

Climate Change and Development

Examples from Zambia



The Climate Context in Zambia

Variability is a feature of the Zambian climate, which has a history of droughts and floods. Small-scale farmers will be affected by disruption to their normal farming cycles by both droughts and floods and will rely heavily on access to alternative natural resources from forests and wetlands during these periods. Coping strategies employed by small-scale farmers through their use of natural resources during times of climate variability will become increasingly important in the future.

Africa in general is considered to be among the most vulnerable regions of the world to climate change. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predictions:

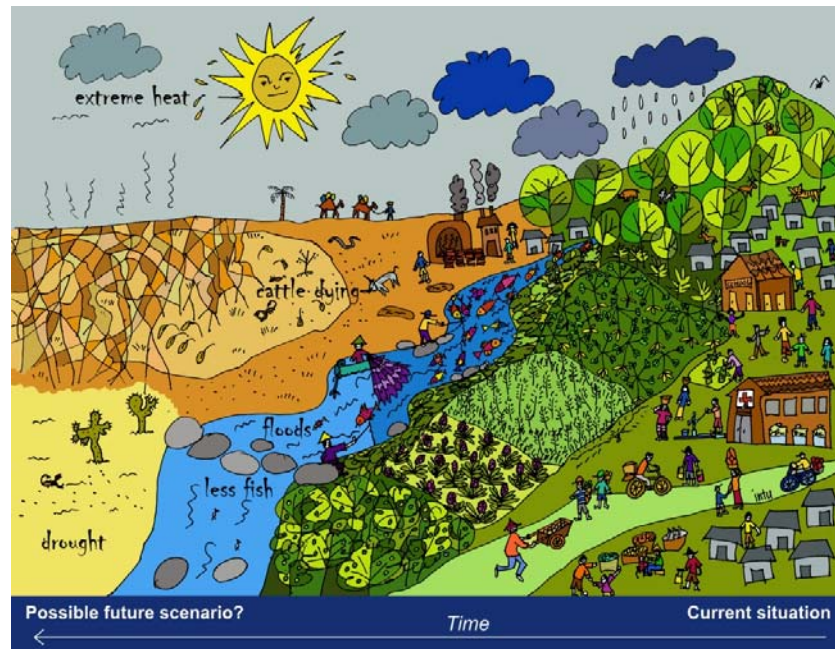
- By 2020, 75-250 million people in Africa will be exposed to increased water stress due to climate change
- There is an expected decrease in area suitable for agriculture, length of growing seasons and yield potential, particularly along margins of semi-arid and arid areas
- In some countries, yields from rain-fed agriculture could be decreased by up to 50% by 2020
- It is projected that local food supplies will be negatively affected by decreased fisheries resources in large lakes due to increased water temperatures, which may be exacerbated by continued over-fishing
- The projected climate change – related exposures are likely to affect the health status of millions of people, particularly those with low adaptive capacity

Climate change is predicted to directly affect national development in Zambia through

- Increase in droughts reducing commercial and subsistence agricultural outputs;
- Increase in droughts reducing hydro-power generation;
- Increase in floods causing economic damage.

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Agriculture and natural resources are important drivers of growth in many developing countries. Climate change impacts on these resources will have direct effects on poor peoples' livelihoods and consequently on poverty. The situation is illustrated in the figure below, which was drafted based on local community consultations conducted in Zambia. Local people are already noticing changes in the climate and predicting what the future situation might look like.



The money spent by aid countries is most often targeted for activities that ultimately aim on poverty reduction and therefore, have long-term development objectives. Yet, climate change is likely to make the poverty reduction goals more difficult to achieve unless recipient countries are assisted to be more response-capable and development interventions are designed in a way that helps to reduce vulnerability and enhance adaptive capacity. This means that the possibility for a change in climatic conditions must be taken into account in any intervention, and ways to adapt to those potential new conditions must be identified. This assessment of climate risks may result in the identification of counterproductive development interventions, necessitating some redesign and reprogramming of development assistance.

The Climate Change and Development Project in Africa

The pilot phase of the Climate Change and Development project was implemented in Zambia from January to September 2007 by The World Conservation Union (IUCN) with the support of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Unit for International Environmental Policy. The full-size project intends to expand project activities within Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique.

The key problem that the project addresses is that climate change and climate variability is currently not sufficiently taken into account in natural resources management and poverty reduction related development interventions and national policies. The project aims to ensure that national policies in the project's target countries and Finland's development interventions reduce vulnerability and enhance adaptive capacity to climate variability and climate change.

About IUCN

Created in 1948, IUCN brings together 81 States, 114 government agencies, 800 plus NGOs, and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries in a unique worldwide partnership. IUCN's mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

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