

Policy Brief

The National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) of Ghana: **Is Ghana REALLY prepared?**

March, 2015

Briefing paper written by Chibeze S. Ezekiel *

* Chibeze S. Ezekiel is a young Social Development Practitioner in Ghana certified as a Master Youth Trainer on Climate Change by the World Bank Institute (WBI). He has considerable social work experience with emphasis on youth development, climate change, water & sanitation, gender and tax justice. He has published a number of briefing papers and articles to his credit. He read Psychology and Sociology at the University of Ghana.

Comments should be addressed by e-mail to the author: chibeze@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The fight against Climate Change (mainly attributed to man-made activities) is increasingly becoming more intense as a result of its continuous adverse impact on people's source of livelihood and survival. Climate change effects such as rising sea levels, changing weather patterns, heat waves, drought, bush fire and other increased incidences of natural disaster are visibly experienced. Although it is a global phenomenon the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Developing Economies are considered as most vulnerable due to their limited coping strategies or mechanisms.¹

In July 2014, the government of Ghana launched a National Climate Change Policy (NCCP)² of Ghana which seeks to essentially ensure a coherent and pragmatic approach in dealing with the impact of climate change on the socio-economic development agenda of the economy.

The NCCP has prioritized five (5) main Policy Areas:

- (i) Agriculture and Food Security
- (ii) Disaster Preparedness and Response
- (iii) Natural Resource Management
- (iv) Equitable Social Development
- (v) Energy, Industrial and Infrastructural Development

Although belated, the NCCP is appropriate towards dealing with climate change in a well-defined and pragmatic manner. The gravamen of this document is to critique sections of the NCCP in terms of government's approach towards dealing with climate change as well as the blatant neglect of young people in the development of the NCCP raising concerns about government's commitment towards ensuring inclusiveness in decision making processes.

SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS IN THE NCCP

1. There is no information on significant successes, progress or interventions already chalked in the fight against climate change as a basis to help inform new or future interventions.
2. The Monitoring & Evaluation mechanism lacks comprehensive details
3. Even though climate change is a cross-cutting issue, the policy provides inadequate information on relevant allied sectors or institutions required for its satisfactory planning and implementation
4. The policy is mute on possible employment opportunities for young people through areas such as green economy, proper waste management, and clean/renewable energy.
5. The policy displays parallel programs and/or action plans which can lead to role conflicts or disputes among implementing agencies
6. Other than just referring to the youth as a vulnerable group, the policy fails to appreciate that young people possess energies and talents if well discovered, developed and deployed can significantly contribute to climate solutions.
7. The policy seems to be more of an 'initiative' rather than a 'progressive' programme.

¹ CLIMATE CHANGE: IMPACTS, VULNERABILITIES AND ADAPTATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES - <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/publications/impacts.pdf> &

Climate change vulnerability and the identification of least developed countries by Matthias Bruckner (http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/cdp_background_papers/bp2012_15.pdf)

² <http://www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php/news-slider/6066-president-mahama-launches-two-national-policy-documents>

SECTION 3 OF THE NCCP:**POLICY IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS****3.1 Institutions – Roles and Responsibilities**

The policy in identifying relevant institutions failed to include the National Youth Authority (NYA). The role of young people cannot be underestimated at least considering the fact that they constitute majority of the population; more so when decisions taken have direct bearing on their livelihood or existence. The contributions of young people in the fight against climate change globally are clearly evident; YUNGO's role in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) discussions is a perfect case³.

Again, the NCCP acknowledges that Ghana must fulfill to the fullest extent possible, all its commitments under the UNFCCC. During the 33rd Session of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Cancun from 30th November – 4th December 2010, Parties (including Ghana) agreed as captured under Article 6 (2e) of the Convention⁴ to also foster youth participation in decision making processes.

Indeed, section 5.2.1 of the National Youth Policy of Ghana states that *“The views of the youth and their participation in national development must be sought. The government... must consciously and consistently involve young people in decision-making”*. This provision is mandated by Article 11 of the African Youth Charter.

Unfortunately, Ghana has failed to adhere to these very commitments as young people have been alienated throughout the process – which is worrying!

As part of its obligation to UNFCCC as captured under Article 4 and 12, government received funding from Global Environment Facility (GEF) to conduct and implement its Third National Communication (NC3) from January 2012 to December 2014. Arguably, there is virtually no evidence available to indeed prove that consultations and public awareness processes took place as required.

3.2 Legal and Regulatory Framework – International Obligations:

Having a legal framework is an ideal situation. But the lack of enforcement of already existing laws or regulations gives little hope to the climate change regulations. There is no evidence or basis to show that legal frameworks around social interventions have produced significant

³ Children and young people have been participating in the UNFCCC intergovernmental process going back to COP 5 in Bonn. Starting in COP 11/CMP 1, youth have also organized preparatory meetings called "Conferences of Youth," which help build their capacity to participate in the UNFCCC negotiation process. Prior to COP 15/CMP 5, the secretariat granted a provisional constituency status to admitted youth non-governmental organizations (YOUNGO). The constituency status provided a conduit for the exchange of official information between young people and the secretariat; assisted the secretariat in ensuring an effective participation by youth appropriate to an intergovernmental meeting; coordinated young people's interaction at sessions including convening constituency meetings, organizing meetings with officials, providing names for the speakers list and representation at official functions; and provided logistical support to youth during sessions. On practical terms, YOUNGO is given the opportunity to address the plenary, High Level Segment of a COP/CMP, make submissions (individual youth organizations also), attend workshops, meet with officials of the Convention such as Chairs of the subsidiary bodies and the COP Presidency. They also organize Young and Future Generation's Day during the COP/CMP organizing a series of side events, exhibits, interviews, media stunts, etc.

http://unfccc.int/cc_inet/cc_inet/youth_portal/items/6795.php

⁴ *“To foster the participation of women, youth, indigenous peoples... in decision-making on climate change at the national level and their attendance at intergovernmental meetings, including sessions of the Conference of the Parties...”*

outcomes. Eventhough its essential to have such legal measures in place, what is more crucial is the ability to sensitize the public on the relevance of adapting to climate change effects by practicing appropriate behavioural patterns. How to negotiate and get people to voluntarily or willingly respond positively should be a priority.

Quito (a municipality in Ecuador) in February 2008 released a Quito Strategy for Climate Change (EQCC) to address environmental issues. There were no national laws, policies, or international frameworks that guided or supported Quito's effort but the strategy was successful. This is a lesson that Ghana can learn from.

SECTION 4 OF THE NCCP:

4.1 Agriculture and Food Security:

The Medium Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (METASIP) 2011 – 2015 already has an extensive strategy towards tackling the current visible adverse effects of climate change on the sector. In spite of climate change effects, paragraph 43 of the 2015 Budget Statement of Ghana mentioned that the Agriculture Sector continued to show signs of recovery, increasing consistently from 2.3% in 2012 to 5.2% in 2013 and 5.3% in 2014. It stands to reason that the Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP II) under the METASIP has contributed to this progress.

The NCCP however fails to acknowledge such progress made in the implementation of the METASIP (and specific action plan in the fisheries sub-sector) thereby creating the impression that such systems do not exist. The NCCP therefore should not therefore be seen as attempting to create a parallel programme.

4.2 Disaster Preparedness and Response:

It is still unclear whether Ghana has a formal city level Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategy. Providing efficient infrastructure as a way of dealing with climate disaster as captured in the NCCP is very laudable. This undoubtedly requires very costly capital investment. Owing to the rate of disaster being experienced as a result of climate change, government is encouraged under such situation to quickly adopt and pilot the bio-engineering approach (use of local resources to build defence structures)⁵ in some affected communities for possible scale-up to save resources and the livelihoods of community members.

Even where Community Action Plans exist in Ghana, there are no specific projects or programmes in place to capacitate communities towards disaster risk reduction.

The National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) in Ghana established to manage disasters and similar emergencies in the country has since been providing support to disaster affected victims and yet the NCCP does not provide any direction in clear terms how it intends to feed into the work of NADMO or vice versa. Indeed, a project supported by UNDP failed to achieve its intended purpose due to poor coordination.⁶

Unlike Ghana, young people in Nepal (constituting about 65% of the population) have been trained as actors and playwrights with the goal of reaching poorly educated rural residents ill-

⁵ http://www.preventionweb.net/files/4148_emecoengindrcca1.pdf

⁶ In the past few years, UNDP has supported the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) to undertake climate change and disaster risk reduction (DRR) related issues. However, inconsistencies and lack of harmonization in policies and practices for assessing and managing climate change and DRR make it difficult to maximize the impact of these interventions – UNDP Project Facts Report (Institutional Support to Integrate Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction into National Development Plans)

equipped to tackle local problems and development issues through drama. As a result, street drama as a social empowerment and awareness tool on climate change has been adopted. Additionally, Emergency and Maintenance Funds; Search and Rescue (S&R) among other initiatives have been established all in the quest to provide young people opportunity to be part of solution-providers. Replicating these concepts should be possible given the number of active youth-led environmental groups in Ghana.

Countries such as Australia, Philippines, South Korea and others in Latin America have in place Climate Vulnerability Mapping methods. It is still unknown if Ghana has such systems in place to even assist stakeholders championing DRR issues.

4.3 Natural Resource Management:

Management of natural resources in Ghana including resilience of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems has grossly been inefficient. Major factors include poor institutional structures and coordination, policy intervention failures, lack of enforcement of rules and regulations as well as non-active involvement of community members. In the absence of any radical approach to dealing with these above challenges, the proposed programme and action plans captured in the NCCP will yield no results.

4.4 Equitable Social Development:

- Impacts of climate change on human health:

Health related issues are not new in the Ghanaian context. The policy simply rehashes the already known challenges and corresponding recommendations available. To obtain effective collaboration for significant results or deliverables, it will be important to align the health and sanitation plans with the relevant agencies, i.e., Ministry of Health (MoH)⁷ and Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD)⁸ that have clear policies and strategic programmatic plans.

- Impacts of climate change on access to water and sanitation:

While minimizing impacts of climate change on access to water and sanitation is also another important issue to address, it is recommended that such interventions are aligned with strategies and action plans as outlined in the Environmental Sanitation Policy of Ghana.

- Gender Issues in Climate Change:

Having a gender sensitive climate change policy is highly commendable. Women are undoubtedly vulnerable and are at greater risk from climate change effects. Studies show that climate change makes farming more difficult for these women. When crops fail due to flooding, drought or soil erosion, less food is available and women find themselves under stress to provide food for their families.

Some research commentary posits that as food, fuel and water become scarce; women have to walk farther to collect them. Long treks often put women at a greater risk of violence.

When extreme weather conditions do hit, women suffer the most. This is often linked to their lack of rights. For example, many can't leave their homes during emergencies if they lack a male escort. Awareness of the differential impacts of climate change on men and women is increasing. In continents like Africa, where women are responsible for 60-80% of food production, unpredictable growing seasons and increased incidence of droughts and floods place women, their families and their livelihoods at risk.

Conducting a study on gender-differentiated impacts of climate change in Ghana is strongly recommended to obtain gender risk or vulnerability assessment in communities that are more

⁷ National Health Policy, Ghana

⁸ Environmental Sanitation Policy, Ghana

prone to climate change effects to form a basis for relevant interventions or scale-up across the nation. CAPRI has some literature in this area.⁹

- Climate Change and Migration:

A clear consequence of climate change is the displacement and migration of families, which almost always have a negative impact on the vulnerable women and children – and in some cases young people. Under these conditions, there is increased possibility of abuse and trafficking of women and children. Needless to say that the education and health of such vulnerable groups are also jeopardised

Migration crises will soon become inevitable with the spate of climate change effect. More young people especially in the rural areas engaged in farming are laying down their tools and flocking into the urban centres in search of greener pastures. Government's attempt to boost Youth-in-Agric seems not to be yielding the desired results. Food insecurity may soon explode thus making provisions to averting such possible crises is extremely crucial.

4.5 Energy, Industrial and Infrastructural Development:

The vision of the NCCP as stated is “...*achieving sustainable development through equitable low carbon economic growth for Ghana*”. According to Ghana's 2nd Communication to UNFCCC, it is still making frantic efforts to reduce the emission levels even though Ghana emits about 24 mega-tonnes of CO₂.

It therefore comes as a surprise, recent intentions of Government to establish a 700 MW Coal-fired Power Plant which certainly will emit volumes of Greenhouse Gases (GHG) emissions leading to severe health and environmental consequences. Media report says that about 20 million tonnes of coal is expected to be imported from South Africa for this project which will release about 2 million tonnes of gases into the atmosphere. This places serious doubt on government's commitment to reducing carbon emissions¹⁰.

Again, paragraph 615 of the 2009 National Budget Statement of Ghana, states that Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Natural Resources and Environment Good Governance (NREG) will prepare a sustainable development action plan to reduce the effects of climate change by reducing carbon emissions. The status of this plan is presently unknown!

In a similar case, around 88% of all GHG emissions in Mexico City were attributed to energy consumption in the form of fossil fuels and electricity used in transportation, industry, trade, housing, or services. Mexico City Mayor Marcelo Ebrard presented the final results of the City's 2008-2012 Climate Action Program, announcing a 7.7M ton reduction of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions over the four-year period. Excitingly, not only did the Program meet its planned reduction goal through targeted action in key sectors, but also surpassed its goal by 10.2%. This case shows that Ghana can do better!

⁹ CAPRI Working Paper No. 106 (September 2012). A LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE GENDER-DIFFERENTIATED IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON WOMEN'S AND MEN'S ASSETS AND WELL-BEING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

¹⁰ **Some Coal-Plants Already shutdown**

- ❖ FirstEnergy Corp – Retired the largest amount of coal power in 2013 in terms of megawatts taking nearly 2,000MW of coal out of the US Power mix
- ❖ Duke Energy – Largest electric power holding company in the US – shut down 3 coal units in North Carolina, totalling 1,342MW.
- ❖ Southern Company – shuttered 2 units of its Harllee Branch power plant
- ❖ Scottish Power – has shut down its 1200MW Cockerzie coal fired plant
- ❖ Kingsnoth Coal Plant – also in the UK has closed down its 1940MW due to EU's (LCPD)
- ❖ Italian Tirreno Power – turned off its two 330MW coal fired units at its Vado Ligure Plant in Savona province

Ghana's energy policy states that, government will promote the use of environmentally-friendly energy supply sources, such as renewable energy (solar, wind, waste), in energy supply mix of the country. Also, Session 31 of Ghana's Renewable Energy Act 2011 (ACT 832) makes provision for the establishment of a Renewable Energy Fund which has still not been established. The non-establishment of the fund seems to prove government's lackadaisical interest in promoting renewable energies. Instead of government developing renewable energy mechanisms in fragmented fashion, it is advisable to run such interventions in a concerted manner.

5.0 FROM POLICY TO ACTION: THE WAY FORWARD

Provisions made for the next steps according to the NCCP are commendable. However, while the establishment of an inter-ministerial oversight committee is important to create linkages with the implementing entities, the omission of the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection as well as the National Youth Authority (NYA) from the nucleus of the ministerial body should be reconsidered. Gender mainstreaming and youth inclusion in ALL the processes ought to be non-negotiable.

The policy provides no clear timelines or milestones which are crucial for monitoring and evaluation of progress by relevant and interested stakeholders. If indeed climate change has been acknowledged as a critical issue and can devour socio-economic development interventions, then that sense of urgency must be seen.

Again the policy notes that, intensive educational programmes should be carried out on climate change activities to enable the various sectors implement the policy. It further recommends that capacity building, especially training of relevant staff at the Ministries, Departments & Agencies (MDA) level should form an integral part of the implementation strategy.

Though this is necessary, the policy fails to indicate the impact of previous education or awareness creation on climate change. At least if two national communication plans have been submitted to the UNFCCC in 2000 and 2011 respectively, it presupposes that some considerable education or climate sensitization interventions took place over that period. So emphasis should be placed on what are the challenges or gaps identified from these years of education. As part of ensuring cost-benefit analysis, it is important to tackle the specific issues instead of launching (another) blanket education programme. Collaboration with other stakeholders or partners is encouraged to leverage on existing efforts and build synergy towards achieving common goals or objectives.

Proposed time frame according to the NCCP Phase II implementation is from 2014 – 2020 with proposed budgetary allocations per focus area. This strategic plan is quite ambitious especially when financing of the action plans outlined are predominantly dependent on donor support – which is usually unreliable and inadequate.

FINANCING MECHANISM

Financing of climate change interventions by government has not been clear. According to paragraph 385 of the 2015 Budget Statement, government is now making effort to access the result-based finance for the full implementation of REDD+ activities to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. In 2015, government has pledged to implement measures to undertake climate change and green economy programmes and projects that promote clean environment, job creation and poverty reduction. In addition, it will undertake Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Review (CPEIR) leading to climate sensitive budgeting in the medium term. It will be interesting to know how these plans are going to be actualised.

At the November Summit, G20 Leaders expressed support for “strong and effective action to address climate change” and promised to work for a legally binding deal in 2015. The G20 communique stated, “We will work together to adopt successfully a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the UNFCCC that is applicable to all parties at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) in Paris in 2015. *We encourage parties that are ready to communicate their intended nationally determined contributions well in advance of [the 21st Conference of Parties] COP21 (by the first quarter of 2015 for those parties ready to do so).* We reaffirm our support for mobilising finance for adaptation and mitigation, such as the Green Climate Fund” – (Paragraph 19). Eventhough pledges made by these world leaders are usually not forthcoming it will however be interesting to know if Ghana has already communicated her plans as required towards obtaining this possible funding breakthrough.

CONCLUSION:

According to paragraph 3 of the Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Agenda, “*Young people will be the torch bearers of the next sustainable development agenda through 2030...*” Therefore the inclusion of young people by the government of Ghana in the national development agenda including climate change processes should not be regarded as an option or choice.

Taking action to combat climate change and its impacts can best be achieved in Ghana given the case of Nepal where even with limited resources young people’s contribution produced significant results. That sense of urgency must be felt especially when some of the consequences of climate change can never be reversed such as loss of human lives.

Instead of branding young people merely as a vulnerable group, they also possess the energy, abilities and talents that can be discovered, developed and deployed appropriately in bringing climate change under control.

In this regard until pragmatic steps or actions are visibly seen permeating in every fabric of society, merely developing a policy do not mean adequate preparedness against climate change has been established. The appointment of Former President, John Agyekum Kuffour as a UN Special Envoy on Climate Change in December 2013 provides some opportunity for Ghana to showcase our quest to nailing down climate change.

RECOMMENDATIONS:**For governments:**

- Assess climate change interventions critically from a gender lens and a youth perspective to ensure equity.
- Provide deliberate decision making spaces for young people to contribute to the processes of fighting climate change.
- Consider how employment opportunities can be generated for young people through initiatives such as green economy and sanitation management.
- Reposition itself towards assessing funding opportunities in dealing with climate change

For civil society organisations working on climate change:

- Include gender analysis and youth inclusion at all levels in research, policy formation and advocacy for climate solutions.
- Seek to work in alliance with relevant institutions to ensure that results-oriented adaptation and mitigation mechanisms are effectively and efficiently planned and executed.

- Advocate positive behavioural change among citizens that leads to environmental sustainability.

For private sector:

- Set up systems that promote climate consideration in some development or project work such as construction of facilities or financing businesses that promote clean environment.
- Cooperate with youth groups in the informal sector to improve young people's capacity to plan and implement activities or projects that sustain the environment.
- Invest in capacity building and awareness for customers and other associates to increase environmental-friendly practices among them.