

THE EAST AFRICAN SUSWATCH E-BULLETIN

(FORMERLY THE LVEMPII CIVIL SOCIETY WATCH E BULLETIN)

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

In Picture: Five-year Anniversary of the Paris Agreement with a National Launch of the Catalogue of Local Sustainable Solutions in East Africa

On December 22, 2020 Joint Energy and Environment Projects (JEEP) and Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD) - members of INFORSE East Africa in Uganda, and as part of the *East African Civil Society for Sustainable Energy and Climate Action (EASE-CA)* Project, with financial support from CISU-Denmark, held a launch event for the *Catalogue of Local Sustainable Solutions in East Africa* (Available at: <http://localsolutions.inforse.org/>)

This catalogue seeks to popularize the local sustainable energy and other sustainable development solutions (best practices in technical solutions, financing models, business models). The EASE CA Project also involves SusWatch Kenya and TaTEDO in Tanzania; as well as the INFORSE secretariat and the Nordic Folk center for Renewable Energy in Denmark. In Uganda, JEEP & UCSD showed case sustainable energy and climate solutions and their potentials to address climate change problems and increasing energy scarcity through local action. JEEP is already promoting some of these solutions country-wide, for example in Nakaseke, Nakasongola and Nebbi that are empowering local communities to get access to clean energy and improved livelihoods in an economic and climate friendly way.

Below are some pictures from the Launch event



Launch occasion, participants at the event; and a vegetable backyard garden at JEEP (Photo: UCSD)



JEEP staff showcasing the Hay basket cooker in action – cooking rice; David Nkwanga (Nature Palace Foundation) shows how an Ethanol Stove works (Photos: UCSD)

From 2020 to 2021: The Climate Change Discussion and Work Ahead in East Africa

While anticipating that 2020 must be the year for coordinated, comprehensive climate action, WWF rightly noted that ‘like investing in your retirement, the sooner we take action, the better chance we have at preventing the direst impacts of our rapidly warming world’. But this was not to be as the Covid-19 pandemic crept in to largely interfere with this action in 2020.

In a post-Covid19 recovery year running up to the global COP26 climate summit in November 2021, there are many issues set for 2020 that have remained undone. The results from the last global climate Summit (COP25 in Madrid) were utterly disappointing, as the international community lost an important opportunity to show increased ambition on mitigation, adaptation & finance to tackle the climate crisis. Nevertheless, in 2020, momentum has been sustained by virtual meetings and conferences, with little add to where COP25 left it. Hence, 2021 promises to be the springboard to re-ignite efforts to counter the global climate change occurrences across continents.

2021 also provides hope. While the United States (one of the leading Green House Gas emitters) officially withdrew from the Paris Climate Agreement the day after the November 3, 2020 election, Joe Biden, who won that presidential election, has announced his intent to immediately rejoin the Paris agreement on the day of his inauguration come January 20, 2021.

Hope is also hovering over in 2021, as President-elect Biden considers tackling climate change a top priority and has proposed a plan to invest \$2 trillion over four years in deploying climate solutions. Hope for ambition in national climate pledges – the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) is abound in 2021. Countries pledged as part of the Paris Agreement in 2015, to update their NDCs every five years. 2020 was the first test of their intent to strengthen their commitments and reduce emissions enough to limit global temperature rise to 1.5-2 degrees C. But this was slowed down by the covid-19 pandemic. According to the NDC tracker, in East Africa it is only Kenya and Rwanda that submitted their NDCs by the end of 2020. An opportunity for the rest of the EAC Partner States is therefore still open.

2021: Provides Hope

Relatedly, the UNDP’s Climate Promise – a global intervention on NDC enhancement, currently supports 115 countries, including East Africa (Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and South Sudan). The Climate Promise is commitment to ensure that any country wishing to increase the ambition of their national climate pledge is able to do so.

However in all this, it is important in 2021 for Parties to revolutionize national climate actions (as many are still under review) to incorporate local adaptation actions that involve all actors including the vulnerable people in their respective national boundaries. This will be in line with the Global Commission on Adaptation (GCA)’s Year of Action to accelerate and scale climate adaptation solutions. As a reminder one of the GCA’s Action tracks is a *call to increase the volume of devolved and decentralized funding available to local governments, community-based organizations, and others working at the local level to identify, prioritize, implement, and monitor climate adaptation solutions*. A framework for implementing and monitoring this locally led action is also needed in NDC reviews

In our view, 2021 will indeed be both a thrilling and thought-provoking Year. *Bonne Année 2021!*

Paris Agreement after 5 Years: COVID19 and the Need for Clear Money for Local Adaptation Actions in East Africa



Local Action: Hay basket cooker in action by JEEP

The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, established the global goal on adaptation of enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change, with a view to contributing to sustainable development and ensuring an adequate adaptation response in the context of the temperature goal

A Report, which subtitled ‘Climate-change impacts, adaptation challenges and costs for Africa,’ released by UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and endorsed by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) in 2013, emphasized the financial challenges that Africa faces in adapting to climate change, if temperatures reach such levels.

The report noted that adaptation costs for Africa could reach approximately US\$350 billion annually by 2070, should the two-degree target be significantly exceeded, compared to US\$150 billion lower per year if the target were met. Worse still the Report suggests that these costs will not be purely financial, but also humanitarian and ecological.

Furthermore, the 2019 Global Commission on Adaptation (GCA)’s research found that investing \$1.8 trillion globally in five areas from 2020 to 2030 could generate \$7.1 trillion in total net benefits. The five areas are: early warning systems, climate-resilient infrastructure, improved dryland agriculture, mangrove protection, and investments in making water resources more resilient.

But these areas need to bring local level actions in picture so that the climate change vulnerable communities are able to play their part in these changing times. For example, the 2019 October–December rains over East Africa were one of the wettest seasons on record, with many locations receiving more than double the climatological rainfall, leading to floods and landslides. The wet conditions associated with the positive Indian Ocean Dipole event, with warm sea surface temperatures in the western Indian Ocean resulted in the rise in inland water bodies, displacing communities and leading to loss of farmland, property and lives. Many victims yet to fully recover from this occurrence.

COVID-19 pandemic has further stretched local governments’ efforts to provide services including adaptation actions, while household budgets have been severely affected by loss of incomes due to the massive job losses in many parts of East Africa. As summed up by *Climate Home News* (May 2020), ‘The weather has affected crop growth and food prices, and has contributed to the locust outbreak. People in the East Africa are suffering impacts of climate change events and COVID-19 simultaneously, or in quick succession, reducing their ability to cope, and acute food insecurity is growing’.

Despite this, the Global Commission on Adaptation (GCA) notes that currently, only about 10 percent of international committed climate funds for local-level climate action makes it to the local level. Local groups are often not included in planning processes that affect them. This raises the urgent importance by the international community to empower local actors in order to strengthen their resilience to climate change. Therefore, it is not too much to ask for clear adaptation money flowing at the pace or scale needed in view of the above urgency in order to safeguard the vulnerable communities’ lives, livelihoods, dwellings and jobs in the face of climate change.