

act!onaid



A COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF A CLIMATE JUSTICE SEMINAR

**organized by ActionAid Ghana
and the University of Energy and Natural
Resources (UENR), Sunyani - Ghana**

29th July 2021



INTRODUCTION

The impact of climate change continues to be one of the greatest challenges affecting humanity. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2018) in its 2018 report predicted that Climate-related risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security, and economic growth are projected to increase with global warming of 1.5°C and increase further to 2°C above pre-industrial levels (IPCC, 2018). Across the globe, many efforts both policy and practice are, therefore, being pursued to keep temperatures below 1.5°C to avert such predicted catastrophe as well as towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goal 13 on Climate Actions.

In all of this, it's widely accepted that the industrialization of economies of the world over a century and its resultant emission of Greenhouse Gases in the process, is what has caused global warming and set climate change in motion. Most of these industrialized countries responsible for global warming and climate change are in the Global North. Unfortunately, least developed countries like Ghana who have contributed the least to global warming and climate change, with weak economies and less capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change, are at the receiving end of its effects. Ghana has been adversely affected by numerous climate hazards including sea level rise, floods and droughts, and high temperatures; affecting lives, property, agricultural productivity and human health. Women and young people are

the most affected by these climate hazards due to their peculiar vulnerabilities.

Efforts for climate change mitigation and adaptation has seen governments and other stakeholders supporting in policy formulation processes and their implementation. As part of ongoing interventions on climate change, ActionAid Ghana in partnership with the University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR) organized a Climate Justice Seminar on the theme "Socio-economic and Environmental effects of Climate Change on Women and Households in the Bono enclave of Ghana" on the 29th of July 2021 at Eusbett Hotel, Sunyani – Bono Region of Ghana. The seminar brought together key regional level stakeholders including both senior and junior faculty members of UENR, the Regional Coordinating Council, smallholder women farmers, Youth, planning officers of some Districts and Municipal Assemblies. Also, key regional level government departments and agencies including the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency of Ghana, as well as some civil society organizations participated in the seminar.

Among other things, the seminar sought to deepen participants' understanding of Ghana's climate foot print, mitigation and adaptation actions, socio-economic and environmental effects on women and strategies for building resilience.

OBSERVATIONS

Following various presentations and plenary discussions during an open forum, participants of the seminar made the following observations:

1. That climate hazards and extreme events from 1968 to 2017 has affected over 16 million people in Ghana and resulted in at least 444 deaths, excluding undocumented deaths from floods. And that, the country loses an estimated amount of USD 200 million annually while future climate events are predicted to affect up to 28% of Ghana's population if the current trend of climatic events continues. In all of these, women, children, and the youth are the most affected.
2. That Ghana is ranked as highly vulnerable to climate change. Among its sectors identified as most vulnerable include agriculture, water resources, coastal settlements, health, energy, cities and infrastructure.
3. That, farmers who are more engaged in maize farming, a crop which has become a predominant staple food and have received more support under the government's inputs subsidy programme of its flagship planting for food and jobs programme, are most vulnerable to climate change.
4. That Ghana, like many developing countries has contributed the least to greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions of only 0.08% of the total global greenhouse gas emissions globally (USAID, 2019; Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ghana, 2018).
5. Therefore, Ghana needs to prioritize more on adaptation actions than mitigation in its climate change programme of actions in its Nationally



Determined Contributions (NDC's). In this regard, it is imperative that Ghana adheres to its National Adaptation Plan.

6. That, among other sectors known to be the sources of Ghana's GHG emissions, agriculture, forestry and other land use forms (AFOLU) are the leading sources of Ghana's GHG emissions; while at the same time Ghana's agriculture sector is known to be the most vulnerable sector to climate change.
7. That, over the years, the government of Ghana has formulated a number of key policies on climate change which outlined government's plans for reducing its carbon footprint and improve resilience against climate change effects. Key among these policies include the National Climate Change Policy, the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the National Adaptation Plans which are both going through reviews. It is important that the government expedite action on the finalization of these policy documents to pave way for their implementations.
8. That Ghana has also ensured that some provisions in the key climate change policies are linked to some of its national development frameworks. Worthy of particular mention is the Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies (2017 – 2024). This policy makes reference to the Paris Climate Agreement and highlights the 31 programmes of action as contained in the Ghana NDCs. It further called for Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to take up the climate actions in their Medium-Term Development Plans (MDTPs) for implementation at the local level. To facilitate this, the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) and the Ghana Statistical Service have also been tasked to develop a set of harmonized indicators to be used for tracking and reporting on progress of implementation of some of its key national development policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the observations from the seminar, participants agreed to put forward the following recommendations for policy considerations and programme interventions to improve on Ghana's carbon footprint, build resilience of communities and reduce vulnerabilities to climate change:

1. Considering that Ghana is at the forefront of climatic events which are costing lives and property almost on annual basis, we call on the government through the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, to take steps to establish a national fund that will draw financial resources from local and external sources for effective preparedness and response to climate related disasters. Also, Ghana, with its president as the chairman of ECOWAS and Co-Chair of the Eminent Group of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Advocates, should lead in rallying other African countries to make a joint and strong call for the establishment of a dedicated international climate fund for responding to loss and damage caused by perennial climate events in developing countries. This dedicated international

fund should also support vulnerable countries' resilience building initiatives to reduce vulnerability to climatic events.

2. Agriculture has been identified as one of the key sectors that is vulnerable to climate change, and farmers who engage in maize farming found to be most vulnerable to climate change despite all the support that maize farming is receiving from the government's farm inputs subsidy programme under its flagship planting for food and jobs programme. In this respect, we call on the government through the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, to open up the planting for food and jobs programme to actively target all food crops including neglected local and indigenous crop varieties known to be more adaptable to local conditions and have high nutritional value. Diversifying agriculture is known to be a good strategy for building resilience of farming systems and households to climate change as against mono cropping or focusing on promoting just a few crops.



3. It is clear that Ghana, like many developing countries, is nowhere near the high polluting countries of the world as far as Greenhouse Gases emissions are concern. That, Ghana and other developing countries should be more concerned with their adaptation needs than mitigation. Consequently, we call on government through the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation and all other stakeholders, to take advantage of the ongoing review process of the Ghana Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to increase the number of climate actions for adaptation than the current situation, and further increase the amount of funding required for implementing its adaptation programme of actions. This will ensure that the country focuses on building resilience of its communities including the vulnerable farming households. Again, the government of Ghana should take a lead in mobilizing other African Union member countries to intensify the call for the high polluting countries as a matter of urgency, to reduce their GHG emissions and honour their financial obligations, thereby contributing to helping developing countries like Ghana to implement their climate adaptation and mitigation plans.

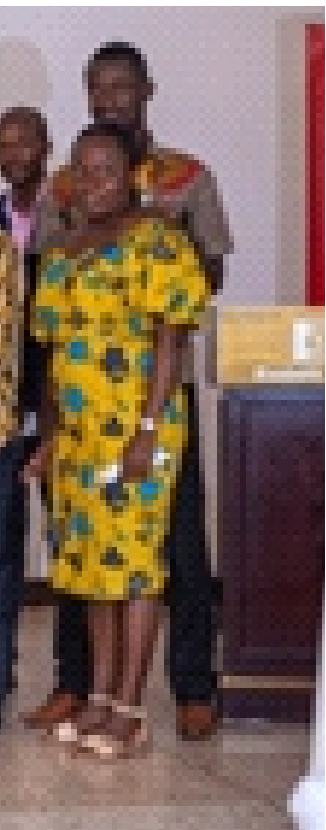
4. With agriculture contributing significantly to Ghana's GHG emissions whiles the same time most vulnerable to climate change, there is the need to transform its current agriculture system that is more based on industrial practices, to one that is more sustainable with less contribution to Ghana's GHGs. In this regard, we wish to call on the government through the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, to consider appropriate policies and programmes to support a transition of its agriculture away from the current conventional agriculture that highly depends on industrial inputs, to AGROECOLOGY which is known to be able to both contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as builds resilience of communities and empowers women and smallholder farmers. In this regard, the review of the National Adaptation Plan (NAPs) also offers an immediate opportunity to adopt agroecology as a

component of the plan. The Food and Agriculture Organization's "Scaling up Agroecology Initiative" is yet another opportunity that the government of Ghana can leverage on toward the transition of Ghana's food system to agroecology and sustainable agriculture.

5. Since climate change is well recognized in some key development frameworks of Ghana, it is important that MMDAs use the ongoing review process of their respective Medium Term Development Plans (MTDPs) to include more climate change adaptation actions as well as agroecology to support women, smallholder farmers, youth, and their communities to adopt sustainable agriculture and environmental sustainability practices at the local level. These can offer green economic employment opportunities for young people in the agriculture and environmental sustainability sectors of local economies.

6. With agroecology gaining more and more attention as an effective agricultural system that can help to reduce agriculture's carbon footprint, it is crucial for research institutions to critically consider focusing their studies on agroecology to help generate the required knowledge and evidence to support the scaling up of agroecology. Institutions of higher learning like the University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR), should also consider mounting academic programmes and courses on agroecology so as to train the needed human resource capital to support the transition of our agriculture practices to agroecology.

Despite the fact that people in Ghana and in developing countries are adversely impacted by climate change, knowledge on climate change is generally low. It is important for Civil Society Organizations to increase their effort in sensitizing communities and the general populace on climate change. This will increase awareness which could lead to a mobilization of social movements from communities in developing countries, to join their governments to intensify the call for high polluting countries in the Global North to urgently reduce their GHG emissions, and also honour their obligations of providing technical and financial support for adaptation and mitigation programmes of Ghana and other least developed countries.



act!onaid

Oko Kotey Link, East Legon,
P. O. Box AN 19083,
Accra - North, Ghana
Tel: +233 (0302) 544714/5
+233 (024) 4316392
Fax: +233 (0302) 764930

 aaghana@actionaid.org

 ghana.actionaid.org

    [@actionaidghana](https://www.youtube.com/actionaidghana)

<https://ghana.actionaid.org/>