

The Focus lenses of the Climate Catastrophe beyond the Floodings in Kenya. Is the fight far from over for Faith Based Actors?

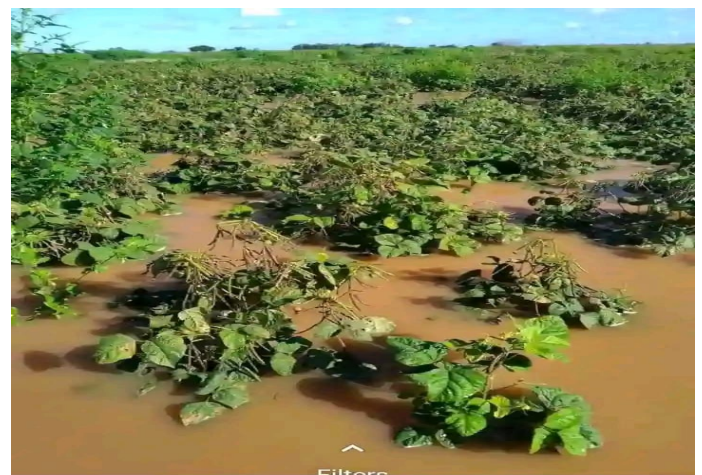
When the repercussions of climate manifest in reality, they do so to expose the gaps in the levels of unpreparedness and the inability to mitigate and adapt timely and effectively. Most importantly they strike to lay bare the consequences of man's relaxation to act with the urgency climate emergency deserves. On the other side the climate crisis appears every time to expose frontline communities' vulnerability to the ground reality and the need to shift from generic pledges and unclear targets to offensive implementable



Housing Structures Sub-merged in Floods in Lazima Village. (Photo: Courtesy)

ambitions. The context of the situation is informed by the current sad state of affairs due to the ongoing happening in Tana Delta Sub- County, Tana River County.

In Tana Delta Sub-County, the long and short rains no longer come as usual. It has become much difficult to predict the weather pattern due to the negative impacts of climate change. December and May are usually planting periods. When the El Nino rains began in October 2023, the small-scale farming who fend their livelihoods though farming activities, never had the opportunity to grow their crops. The heavy downpour went on till late January and early February with their farming fields wholly submerged in water due to sever flooding. With pressure from fear of starvation mounting, farmers hurriedly (under the back drop of poor farming methods) rushed to plant though very late only to face another heartbreaking cutworm infestation. Those severely vulnerable already gave up but those with the financial capacity replanting two to three times. Devastatingly, the floods resurfaced again just near the harvesting period leaving a number of households with nothing to salvage in a span of two seasons.



Farmers in their field trying to salvage whatever they can as they vacate the areas due to Flooding. (Photo: Courtesy)



Children at Lazima camp having their rest outside their temporary homes. (Photo: Courtesy)

Worsening the situation further to the threat of hunger is the internal displacement of over 1600 households, whose homes have been submerged in water. Families are seeking shelter at the road sides with temporary sheltering structures. Learning is still paralysed despite the Government asking for the resumption of learning activities. A number of villages (including my own) can hardly be accessed. Accessibility is through alternative, financially expensive and dangerous means of water transport due to the impassable roads. This has

also locked these families out of access to food supply and access to health service. Key Infrastructure like communication antennas is also facing the threat to collapsing with the whole situation getting deplorable with every ticking of the clock.

Recalling the 2 previous UNFCCC Negotiations which I attended as part of the Lutheran World Federation Observer delegates, its worth to note that, negotiations on loss and damage funds and the global goal on adaptation took a positive trajectory from a food perspective (COP27). However, the Sharm El Sheikh Work Programme on Agriculture was not ambitious enough and



Mr. Maro Mcah, an LWF Delegate Delivering His remarks in a press conference during COP28. (Photo: Albin Hillert)

lacked clarity to reach a decisive point. Progress would be made later though in the historic COP28, as it was the first COP to also put a meaningful focus on agri-food sector. The UAE Declaration of Sustainable Agriculture, resilient food systems and climate Action, saw over 134 member states officially becoming signatories of it. The declaration which notes the transformative potential of agriculture as a critical component in climate action also acknowledged the need to support smallholder farmers, and the

inclusion of vulnerable groups (women and youth) in discussions on food security and climate change with additional spotlight on the urgent need for adaptation. But how will this paper work be put in action if the will to provide funding for adaption is lacking? In addition to the inoffensive

unclear targets, how do we expect multilateral dialogues to cascade down to meaningful impacts aimed at cushioning my people of Tana River.

It is encouraging however to see the role of Faith Actors in the quest to advocate for climate Justice as witnessed through humanitarian work, advocacy and Development. Their role's impact has thus far surpassed the community's expectations and exceedingly yet, they are the first in line to stand up for the afflicted, providing relief to those grieving, building capacity and strengthening community resilience, restoring hope to those who have given up and lastly balancing the power dynamics in high profile negotiation meetings even still with their observer status. I wish to draw examples from Salama Lutheran Parish in Tana Delta sub-county, Tana-River, County Kenya.

Lazima Lutheran Church and Kulesa Lutheran in two different villages have been totally sub-merged in the floods from the swelling waters of River Tana. My Class 1 teacher passes on at Malindi Referral Hospital. He is to be laid to rest in his ancestral land yet, the roads, the places of worship and the segregated sacred ancestral burial sites. are not accessible. How does the family and the community come to terms with this ordeal. I can only imagine of the trauma and the heavy burden lying with my community, against a backdrop of the threat of losing cultural identity. It speaks to the ethical and moral obligations the faith actors have always tried to mainstream in pursuing climate Justice.



A church elder in Lazima Village assessing the flooding situation on the Church Building (Lazima Lutheran Church) (Photo: Courtesy)

This affirms one of our policies and its core intention of the need to compensating non tangible impacts that transcend economic calculations (non economic losses and damages) alongside those that can be quantified in monetary value. What I am witnessing of my own community cut to the core of what it means to be an ambitious young man from the global south. It is with this regards that my voice will never grow hoarse in articulating such matters. Ahead of the upcoming climate Change Conference in Bonn (SB60) and subsequently the COP29, part of the negotiation and work program in the Global Stock Take should also centre in refining logistical elements and the development of modalities that will see the implementation of the same and the support Global South Member states need in achieving the implementation of their respective NDC's. From the look of things, the fight for climate Justice is far from over.

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