

The Weekly

Information Resource Bulletin

FOCUS

Climate change and Having Enough Food

Malawi's rapid population growth is driven by a high total fertility rate (the number of children born per woman) – which is reported to be six.

According to a study by the African Institute for Development Policy and Population Action International, Malawi's population of approximately 15 million is projected to increase by more than three times to 50 million by 2050. This will surely worsen competition for land and resources among Malawians.

Rapid population is directly linked to climate change. As the population grows there is a growing need for trees for fuel leading to deforestation. Flooding caused by deforestation leads to food shortages as crops get washed away.

Population growth also contributes to land scarcity. In the past, population growth did not reduce the size of farmland because there was always more land to convert to agriculture. Now, this is not the case because people have now started turning lands dedicated to agricultural purposes, into homes. This will in turn affect food production, since if a farmer used to harvest 20 bags of maize from that land, obviously he/she will now be harvesting less.

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- To help journalists discuss with their listeners how population growth is directly linked to climate change
- **To help journalists discuss with their listeners how climate change leads to food insecurity**
- To encourage journalists together with their audience to find ways of mitigating climate change.

The Problem: Lack of Food

Food shortage is heightened by climate change, which is predicted to make natural disasters such as drought and flooding more frequent and severe, in addition to making weather more erratic generally.

A lot of communities engaged in small-scale agriculture are particularly vulnerable to these trends.

Malawi is vulnerable to extreme weather events, including both droughts and flooding. While floods displace more people and destroy crops, droughts are a greater cause of food insecurity.

Climate change makes the globe to become warmer, and this leads to an increase in pests such as crop-destroying army worms and locusts.

The warm and moist conditions create a perfect environment for the worm

to live and an ideal food source for them.

Drought and other natural disasters, such as floods and locusts can easily cause food shortages.

Malawi has recently suffered a series of devastating natural setbacks such as floods and droughts with thousands currently facing food shortages. By January 2014, according to World Food Program approximately 1.9 million people were facing food shortages. This number is up by 27 percent from the figure released earlier in July 2013. The largest numbers of people with food shortages are located in the districts of Mzimba (Northern Region) and Mangochi (Southern Region).

Activities for Journalists

Use your community radio station to help listeners understand how climate change has contributed to food shortages.

Make your audience understand that Climate change contributes to food insecurity through the following:

- Climate change makes the Earth warmer, which results into an increase in locusts and other pests. The pests eat seed stocks and destroy the crops in the field. Wild plants may be the only source of food to the people, but with the rising number of deforestation cases, it is difficult to get wild fruits for survival.
- Drought may also lead to the death of livestock. For those who rely on livestock for their livelihoods, a loss of their animals can be devastating.
- Let your audience know that a report by Food and Agriculture Organization- FAO,

indicates approximately 2,500 hectares of crops have been affected by army worms this year. (That amounts to approximately 2,500 soccer fields.)

- Have a vox pop with some community members in your area and ask them how they think population growth has led to climate change.
- Interview two families on how climate change has contributed to food shortages in their families.
- You can further probe on how their harvest of crops has changed over the years.
- Interview an agriculture worker from your area and ask him/her on how climate change has led to food shortage issues in Malawi and how he/she thinks the community could mitigate climate change effects.

Community Engagement

Urge listeners to send SMS, call or stop by the radio station to talk about how climate change has affected their planting season this year and what they are doing to mitigate climate change effects.

Useful Contacts

- Sandra Mapemba -Population Reference Bureau-PRB- Contact person+265-99-921-9789
- Dingaan Mithi-Association of Journalist Against AIDS +265(0) 999 694 832
- <http://www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?code=MWI>
- <http://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/nearly-one-and-half-million-need-food-assistance-onset-lean-season>



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