

The Weekly

Information Resource Bulletin

Climate change Focus

Malawi is one of the countries hardest hit by climate change and a rapidly expanding population is likely to add to future problems. Agriculture is the primary source of employment and income for most of the rural population of the country.

A study by the International Food Policy Research Institute says climate change, with rising temperatures and increasingly erratic rainfall patterns across much of the sub-Saharan region, will likely cause a decline in average maize and sorghum yields.

As it was already alluded to in the previous bulletin; extreme weather events like droughts, floods and changes in the frequency and intensity of dry spells is already negatively affecting agriculture in most parts of the country.

There is need for Malawi to start looking at other alternatives to mitigate climate change effects.

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- To emphasize the link between increase population and climate change
- To promote discussion and dialogue between listeners and other community members about the adaptive strategies that farmers can use in response to climate change effects
- To learn from other farmers about the advantages of some of the strategies

The Problem: Not Enough Knowledge on Adaptive Strategies of Climate Change Effects

In just the next couple of decades, the World Bank says, farmers across Africa could lose more than half their cropland to drought and heat.

Almost all households (97%) in Malawi engage in farming activities and maize is widely grown. As a result, food security in Malawi is associated with maize production.

More than 95% of Malawian agriculture is rain-fed and nearly all smallholder farmers rely on rain-fed agriculture, as such anything that affects agriculture has far reaching effects on smallholder farmers. For example; droughts and floods can lead to hunger.

Malawi faces severe water scarcity because of the combined effects of climate change and rapid population growth. This combination makes it difficult for the nation to feed itself – it also leads to environmental degradation.

The largest cost of climate change for Malawi could be the loss of agricultural output as a result of soil degradation, as well as deforestation. The cutting of trees is needed to supply firewood and charcoal.

Given Malawi's high vulnerability to impacts of climate change, significant additional adaptation efforts are needed to address this situation.

Activities for Journalists

Use your radio station to help your community understand what farmers in particular and the community as a whole can do in response to the impact of climate change.

Adaptive strategies are needed.

Find out if farmers in your community have adopted any of the following:

- Raise a variety of crops rather than just one or two
- Save rainwater to irrigate crops
- Grow more and more drought tolerant crops such as cassava
- Consider small scale irrigation
- Adopt climate smart agricultural technologies such as conservation agriculture

These above points will be aimed at reducing soil erosion, nutrient loss and increasing soil health, this will in turn help reduce crop devastation during droughts.

Have a VoxPop with some farmers from your community on how they are being affected by climate change effects.

After the vox pops, have an in-depth

interview with two farmers from your community (a man and a woman). Ask them about the some of the adaptive measures that they are using.

Identify some farmers who are using new ways of farming to slow the effects of climate change.

Are these new ways of farming, working? What are the advantages of these new techniques?

Ask them to tell you how they learned about the new strategies (was it through the radio or county extensive officer?)

Interview an agricultural expert from your area; ask him/her about the adaptive strategies farmers ought to use to respond to climate change effects.

Perhaps you might create a series of programs featuring farmers who are using techniques to limit the effects of climate change. What better way for farmers to learn about new practices than by hearing other farmers describing methods that work.

Ask your listeners to send an SMS on what type of an adaptive method they are using and its advantages.

Useful Contacts

- PRB- Contact person; Sandra Mapemba: +265-99-921-9789
- Walter Mugove Nyika; www.seedingschools.org; Phone:+265(0) 999788373
- Malawi Demographic Health survey 2010
- www.oxfam.org/sites/www.../rp-winds-of-change-malawi

