“The issue of climate change has often been seen as an abstract concept or a scientific subject understood only in universities – but not by the ordinary people. It is very important that we communicate in a language that our people understand”.

Prof. Wangare Maathai, Nobel Laureate 2004
Preface

Climate change may not yet be the BIG STORY for media but it most definitely seems to be claiming big spaces in unprecedented events across the globe. The past two decades have seen the world degenerate into extreme weather patterns that continue to baffle scientists and researchers as well as force governments to re-think strategies and approaches to managing weather changes.

Devastating weather patterns exemplified in massive flooding, violent storms, extreme heat and fundamentally acute temperatures seem to have tilted universal balance forcing the focus towards strange climatic variations. In Africa, especially in the sub-Saharan region, shifting weather patterns have provoked unreliable rains, frequented by severe droughts and famines. The result has indeed been catastrophic. For a region that depends solely on agriculture for survival, food security for millions of the population is becoming extremely intricate, not to mention the ravaging impact of deforestation, water-source pollutions and garbage dumping on the environment.

Taking this reality into consideration, Africa and the world at large would be irrational not to prioritize the climate change phenomena. As a media-based organization, Peace Pen Communications understand the importance of the role of the media in reporting climate change. Media has immense abilities to influence actions and advocate for positive change towards mitigating the devastations brought about by climate change. By enhancing media capacity in understanding climate change and unpacking this reality to targeted communities, media will have played a huge role in preparing and cushioning communities from the devastations of a changing world.

This hand-book is the culmination of five media workshops hosted by Peace Pen Communications for media, especially vernacular reporters with the aim of introducing and entrenching the climate change discourse within the media agenda. It is time for media to embrace climate change as a valid area of special focus and indeed as the BIG story.

Peace Pen Communications is grateful to the team that worked through the climate change media clinics project and to Wanjiru Gathira of the Social Impact Institute who helped in drafting this report. Special thanks to the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, East Africa office for supporting this entire project.

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Context

The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 clearly addresses the rights of citizens to clean and healthy environments. Article 70 of the Constitution outlines provisions on enforcement of environmental rights. However, not many Kenyans understand these crucial provisions, yet the need to disseminate this information is very important. The media has a role to play in the dissemination of such information and is therefore a major partner in the climate change and environmental conservation discourse. The media is the channel through which information is sourced, internalized, packaged, disseminated and monitored, and it can therefore not renege on its responsibility and contribution to the dialogue on climate change and environmental conservation.

Media’s active participation is required to inform and educate the masses on the critical issue of climate change, its impacts, mitigation and adaptation processes. It is through the media that the climate change agenda can be pushed and sustained so it gets on the priority list of duty bearers such as governments and other critical stakeholders. In this regard, Peace Pen Communications acknowledges the very important role of vernacular and community media and has sought to sustain a partnership with vernacular radio journalists/presenters.

Vernacular media has dramatically expanded over the last decade and now covers at least half of the 42 ethnic groups in Kenya. Vernacular stations have had a huge impact on rural communities, given that 80 per cent of the Kenyan population uses radio as a platform for cultural enhancement beyond dissemination of the news.

Rural communities face greater water scarcity and environmental degradation than urban communities, and they tend to be more vulnerable to ravages of food insecurity. The majority of people, particularly in rural communities strongly identify with broadcasts in their mother tongue, hence vernacular radio can be an important channel for disseminating information on the adverse impacts of climate change, e.g., extreme weather patterns, climate related disasters, in a practical way that can enable people to articulate and interrogate the issues. Vernacular radio therefore provides a platform for listeners to know and understand their rights as Kenyans to a clean and productive environment as stipulated in the Constitution of Kenya 2010. However, while most vernacular journalists/presenters command a huge following, many of them lack basic training in media because they tend to be selected for their language eloquence as opposed to their professional attributes, which means that they require even greater need training on climate change issues.

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Source: Workshop reports from Peace Pen Communications;
September 2012
SECTION 1: Introduction

Average temperatures around the world are increasing. Whenever we burn fossil fuels or cut down trees we release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, primarily carbon dioxide and methane. These gases trap heat in the atmosphere and warm up the earth. The more we burn fossil fuels and cut down trees, the more the earth’s surface heats up. The average temperature is expected to rise by at least 2°C by the end of this century, probably more. While this number does not sound like much, it is enough to ensure billions of people suffer from water shortages and heat waves. In addition melting ice sheets and rising sea levels could cause flooding and the displacement of millions of people.

Climate change is the defining human development issue of our generation. The 2007 Human Development report acknowledges that climate change threatens to erode human freedoms and limit choice. As predicted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), “climate change impacts will be differently distributed among different regions, generations, age classes, income groups, occupations and genders.” The IPCC also notes that the impacts of climate change will hamper development and harm human living conditions and lifestyles. The effects will fall disproportionately upon developing countries and the poor within all countries, and thereby exacerbate inequities in health status and access to adequate food, clean water, and other resources.

High dependence from agriculture, forest resources, fisheries and biofuels can increase the vulnerability and the risk of environmental depletion. Moreover, the problems relating to the management of the environmental common assets can become worse under the pressure of global warming.” These problems include food security, freshwater supply, rural and urban settlements and their infrastructures. The impact of climate change on the lives of vulnerable groups will vary between regions and cultures. Therefore, reporting on climate change impacts and potential climate change related disasters is urgently required in order to enable people at the local level to adapt to climate change.

There are some basic pointers that are extremely important for media to conceive when embarking on reporting climate change and the issues around it.

Although climate change was initially conceived as a scientific and technical issue, expanding bases of knowledge have made it clear that the impacts are much broader; and that climate change is, in actuality, a socioeconomic problem. Thus, in order to

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3Lambrou and Piana 2005:20
fully understand and deal with climate change, it is imperative to consider the related social, economic and political aspects. Poverty and development, and the associated gender implications, for example, must be taken into account when determining appropriate responses. In the face of climate change, it will be impossible to eliminate poverty or promote human development without accepting the fact that different groups, including the poor, women and men, will be affected differently.

Climate change represents a change in long-term weather patterns. Average temperatures can increase or decrease. Rainfall can increase or decrease, as can hours of sunshine. Climate change has occurred naturally over millions and millions of years. However when scientists talk about the issue of climate change, their concern is about global warming caused by human activities. The earth has warmed by over 0.5°C in the last 100 years. 1995-2006 rank as the twelve warmest years since records of global surface temperature began in 1850. A warmer earth may lead to changes in rainfall patterns, a rise in sea level, and a wide range of impacts on plants, wildlife, and humans. While predicting changes in the climate over the next 100 years and beyond is difficult, scientists agree that temperature rises of 2°C above pre-industrial levels are almost inevitable, and rises of 3°C are likely. The most pessimistic models predict that the average global temperature might increase to 6°C above its pre-industrial level. This may not sound like much, but it could change the earth's climate as never before. At the peak of the last ice age (18,000 years ago), the temperature was only 4°C colder than it is today, and glaciers covered much of North America. Even a small increase in temperature over a long time can change the climate. When the climate changes, there may be big changes in the things that
people depend on. These things include the level of the oceans and the places where we plant crops. They also include the air we breathe and the water we drink.

The poorest developing countries will be hit earliest and hardest by climate change, even though they have contributed little to causing the problem. Their low incomes make it difficult to finance adaptation. The international community has an obligation to support them in adapting to climate change, and in switching to a low carbon economy. Developing countries are already taking significant action to decouple their economic growth from the growth in greenhouse gas emissions.

Greenhouse Gases

The earth’s atmosphere (the air that we breathe) contains a number of so called greenhouse gases. The ones most closely associated with global warming are carbon dioxide (CO2) and methane (CH4). These gases behave like the glass panes in a greenhouse. During the Industrial Revolution, the climate and environment was altered through agricultural and industrial practices.

The Industrial Revolution was a time when people began using machines to make life easier. It started more than 200 years ago and changed the way humans live. Before the Industrial Revolution, human activity released very few gases into the atmosphere, but now through population growth, fossil fuel burning, and deforestation, we are affecting the mixture of gases in the atmosphere.

Since the Industrial Revolution, the need for energy to run machines has steadily increased. Much of this energy comes from fuels like coal and oil and fossil fuels. Burning these fuels releases greenhouse gases. Coal and oil are the primary fuel used by power plants in making electricity. Most machines and gadgets that run on electricity indirectly cause greenhouse gas emissions (unless they use renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, nuclear). Moreover, every day activities such as flying, rubbish sent to landfills, and methane that is produced by the animals (primarily cows) that we raise for dairy and meat products produce greenhouse gases and contribute to global warming.

A single journey of 500km using an aircraft emits six times more greenhouse gas than a high speed train, and 12 times more than a coach. Flying is very bad for global warming because one short-haul return flight for a family of four adds 33% to the family’s annual carbon emissions. In addition to emitting CO2, airplanes also emit nitrogen oxides, which are particularly effective in forming the greenhouse gas ozone when emitted at cruising altitudes. Aircraft also trigger the formation of condensation trails, which are suspected of enhancing the formation of cirrus clouds, which add to the global warming effect. For example, aviation emissions account for at least 9% of UK greenhouse effect.

The Human cost of climate change

Counting the numbers, unveiling the faces

In its’ educative and informative role, the media needs to be able to link the dots of current climate change trends and the impact of this phenomenon in our changing world. It is professionally prudent for media to stretch beyond the informative role to assume an educative approach on unpacking the human cost of climate change. It is therefore important for the media to assume a deliberate interest in consolidating the indicators and impact of climate change both locally and globally.

Climate change threatens the basic elements of life for people around the world such as access to water, food production, health, and use of land and the environment. Although there will be some benefits from climate change in some regions, e.g., higher agricultural yields and increased water availability in certain areas, milder winters and warmer summers in others, overall, these positives are expected to be outweighed by the following negatives:

- More than one sixth of the world’s population lives in regions supplied by melt water from major mountain ranges (e.g. Himalayas, Andes). Contracting glaciers and melting snow will significantly reduce the water available for drinking, irrigation and hydropower.
- Production from agriculture and forestry will decline in many places including Africa, parts of Australia, and New Zealand.
- By 2020, yields from rain-fed agriculture in some parts of Africa could be reduced by up to 50%, leaving hundreds of millions without the ability to produce or purchase sufficient food.
- By 2020 between 75 and 250 million people in Africa are projected to be exposed to increased water stress due to climate change.
- Increased variability in rainfall is expected to increase the risks of flooding even in areas in which the overall level of rainfall is projected to decrease. According to one estimate, by the middle of the century, 200 million people may become permanently displaced due to rising sea levels, heavier floods, and more intense droughts.
- Scientists have warned that half the world’s population could face a shortage of clean water by 2080 because of climate change.
- Increased mortality from floods, heat waves and droughts are expected in many parts of the world, including Europe and North America. For example, heat waves like that experienced in 2003 in Europe, when 35,000 people died and agricultural losses reached $15 billion will be commonplace by the middle of the century.
- The fallout could be political and economic instability, which would have implications for everyone.

Source: http://www.cooltheworld.com/lesson.php?lesson=1
SECTION 2:
The role of the media in the climate change discourse

Media is an important channel for disseminating information that can empower people to effect positive change. Beyond the traditional role of media to inform, educate and entertain the masses, media can be used as an advocacy tool for sustainable development and in the case of climate change; media automatically assumes the role of an active partner in the climate change scenario.

Media can be used as a platform to inform vulnerable communities on climate change related impacts and disasters through radio programs, radio drama, story-telling, involving experts on climate change, visiting communities and getting their stories. Radio is one of the most effective ways of communicating and facilitating dialogue among people because it is instant and reaches a wide variety of people within a short time. Up to 75 per cent of ethnic groups in Kenya are aligned to specific vernacular stations, which makes community radios a unique and effective tool for communicating climate change issues.

The growth of vernacular radio stations in Kenya reflects improvements in information technologies and the shifting of development paradigm towards a more participatory style of information and knowledge transfer. Vernacular radio broadcasting serves the geographic communities and interest of communities of a wide swathe of the population. Use of vernacular radio is vibrant and growing, and has become an avenue for participatory communication and is a relevant tool in both economic and social development. It provides a mechanism for facilitating individuals, groups, and communities to tell their own diverse stories, to share experiences and to become active creators and contributors of media by using their preferred language, which is an added advantage for understanding issues. The bulk of the Kenyan population is concentrated in the rural areas, which is the focus of vernacular media. In fact, the impact of climate change & environmental degradation are likely to be felt more by rural populations.

In this regard, vernacular radio presents a great opportunity for transmitting critical information on climate change related disasters because it has the capacity to reach large populations and articulate specific issues to different target groups. It can play a significant role at the grass roots level in communicating climate change information at the local level. It can also be an effective channel for improving the sharing of climate change information to remote rural communities. Vernacular radio in this regard provides a set of participatory communication techniques that can support and increase climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts through use of local languages to communicate directly with people and listeners’ groups.
Why is media crucial in the climate change discourse? Journalists, the world over, struggle to report effectively on climate change due to several challenges such as lack of proper training on the subject, unsupportive editors and weak outreach from policy makers. Currently in Kenya, radio reporting on climate change issues and climate change related disasters occupies a very small proportion of media reports when compared to the scale of a problem that threatens billions of lives and livelihoods. Journalists should be active partners in this discourse because of their ability to influence and inform people at the local level and secure their participation in adaptation and mitigation actions that can enable them to cope in a changing climate. In this regard, vernacular radio presenters are best placed to include climate change stories in the broadcasting agenda.

Climate Change – Not yet a BIG STORY for media? While highlighting the importance of accessibility and language, the late Professor Wangari Maathai of the Greenbelt Movement noted that “The issue of climate change has often been seen as an abstract concept or a scientific subject understood only in universities – but not by the ordinary people. It is very important that we communicate in a language that our people understand”.

Until recently, climate change had been mainly considered as an environmental problem, with all the responsibility for managing it being placed on ministers of the environment. Today, however, we see more and more climate change initiatives from A team of journalists on a fact-finding mission of environmental conservation projects in Watamu take note from conservationists of A Rocha Kenya. (Photo by George Aoko).
the international to the local levels and in different regions and countries. There is a better understanding and appreciation of the fact that climate change is a multi-sectoral development problem that must be approached from multiple angles.

In mainstream media, climate change is yet to become the BIG STORY, particularly in Africa where politics usually takes center stage.

Climate Change tends to be sporadically reported in the face of weather disasters and catastrophes, hunger and starvation and droughts and famines.

Yet, media coverage on climate change is urgent and the role of the media needs to be urgently re-defined. Traditional media still grapples with daily mainstream political coverage to the detriment of crucial issues like climate change and environmental conservation.

“Not a sexy-topic!”

Climate change is not yet a topic “sexy enough” to warrant vast and prominent coverage by the media.

Through-out the various media workshops conducted by Peace Pen Communications between March to November 2012, media participants lamented the reluctance by editors to consider Climate Change as an important media focus. On their part, journalists lamented the “dryness” of climate change news and its inability to make it to the front pages or to the BIG story slot in media houses.

Insufficient information and lack of basic understanding on climate change and its surrounding issues have repeatedly been sighted as the major challenges faced by journalists while attempting to unpack climate change as a topical issue. This and the under-prioritization of the topic have contributed to the rather lackluster approach that the media has expressed towards covering climate change. And in other instances, lack of technical resources especially for media located in rural areas has been singled-out as a major hindrance.

However, it is clear that the media by a larger extent is yet to fully embrace climate change as a topic worthy of competition against the daily politics of the day. The bottom-line of this discourse being that climate change as a media topic is not as “exciting enough” for media, especially from Africa to pay some specific attention to. It has become abundantly clear that the future of the globe depends on how the world addresses climate change and climate related disasters, and ultimately, how the media tells the Climate Change Story.
Conclusion

Although Kenya is a signatory to international laws and conventions on climate change, such as the Kyoto protocol, most people have no idea what these are and what our obligation is. Although there is a lot of concern on greenhouse emissions, no one seems to be raising any alarm bells about its effect on the atmosphere.

The media is best placed to raise the red flag on human related disasters brought about by climate change and also report on environmental degradation that is being wrought in various parts of Kenya due to ignorance and lack of information about a changing climate. In this regard, the media is a definite partner in the dialogue on climate change issues and climate related disasters.

However, radio journalists in particular need to have a very good understanding of climate change if they are to be effective. In order for such journalists to be able to report on climate change issues in an informed, educative and interactive manner, they will need to have their capacities built around the importance of climate change reporting.
SECTION 3:
Some frequently asked questions about climate change

A media guide to understanding Climate change

1. What is Climate Change?
Climate change is a scientifically proven phenomenon that includes “any change in the climate, whether due to its natural variability or as a result of human activity”. Specifically, climate change could lead to an increase in average sea level, the melting of polar ice caps or an increase in the intensity of extreme hydro-meteorological events. These changes, compounded with present levels of vulnerability, could lead to even more disasters. Disaster impacts are usually associated with levels of regional, sectoral and social vulnerability. Therefore, an analysis of climate change risk requires an assessment of vulnerability to the associated threat. Every country will be affected by climate change. Because projections indicate that climate change will cause less secure means of subsistence, more vulnerability to hunger and poverty, exacerbation of social inequalities (including gender inequalities) and more environmental degradation, the poorest and most vulnerable countries will be most affected. Ironically, it is these countries that produce the lowest levels of emissions.

2. What is the global perception of Climate Change?
As scientific evidence has accumulated that the planet is warming and that humans are behind it, many previous skeptics have been won over. There remains a vocal cadre of critics, however, at least some of whose arguments have shifted over the last several years from outright denial that the earth is warming to insisting it is unrelated to human activity — and even if it is, there is likely nothing much to worry about. Some of the most vocal skeptics have done relatively little recent peer-reviewed scientific research on the topic, and some have had their voices amplified via financial support from industries opposed to any government regulation or taxation of greenhouse gas emissions. Others do have training and experience, at least in some aspects of the wide-ranging issue, and are not bankrolled by industry. But overall, their number represents a distinctly minority position in the ongoing and normal colloquy among scientists about the evidence of climate change and its likely impacts.

3. What has been the global response to Climate Change?
The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Stern Report to the British Government, the United Nations Millennium Ecosystems Assessment and others, have expressed what the global scientific community thinks about human induced climate change. All the reports clearly state that we have a very short window of opportunity to address fundamental ecosystem imbalances, and specifically, massive emission of greenhouse gases, or face unprecedented consequences.

http://www.sejarchive.org/resource/index18.htm
The 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change was the first binding international legal instrument to address the issue. Adopted after two years of intensive negotiations within the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on Climate Change, it was opened for signature in Rio de Janeiro at the June 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development. The INC negotiators relied heavily on the First Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a body established jointly by the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization. The Convention was signed by 155 states during UNCED. In addition, two other international environmental treaties address climate change indirectly. The amended 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer legally obliges its parties to phase out chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) by the year 2000. Although inspired by concern over the destruction of the ozone layer, this protocol is significant also for climate change since CFCs are greenhouse gases. Similarly, the 1979 Geneva Convention on Long-Range Trans-boundary Air Pollution and its protocols regulate the emission of noxious gases, some of which are precursors of greenhouse gases. These treaties, however, do not address the complex set of inter-related climate issues.

4. What are the global/local policies on climate change?

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

The United Nations General Assembly established a negotiating committee at its 45th session in 1990, and in 1992 the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was signed at the Earth Summit. The Convention delineated broad objectives to stabilize concentrations of GHGs in the atmosphere, as well as to define adaptation measures for multilateral action. To achieve its objectives, commitments were defined for the Signatory Parties, based on the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities; there are also commitments that apply to all states.

Kyoto Protocol

In the second half of the 1990s, given that the Annex 1 Parties were unable to comply with their reduction commitments, the Kyoto Protocol was adopted. This mechanism, signed during the third session of the Conference of the Parties in the city of Kyoto, Japan, was meant to facilitate compliance with the Convention’s final objective to reduce emissions, and it established new quantitative goals for the countries. The Protocol entered into force in February 2005 for the nations that had deposited their ratification instrument, and will remain in force until 2012.

Post-Kyoto

The unprecedented consensus among scientific, political, business and civil society communities means there is widespread recognition and acute awareness about the urgency of dealing with climate change. It was decided during the G-8 + 5

http://ciesin.columbia.edu/docs/iucc201/fs201.html
emerging economies summit in 2007 that, by the end of 2009, an agreement would be negotiated under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to succeed the Kyoto Protocol. In addition, during the United Nations High-Level Event on Climate Change, held in New York in September 2007, governments made a commitment to initiate negotiations on a later agreement that was to be presented at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-13), held in Bali, Indonesia, in December 2007.

The Kenya National Climate Change Response Strategy
The Kenya National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS) was developed in April 2012. It is based on outcomes of stakeholder-consultations held all over the country and therefore captures the aspirations of most Kenyans on tackling climate change challenges. The document has also drawn from sectoral climate change response activities and Action Plans of various line Ministries. The Strategy has identified modalities of dealing with climate change challenges in the country with a view to ensuring a climate-resilient nation. These include recommendations on relevant policies, institutional framework, awareness creation and mobilization of resources, among many others.

5. What are the effects of Climate Change?
Climate change poses potentially unprecedented threats to human development and wellbeing. Much of that threat consists inter alia in changes to hydrological cycles and rain regimes, in the effect of temperature increases on evaporation, and in the worsening severity of extreme climate events. Humans in general will be increasingly
subject to greater risk and vulnerability as climate change damages humans’ means of subsistence, health and security. The list below provides potential effects of climate change on sustainable human development:

- Structural damages caused by floods and storms
- Rising sea levels
- Coastal erosion
- Population migration due to floods and disasters
- Higher sea surface temperatures
- Shrinking sea ice cover
- Fresh water reserves invaded by salt waters
- Deteriorating coral systems
- Ocean acidification
- Loss of marshes and mangroves
- Increased morbidity and mortality due to heat waves, floods, storms, fires and droughts
- Greater incidence of infectious diseases such as cholera, malaria and dengue fever, due to the extension of risk seasons and a wider geographic distribution of disease vectors
- Increased malnutrition, diarrhea, and cardio-respiratory diseases

6. Climate change in the Kenyan and regional context
Kenya, like other African countries, is already experiencing the negative impacts of climate change. Already, the country has been marred by extreme weather conditions characterized by violent floods and devastating droughts and famine. The depletion of the environment through deforestation and other environmental degrading practices and processes has left the country even more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Alongside these developments have been attempts to address these challenges through numerous environmentally friendly practices and policies.

7. How can we adapt to climate change?
The IPCC defines adaptation as: “…adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli and their effects or impacts. This term refers to changes in processes, practices, and structures to moderate potential damages or to benefit from opportunities associated with climate change.” Communities at risk and people living in poverty must be prepared for the effects of global warming by undertaking measures to counter the impact of climate change. Adaptation strategies for climate change include:

Managing infrastructure and settlements
- Build breakwaters or seafronts, dikes and barriers against rising tide levels
- Re-zone settlements and productive activities in coastal areas.
- Build bridges to areas that are subject to flooding
• Divert fresh water to areas where there is a water shortage by building dikes, water transfer or irrigation canals
• Increase water extraction from subterranean water reserves

Managing ecosystems
• Introduce native and salt tolerant plants and animals to protect/re-vegetate the coast
• Introduce varieties of plants and crops that are tolerant to high temperatures
• Restore damaged ecosystems
• Establish natural protected areas and biological corridors
• Introduce herbicide resistant varieties
• Introduce drought tolerant varieties
• Implement reforestation, afforestation or reduce deforestation as well as soil degradation strategies
• Establish aquaculture including mariculture to compensate for losses in food production caused by extreme climate events

Productive activities
• Engage in substitute agriculture
• Introduce new types of crops that are grown
• Engage in irrigation farming

Socio-economic processes
• Support migration and community destabilization in areas affected by climate change

8. How can we mitigate climate change? Given their historic responsibility and differentiated economic development, mitigation actions are generally taken in developed countries. Actions associated with mitigation are grouped into two areas: reducing GHG emissions and carbon capture, fixing and sequestration. Initiatives or projects included in these types of measures are intended to increase storage of GHG by means of ‘sinks’. Sustainable agriculture, forestry (afforestation, reducing deforestation, and reforestation) and the conservation of nature come into play here.
SECTION 4:

Media engagement in reporting climate change must be sustained

It is a fact that the role of the media in climate change cannot be contested. It is through media that information on climate change is disseminated, internalized, interrogated and subsequently interventions formulated and implemented.

With regard to climate change impacts and climate related disasters, media can influence political decisions, change public attitudes and, of course, save lives by asking questions such as: why are disasters happening, how can we prevent disasters, and who is responsible?

The media can ensure it engages in effective communication. A large part of the investment in climate change must be directed at distributing information and building capacities on how people at the community level can cope with climate change.

There is an information deficit on climate politics and climate protection, which raises the question of how the subject is communicated. Is it slanted toward technically interested people? These discrepancies are particularly noticeable with regard to the extent to which people are informed about the international climate change negotiations. In this context, it is imperative to design appropriate mechanisms for disseminating information to marginalized members of society.

How can the media contribute to Climate Change mitigation and/or adaptation actions? The media can contribute by gathering, producing and documenting information on the differentiated impact of climate change in their respective counties.

This is required in order to better understand the causes and consequences of that impact, but also to write stories that can raise awareness and reduce any negative effects on people. It is necessary, therefore, to invest in research in areas such as: specific resources and patterns of climate related disasters; vulnerability and risk patterns at the local, county and national levels; and other underexplored dimensions such as security, migration and disasters.

Given the devolved structure of governments that will be put in place, it will be important for the media to inform communities of the various adaptation measures that are in place or likely to be established at the county level. In these undertakings, local governments will play a prominent role in preparing initiatives that are effective,
equitable and sustainable and enable communities to adapt to a changing climate. The media will have a critical role in informing communities on the use of and access to natural resources, the distribution of benefits, and the participation of women and men in decision-making processes. Such information will also encourage citizen participation and the design of policies to address climate change impacts at the local level.

Key Climate Change messages for media
1. Climate change is a problem of development and, as such, is affected by two characteristics: inequality and poverty;
2. Climate change has numerous causes and effects and must therefore be approached by numerous sectors, stakeholders and disciplines;
3. While needs are global, they are more urgent and dramatic for societies living in conditions of greatest inequality and vulnerability;
4. In order to fight climate change as effectively as possible, consideration must be given to vulnerable target groups such as women, children and the elderly who are likely to bear the greatest brunt of the specific effects of climate change.
Recommendations:

Media must embrace climate change reporting!
People are powerful agents for development and, therefore, can and should be active participants and decision makers in mitigating and adapting to climate change. The media should ensure that communities have access to information on climate change that ranges from training, financial instruments or mechanisms (i.e., the Adaptation Fund) and to the benefits of commercial approaches to contain climate change (i.e., the CDM).

Journalists should improve their understanding and analysis of climate change issues by integrating social, economic, political, and cultural dimensions when examining the causes and consequences of climate change. Methodologies must also consider the different scenarios related to climate change; this consideration must also be present in policies, programs and projects at the county level.

By making climate change the BIG STORY, media can begin to raise awareness and thereby help communities to implement global solutions at the local level.

Greater reporting by the media can:

- Assist duty bearers and right holders to translate international commitments adopted at the international level – in agreements, conventions, conferences, declarations and resolutions – into their domestic policies.
- Promote a more active role for communities in discussions and decisions about climate change at the local and county levels.
- Use the knowledge and specialized skills of rural communities in particular in mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- Provide equitable information on climate change conditions and opportunities. Exploring the root causes of climate change and the social dimensions lead to disaster risk reduction stories.

Tips for ensuring good coverage on climate change related disasters
Journalists play a crucial role in promoting information on climate change related disasters.

- Develop private contacts with climate change and disaster experts before disasters happen; know who they are, their exact specialty and have regular contact with them.
- Have a contact list for experts in urban risks, early warning systems, and climate change, gender, environmental and development issues to enrich your story.
• Have contacts with national and local meteorological departments, climate change experts, disaster managers, ministers and ministries involved in environment, climate change, disaster reduction, civil protection or civil defense.
• Maintain updated lists of experts for every type of hazard likely to happen in your county.
• Keep updated statistics on previous events in your county/region.
• Become familiar with the most climate related disaster-prone zones and vulnerable areas.
• Keep a track record of past climate related disasters and lessons learned.
• Become familiar with the main prevention and mitigation measures taken by your authorities so that you are ready when climate related disasters strike.
• Know the factors that can make a climate related disaster worse.
• Base your information only on sound scientific knowledge.
• Invest in disaster risk reduction knowledge to dig out stories later on.
• Listen to communities and what they have to say.
References


