

A Monthly from the East African Sustainability Watch Network founded by Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD), Tanzania Coalition for Sustainable Development (TCSD) and SusWatch Kenya

Green Parties to Lobby Parliaments on Climate Emergency in East Africa



EAGF members at the Press Briefing in Nairobi. (Photo: UCSD)

Green Political Parties have called upon the East African Partner States to declare a climate emergency in the region. This was contained in a press statement titled: 'Petition for Climate Emergency Declaration and Electoral Reforms in East Africa' issued August 31, 2019 in Nairobi.

Under the umbrella of the East African Green Federation (EAGF) comprising the Democratic Green Party of Rwanda, Burundi Green Movement, Ecological Party of Uganda, and the Green Congress of Kenya, they expressed concern about the agonizing challenges facing humanity today due to climate change.

Specifically, the Greens highlighted the fierce heat waves that swept through Northern Kenya, and the landslides that caused death and suffering in Bududa in Eastern Uganda (Mount Elgon).

Speaking at the Press Conference held at Westwood Hotel in Nairobi on August 31, 2019, the EAGF President – Mr. Thomas Kentos Bakyayita highlighted the six principles that guide the global greens to promote sustainability that include non-violence, participatory democracy in management of natural resources; respect for diversity; social justice and ecological wisdom and sustainability.

President of the Ecological Party of Uganda – Mr. Bbaale Charles cautioned that 'We have one life to live – so we need to preserve the (Mother) Earth'

On what actions EAGF plans to take in view of the above, Hon. Martin Ogindo, Party leader for the Green Congress of Kenya declared that, 'We seek to petition every Parliament in East Africa to move with speed and declare climate emergency, as this will put us on a pedestal for a strong and integrated response to climate change', he concluded

The East African Green Federation was formed in November 2013, and currently brings together leaders from Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya and Burundi. It has a mission to bring about all necessary political and socio-economic changes in the country in the areas of democracy, rule of law, constitutional governance, fair distribution of national resources, the protection of environment, and generally striving for national sustainable political and social economic development that is inclusive, free and fair.

EAGF also recognizes the new wave of regional integration by the countries of East Africa and accordingly uses this re-engineering opportunity to reposition itself in this new regional configuration where green ideology is one of the key drivers of sustainable growth.

Read more about the East African Green Federation from here: <http://easternafricagreens.org/>

Opinion: The Kampala Commonwealth Parliamentarians Conference should review progress on Climate Change recommendations from Bangladesh & set milestones



While the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentarians Conference (CPC) will be held in Kampala, Uganda under the theme, “Adaptation, Engagement and Evolution of Parliaments in a Rapidly Changing Commonwealth”, the preceding CPC (63rd) held in Bangladesh in November 2017 on the theme ‘Continuing to enhance high standards of performance of Parliamentarians’, had eight main conference workshops. One of the workshops focused on: *The Climate Change Debate: A challenge for the Commonwealth?*

This 63rd CPC climate change workshop focused on discussions that Commonwealth countries who have signed the COP 21 Paris Agreement should address and deal with climate change. The Commonwealth as a body encourages jurisdictions to address climate change and to look at the implementation of climate financing of these in terms of how much is to be monitored. It was should reinforce the COP climate change adversely Commonwealth countries. have not done much in 2020, all nations will climate change and there climate change to provide predictability, legitimacy and autonomy. Another discussion leader from the Caribbean Region spoke about the effects of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma which moved across the Atlantic Ocean and made landfall in a number of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) branches in the Region. Two recommendations at the 63rd CPC climate change workshop were endorsed: Legal reform can make a low carbon and climate resilient development pathway possible by reinforcing policy, strengthening institutions and mobilizing resources towards climate change activities; and that Parliaments within the Commonwealth should ensure a framework for combatting climate change is developed and implemented within each Region and updated at Regional Conferences.

Commonwealth citizens across the globe are keen on vibrant climate actions (recommendations) from Kampala including setting key measurable milestones before the next (65th) CPC.

Fortunately, the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentarians Conference has on its agenda a discussion on climate change. Under Workshop A: Talk - Show Panel – Climate Change: *Achievements, Challenges and Efficacy of Parliament Interventions* is planned on Thursday September 26, 2019. It is important that at the onset of this, a review of the two recommendations made in Bangladesh acts as a ‘baseline’ for this workshop. The IPCC 1.5degC Special Report suggests that peaking emissions by 2020 is critical if we are to have a good chance of limiting warming to 1.5-2°C. However, the Report finds that even if countries honor their NDCs, emissions will continue to grow not only through 2020, but through 2030. In light of this, Commonwealth citizens across the globe are keen on vibrant climate actions (recommendations) from Kampala including setting key measurable milestones before the 65th CPC.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) was founded in 1911 as the Empire Parliamentary Association and was run in the United Kingdom. Originally, it comprised Australia, Canada, Newfoundland, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom. It would later change name in 1948, a plan that saw the coming on board of most Commonwealth. **Follow developments related to the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentarians Conference in Kampala from: <https://tinyurl.com/y64lefub>**

A Poverty Reduction Emphasis Needed in the East African Community Budgeting



The East African Community (EAC) budget for the Financial Year (FY) 2019 / 20 under the theme ‘Transforming Lives through Industrialization and Job Creation for shared prosperity, was presented to the East African Legislative Assembly in Arusha (Tanzania) on June 19, 2019

The priority interventions for FY 2019/2020 include the consolidation of the Single Customs Territory and promotion of intra- and extra-EAC trade and export competitiveness, development of regional infrastructure, effective implementation of the Common Market Protocol and the enhancement of regional industrial development. Other areas include the implementation of the roadmap towards the EAC Monetary union, institutional transformation focusing on implementation of the institutional review recommendations and improvement of performance management at the EAC Organs and institutions.

At the backdrop of the 2019/20 budget are persistent constraints. These include the lack of alternative sustainable funding mechanism for the EAC to enhance disbursement of funds and address the increasing financial challenges the EAC is facing; and Partner States’ failure to meet their financial obligations as per the provisions of Article 143 of the Treaty establishing the EAC. Accordingly, a number of activities planned by the regional block did not take place due to late remittances of funds; late submission to the regional assembly of Budget estimates, contrary to the provisions of Section 4 of the EAC Budget Act; and the high level of poverty in the region that does not receive corresponding alertness in the regional budget.

A sturdier poverty reduction focus still needs to be seen in the EAC budget. As noted by Hon Victor Burikukiye before the approval of the EAC Budget Proposals for Financial Year 2019/2020, ‘The amount of budget set for the productive sectors is a paltry 5% of the budget. Furthermore, it is reported the docket that is in charge of the productive sector is understaffed. “It is paradoxical that whereas the EAC hopes to improve the life of its citizens, the two sectors are under budgeted for. In future, let us improve on the budget lines”, he added.

Key poverty reducing interventions remain under budgeted. The need to invest in fish farming and other forms of agriculture for food security and improved livelihoods should be emphasized as they have positive spin-off effects in realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, investment in small holder climate smart agriculture (on which millions have to rely) has dividends in terms of zero hunger, good health and well-being.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 1.5°C Special Report has noted that without transformation in society and rapid implementation of ambitious emissions cuts, limiting warming to 1.5°C while achieving sustainable development will be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. Even if countries fulfill their current national climate goals and make deep emissions cuts after 2030, warming would still very likely exceed 1.5°C, given the challenges associated with dropping emissions to net-zero well before 2045. Therefore, all countries and non-state actors (including in East Africa) will need to strengthen their contributions without delay. The starting point is priority setting when apportioning financial resources in the EAC and Partner state budgets.

It is therefore important that future EAC budgets focus more on local solutions through the promotion and implementation of many micro-levels, people-cantered climate-smart actions at the grassroots level. These should contribute massively in building resilience of both communities and ecosystems they depend on, and to gradually realize a people-centered Community.