

MEMBERS OF COUNTY ASSEMBLY (MCA) OF WAJIR COMMITMENT TO MAINSTREAMING CLIMATE CHANGE IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING.

20th Dec 2017.

Wajir, once a marginalized county of Northern Kenya is leaping the benefits of devolution. The County saw its first ever tarmacked road in 2014 since independence. There has been myriad of infrastructure development ranging from roads, street lighting, prestigious hotels, a booming business district to modern permanent residential settlements albeit the nomadic pastoralism lifestyle of the community here.



An aerial picture of Wajir County.

However, despite such important developments, climate disasters have persisted and are even more intense with the dawn of each year. The common climate disasters experienced in Wajir and most parts of the northern Kenya frontier are floods and droughts which result to loss of livestock, property, insurgence of diseases e.g. malaria and cholera among others. As a result, there is a dire need to address the impacts of climate change nationally and more importantly at the local level.

Devolution of ministries that exist at national government has been a blessing for Wajir people. It has facilitated policy and development planning at the county level, the Counties are able to craft policies and developmental projects that respond to the current and persistent challenges on the ground.

In this respect, the county has made commendable milestones in legislation on climate change and environment. They have already enacted a climate change fund bill of 2016. The charcoal

management bill is also in the pipeline and they hope to work on a rangeland management bill among others.

On 19th of December 2017, the Green Africa Foundation team met with the Members of County Assembly, some executive arm of government members and CSOs of Wajir County. The objective of the meeting was to validate the climate change mainstreaming guidelines for the agriculture, water and sanitation and the forest, wildlife and energy sectors for Wajir County.



Hon. Noor Hussein delivering a welcome on behalf of the MCAs.

The MCAs were very excited and impressed by the inputs of various stakeholders to come up with the mainstreaming guidelines. The process begun in September 2017 with an appraisal meeting, then the prioritization in October then the drafting workshop in November and now the meeting with the legislatures.

68% of endemic diseases in Wajir are water related hence need put in place systems for clean water especially during floods and droughts seasons. The MCAs called for increased research on the quality and quantity of rainwater and underground water stored in aquifers. They said that water harvesting at the household level should be encouraged to reduce stress on natural water sources.

On sanitation, they recognized that the water table in the county is very high hence digging latrine toilets will affect water quality. They recommended a standardization system for sewerage system that can eventually face out the bucket system.

Hon. Meimuna highlighted the intensive small scale farming taking place in the county, she highlighted the need to introduce modern technology into agricultural production to improve

food security. She also mentioned that value addition is key to increased income from products like camel milk that can make yogurt and chocolate. Improving on packing would be one of the low lying fruits as it can improve hygiene and aesthetics making it attractive to buy.



Hon. Meimuna and her MCA colleagues following climate change mainstreaming guidelines presentations during a legislators meeting hosted by Green Africa Foundation.

Madam Ambia of KWS mentioned on the possible positive uses of the invasive Mathenge plant. She said that it has the second best charcoal from acacia trees, it can also be used for joinery in carpentry and its seeds can be used to make flour that makes very delicious chapatis. On other forest products, she explained about the gum and raisins trade that has existed for a long time, which if streamlined can be a major source of income for the gum and raisin farmers. They all agreed that if planning for impacts of climate change is made on the above interventions, there will be livelihood diversification and reduce intensity of climate disasters.

Hon. Ebla Bashir Hassan in his vote of thanks, appreciated his fellow MCAs for turning up in good numbers besides being on recess, he said that was evident of their commitment to developing Wajir County. Allah shall reward them. He appreciated the efforts of Green Africa Foundation towards climate change adaptation and mitigation in the Northern part of Kenya. He resounded their commitment to ensure the county is climate proofed. He said that the meeting was an eye opener and the lessons learnt would enable them make sound decision on environment and climate change issues. He further requested for more strategic capacity building on MCAs whom besides being experts in their own fields have not dealt with climate change adaptation and mitigation in-depth. The meeting ended on a high note with

commitments from different MCAs to carry on with the climate change work Green Africa Foundation has begun.

The meeting with MCAs of Wajir County is one of the activities under the StARCK+ extension project that is funded by DFID and administered by ACT!. The goal of the project is to consolidation prior efforts towards completion of climate change legislation and cross sectoral coordination for enhanced climate change mainstreaming in Wajir, Marsabit and Garissa Counties.



A group photo of a section of Members of County Assembly of Wajir and Green Africa Foundation team.

Prepared by Gladys Gatiba