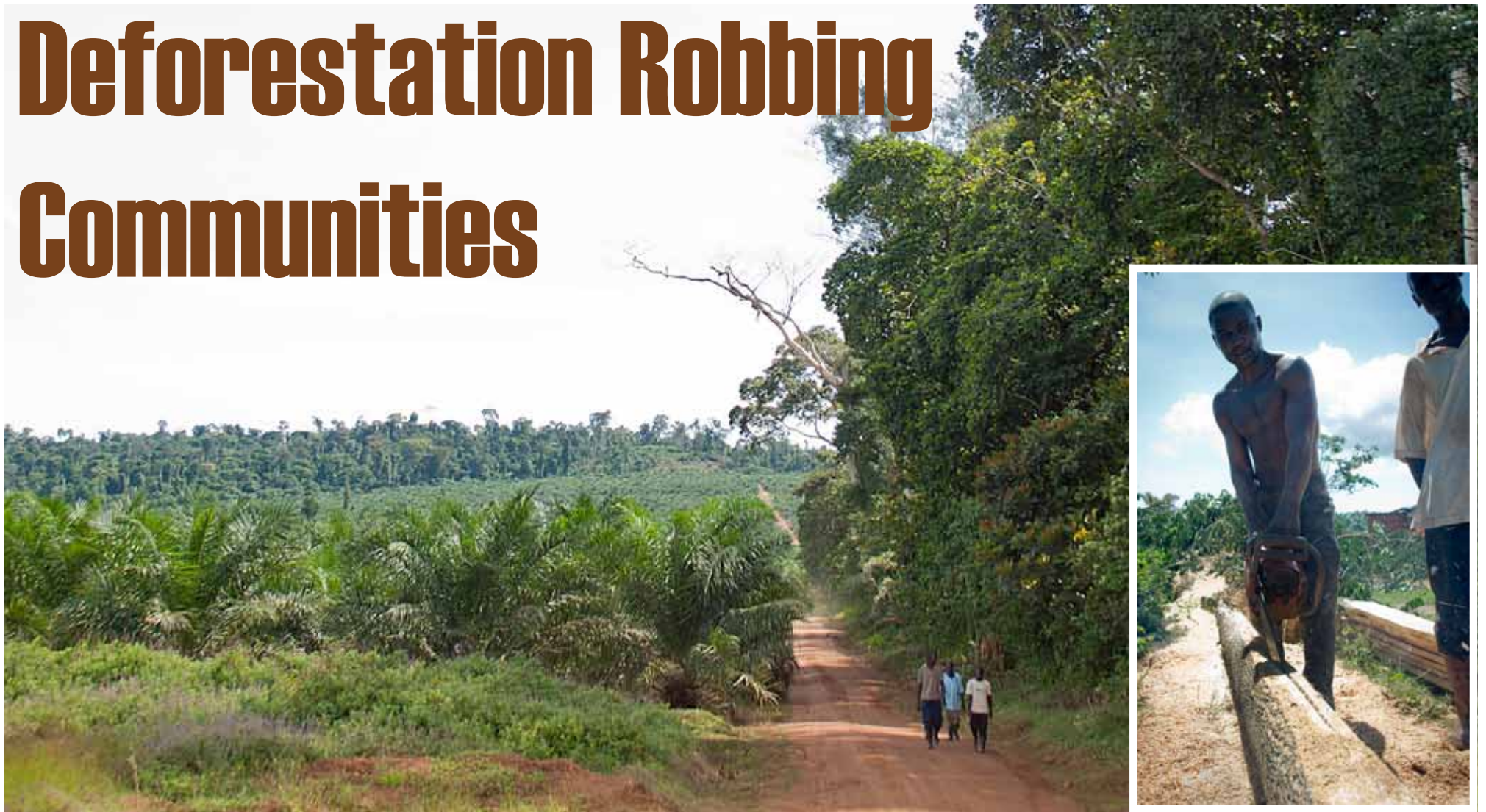


Every morning thousands of delegates, journalists and protestors stream to the ICC in Durban to attend the 17th Conference of the Parties. Thousands of journalists have descended on the ICC to cover the high-level ministerial talks which started on Tuesday. Security is tight with the UN police inside the ICC and thousands of Metro and South African Police members patrolling the outside of the buildings. The NGOs are telling their stories with pamphlets and posters outside the main plenary. Space for protests are limited, but those who feel they need to shout out their input can find a space ... even if it has to be behind the fences that keep the delegates away from the man on the street.

Pictures and words by: Tinus de Jager



Deforestation Robbing Communities



Above left: Bugala Island appears as it used to, covered in dense rainforest. The land is being cleared to make way for palm trees, like those on the left. The deforestation has robbed some women who used to sell timber they collected in the forests of their livelihoods. **Above right:** Workers on Bugala Island work to clear the rainforest to make way for an expanding palm tree plantation. Palm oil production is one of Uganda's rising industries. **Pictures by: Will Boase**

By Andrew Green

SESE ISLANDS, Uganda - From a distance, Bugala Island in Lake Victoria is a patchwork of green and brown. The pattern is a result of dense forest retreating in the wake of recently planted palm tree plantations.

The island, the largest of Uganda's Ssesse Islands, is at the center of one of the country's newest economic endeavors – palm oil processing – and the formerly lush rainforest has fallen quickly, taking with it some critical jobs for the island's poorest women.

Now, five years after the first phase of that process was completed, residents are starting to measure the impact of the initiative. Many speak glowingly of the jobs and activity the plantation has created. But for some of the island's poorest residents – especially widows and the wives of often-traveling fishermen – continued deforestation has robbed them of their sole source of income.

Sarah Namwanje used to collect timber and charcoal from the forests that she could sell to people around the island. Now the 28-year-old mother of seven has no way to make money.

"No timber is seen," she said. "We're searching for firewood and trying to get money, but my job has stopped."

Ahead of the palm oil project's start, activists had clashed with the government over the potential environmental ramifications of the deforestation. But, with assurances from Bidco – the company behind Uganda's palm oil industry – that the development would have little environmental impact and a stamp of approval from the National Environment

Management Authority (NEMA), the dazzle of a new industry and more jobs eventually won out.

What was never communicated to some of the poorest residents was how the project would affect both their livelihoods and their health. Especially the small groups of women who live on an island mostly populated by fishermen.

Some are widows, their husbands lost to AIDS or fishing accidents. Others are left alone for long stretches of time, their husbands chasing schools of fish around the archipelago of 84 islands. Until the men return with money from their catch, the women must scramble for resources.

The available jobs for these women are scarce and Mary Nampomwa, a local health worker, said it is difficult for many of them to get by without resorting to commercial sex work.

Before the palm plantations arrived, women who refused to turn to sex work had small-scale jobs, like gathering firewood. They had relatively free access to the timber in national forests or on privately held, underdeveloped plots, according to Richard Kimbowa, the programme manager for Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD).

But many of those landowners, offered an opportunity to make good money off of unused land, sold out or cleared the forest

themselves to create subsidiary palm plantations. Now the island's poor women are "being marginalised," Kimbowa said, in the "craze for expanding this palm."

Namwanje said the only thing she knows to do is encourage people to start planting more trees, so that she has renewed access to firewood and charcoal. But that is not going to happen anytime soon. Other women have taken up jobs drying small mukene fish on the sand next to Lake Victoria.

What is particularly galling to Edisa Katusime, a single mother of six children, is that local officials had for years been warning residents about cutting down trees.

She was told that the forest was critical for preserving the island's animal life and she had to be secretive about gathering timber.

But the government is "not preventing Bidco because it's a company," she said. "They are allowed to cut when the government

is telling us the importance of the trees."

Kimbowa predicts that the small-scale job loss might be only the first of the problems the palm plantations are going to create. Eventually, he said, there are going to be issues with food security as land previously used for raising crops turns to palm trees. And already some of the women are reporting that the absence of forest covering is creating health issues.

The loss of the forest means there is no

longer a shield from the strong winds that sometimes blow across Bugala Island. The wind now "sounds as if it's going to knock the house down," Katusime said. The dust it carries sometimes leaves her children in coughing fits and has been particularly dangerous for asthmatic residents.

And despite assurances from Bidco that it is following the plan laid out by NEMA to minimize environmental impact, UCSD is still monitoring the situation, concerned about issues like soil erosion and seepage of agrochemicals into Lake Victoria. Despite the jobs that Bidco has brought, most of the people on Bugala still live and die by fishing. If fish stocks are reduced, there will suddenly be a lot more people on the island without a source of income.

For now, the warnings of environmental groups and the complaints of women like Katusime and Namwanje are muted by widespread enthusiasm for the island's palm oil industry. And it's still growing. According to Bidco, the palm oil plantation will eventually cover 40,000 hectares and be the largest plantation in Africa.

There is division even within the small group of women infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS that Katusime and Namwanje belong to. Unlike those two women, Annette Nnamukasa was able to harness enough money to take advantage of the palm oil boom. She bought about two acres of land and had it cleared. In its place she planted palm trees and now sells the crop to Bidco.

"It is almost the same," she said. "The palm trees are almost forests."

"They are allowed to cut when the government is telling us the importance of the trees."

El agua es lo primero

Por Joshua Kyalimpa

Cobran impulso los esfuerzos para que el agua se incluya como capítulo con peso propio en las negociaciones internacionales sobre el cambio climático que se desarrollan hasta este viernes 9 en Durban, Sudáfrica.

Según expertos en temas hídricos, se lograría así más énfasis en el desarrollo de políticas y en la atracción de recursos hacia este sector mediante programas de adaptación.

“Lo primero que cada uno de nosotros usa al levantarse es agua, y también cuando se va a la cama. De todos modos la damos por sentada”, dijo Chris Moseki, gerente de investigaciones en la sudafricana Comisión de Investigación del Agua, que integra la Asociación Mundial para el Agua.

La falta de agua es un problema grave en África austral, donde afecta a casi 100 millones de personas. La región se volverá más caliente y más seca en los próximos 50 y 100 años, lo que pondrá en riesgo el suministro hídrico de establecimientos agrícolas, industrias y hogares, además de amenazar los ecosistemas, indican modelos trazados por el sudafricano Consejo de Investigación Científica e Industrial.

A expertos y políticos les preocupa que la planificación sobre cambios en la disponibilidad de agua no esté recibiendo el destaque que merece.

El secretario ejecutivo del Consejo de Ministros Africanos sobre el Agua, Bai-Mass Taal, dijo que el grupo está trabajando para elevar el perfil de los temas hídricos en la Convención Marco de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Cambio Climático, cuya 17 Conferencia de las Partes (COP 17) tiene lugar en Durban.

“Les decimos a las partes: apreciamos lo que están haciendo en otros sectores, pero sin abordar los temas hídricos directamente todo eso habrá sido en vano”, dijo Taal.

De momento, los asuntos relativos al agua se discuten como parte de la planificación, adopción de prioridades e implementación de la adaptación a un clima cambiante.

Mientras se espera que cada vez más países padezcan escasez hídrica, la actual posición del agua en las conversaciones climáticas es inadecuada, dijo la secretaria ejecutiva de la Asociación Mundial para el Agua, Ania Grobicki.

“El producto interno bruto (PIB) de muchos países menos adelantados depende del agua. Más de 50 por ciento de los alimentos del mundo procederán de África en el futuro, y esto depende de la disponibilidad de agua”, señaló.

“Es por eso que este debate debería ir más allá”, agregó.

Más de 70 por ciento de la población de la Comunidad para el Desarrollo de África

Austral depende directamente de la agricultura, principalmente de la que se obtiene solo con agua de lluvia.

Las proyecciones del Consejo de Investigación Científica e Industrial están entre las muchas que llaman la atención sobre el efecto que tendrán sobre la población africana los cambios pronosticados en los patrones de lluvias, los limitados recursos destinados a la adaptación y la falta de instituciones para regular el aprovechamiento de los ríos.

Desafíos similares se pronostican para el resto del mundo, pero la falta de riego y de infraestructura general en África es un factor que multiplica la necesidad de una intervención urgente.

La respuesta de África

Al cambiar los patrones de las precipitaciones, África enfrenta crisis importantes. En 2010, millones fueron víctimas de la hambruna en Níger y Mali a raíz de una sequía que afectó a los productores agropecuarios.

Este año, el Cuerno de África padece su peor sequía en 50 años, y millones sufren hambre por ese motivo.

Según el Programa Mundial de Alimentos (PMA) de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas, unos 12,3 millones de personas necesitan asistencia de emergencia en esa zona.

La comisionada de la Unión Africana para la Economía Rural y la Agricultura, Rhoda Peace, señaló que cuando los líderes del continente hablan sobre el cambio climático invariablemente se refieren a sequías e inundaciones, lo que muestra que el agua ya es una prioridad.

En 2008, los jefes de Estado africanos resolvieron colocar el agua y el saneamiento como prioridad continental.

“Los gobernantes acordaron asignar por lo menos 0,5 por ciento de su presupuesto nacional al agua”, dijo Peace.

“Que ese sea realmente el caso es otra historia, pero a algunos países les está yendo muy bien y pueden lograr sus objetivos”, agregó.

Brindar un acceso adecuado al agua en toda África costará miles de millones de dólares. Y para los muchos gobiernos africanos que no honran compromisos previos, no será posible recaudar las sumas necesarias sin apoyo.

El coordinador para África oriental de la Asociación Mundial para el Agua, Simon Thuo, dijo estar sorprendido de que incluso las propuestas del grupo de negociadores africanos mencionen el agua solo superficialmente.

Como otros expertos, Thuo cree que aun si las negociaciones climáticas abordan de manera específica la administración de este elemento esencial, no recibirá la atención ni el financiamiento necesarios.



La falta de acceso al agua requiere una solución urgente en África austral.

Tempo de uma nova revolução verde

Os negociadores da 17ª Conferência das Partes (COP 17) da Convenção Marco das Nações Unidas sobre Mudança Climática devem aos mais de sete bilhões de habitantes do mundo um acordo útil para a agricultura, o setor mais afetado pela mudança climática, afirma o presidente do Fundo Internacional para o Desenvolvimento Agrícola (Fida), Kanayo F. Nwanze.

Os efeitos combinados de aumento da população mundial, escassa produtividade e ameaça aos recursos hídricos representam novas pressões sobre a capacidade do setor agrícola para gerar alimentos, dinheiro e formas de sustento na África.

Organizações e instituições internacionais apresentaram uma carta aberta à ministra de Agricultura, Silvicultura e Pesca da África do Sul, Tina Joemat-Peterson, pedindo a inclusão de medidas de adaptação para o setor agrícola no texto a ser acordado nesta cidade pela COP 17. Entre os signatários da carta estão Banco Mundial, Grupo Consultivo de Pesquisa Agrícola Internacional (CGIAR) e a Organização Mundial de Agricultores (WFO). O texto afirma que não se deve deixar passar a oportunidade da COP 17 para tratar dos problemas da agricultura, setor repetidamente marginalizado da agenda nos últimos dois encontros.

"As regiões mais vulneráveis do mundo, os países em desenvolvimento, são afetados desproporcionalmente pela mudança climática, apesar de contribuírem pouco com emissões de carbono", diz a carta. "As populações do Sul dependem em grande parte da agricultura para sua subsistência e têm cada vez mais dificuldades para produzir alimento suficiente para suas famílias e para os mercados", acrescenta. Nwanze disse à IPS que é preciso uma nova revolução agrícola para oferecer soluções inteligentes aos desafios impostos pela mudança climática.

Q: Por que uma nova revolução agora?

A: A discussão que temos agora é basicamente como conseguir uma agricultura "climaticamente inteligente", o que na essência significa obter o máximo dos pequenos produtores, que constituem a maior população rural na África e cuja maioria é de mulheres. Devem ter acesso a insumos básicos e serviços financeiros. É necessário responder a todos os temas que têm a ver com o impacto da mudança climática na agricultura. Temos que falar sobre sistemas agrícolas sustentáveis. A revolução verde (período de auge na produção do Sul, aproximadamente entre 1960 e 1990) teve êxito porque se concentrou em mensagens muito claras: maior uso de fertilizantes, mais sementes melhoradas e irrigação. Contudo, no longo prazo, descobrimos que não era sustentável. Portanto, agora temos de buscar enfoques sustentáveis

de produção, que não destruam o meio ambiente e estejam disponíveis para um amplo espectro de agricultores na África e em todo o mundo. É necessária uma nova revolução verde para enfrentar o desafio de alimentar mais de nove bilhões de pessoas em 2050. Não existe uma receita mágica para eliminar a fome da noite para o dia. Não creio que as ideias podem alimentar as pessoas. São necessárias ideias para uma nova revolução verde, e a agricultura "climaticamente inteligente" pode proporcioná-las.

Q: A agricultura está ameaçada por muitos fatores. Qual é o primeiro passo para torná-la sustentável?

A: O primeiro passo devemos dar na agenda política. Precisamos de um compromisso no nível mais alto dos governos para que assumam a agricultura como prioridade, e devemos conseguir que apoiem suas promessas com dinheiro.

Q: O senhor expressou preocupação pelo progresso lento das negociações. Quais as suas expectativas?

A: Estamos tentando um tema que transcende ao que chamamos de simples equações. É uma questão que provoca muitas discussões políticas, e, portanto, as pessoas perdem o senso de prioridade. Tudo se torna muito lento. Estamos negociando um tema político, e há muitas coisas em jogo. São temas simples baseados em fatos, e os argumentos também estão baseados em fatos. Porém, há pessoas que ainda negam a mudança climática. Como se pode negociar com alguém que não crê? Este é o problema que temos. Precisamos de uma verdadeira liderança. A África do Sul realiza um trabalho fantástico de incentivo a toda esta discussão sobre colocar a agricultura na agenda. A agricultura sofre o impacto do aquecimento global, mas também é uma solução, pois se encontra na intersecção entre a segurança alimentar e a mudança climática. Assim, não podemos ignorá-la.

Q: O que temos feito bem no desenvolvimento agrícola da África?

A: Há dez anos não se ouvia ninguém falar de agricultura. Mas após os acontecimentos de 2007 e 2008, com o aumento da volatilidade dos preços dos alimentos, agora as pessoas dizem que a agricultura equivale à segurança alimentar, e isto equivale à estabilidade política e à paz mundial. Com esse tipo de vínculo, não se pode ignorar a agricultura, e isto é algo que fazemos bem.



Kanayo F. Nwanze.

Il est temps pour une nouvelle révolution agricole

Les négociateurs à la 17ème Conférence des parties (COP 17) doivent proposer aux plus de sept milliards de personnes dans le monde un accord avec un plan de travail pour l'agriculture, un secteur qui devrait être le plus touché par les changements climatiques.

Les effets combinés d'une population mondiale croissante, d'une faible productivité et de la menace sur les ressources en eau constituent de nouvelles pressions sur l'agriculture pour fournir de la nourriture, de l'argent et des moyens de subsistance en Afrique.

Un groupement d'organisations agricoles et de plaidoyer a adressé une lettre ouverte au ministre sud-africain de l'Agriculture, des Forêts et de la Pêche, Tina Joemat Patterson, demandant l'inclusion de l'agriculture comme une approche d'adaptation dans le texte qui sera accepté par les négociateurs sur les changements climatiques.

Ce groupe - qui comprend le Programme du Groupe consultatif pour la recherche agricole internationale de

la Banque mondiale sur les changements climatiques, l'agriculture et la sécurité alimentaire, et l'Organisation mondiale des agriculteurs - a déclaré que la COP 17 devrait être le moment pour l'agriculture, qui a été à maintes reprises retirée du programme de deux précédentes négociations sur les changements climatiques.

"Les régions les plus vulnérables du monde - les pays en développement - sont touchés de manière disproportionnée par les changements climatiques, bien qu'elles contribuent peu aux émissions de carbone", indiquait la lettre. "Les gens dans les pays en développement dépendent fortement de l'agriculture pour leurs moyens de subsistance, et ont pourtant de plus en plus de difficulté à pouvoir produire suffisamment de nourriture pour leurs familles et pour les marchés".

Le président du Fonds international de développement agricole (FIDA), Kanayo F. Nwanze, a déclaré, dans un entretien avec IPS, qu'une nouvelle révolution agricole doit apporter des solutions intelligentes aux défis actuels posés par les changements climatiques.

Q: Pourquoi une nouvelle révolution aujourd'hui?

R: Tout le débat que nous tenons en ce moment porte fondamentalement sur la manière de parvenir à une agriculture intelligente face au climat, ce qui signifie essentiellement obtenir le maximum des petits fermiers qui constituent la grande majorité des agriculteurs en Afrique, et qui

sont essentiellement des femmes. Ils doivent avoir accès aux intrants de base et aux services financiers. Cela doit répondre à tous les problèmes actuels qui se rapportent aux effets des changements climatiques sur l'agriculture.

Nous devons parler des systèmes agricoles durables. La révolution verte a été un succès parce qu'elle portait sur des messages très clairs: l'utilisation accrue des engrais, plus de semences améliorées et l'irrigation. Mais nous avons constaté, dans le long terme, qu'elle n'est pas durable. Alors, nous avons besoin aujourd'hui de chercher des approches durables de production qui ne détruisent pas l'environnement et sont disponibles pour un large spectre d'agriculteurs en Afrique et dans tout le monde entier.

Une nouvelle révolution verte est nécessaire pour relever le défi de nourrir plus de neuf milliards de personnes en 2050. Il n'y a pas de formule magique pour éliminer la faim du jour au lendemain parce que je ne crois pas que les idées puissent nourrir les gens. Des idées pour une nouvelle révolution verte sont nécessaires et une agriculture intelligente face au climat peut fournir ces idées.

Q: L'agriculture est menacée par plusieurs facteurs, quelle est la première étape pour la rendre durable?

R: La première étape que nous devons franchir, c'est l'élaboration d'un programme politique. Nous devons obtenir un engagement au plus haut niveau des décideurs gouvernementaux disant que l'agriculture est une priorité et qu'ils doivent mettre leur argent là où se trouve leur bouche.

Q: Vous avez exprimé une inquiétude par rapport à la lenteur des négociations. Quelles sont vos attentes?

R: Nous sommes confrontés à un problème qui dépasse ce que nous appelons des équations simples. Vous avez affaire à une question qui apporte beaucoup d'arguments politiques, et ensuite les gens perdent le sens de la priorité. Cela devient très lent.

Nous négocions un problème politique et il y a beaucoup de choses en jeu. Nous négocions des questions simples qui sont fondées sur des faits et constituent des arguments basés sur des faits. Certaines personnes aujourd'hui continuent de nier que les changements climatiques existent. Comment pouvez-vous négocier avec quelqu'un qui ne croit pas? C'est le problème que nous avons. Nous avons besoin d'un véritable leadership. L'Afrique du Sud fait un travail fantastique conduisant à tout cet argument de mettre l'agriculture sur le programme.

Elle est influencée par les changements climatiques, mais l'agriculture est aussi une solution aux changements climatiques parce qu'elle est à la croisée des chemins de la sécurité alimentaire et des changements climatiques. Nous ne pouvons donc pas l'ignorer dans les affaires climatiques intelligentes.