

Climate Change and Human Security

BY

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Introduction

What is Human Security?

Human security takes on broader meaning when one considers basic needs for food, water and health.

Human security is achieved when and where individuals and communities;

- Have the options necessary to end, mitigate, or adapt to threats to their human, environmental, and social rights;
- Have the capacity and freedom to exercise options; and
- Actively participate in attaining these options.

Linkages between Climate Change and Human Security

a) Food-Livelihood-Climate-Conflict

Food and livelihood pressure due to climate change will lead to populist or military coups in a number of countries resulting to:

- Compromising of agricultural production and access to food in many African countries and regions,
- Population movements and displacement both within countries and internationally,

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- Decrease in area suitable for agriculture, the length of growing seasons and yield potential, particularly along the margins of semi-arid and arid areas,
- Decreased local food supplies due to decreasing fisheries resources in large lakes as a result of rising water temperatures,
- Climate-induced changes in crop and livestock production will affect the gender division of labour with negative effects on women's and men's incomes, livelihoods and household security.

b) Health-Climate-Livelihood-Conflict-Security

Climate change-related exposures are likely to affect the health status of millions of people, particularly those with low adaptive capacity, through:

- Increases in malnutrition and consequent disorders, with implications for child growth and development,
 - Increased deaths, disease and injury due to heat waves, floods, storms, fires and droughts,
 - Disruption of water supply and sanitation systems and health-care infrastructure due to floods, landslides and windstorms,
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- Increased burden of water-borne diseases such as cholera,
 - Increased frequency of cardio-respiratory diseases due to heatstroke and higher concentrations of ground level ozone related to climate change,
 - Altered spatial distribution of some infectious disease vectors,
 - Shortened development time of pathogens as a result of higher temperatures,
 - Increased spread of new vectors such as those of malaria, dengue and tick-borne encephalitis.
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c) Water-Conflict-Security

The water resources would diminish because of;

- Prolonged drought,
- Shrinking lakes,
- Drying rivers and aquifers,
- Sinking water tables.

These would result to;

- Regional conflicts as people compete for the few resources; Kenyan experiences in Mai Mahiu in 2005 and Laikipia in 2006 are recent examples,
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- Human displacements as a result of floods and hurricanes,
 - Tensions and political instability as a result of pressure on international regimes such as the Nile Treaty which are old, inadequate, and fragile,
 - Salinization of coastal freshwater aquifers as a result of sea level rise,
 - Destruction of infrastructure such as roads and railways,
 - Degradation of coastal wetland vegetation and coral reefs.
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d) Food-Fuel -Conflict- Security

Large-scale investments in bio-fuels in the medium and long term as a substitute for green house gas-producing petro-based energy sources may have the perverse effect of taking considerable land out of food production and diverting food grains and would result in;

- Increased food prices,
 - Erosion of biodiversity,
 - Increased food and livelihood pressure,
 - Increased national and regional insecurity due to desperation of rural and urban populations,
 - Displacement of small farmers from their lands.
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e) Disaster-Livelihood-Governance-Conflict-Security

Catastrophic weather events often produce cascades of secondary physical hazards such as;

- Landslides,
 - Economic stresses as result of expensive clean up exercises,
 - Damage to factories, storage facilities, and pipelines in urban industrial landscapes,
 - Human deaths as a result of public health consequences,
 - Downstream inundation when dams overflow or dam authorities release large volumes of water to safeguard large dams (as in Mozambique at present and in several recent years).
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f) Sea Level-Displacement-Security

Sea level rise in the long term and its collateral impacts on river flow and ocean discharge regimes will cause;

- Displacement of many millions of people currently living in coastal areas.
 - Complete submersion for small island nations of the world, especially the many cultural groups living on coral atolls.
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g) Mitigation-Adaptation-Conflict-Security

Mega-projects conceived by nations as solutions to climate change such as the planting of large-scale forestry under the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and the building of more large dams and reservoirs will result to;

- Displacement of poor and marginal people as they are forcibly evicted from their lands to make way for the mega project investments,
- Erosion of biodiversity.

The "clean green" solution of nuclear energy so heavily promoted in the early years of this century and recently adopted as a climate change-fighting strategy has led to;

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- Worldwide race to capture extractive rights and exploit uranium reserves. High value of uranium has led to violent conflict in the Congo and the renewed use of forced labour,
 - Human health consequences of working and living in a toxic and radioactive environment. Epidemics of cancer and other radiogenic health problems now prevalent in areas that hosted the Cold War nuclear machine,
 - Leakage of weapons grade material into the hands of non-state actors.
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Conclusion

- Climate change challenges are very clear both from intrastate stability and interstate relations point of view.
 - Aspirations of the poor and marginalized communities must be addressed together with climate change.
 - Rich countries must not only cut back on consumption but also help, support, promote the rest of the world to adapt to climate change.
 - A timely and adequately funded combination of adaptation and mitigation efforts needs to be encouraged.
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- Adaptation strategies should take account of impacts on all stakeholders, including women, indigenous groups, and ethnic minorities.
 - International cooperation needs to be strengthened in response to the kinds of climate change threats discussed above.
 - Climate change is a global phenomena and a collective response in form of global partnerships should be adopted.
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THANK YOU!!