Managing climate change critical for human development in Kenya

The report indicates that Kenya has experienced an increase in intensity and frequency of extreme climate events with negative socio-economic impacts on almost all sectors of the economy and human development. The production sectors such as agriculture and tourism are suffering significant losses from uncertain weather patterns, with direct consequences on the well-being of the population. The effects of the rising temperatures pose challenges of incidences of certain diseases such as malaria. The cumulative impacts of climate change over the next two to three decades have the potential to reverse much of the progress made in advancement of human development, the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Kenya’s Vision 2030.

While launching the study in Nairobi, Devolution and Planning Cabinet Secretary Ann Waiguru observed that women are more vulnerable to climate change than men, primarily because they constitute the majority of the world’s...
poor and also because they are more dependent on natural resources which are susceptible to the effects of climate change.

The UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas said it would take a concerted effort to roll back the effects of climate change. “We want to commit our financial and technical assistance to work with the Government of Kenya and its people, as well as other development partners to help mainstream the policy recommendations advanced in the 7th Report into national and local development strategies, policies and plans,” she added.

The report shows that the human development aspirations of Kenyans cannot be achieved through a business-as-usual approach and the country must build on climate change variability within the overall development planning.

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### Celebrating the life and legacy of the late Professor Wangari Maathai

The Permanent Mission of Kenya to the United Nations Headquarters in New York organized a special event to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Late Nobel Laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai.

In his message delivered by Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described the late Professor as “…a pioneer in promoting sustainable development and articulating the links between human rights, poverty, environmental protection, peace and security. That is why she was awarded the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize”.

“Professor Maathai combined radiant warmth with passion, eloquence with wisdom. She was an inspiration to all who met her. Her death was untimely, but her legacy will endure, not just in her own country of Kenya, but far beyond. As we look forward to a post-2015 development agenda that will bring a life of dignity for all, let us commit to following Professor Maathai’s example by caring for people and the planet alike,” he added.

The President of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. John Ashe also had remarks delivered on his behalf by Mrs. Paulette Bethel, and reiterated how the late Prof. Maathai was a pioneer in many ways. She was the first East and Central African woman to earn a doctorate degree and was also the first African woman and environmentalist to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, ten years ago.

“But first and foremost, she was a pioneer of sustainable development. When she founded the Green Belt Movement in the seventies, she understood the intrinsic linkages between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development. As she witnessed the struggles of rural women to meet the basic needs of their families, she strove to respond to their concrete problems such as lack of food, fuel or shelter by planting trees. Yet, it soon became apparent that tree planting not only improved their livelihood, but also empowered them and their communities as people came to understand the importance of protecting and nurturing their environment,” he said.

Mr. Ashe said that the late Nobel Laureate was aware of women’s central role in development and how they invested most of their time, energy and resources in their families and communities. Thus, she believed that the empowerment of women reaped benefits for the entire society.

During the event, a plaque was unveiled at the tree the late Professor planted just months after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. In addition a new dogwood tree was planted in her honour. This was to commemorate her work and vision, both fitting tributes to her tremendous work and the millions of trees that have been planted by the Green Belt Movement.
Memorable 20th anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda observed at the UN in Nairobi

Guests from all walks of life streamed into the UN complex the morning of 14 April, 2014 to “Remember, Unite, Renew” and honour the victims of one of the darkest chapters in the history of Africa, the genocide in Rwanda.

The anniversary dubbed “Kwibuka20” was attended by about 500 guests who were welcomed at the UN by the emblem “20” made of white roses remembering the more than 800,000 innocent people so brutally murdered in Rwanda.

In his message presented at the ceremony by UN Resident Coordinator Nardos Bekele-Thomas, UN Secretary-General paid tribute to the bravery and resilience of the survivors.

“We draw inspiration from the ability of the Rwandan people to unite and show that reconciliation is possible even after a monumental tragedy. And we pay tribute to their determination to renew their country and pave the way to a secure and prosperous future,” he added.

The Secretary General encouraged the people and Government of Rwanda to continue promoting the inclusive spirit needed for healing and reconciliation, and to deepen respect for human rights.

The High Commissioner of the Republic of Rwanda to Kenya, Ms. Yamina Karitanyi addressed the audience with a moving speech as she painted vivid pictures of the tragedy in 1994. She however positively concluded by highlighting, “Rwanda is healing well and using home grown solutions to respond to the needs of citizens. The sad history has been compensated by resourcefulness of our people”.

Ambassador Ruth Solitei, Chef de Cabinet in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kenya noted, “Today we stand in awe of the Rwandan Nation, a country that has risen out of pain and despair to become a beacon of peace, tolerance, development and an anchor state in both the East African Community and African Union”.

A moment of silence was observed after the guests and UN staff laid roses on a symbol of “20” that was created on the grounds in front of the UN lobby. Afterwards, the guests had an opportunity to view an exhibition mounted by the UN Information Centre (UNIC) of photos, paintings and letters on peace by students from Nairobi.

The solemn ceremony was organized by UNIC, in collaboration with the Rwanda High Commission and was attended by the Rwandan community in Kenya, members of the diplomatic corps, university students...
Securing high level championship for HIV and health: County First Ladies

KENYA has made significant progress in reducing HIV prevalence, maternal and infant mortality in the past decade. Specifically, HIV prevalence among adults aged 15 to 64 years decreased nationally from 7.2% as measured in the Kenya AIDS Indicator Survey (KAIS 2007) to 5.6% in 2012 (KAIS 2012). The prevalence among children aged 18 months to 14 years was 0.9% and varies by region among adults. The highest prevalence is in Nyanza and lowest in the North Eastern region. Despite the stabilizing national prevalence, there is continuing feminization of the epidemic.

Following the national championship of the HIV prevention agenda by the First Lady of Kenya, Ms. Margaret Kenyatta, the 47 County First Ladies committed to championing HIV prevention in their counties at the County First Ladies (CFL) forum on HIV and AIDS held on 24-25th April 2014 in Nairobi. This forum aimed to engage the CFL to leverage on their influence and positions to advocate for HIV response in their respective Counties; empower the CFL to promote social dialogue and transformation of the challenges and obstacles to the HIV and AIDS pandemic and response in Kenya; support the CFL in their efforts to promote couple HIV testing and counseling, as well as male partners’ involvement in the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT) programmes, and support the CFL to develop county specific action plans to catalyze the response. The ladies pledged to use their positions as local opinion leaders to help reduce HIV associated stigma by mentoring people living with HIV (PLHIV) in their communities.

To conclude the ceremony was a “Walk to Remember” in memory of the genocide victims, which started at the UN complex and ended at the Rwanda High Commission grounds, led by Ambassadors Yamina Karitanyi and Ruth Solitei, as well as UNIC Director Nasser Ega-Musa.

As the UN Secretary-General said, “Together, let us commit to remember, unite and renew for the people of Rwanda and for our actions to prevent genocide around the world”.

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UN Resident Coordinator Nardos Bekele-Thomas and Rwanda High Commissioner Yamina Karitanyi at the ceremony. ©UNIC, 2014

Securing high level championship for HIV and health: County First Ladies

UN Resident Coordinator Nardos Bekele-Thomas and Rwanda High Commissioner Yamina Karitanyi at the ceremony. ©UNIC, 2014
Kenya young parliamentarians speak out on youth volunteerism and employment

THE UNV Kenya convened a consultative forum between the UN agencies and the Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association in April 2014 at the UN Complex. The Association is an arm of the Parliament made up of young leaders who are passionate about youth leadership, empowerment and development.

The meeting was an opportunity for UN agencies to consult with the young leaders and open up on partnerships to support youth programmes in the country. The forum was graced by, among others, the UN Resident Coordinator, Mrs. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, UNDP Country Director, Ms. Maria-Threase Keating, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Joyce Laboso, Patron of Global Peace Foundation, Dr. Manu Chandaria.

“TODAY as we consider how to equip the youth of our nation for political leadership and economic inclusion, let’s understand one thing: when we raise up young leaders we are not doing youth a favor. We are doing our nation a great service and this is why I must thank the UN Agencies for extending a warm invitation to us. It is indeed a great service to Kenya and to Africa,”

Hon Sakaja Johnson – Chairperson, Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association

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and Hon. Sakaja Johnson. There were discussions on the role of youth and its leadership in the development of the nation. Presentations by several guests focused on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), as well as on youth participation on governance and leadership.

In her presentation the UN Resident Coordinator encouraged the law makers to take a lead in setting up and supporting policies that will help young people access opportunities for employment to contribute to the growth of the economy. The same sentiments were highly supported by Dr. Manu Chandaria who went ahead and asked the young parliamentarians to think of policies or frameworks that will improve the education system for it to be relevant and able to address current development challenges.

The legislators were also encouraged by the UNDP Country Director to build partnerships with UN agencies and initiate programmes that can be implemented collectively for maximum impact.

**A heritage of commemoration – Nairobi, a historic urban landscape**

The vibrant modern city of Nairobi is at the heart of economic development in East Africa. The city also welcomes travelers from across the world to its exquisite safaris and rich wildlife reserves. However, UNESCO, together with its partners, invites you to re-examine this emerging African metropolis to introduce its rich cultural and historical urban landscape as told through the streets, buildings and recreational parks.

UNESCO, in close collaboration with the National Museums of Kenya (NMK), has been supporting the tangible and intangible cultural heritage initiatives, allowing people to appreciate and respect their heritage attractions, not only as business and tourist destinations, but also as remembrance of their great architectural, aesthetic and historical importance.

For this reason, Kenya celebrated the first International Monuments and Sites Day, marked by the official opening of the Nairobi Gallery which carries timeless collection of artifacts, jewelries, fabric designs and temporary art exhibition of African origin; and the launching of “Historical Walking Tours” in Nairobi’s central business district.

The “Historical Walking Tour” was the highlight of the event where trained volunteer guides explained on the significance of various monuments and architecture contributing to the historic

*(From left) UNESCO Regional Director, Minister of Tourism, Trade and Culture in the Nairobi County Government, and Director General of the National Museum of Kenya celebrate the official launch of the Nairobi Gallery ©Masakazu Shibata/UNESCO*

*A guided historical tour was conducted by volunteers at the heart of Nairobi City District ©Masakazu Shibata/UNESCO*
Nairobi landscape. The guided tour is one of the initiatives supported by UNESCO to enhance knowledge of, and respect for Kenya’s diverse heritage.

Hon. Anna Othoro, Minister of Tourism, Trade and Culture in the Nairobi County Government described the event as an opportunity for Nairobi and its residents to “open up to the world, not only for its beautiful natural landscape but also by appreciating the city’s rich historical and cultural assets”.

Dr. Ahmed Yassin, the Director General of the National Museums of Kenya noted that “heritage places in living landscape carry a memory of human experience” and how historical monuments to traditional practices and contemporary art forms, enrich our everyday lives in countless ways.

Mr. Djelid Mohamed, Director of UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa addressed the challenges of “balancing heritage conservation and social and economic development, given the impact and benefit of both to local communities”. He particularly highlighted on the important role that local governments and the media have in the promotion and protection of heritage tourism. “You have the responsibility not just to report on negative stories of the City but to contribute to the promotion of knowledge that is much needed for the City of Nairobi and Kenya as a whole”.

UNESCO advocates culture essential to sustainable development because of the resources it embodies for individuals and communities as a source of innovation and creativity. Culture-led development not only harnesses entrepreneurship in the areas of cultural and creative industry, sustainable tourism and cultural infrastructure that bring substantial revenues, but also cultivates greater social inclusiveness and resilience for individuals and communities. To unleash the transformative power of culture, UNESCO, in close collaboration with the National Museums of Kenya and Nairobi County Government, supports local ownership in order to integrate culture into national policies and legal framework to safeguard heritage.
IOM takes safe migration and peace building road and radio shows to Turkana Central

LODWAR town was engulfed in a carnival mood for two days, as IOM, under the aegis of the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security project, held a safe migration and peace building outreach road show to raise awareness on human trafficking and the culture of peace.

The town came almost to a standstill as approximately 4,000 residents came out to participate in the roadshow held on 15-16 April 2014.

The roadshow sought to empower school going children by disseminating peace and safe migration messages, in an area which over the years has been identified as a hub for human traffickers and resource based conflicts.

For two days, the convoy snaked through the town of Lodwar to the delight of the residents who turned up in numbers and were left yearning for more. The residents were visibly excited by the caravan that awoke the rather dull town in Northwestern Kenya.

Messages on peace, safe migration, food security, child labour and trafficking dominated the highly charged caravan which staged numerous stop overs along the designated routes. Information, Education and Communication materials labelled, “Peace starts with me and you”, and “Migrate safely and orderly” were also issued to the audiences. To spice up the event, presenters of a popular local radio station, Maata FM, took part in the road show and actively disseminated the messages.

The event featured a series of music performances by young local artists, dance competitions and free give-aways which included T-shirts and solar radios.

“We thank IOM for this initiative. Our school going children will grow up better informed about the ills of human trafficking and conflict, and instead concentrate on their education,” said 34 year old Jane Ajele.

Meanwhile, under the same initiative, IOM Project staff, David Lukiri and Augustine Lambert participated in a community radio talk show at Maata FM to sensitize the residents on the perils of human trafficking and the need for safer migration.

The interactive one hour evening show which ran for four days saw 500 callers take part. The community radio has a reach of up to 100km radius and covers Loima Sub County, Turkana County, as well as parts of Pokot County.

The road shows will continue in Lodwar.

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