

# The Weekly

## Information Resource Bulletin

### FOCUS: Climate Change and Women

A 2009 report by OXFAM indicates that an increase in temperatures and intense rain in Malawi over the past 40 years has led to drought and flooding, causing shorter growing seasons, poor crop yields, food shortages, hunger and the spread of disease.

Climate change affects women and men differently because of political, social and economic inequalities.

Since women have multiple roles in Malawi as farmers, providers of food, water and firewood as well as caring for their children, they are affected most by the changing climate, according to the Oxfam report.

The report also warns that, in the absence of food, some vulnerable women may be forced to resort to prostitution for food, which could lead to an increased vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

Climate change directly affects food security and this could lead to more health problems such as malnutrition in children and this will affect women more since they are the ones who are responsible for caring for their children.

### The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- To discuss how women are being affected by climate change
- To discuss how men can support women, so that they are not severely affected by climate change
- To learn from other women they are being affected by climate change and how they are coping with

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### The Problem: Climate Change Has a Huge Impact on Women

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) 2007 report gives the following climate-related impacts for Africa: By 2020, between 75 and 250 million people are projected to be exposed to increased water stress due to climate change. By 2020, in some countries, yields from rain-fed agriculture could be reduced by up to 50%. Agricultural production, including access to food, in many African countries is projected to be severely compromised.

Malawi has already started feeling the effects of climate change.

Women are the most affected as problems caused by climate change further worsen inequalities between the sexes.

Malawian women play multiple roles. They are

expected to care for the children, cultivate the land, fetch water and provide food and firewood.

Erratic weather patterns, caused by climate change, have led to small crop yields; which means less food for most families in the country.

This in turn leads to some vulnerable women resorting to prostitution in order to make enough money to buy food. Prostitution often leads to an increased vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

Climate change has also affected women in other ways. Due to deforestation, they often have to walk long distances to find firewood.

Previously rivers in some areas flowed all year round, but these days when the rains stop the rivers dry up, and women cover long distances to fetch water for their families.

## Activities for Journalists

Use your radio station to help your community understand how women are being affected by climate change.

The Gender and Climate Change report by World Conservation Union indicates that women are more severely affected by climate change and natural disasters because of their social roles and because of discrimination and poverty.

Women in rural areas are highly dependent on local natural resources, because of their responsibility to secure water, food and firewood for cooking and heating. The effects of climate change, including drought, uncertain rainfall and deforestation, make it harder for them to obtain these resources.

In some areas, climate change generates resource shortages and unreliable job markets, which lead to increased migration. This often means fewer men and women in some communities and – those who are left behind must take on additional agricultural and households duties.

Have a vox pop with women from your community and ask them how they are being affected by climate change.

Have another vox pop with men from your community and find out how they think climate change is affecting women.

Interview two women from your area who have been affected by climate change. How has it changed their lives? How did this affect their family? Also, ask them what role they think men can play in making sure that women are not being severely affected by climate change.

Interview two men from your community and ask them how they think men could support women in making their lives easier given the additional challenges that women face due to climate change.

Interview a gender officer from your area and ask him/her how climate change has affected women in the area, and what he/she thinks men can do to support women.

### Community engagement

Urge listeners to send SMS, call or stop by the radio station to talk about how men can support women in ensuring that climate change does not severely affect women only and how they can work together to achieve this.

### Useful Contacts

- The Director; Women's voice +265 995 480 941
- NGO, Gender Coordination network; +265 1 771 171
- [https://unfccc.int/files/cancun\\_agreements/green\\_climate\\_fund/application/pdf/tc2malawi.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/cancun_agreements/green_climate_fund/application/pdf/tc2malawi.pdf)
- <http://www.ipcc.ch/>
- <http://www.motherjones.com/blue-marble/2007/03/climate-change-will-affect-women-more-severely-men>



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