

# The Weekly

## Information Resource Bulletin

### Climate change Focus

In simple terms, Climate Change can be explained as the shift in the normal or usual climatic patterns over a long period of time (at least 30 years).

Malawi is one of the 15 countries categorized as a population and climate change “hotspot” by the US based Population Action International (PAI) -a non-profit organization globally championing access to sexual and reproductive health services.

The National Statistical Office (NSO) projects that the population of Malawi could more than triple to 50 million by 2050. This is worrying because there will be an increased pressure on water, land and other natural resources.

These combined effects of climate change and rapid population growth, are also increasing food insecurity, environmental degradation and poverty levels.

### The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- To improve the listeners’ understanding of the link between rapid population growth, the environment and climate change
- To educate listeners on the general effects of climate change
- To increase the listeners awareness, knowledge, understanding and participation in environment and climate change management and related issues

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### The Problem: Climate Change

Climate change is increasingly being recognized as a major development challenge facing Malawi and the world at large. Evidence is building that the effects of climate change are being felt in the form of persistent and prolonged dry spells and droughts, floods, increased variability of temperature, rainfall and storms, among others, according to experts.

They say Malawi is experiencing all of the effects: persistent dry spells, droughts, flash floods, and erratic rainfall -- manifestations of the country’s susceptibility to climate change.

For example, between December 2012 and January 2013, Malawi received heavy rains resulting in flooding in several districts. The Southern Region of Malawi was the most affected with districts of Mangochi, Phalombe, Nsanje and Zomba being the worst hit.

The total number of households that was affected throughout Malawi was 12,877, according to the Department of Disaster Management Affairs, and four deaths were recorded.

The families in the affected communities lost a lot. Homes were completely destroyed, others were damaged, crops were wiped out, livestock lost, and water sources were contaminated.

The country also faced acute food shortages, which worsened the situation in the flood-affected communities.

Some of these effects, especially droughts and floods, have increased in frequency, intensity and magnitude over the last two decades; and have adversely impacted on food and water security, water quality, energy and the sustainable livelihoods of rural communities.

According to the National Environment and Climate Change Communication Strategy (2012 – 2016), high levels of poverty, illiteracy and rapid population growth have been identified as the root causes of environmental degradation which is worsened by the severe impact of climate change.

## Activities for Journalists

Use your radio station to help your community understand what climate change is and what its effects are in general.

Help your listeners to understand that climate change has manifested itself in several ways including:

- Rising temperatures
- Increase in extreme weather events
- Changes in seasonal patterns
- More frequent droughts
- More intense droughts
- Increased flooding

Give several examples including these:

Malawi faces severe water scarcity because of the combined effects of climate change and rapid population growth, which are also increasing food insecurity, environmental degradation and poverty levels.

Malawi is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change and this has affected agriculture production -- the backbone of the country.

According to a report titled; *The Winds of Change: Climate Change, Poverty and the Environment in Malawi* by OXFAM International, an increase in temperature by about one degree Celsius and intense rainfall over the past 50 years has led to drought and flooding, causing shorter growing seasons. This in turn has led to poor crop yields, food shortages, hunger and the spread of disease in a country where nearly a third of the people already live in extreme poverty.

### **You might discuss some of the specific effects of climate change with your listeners in your programs.**

Have a Vox pop with people from your area and ask them to explain how they understand issues of climate change.

Have an on-air discussion with several people including a chief from your community on the effects of climate change on the environment and how together as a community solutions can be found to cope with climate change.

Also have a discussion for a few minutes with the same people on how population growth impacts on climate change.

Consider interviewing Sandra Mapemba from the Population Reference Bureau (PRB) on the link between population growth and climate change.

Also, you might interview Herbert Mwalukomo from the Civil Society Network on Climate Change, ask him to explain:

1. The causes of climate change
2. The effects of climate change in the country
3. Things that communities can do to cope with climate change.

### **Community Engagement**

Urge listeners to send SMS, call or stop by the radio station to talk about how they have been affected by climate change and what they think they can do to cope with climate change.

### **Useful Contacts**

- Herbert Mwalukomo -Civil Society Network on Climate Change ; Phone:+265( 0)881038910, + 265 (0) 212 700 104
- Sandra Mapemba-Population Reference Bureau (PRB); Phone: : +265(0)999219789
- Welton Phalira- Lake Chilwa Basin Climate Change Adaptation Programme; Phone: +265(0)888 308074
- <http://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressrelease/2009-06-17/climate-change-pushing-malawi-further-into-poverty-women-hit-worst>

