

THE COST OF SILENCE

A MEDIA HANDBOOK ON

HOW CLIMATE CHANGE WILL DISRUPT HUMANITY: HEAVILY IMPACTING ON

HEALTH, AGRICULTURE, LIVELIHOOD, ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

OF AFRICA

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Introduction

Air, Food, Light and Water; these are four vital requirements for human existence. No human or animal can survive without air, water or food, and none can survive in the absence of sunlight – photosynthesis; a process both human and plant depends for respiration.

Three out of these vital elements of human survival is under the precarious threat of Climate Change. The rise in carbon pollution is contaminating the quality of air intake, causing severe health complications including lung cancer, asthma and heat waves.

Like no other time in history, the quantity of water is fast drying up in some parts of the world; example is the Lake Chad region of Africa, which has shrunk to 2,000 square kilometer from its original 25,000 square kilometer, affecting the livelihood of between 20-40million people living in the region.

The consequence of water shortage is affecting agricultural productivity, resulting in low yield and also conflict between herders and farmers.

Thus; the air, food and water, which constitute the most essential human need for existence is being compromised by Climate Change.

Scientists and policy makers have argued that Climate Change is one of the most important global issues of the 21st century. It poses significant risk not only to the environment but to the society and the global economy.

Africa, although contributing less carbon emission compared to highly industrialized regions, may face the greatest consequence of the variation in the climate. The continent is however the least prepared in terms of government and citizen's response in adapting to new behaviour or technology to minimize the effect of Climate Change.

The farmers, especially smallholder farmers who contribute more than 70percent of domestic food production in the continent are not aware of Climate Change, its consequences and how to switch to smart agricultural practices.

This is where Media Advocacy on Climate Change Initiative, (MACCI) come in with a number of communication tools to deliver simplified information about Climate Change to farmers, health workers, policy makers, governments, media and the public on the need for urgency in adapting to the changes and how to prevent the furtherance in rise of temperature, by cutting down on human activities that keep emission on the increase.

MACCI is a specialized Non Governmental Organisation, with focus on knowledge development; sharing and management; designing tailor-made models for delivering requisite behavioural responses as well as responsive government policies for mitigating the impact of global warming.

What is Greenhouse Gases?

The Earth requires certain amount of temperature to keep the inhabitants safe. The greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, methane and water vapor. Certain amounts of these gases are required for survival for human and habitat.

The greenhouse effect is an increase in the average temperature of the Earth. Without greenhouse gases, the Earth's temperature would be too cold to support life and with excess greenhouse gases, the Earth would heat up beyond survivable levels.

As long as human activities continue to increase, more greenhouse gases will be produced; the earth's temperature will continue to rise. It is estimated that the earth's temperature will increase by two degrees Celsius to about six degrees Celsius by 2100. This is an unimaginable scare!

What are the sources of Greenhouse Gases?

- Burning of fuel (one gallon of petrol fuel -Premium Motor Spirit puts about 8.84kg of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere).
- Cooking firewood
- Poorly managed waste dump sites
- Carbondioxide
- Burning of fossil fuel e.g Coal, Natural gas
- Deforestation (clearing and burning forests releases large amounts of carbon into the atmosphere)

How Climate Change can affect Health

Rise in Diseases such as hyperthermia is already on the increase in the higher temperate regions of Africa.

Aside the devastating impact of heat waves, which has become more regular in Africa, causing damaging effect to life expectancy and crop production, climate variation causes diseases transmitted through water by means of vectors such as mosquitoes.

Available studies show that climate induced diseases are among the largest killers globally. Diarrhea, Malaria, Malnutrition are among the leading cause of mortality in Africa.

Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to kill an additional 250,000 people each year, from malnutrition, malaria, and diarrhea and heat stress, while continuing to jeopardize clean air, safe drinking water and sufficient food supply.

How Climate Change can affect Economy

According to Department of Petroleum Resources, Nigeria losses approximately \$2.42million daily to gas flaring. The cost of gas flaring over the period of 10years can fix Nigeria's major infrastructures of Road, Health Care Centers and decent Educational facilities.

On an annual basis, experts predict that Climate Change will cost Africa US \$50billion to GDP.

Climate Change will lead to a refugee crisis. Displacement of people as a direct result of Climate Change, this is not hypothetical, it's already happening. The refugee crisis will add economic burden to countries across Africa and by extension put further aid pressure on developed economies.

The Green Economy

This innovative economic concept will shift focus from natural resource dependence, for instance the fossil fuel for powering vehicles will be replaced with cleaner less carbon or carbon free alternatives, energy sources for industry or household will no longer be the green house gases dominated. Already, developing countries are making advances into a full green economy.

For instance, from 2024, Paris will no longer use fuel powered vehicles. Amsterdam has already announced ban of all gasoline and diesel vehicles by 2030.

Global Financial Institutions such as the World Bank have also introduced new financial instruments such as the green bonds to encourage countries embark on projects in the area of renewable energy, non-fossil fuel transportation so that countries can make quick transition to adaptation and mitigation of the effect of Climate Change.

How Climate Change can affect Environment

One gallon of Premium Motor Spirit contains about 4litres, if you burn 4litres on a drive from your work to your home, you have added about 8.8kilogramme of green house gas into the atmosphere.

Climate Change threatens the cleanliness of the air; the polluted air causes illness, depletes our water sources and limits food supply. It disrupts livelihoods, forces families from their homes and pushes people into poverty.

Increase in Global Flooding

It is predicted that global flooding may double by 2030. Some part of the world not known for excessive rainfall will experience torrent of rainfall leading to flooding. This would result in huge economic loss as well as displacement of millions of people.

Nigeria Emergency Management Agency report indicates a loss of 2.6Trillion Naira about \$7.2billion, to the 2012 flood in Nigeria. This represent one third of Nigeria's 2012 annual National Budget.

Globally, there will be an increase in flooding which could cost lives and huge economic loss.

How Climate Change can affect Agriculture

Rise in temperature on the planet and more unpredictable rainfall pattern are expected to cause reduction in crop yield in many tropical developing countries, where food security is already a problem. Ethiopia and Kenya are already suffering from the impact of this situation, jeopardizing household and national food security.

Three out of four people living in poverty rely on agriculture and natural resources to survive. For these people, the effects of Climate Change — limited water and food sources and increased competition for these resources is a matter of life and death.

Floods and droughts brought on by Climate Change threaten food production and supply. As a result, the price of food increases, and access becomes more and more limited, putting many at higher risk of hunger.

In 2017, conflicts and climate disasters put 124 million people in 51 countries up against severe food shortage and hunger. According to the Global Report on Food Crises, climate disasters triggered food crises across 23 countries — mostly in Africa — with shocks such as drought, leaving more than 39 million people in need of urgent assistance.

Revenues from crops will drop by as much as 90 percent in parts of the African continent by 2100. As a result, there will be an increase need of humanitarian services as a result of the physical and economic loss to Climate Change.

Rise in Malnutrition

The number of undernourished people in the world has been on the rise since 2014, reaching an estimated 815 million in 2016, majority live in developing countries. Much of the increase is linked to the growing number of conflicts, which are often exacerbated by climate-related shocks.

By 2050, Climate Change has the potential to increase the number of people at risk of hunger by as much as 20 percent. The majority of those at risk live in Africa.

Crop yield are likely to fall by up to 50% in some African countries. Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change predict that Climate Change could put 50million people at the risk of hunger by 2020 and that number may rise to 266million by 2080.

One-third of the planet's land is no longer fertile enough to grow food. More than 1.3 billion people live on this deteriorating agricultural land, putting them at risk of climate-driven water shortages and depleted harvests. These circumstances lead to worsening hunger and poverty.

How Climate Change can affect Livelihood

Climate and weather have tremendous impact on human life – endanger life and destroy livelihoods and properties. Global human loss to extreme climate condition as a result of weather natural disasters is approximately 600,000; 95 percentages of which took place in developing countries.

Water Shortage

Fresh water supply is likely to be compromised by the erratic rainfall pattern. Water scarcity is already apparent in Africa.

A lack of water and poor water quality can compromise health and hygiene, putting population at risk of diseases such as diarrhea, cholera which kills more than 3million people every year, as well as trachoma, an eye infection that can cause blindness.

Access to clean water is likely to become more limited, and the risk of hunger and famine will become even greater than it is today.

Water scarcity will increase, leaving as many as 250 million people without the water they need by 2030.

Rise in Conflict

Conflict is the primary cause of poverty and suffering in the world today. It will be exacerbated by Climate Change.

By amplifying existing environmental, social, political and economic challenges, Climate Change increases the likelihood of competition and conflict over resources. It can also intensify existing conflicts and tensions.

The conflict between nomadic herders and farmers in Nigeria and parts of West Africa has taken a terrorism dimension. In desperation to seek green pastures for their livestock they invade farmlands, destroy farm crops and attack farmers.

Many Nigerian farming communities in agrarian States of Benue and Taraba have been destroyed in clashes involving herders and farmers. This is mainly because of the depletion of pasture and shortage of water for the herds.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: An average of 21.5 million people has been forcibly displaced since 2008 due to Climate Changed-related weather hazards.

The organisation says that Climate Change also acts as a 'threat multiplier' in areas of ongoing conflict. "Climate Change sows seeds for conflict, but it also makes displacement much worse when it happens," it says.

Who is most affected by Climate Change?

While every human around the world feels the effects of the variation in global temperature, people living in the world's poorest countries in Africa are the most vulnerable.

Increasingly unpredictable weather patterns, shifting seasons, and natural disasters disproportionately threaten these populations, increasing their risk and their dependency on humanitarian aid.

As human, Animals too are endangered by the adverse effect of Climate Change, shortage of water and sufficient green areas will continue to force herders to look for alternatives. There will be battle for space for water and healthy grass.

The insecurity in Northern Nigeria is as a result of insufficient water and grass for herds.

What is the forecast for the future?

Climate Change undermines development gains and leads to shortages in basic necessities.

The impacts of Climate Change continue to exceed previous scientific forecasts, worsening and multiplying at dramatic rates that will only be amplified in the years to come, until countries begin to apply adaptation strategies to mitigate this precarious impact.

Drought and flood incidences will be more frequent and more intense. Tens of millions of people are expected to be forced from their homes in the next decade as a result of flood and draught. This could result in the biggest refugee crisis the world has ever seen.

How Do We Respond

Since Climate Change is a creation of human activities, it can only be reversed by an alteration in human actions, activities and lifestyle. Human's way of life will be altered in the coming years in order to keep the Earth safe for habitation. Basic things like mode of transportation, the choice of Energy will have to come into compliance with the realities of present environmental situations.

The government will play a key role especially in the areas of promoting and implementing climate friendly policies.

The media, a constituent described as the watchdog of the society has a tremendous role to play in terms of public enlightenment and more importantly to monitor and ensure government compliance to global green campaign and adaptation of activities which can mitigate the impact of Climate Change.