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FOCUS

Climate justice

Global heating is causing increasing suffering around the world. The poorest people, who have contributed least to making the crisis happen, are especially exposed. Vulnerable communities' interests deserve policymakers' attention. That includes indigenous peoples, women and the young generation. At the same time, it is necessary to mobilise more money and to implement the transformation to clean energy in ways that do not further disrupt economic and social life.

Title: Climate protest in Nairobi, Kenya, 2019.
Photo: picture-alliance/AP Photo/Ben Curtis





Our focus section on climate justice starts on page 13. It pertains to the UN's 13th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG): Climate Action. It also has a bearing on the entire SDG agenda.

omy will cause some communities pain. We need policies that ensure a just transition. Policymakers cannot allow entire regions or population groups to drop into poverty. It is obvious, however, that not every inconvenience is preventable.

The lifestyles of the richest people is compounding the climate crisis. For the sake of climate justice, their excessive privileges are not acceptable. State action can reduce extreme inequality. Prudent taxation is one option, and it would boost government revenues. That additional money could serve climate action as well as other purposes, such as education and healthcare, both of which have a bearing on inequality.

It is patently absurd, moreover, that corporations are still raking in profits worth billions of dollars with business models that systematically destroy the climate. Some companies have been taken to court in attempts to find out to what extent existing laws make them accountable for the damage. Environmental law, of course, can be made more stringent. That is true at national as well as international levels.

Destructive inequality

Global heating is extremely unfair. Countries with low incomes are most exposed to its impacts, have the least resources for adapting to the change and have contributed least to making the crisis happen.

The disparities between world regions are great, but the greatest disparity today is between the global rich and the global poor. According to the Climate Inequality Report the richest one percent of the world population causes more climate gas emissions in absolute terms than the poor half of humankind. The report was recently published by the World Inequality Lab, an international group of researchers.

Serious inequality is evident in all world regions. The scholars note that the most prosperous 10% of every world region cause considerably more emissions per capita than the poorer 50%. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and in sub-Saharan Africa, the richest 10% emit about 15 times more, in East Asia 14 times more and in South and Southeast Asia 12 times more. The comparative factor is slightly below six in Europe and a bit below seven in North America. In absolute terms, the North American rich are the worst emitters, and those of the MENA region are worse cli-

mate offenders than their European counterparts.

Within nation states, marginalised groups are affected most, including women and disadvantaged minorities. People who are economically worse off because they lack financial and other assets, have fewer opportunities to shield themselves from climate impacts.

More generally speaking, young people are especially at risk. They did not cause the crisis, but they will suffer its escalating impacts. The young generation's future looks increasingly dark. Climate justice requires that those who are most affected by the climate crisis get a say in how societies respond to it.

We need a dramatic transformation. High-income nations in particular must reduce emissions much faster than they have done so far. Moreover, they must fulfil their promise of transferring \$100 billion in annual climate finance to less fortunate countries. On top of that, a fund to compensate for losses and damages was promised at the climate summit in Sharm el-Sheikh last year. Money must begin to flow soon.

The transformation to clean energy and an environment-friendly circular econ-



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Joan Carling is from the Philippines and belongs to an indigenous community. She is active in international networks that support human rights and environmental protection. Maren van Treel, our social-media editor, met her at an event hosted by KfW Development Bank last year and has now interviewed her for D+C/E+Z. This PDF

includes Carling's elaborations on why global climate justice depends on safeguarding the rights of all indigenous peoples (p. 14).

► All contributions to our focus section will also appear on our website www.dandc.eu, where you will find other related content as well.



Overly expensive childcare is a major issue for many women in Burundi.

DAILY LIFE

Motherhood in Burundi

According to the UN Development Programme, about 75% of Burundians are considered poor. Ethnopolitical conflicts have plagued the country for decades, and both the education and health sectors have been affected by severe spending cuts. The country is also making progress, however. For example, education has become more accessible and its quality has improved. The birth rate is declining. 40 years ago, women had seven children on average, but now they have five. The journalist Gloria Manirakiza (not her real name) lives with her family in Bujumbura, the largest urban centre in Burundi. In this interview, she reports on what it is like to be a mother there.

Gloria Manirakiza interviewed by Merle Becker

You work as a journalist and have five children, four of whom live at home with you.

The youngest is just one month old. What is your daily life like?

My oldest son is 16 now and is starting his professional training. I am still on maternity leave at the moment. Soon I will start working again. My husband is a self-employed businessman in the private sector. He doesn't earn much and his income is irregular, but it's enough for us to live on. If he's not working, he helps me with the children. We get ourselves organised and then everything works out.

What is maternity leave like in Burundi? How long are you allowed to stay home, and do you still receive an income?

A mother stays home for 49 days before and 49 days after the birth of a child while receiving full pay. Afterwards she goes back to work as usual. It doesn't leave much time to rest. Mothers are then given one hour each day for breastfeeding, which they can take

in the morning, at noon or in the evening. For example, if they actually have to be at work at eight o'clock in the morning, they can come at nine o'clock during the breastfeeding period. However, this regulation only applies to the first six months after birth.

And then? How do you manage work with a baby?

Most urban families in which both parents work have domestic helpers who are also babysitters. We have this support too. The baby stays with them while the mother goes back to work. No one brings their children to work here – that's no place for babies. It's also pretty rare for women to stay home with the children and not go to work. Usually it's not an option at all financially. But of course there are also single mothers. I have two colleagues who have to do everything themselves. And they definitely have to work. They couldn't get by without a domestic help or support from their families.

Does that mean that most women in Burundi wean their babies after just a month and a half?



Schools in Burundi struggle with underfunding.

No, doctors recommend that we exclusively breastfeed for the first six months. Only after that period do we begin offering our babies solid food. When I return to work, my baby will be bottle-fed, but mornings, evenings and nights I plan to keep breastfeeding. It's important to me.

Will you get your old job back after maternity leave?

When I return to my workplace, I will join my editorial team, but I will no longer hold a position of leadership and will therefore earn less. But that has nothing to do with my pregnancy. My employer had to restructure because of financial difficulties. The last pay check that I received was for July, and I didn't get it until the middle of November. I'm just happy that I wasn't fired and I'm hopeful that I can find other sources of income.

And when do children go to day-care or nursery school?

When children are five months old, they can theoretically go to day-care. But very few parents do that, because the facilities are not state-run, and are therefore very expensive. We can't afford them either. The prices vary depending on whether the day-cares are in the city or further out. There are even VIP day-cares. In an upscale district of Bujumbura like Rohero, a spot for a five-month-old child costs 500,000 Burundi francs (BIF) per month (about €220). To compare, I earn 400,000 BIF a month and have a good job.

What are school fees like?

For my daughter, who is in her fourth year at a private primary school, I pay about 20,000 BIF. The state-run primary schools are free, but the quality of education is poor. That's why my children go to private schools. All in all, the prices for early childhood-education institutions are very high. That's why most children don't go to day-care, but instead start with nursery school at the earliest. School is compulsory starting at the age of seven.

Let's talk about pregnancy. What is medical care like? Are there regular, prescribed doctor's appointments?

Yes, most women I know receive medical care during pregnancy. I also had regular appointments with my gynaecologist. He checked on me and the baby. And during every trimester of pregnancy, the doctor also takes an ultrasound. I have private health insurance, which means that 85% of the costs for these examinations were covered. We had to pay 15% ourselves. But



of course there are also women who can't afford insurance or their contribution. And some women don't want medical care. They put their trust in traditional medicine and say: "I'll notice when the baby is coming!" That wasn't what I wanted.

Birth is often very culturally defined. In some countries it is normal to receive pain medication, while in others it is decried. Caesarean sections are also much more common in some parts of the world than in others. What's it like in Burundi?

Births usually take place without pain relievers, but directly afterwards women are prescribed antibiotics and other medication, which they pay for themselves. Little is done to alleviate pain during labour; it's simply a part of the process. Caesarean sections are performed when it is medically necessary, which was never the case for me. My husband was present at all of my deliveries, but many women or their husbands don't want that. Oftentimes it is impossible because the men are working. The fact that my husband could be present five times is rather an exception.

With five children, were you able to make a good post-partum recovery?

One of my children goes to boarding school. Therefore, I'm only home with four children at the moment. In the morning, the older children go to school and I'm home with the baby and the housekeeper. And she helps me a lot. She cooks, cleans and does the washing. In the afternoon, she picks up the schoolchildren and they also help me a little. That's how I'm able to recover before going back to work shortly.

What do you want for your children's future?

I hope that my children will have a good future and that we can earn enough income for them all. I want all of my children to be able to attend university. I am already preparing them for that. For instance, I ask them regularly what they want to be when they grow up and what they want to study. In doing so, I want to give them the courage to always go further, challenge themselves and believe in themselves. And I also always tell myself: everything will be okay! I'm an optimist.

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Two German cabinet members visiting a Ghanaian NGO school in February: Svenja Schulze (in charge of international development) and Hubertus Heil (responsible for labour and social protection).

GERMAN POLICY

Ambitious agenda

Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) recently launched its new Africa Strategy. It is a bold statement of intent.

By Ronald Ssegujja Ssekandi

The strategy's title is "Shaping the future with Africa". The BMZ hopes to cooperate with African countries in ways that create "a more just, more peaceful and safer world."

The strategy defines focus areas for German development cooperation with Africa. It is designed to contribute to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and support the Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU).

The new Africa strategy comes at a critical time, marked by recent global crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic and Russia's attack on Ukraine. Moreover, demographic change, the climate crisis and shifting geopolitical dynamics necessitate international cooperation as well.

In this context, the BMZ is prioritising cooperation with African countries, the continent that is home to 33 of the world's 46 Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Moreo-

ver, Europe and Germany have close historical, geographical and cultural ties to Africa.

The strategy is geared to achieving sustainable development. Overarching goals include:

- lending structural support to the achievement of the development goals set by the UN as well as the AU and its member states,
- enabling the continent to unlock its huge potential and become more resilient and
- cooperating with African partners for a global transformation to ensure that everyone can live in dignity and security in an intact environment.

The general idea is to address crises jointly and visibly with Europe's neighbouring continent in a spirit of solidarity.

The BMZ strategy emphasises partnership in a spirit of respect and reciprocity. It states that African governments and the AU must get more attention in multilateral settings. Additionally, the BMZ would like to see African perspectives making a stronger impact on public opinion in Germany and in Europe.

It promises to engage in open and honest dialogue with an eye to promoting com-

mon values and pursuing shared interests with Africa. The BMZ recognises serious challenges, however. The trend towards authoritarian rule is gaining momentum in a number of its African partner countries, for example.

The new strategy emphasises gender justice. Svenja Schulze, Germany's federal minister for economic cooperation and development is committed to feminist policymaking, seeking to overcome structural gender inequality in society and to boost women's and girls' involvement in political, social and economic affairs. Moreover, she has promised to promote the rights of marginalised groups, including people with disabilities, members of indigenous communities or LGBTQI+ individuals.

FOCUS AREAS

The new Africa strategy lists six main areas of cooperation:

- **Employment and fair trade:** African nations' populations are growing fast. By 2050, Africa's urban population alone is expected to triple to just under 1.5 billion. The BMZ estimates that Africa needs to create an additional 25 million jobs every year. The challenge is immense as the worsening climate and biodiversity crisis is hitting the continent hard. According to the BMZ, the existing wealth of natural resources and the technologies available today should allow Africa to become the first world region to make a "just transition" to sustainability by taking climate-smart approaches to development. To facilitate job creation, the BMZ considers it essential to promote trade, infrastructure development, private-sector employment and innovation. In regard to mounting sovereign-debt problems, the BMZ promises to support better public-finance management while also boosting governments' capacity for debt-restructuring negotiations.
- **Overcoming poverty and hunger:** The BMZ plans to promote the transformation of agriculture and food systems in Africa to reduce hunger, malnutrition and poverty in general. It also wants to support the extension of social-protection systems as well as access to education. Social-protection systems are considered vital in building resilience especially in situations of crisis. The BMZ points out that inequality is contributing to many problems and should therefore be reduced.

- **Health and pandemic prevention:** The Covid-19 pandemic has tested global health systems and highlighted the need for better disease management. Since only about 20% of the people in Africa have access to affordable primary health care of an appropriate quality, this sector must improve in particular. The BMZ pledges to support African health institutions as well as pharmaceutical production in African countries. It emphasises women's access to health services and promises to invest in digitalising primary health care.
- **Feminist development policy and gender equality:** The BMZ will support gender equality through structural transformation that strengthens women's rights such as sexual and reproductive rights. It will also establish and develop alliances for gender equality through supporting multilateral initiatives like the Global Partnership for Education, UN Women and UNFPA. Women's economic participation and fighting gender-based violence are other priorities.

- **Promoting good governance:** Many African governments have officially made commitments to good governance, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Nonetheless, many challenges persist. Corruption and illicit financial flows are among the greatest challenges. The BMZ hopes to promote effective public authorities which, however, need to be monitored by free media and underlie the review of independent law courts. The BMZ emphasises respect for human rights, moreover.
- **Peace and security:** The BMZ acknowledges that the continent is facing conflicts, with terrorist threats increasing fast. It recognises the African Union and its Agenda 2063 as key resources in promoting peace and security. It intends to tackle the root causes of violent conflicts in ways that strengthen communities' resilience, prevent new conflicts and foster inclusive conflict resolutions. According to the new strategy, it is necessary to support refugees and internally displaced people.

Implementing the strategy, the BMZ will cooperate with African governments, supra-national institutions, non-state actors, private-sector enterprises and civil-society organisations. It will continue working with time-tested bilateral agencies such as GIZ and KfW as well as multilateral institutions. The BMZ promises to review the implementation of this new Africa Strategy and actively involve external partners.

LINK:

BMZ, 2023: Shaping the future with Africa. The Africa strategy of the BMZ. (Also available in French) <https://www.bmz.de/en/countries/bmz-africa-strategy>



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The fate of mothers with disabled children

In Malawi, many parents raise children with physical disabilities or health problems, which is a great burden. Moreover, many people view children with disabilities as a curse upon parents, imposed by a supernatural power to punish them for a wrong. Strange traditional mindsets amidst rampant poverty are to blame for this bizarre behaviour. This is especially unfair as caring for people with disabilities is being left almost only to women. Men mostly escape from their childcare responsibilities.

This also happened to 30-year-old Luwiza Davidson, a mother of a 7-year-old disabled girl. The child has cerebral palsy, a condition that makes it hard for her to move and maintain balance. "Since my child was born with this disability, my husband has changed. He has completely abandoned me. The love that we had has vanished. He married another woman and stopped supporting me and our child," she says.

Families with disabled children sometimes face segregation from community members too. 34-year-old Loveness Mikaeli, a mother of three, says she is lucky because her husband is supportive of their first-born child, Hannah,

who can neither walk nor stand. However, Mikaeli says that she is insulted and abused by the husband's relatives and by community members.

"It is a challenge because women as well as their disabled children are all suffering from violence and abuse," she says, adding: "Even your neighbours do not want to see you around."

To help support parents with disabled children, an association called Parents of Disabled Children Association of Malawi (PODCAM) was formed. It operates in various regions of Malawi and has wide membership. Whereas membership is open to all genders, the majority of its members are female.

"We have over 18,000 members across the country and the majority of them are women with children with disabilities. Most of them have been abandoned by their husbands too," says Emily Maunde, chairperson of the country's central region chapter of PODCAM. She says that the majority of the abandoned mothers are poor with no jobs to fetch an income. They are raising their children single-handedly.

"These women have bitterness because of what they go through. Some husbands openly say that giving birth to a disabled child is a sign that the mother is cursed. They use this excuse to abandon the woman and child to remarry," Lyness Manduwa, an executive director of PODCAM, says.

Disability rights, just as women's rights, are enshrined in the country's constitution and other supporting laws. The laws criminalise any form of abuse and violence against disabled people and women. Activists however argue that these legal provisions are not enough to fight the strange practice.

"As an organisation we have tried to send these men to court so that the court orders them to support their families. In some cases, the courts have managed to force the men to give support to their wives, but in other cases it has not worked at all," Maunde says.



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Sustainable development requires global awareness and local action.

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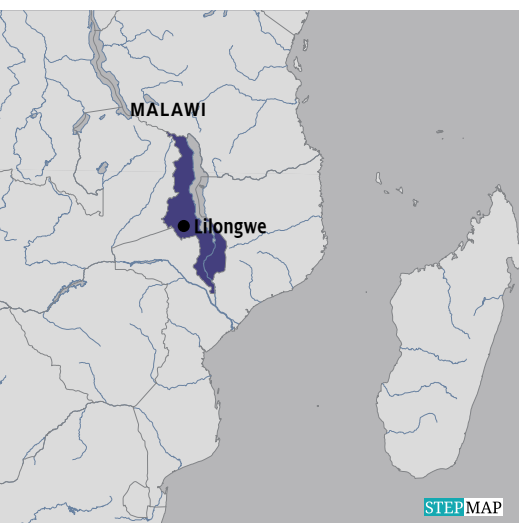
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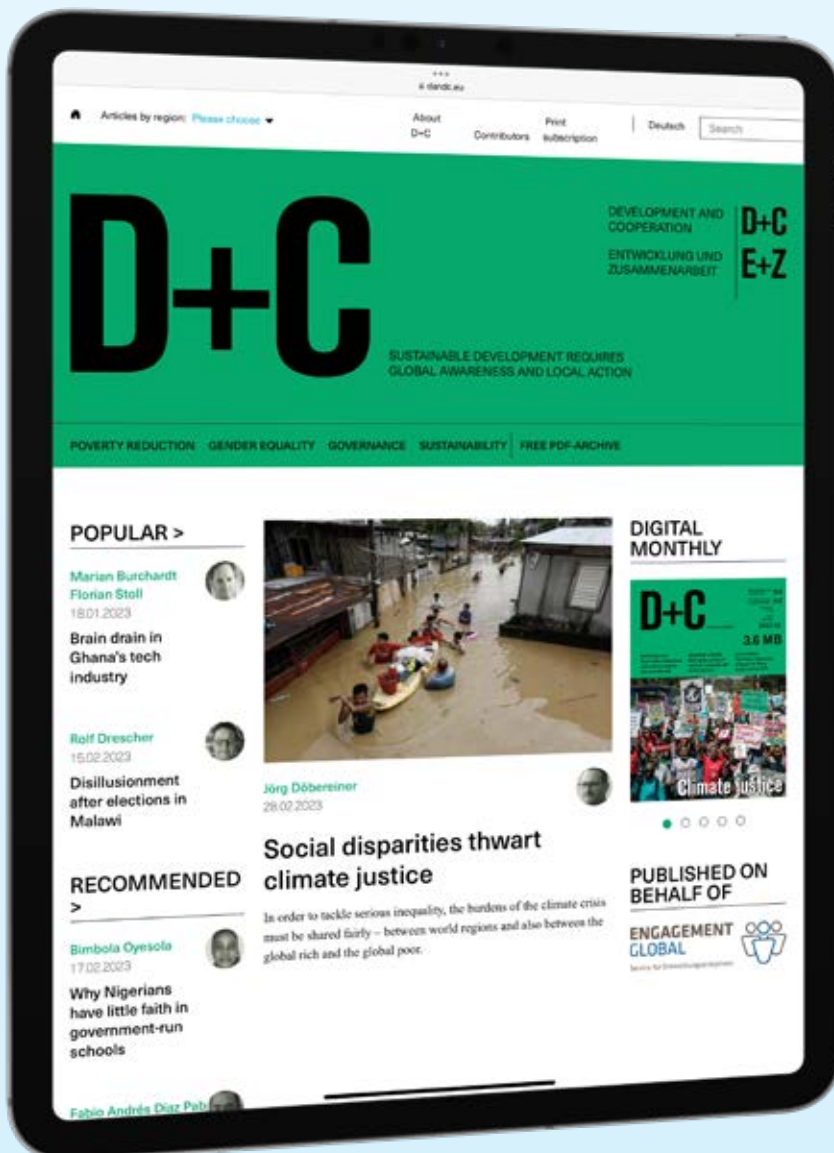
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Pope Francis in Juba, South Sudan's capital.

VIOLENT CONFLICT

Pilgrimage of peace

To see Pope Francis, tens of thousands of believers travelled to South Sudan's capital, Juba, in early February. His visit to South Sudan had been long awaited. The faithful brought along hopes and expectations for their conflict-ridden country.

By Alba Nakuwa

Pope Francis spoke of a “pilgrimage of peace”. He came at a time when citizens of the world’s youngest nation wanted to see real signs of change rather than only hear assurances from their leaders. Many South Sudanese interpret the presence of His Holiness as such a sign. The economy is in devastating state and ceaseless political turmoil haunts the country. Some hope the pontiff might act as a mediator. A handshake between the government and the opposition is urgently needed.

On his last day in South Sudan, the Pope held a mass at the John Garang Mausoleum. It is where the revolutionary leader who started the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement is buried. In the presence of the country’s top leaders, the head of the Catholic church condemned the never-ending violent clashes between government forces

and rebel militias that have displaced some 2.4 million people, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Francis called for peace.

At the same time, he urged all South Sudanese not to lose hope in the peace process. Indeed, Juba showed unity during Pope Francis’ visit, with people chanting and carrying religious banners as well as the South Sudanese flag. The question is how long these good times will last.

People in Juba fear violence and typically shy away from stating their views in public. One Juba-based source, who did not wish to be named, said that the pope’s visit should serve as an eye-opener for those in power, make them listen to frustrated citizens and address the permanent security crises. But the source also pointed out that the short visit was just a glass half full and not enough to quench the thirst for peace, political stability and prosperity.

Another source praised the visit too, appreciating Francis’ display of humility and his appeal to people to serve one another. The fact that he addressed both government and opposition was read as a reason for optimism in a country ravaged by ethnic violence and damaged by corruption.

People also appreciated that the pope’s visit meant global attention. To a large extent, they feel neglected by the international community which shows pretty little interest in their continuous suffering. Francis is the first global leader in a long time to show a personal commitment to South Sudan – and that impresses people of all faiths.

Essential reforms to restore peace have not been implemented so far. What needs to be done was spelled out in the Revitalized Agreement on Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) in 2018. A large number of optimists hope that Francis may have triggered new momentum for implementation, not least because Catholics are among the leaders of both the government and the opposition.

Sceptics, however, doubt his short presence in the country will make a long-term difference. What is obvious, however, is that the country needs new opportunities for investment, educational reform and progress in other areas.

In these matters, there is not much difference between the Pope’s trip to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan. Both countries are resource rich and have long histories of civil strife. Both remain unstable, with violence erupting frequently.

In the DRC, such violence even had an impact on the pope’s agenda. The head of the Catholic church was supposed to visit the Kivu region in the troubled eastern DRC. Due to the ongoing conflict with armed militias in the area, he had to land in Kinshasa instead. Meanwhile, at least 20 people died in Kajo-Keji in western South Sudan and 300 others were displaced in a brutal act of cattle raiding, the day before the Pope was to land in Juba.

Faith leaders typically remain present in crisis areas, even when other institutions have largely disappeared. They have a pattern of challenging poor governance and violent abuse. The Christian faith has deep roots in both the DRC and South Sudan, and Catholic priests are serving local communities on the frontlines. No doubt, they will be encouraged by their top leader’s trip to their country.



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Malawi's president Lazarus Chakwera in Washington in December 2022.

MALAWI

Disillusioned after elections

Lazarus Chakwera's victory in the June 2020 presidential election was a vote for fundamental political change in Malawi and was greeted with euphoria. The new elections had been ordered by court. Since then, however, disappointment has spread: the country's economy is performing poorly, and corruption is weakening trust in politicians.

By Rolf Drescher

Two-thirds of Malawians believe that the government is doing a poor job of fighting corruption and that corruption has increased significantly since Chakwera took office. This is the finding of a survey conducted in April 2022 by the pan-African research network "Afrobarometer". At present, headlines are being made by the case of Zuneth Sattar, a Malawian-born businessman living in Britain. He is under investigation by the Malawi Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) and the British National Crime Agency (NCA) for corruption in connection with \$ 150 million worth of procurement contracts for the Malawi security forces.

Speaking to the British Financial Times, ACB director-general Martha Chizuma said the case had all the hallmarks of "state capture" with systemic corruption allowing the economic elites to manipulate and control state decision-making processes to their advantage. According to an ACB report, investigations are currently underway against more than 80 senior government officials and business executives alleged to have received funds from Sattar, including Vice President Saulos Klaus Chilima. He is alleged to have received \$280,000 from Sattar in 2021 to influence procurement transactions. Chilima was arrested in November but was immediately released on bail. He was removed from all official duties by President Chakwera, but could not be dismissed for constitutional reasons.

In general, the government does not give the impression that it wants to strengthen the ACB's clout. This became evident most recently by the arrest and subsequent release of ACB director-general Chizuma in December. A commission of enquiry has not fully clarified the background to her arrest or who was responsible for it.

There are positive developments in Malawi, to which the active civil society and a fairly free press contribute. However, the present economic and social situation gives no cause for optimism. Malawi remains one of the poorest countries in the world.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts economic growth of 0.9% in 2022, rising to 2.5% in 2023. Considering that the population is growing at around three percent, this means a downturn in economic output per capita. Sustainable poverty reduction requires stable economic growth of six to seven percent, but Malawi's economy lacks the structural foundation for that. The tight national budget leaves the government no fiscal space. The lack of foreign exchange has already led to shortages of petrol, medicine, fertilisers and other essential goods.

The World Bank and IMF rate the country's debt level as unsustainable, with a high risk of debt distress. In November 2022, annualised inflation was 20%. The upturn in food prices is currently above 30%. Many people are thus being pushed into poverty; an estimated 3.8 million will need food aid between October 2022 and March 2023. Seventy percent of the population live in poverty. The country has also been hit economically by the Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, tropical storm Ana and the global economic slowdown – developments that cannot be attributed to the government's economic policy.

When President Chakwera took office, he inherited a difficult legacy and empty state coffers. The government now needs to regain voters' trust by relentlessly rooting out corruption and implementing effective economic, financial and social policies.

It is to be hoped that international organisations and donor countries will continue to provide support – not with countless small-scale projects, but in the form of economic investment and stronger trade relations. Malawi particularly needs help in developing infrastructure and adapting to the consequences of the climate crisis, which already present considerable problems for the country. Debt relief and budget aid would be a strong signal of support.



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Letter to the editor



AGRARIAN TRADITIONS EXPLOITED

Hans Dembowski: How to end hunger (D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly 2022/11, p. 3)

The rural communities mentioned in your editorial are not safeguarding „indispensable resources“ **in spite** of their poverty, but **because** of it. They plainly have no al-

ternative. They consider the farming practices they have inherited to be indispensable. Agricultural landscapes, which are created by human beings, have particular ecosystems, but those ecosystems are not stable. Indeed, they are quite fragile. As soon as cultivation stops, natural dynamics set back in and ultimately destroy the agricultural landscape.

Strictly speaking, an agricultural landscape is a cultural landscape, so its decay leads to cultural damage rather than ecological damage. These landscapes really are only stable in the short term because their viability depends on continuous hard work. One should, moreover, distinguish productive work from the reproductive variety.

The former serves to produce food and other commodities, whereas reproductive work stabilises the vulnerable ecosystem.

Once the reproductive work is considered to be disproportionately intensive compared with the fruits of productive work, cultivation stops and the ecosystem is left to itself. The history of Alpine farming provides clear evidence. Scholars have detected similar trends for various traditional irrigation systems or terraced fields.

As a matter of principle, nature is dynamic, and that is true of natural ecosystems as well. Farmers who depend on safe harvests do what they can to turn dynamic natural landscapes into stable agricultural ones. The price they pay is permanent hard labour.

If the genetic heritage of traditional cultivation must

be safeguarded because it serves the breeding purposes of agricultural corporations, we are witnessing a modern form of exploitation. You should have mentioned that this heritage must not be taken advantage of free of charge. As things stand today, these indispensable resources will only be safeguarded as long as the communities that cultivate and breed them keep maintaining their traditional practices and lifestyles, which means they remain stuck in poverty.

Dr. Artur Behr, Hermannsburg

Comment of the editorial office: In the same issue of D+C/E+Z (p. 24 et seq.), Parviz Koohafkan wrote about Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems and assessed the unacceptable poverty of rural communities concerned.

SHARE YOUR VIEWS ON OUR PLATFORM!

If you have a thought you would like to share on our platform, please get in touch with the editorial office and send us a short proposal of 10 sentences or so in which you outline your main thesis and supporting arguments.

We believe that voices from **Africa, Asia and Latin America** must be heard in global debate. We would like to increase the number of contributions from **Africa and the Arab region**. Therefore, we encourage journalists, civil-society experts and academics in countries concerned to write for us. We are especially interested in **women's point of view**.

Nonetheless, this invitation applies to everyone, regardless of gender or nationality. We need correspondents everywhere, and are keen on closing some evident gaps. We pay a modest financial compensation for articles. If you would like to contribute, please send an e-mail to: euz.editor@dandc.eu.



Flooding in the Philippines.

FOCUS

Climate justice

“We indigenous peoples have the smallest carbon footprints.” **JOAN CARLING, P. 14**

“In spite of many difficulties, women are often agents of change.” **NUSRAT NAUSHIN AND MALIHA MASFIQUA MALEK, P. 17**

“Across Africa, WoMin is organising resistance against the distorted concept of ‘development’.” **CONNIE NAGIAH AND MARGARET MAPONDERA, P. 18**

“Togo introduced a basic income which poor people could access by text message.” **SAMIR ABI, P. 20**

“One of the pressing challenges in Kenya is the unequal distribution of resources.” **ABIGAIL KIMA, P. 21**

“The World Bank has developed a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to coal transition.” **ELIZABETH RUPPERT BULMER, P. 23**

“A multinational corporation is being legally obligated to provide climate protection.” **SABINE BALK, P. 26**

“The good news is that investment funds that apply clear ESG criteria are becoming increasingly popular.” **BRUNO WENN, P. 27**

“The uncertainties of the Anthropocene are expected to undermine people’s mental wellbeing.” **ROLI MAHAJAN, P. 28**

“UNEP’s 32 online courses offer interesting insights into international law.” **SUPARNA BANERJEE, P. 31**

“Carbon pricing helps nations to achieve their climate goals while increasing tax revenues at the same time.” **PRINCE THOMPSON, P. 32**

“The data on what kind of disaster would affect which communities in what ways, is quite limited.” **SUPARNA BANERJEE, P. 33**



Indigenous people fight for the protection of their land and the environment in the Philippines.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Fighting “green colonialism”

Issues of justice matter increasingly in the global debate on the climate crisis. Joan Carling, an indigenous rights and environmental activist from the Philippines, told D+C in an interview what vulnerable local communities demand and what is holding up the transformation to sustainable lifestyles around the world.

Joan Carling interviewed by Maren van Treel

How do you define climate justice?

It means that those that have caused the crisis are accountable for it. They have the responsibility to address the situation and assist those who are suffering disproportionately because of the impacts. Climate change is a result of industrialisation, so

high-income countries with long industrial histories must assume responsibility. Poor countries lack the means to cope with global environmental change, so they deserve support. Rich nations, however, must not only support poorer ones, they also need to drastically reduce their carbon emissions. Currently, they are not changing their unsustainable lifestyles and exploitative economic system as they should.

What is the perspective of indigenous peoples?

We indigenous peoples have the smallest carbon footprints. We live in areas where the impacts of global warming are felt, but we do not have the means to cope with the rapid changes that are happening. In the past,

we could adapt because things happened slowly. Now change has become fast, drastic and largely unpredictable.

To what extent are your voices heard in global debate?

We are making ourselves heard in climate talks but our rights and well-being are not fully addressed. We can make significant contributions, especially in regard to our knowledge and practices of sustainability. How we think about resources matters. We consider them valuable not only because they serve our present needs, but just as much because future generations will need them too. Therefore, we manage – and conserve – them diligently. Accordingly, a large share of the Earth’s remaining biodiversity is found on indigenous peoples’ territories. Indigenous communities focus on the common good, not individual interests.

Do you want that to be the international approach too?

Well, the global pattern is to look at resources from a commercial perspective, focusing on the monetary and commercial value. The profit-maximising extractivism is what has caused climate change. Businesses thrive on creating a lot of artificial demand so people will consume more. Production and consumption thus result from profit interests. Sustainability and social equity are not prioritised. This mindset needs to change.

Do you think that will happen?

Yes, I see mindsets changing, especially among young people. There is a trend of people reducing consumption to reduce their carbon footprint. They are also in the streets and taking action demanding governments to take drastic actions to save their future. Many people pay attention to recycling, moreover, buying second-hand clothes instead of new ones, for example. There is also a spirit of volunteering. People clean up, collect garbage and don't create more waste. Small changes matter. The more people join in, the more we will achieve. Nonetheless, we must still address the root causes. Those that have caused the crisis need to change their behaviour immediately. Systemic changes at a global scale to change the extractivist and unsustainable economic system must be implemented.

Were you happy with the results of the climate summit in Egypt last year?

It is a big step forward that a loss and damage mechanism will be established. I see it as a crucial accountability mechanism. From the perspective of indigenous peoples, loss and damage means renewing our harmonious relationship with nature. It is important to rehabilitate areas that were destroyed and degraded, and it requires funding and technical support. Direct, appropriate and adequate support and assistance to indigenous communities suffering from the impacts of climate change such as flooding and drought should also be provided. We need to ensure that the environmental destruction will not happen again.

What dangers are looming on the way to a sustainable world?

A just transition is an important part of climate justice. We support the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, but it must not harm indigenous communities. Unfortunately, that is what is happening. Our land

is being grabbed for renewable energy projects – whether for windmills, solar farms or dams. The extraction of transition minerals without the consent of indigenous peoples, without equity and the protection of the environment is green colonialism in the name of climate action. We need to make sure that human rights are upheld and principles of social justice are applied in the course of the transition. Far too often, we indigenous peoples are not considered. Our resources

denied their rights and a life in dignity. “Why would we change our economic system and comfortable lifestyles?” is a racist attitude when the poor people, the majority of which are the “coloured people” are suffering because of these. It flies in the face of the need for global solidarity to drastically reduce carbon emission at its source and assist those that are suffering from the impacts of climate change but have contributed the least.



Joan Carling (right) advocates indigenous peoples' rights.

are exploited without our free, prior and informed consent which is part of our fundamental right. Once again, we are on the losing end. We are being sacrificed, even though we are doing the most to protect the global environment.

What is your organisation, Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI), doing?

We are raising awareness, supporting communities defending their lands, territories and resources and advancing policy reforms for the respect and protection of indigenous peoples' rights against criminalisation and human-rights violations with impunity. We insist on solutions that respect rights and facilitate inclusion. When decisions are made without us, no one understands the impacts of climate change and so-called development on our lives. We are doing what we can to make ourselves heard. We are not simply victims, we insist on our rights and we provide solutions.

Do you see racism in how the climate crisis is being addressed?

Yes, there is a strong racist undercurrent. Some people are privileged and others are

In 2018, you were labelled a terrorist by the administration of Rodrigo Duterte, who was the president of the Philippines. How did that change your life?

I fully understand what human-rights defenders at risk are facing. It really affects you emotionally and mentally. It causes a lot of uncertainty, stress and anxiety. It becomes hard to focus on the work you want to do. Sometimes it makes it very difficult to pursue different advocacy strategies because of the risk and possible consequences to the life and well-being of activists in the front line.

Did you begin to doubt your mission?

No, I did not. Indeed, the government's approach strengthened my belief that we must not consider this kind of authoritarian governance normal. We need change. Trampling on human rights is plainly unacceptable. What I found encouraging, was the strong expression of solidarity at the local, national and international level. It was quite overwhelming, and ultimately made the administration drop the charges, not only against me, but other activists as well. At that time, UNEP, the UN Environment



President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva with Sônia Guajajara, Brazil's first indigenous minister.

Programme, gave me the Champions of the Earth award. More generally speaking, environmental activists and human-rights defenders deserve to be honoured. We are not terrorists and should not be forced to live in fear. We are promoting the common good, not special interests.

Does the IPRI have more encouraging news from other countries?

Yes, recent developments in Brazil and Colombia are quite encouraging. People who are partners of IPRI have recently risen to powerful positions. Sônia Guajajara is now Brazil's federal minister for indigenous peoples, and Leonor Zalabata Torres is now Colombia's new permanent representative to the UN in New York. She is a member of our board. These two strong women will hopefully be able to make invaluable contributions to advance the protection of our rights, well-being and aspirations not only in their respective countries but globally as well.

How do you assess climate justice in middle- and low-income countries?

I see more and more social movements rising up in these countries. On the other hand,

there are more authoritarian governments. Political repression is a huge challenge. We face increasing risks when we speak out. In most places, the approach to development is still unsustainable. The only good thing is that Jair Bolsonaro was not reelected in Brazil. However, he still has many supporters and there is a right-wing movement. President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva attending the climate summit in Egypt, however, was a breath of fresh air. We as indigenous people met with him there and appreciated his clear commitment to protecting the Amazon.

How do you assess the situation in China?

China is a very complex country. What is clear is that China is aspiring dominance, which is why they are offering huge investments and funding. They are literally all over Asia, Africa and Latin America with investments. China does not have effective accountability mechanisms, and they have a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. The People's Republic of China is positioning itself as an economic power, but with no environmental or social safeguards including respecting and protecting human rights.

Do you see any positive impulses coming from China in terms of climate issues?

At the domestic level, I think they are trying to rise to the challenges. That is a good thing for the Chinese people. They focus on gaining economic control globally but not on achieving sustainability and social equity. They need to acknowledge that we share the world's resources and we must collectively manage them sustainably to the benefit of all of humanity. That is what global solidarity is about. We will all be doomed if every country – not only China – does what it can to protect its own people to the detriment of others.



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International (IPRI), a non-profit organisation defending the rights of indigenous peoples. In 2018, Joan Carling was awarded the Champions of the Earth award by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

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Rising flood waters all too often affect household work.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

No gender justice, no climate justice

The climate crisis is one of the greatest threats humankind is facing. It is not gender neutral, so the response cannot be gender neutral either.

By Nusrat Naushin and Maliha Masfiqah Malek

Climate change is exacerbating existing inequalities. Women and marginalised groups bear the brunt, but get the least support. The climate crisis is causing losses and damages at an alarming rate. It is also compounding other destructive trends such as desertification and the erosion of ecosystems, leading to further and more intensified losses and damages.

The frontline communities are the first ones to face such impacts. So people are at the heart of climate crisis as well as climate resilience. The impacts of global heating affect women and men differently. Women's interests thus deserve explicit attention in decision making and implementation processes. In developing countries, women tend to depend particularly on natural resources. At the same time, they are too often neglected in public affairs and suffer most in times of crisis. Capacity building is needed to empower them to become more actively involved.

In several areas, adaptation success depends on taking a gender-inclusive approach:

- **Resources:** Women and girls often face barriers to accessing resources, including land, finance and technology, and that limits their individual adaptation options.
- **Safety:** Women and girls are often at a greater risk of violence, particularly in contexts of displacement and migration.
- **Health:** Environmental change can exacerbate issues of female hygiene and health issues, in particular when safe water becomes scarce.
- **Economic opportunities:** Climate change disrupts livelihoods, especially in rural areas where people depend on natural resources. Women and girls are affected in particular. More generally speaking, women's economic opportunities tend to be more limited than those of men – and that is particularly true in climate-vulnerable developing countries.

In spite of many difficulties, women are often agents of change in their communities. They play a crucial role in responding to the impacts of climate change and promoting sustainable development.

Consider the example of Tengarkhali, a village in southwest Bangladesh. It was

often inundated with sea water, and increasing salinity reduced people's access to safe drinking water. For 20 years, Gita Roy and other women from her village in Bangladesh's Satkhira district, campaigned to convince villages and elders that reverse osmosis was the solution to their water scarcity problem. With the help of Water-Aid Bangladesh, the women of that village themselves now run the Moricchap Drinking Water Plant and have successfully tackled one of the lasting impacts of climate change.

To fully empower women, one must address cultural barriers and create an enabling environment. Core issues include:

- Improving women's access to resources such as land, finance and technology, to boost their standing in their communities.
- Investing in girls' education as well as capacity building and skills training for women, further empowering them to participate in public affairs.
- Encouraging such participation, in particular regarding issues relating to environmental change and other gender-sensitive issues.
- Mainstreaming gender-sensitive approaches in adaptation and mitigation measures.

Women's knowledge can play a critical role in responses to climate change. Their leadership is needed. National as well as international actors have a responsibility to empower women. Support is needed not only in financial terms. Education, capacity building and encouragement matter too.

Climate finance should be mobilised in a gender-sensitive manner and take into account all dimensions of gender justice. Without gender justice, there can be no climate justice.



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Due to oil-extraction pollution, some places are dangerously contaminated in the Niger Delta.

EMPOWERMENT

Women oppose environmentally destructive ‘development’ projects

In sub-Saharan Africa, women and vulnerable groups are experiencing the worst impacts of the climate crisis. WoMin, a pan-African eco-feminist alliance, is active in the fight for climate justice. The alliance’s mission is to give voice to the African women and frontline communities that feel the impacts of environmentally destructive projects and resource extraction.

By Connie Nagiah and Margaret Mapondera

Africa is particularly disadvantaged: since 1880, the continent has caused less than three percent of all carbon emissions, yet it is experiencing some of the worst impacts of the climate crisis. Heatwaves, droughts, forest fires, floods and the rise in sea level,

which is affecting coastal regions, are all increasing rapidly.

The food security and livelihoods of many millions of people are at risk. With a current population of approximately 1.4 billion people, the World Bank estimates that by the year 2050, there will be up to 86 million climate refugees in Africa.

Women bear the brunt of the climate crisis. The reason is that patriarchal gender roles have assigned them primary responsibility for producing and preparing food, collecting water and harvesting energy. In most cases they also care for children as well as the elderly and sick.

WoMin wants to make African women’s everyday realities visible and strengthen their position. The main goal of the work is to pre-

vent the natural environment on which women depend from being further destroyed. In many countries, however, the environment is being threatened by large-scale extraction projects or infrastructure expansion.

LAND GRABBING AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION

In cooperation with women’s groups, farmers and communities impacted by mining, WoMin is supporting resistance movements and campaigns against oil and mineral extraction and other mega projects. The organisation draws attention to the consequences of the climate crisis and the associated crises of land grabs, water scarcity and large-scale resource extraction.

At the Women’s Climate Assembly, held in October 2022 in the Niger Delta, Ngozi Azumah from Nigeria spoke out against energy companies. She pointed out that the Delta’s food and soils are very rich, but have been defiled by the pollution caused by oil and gas extraction. She spelled out that the companies do not compensate local people for the harm they cause. Azumah insisted that before fossil-fuel extraction began, “we

were working and contributing something”. Women’s scope for economic activity and feeding children has been reduced.

The event was supported by WoMin and convened over 100 women from different women’s organisations in West and Central Africa. All of them are working together to fight destructive large-scale projects. The participants believe that these often worsen the climate crisis and impact communities’ access to communal resources such as water and farmlands. The event gave women a platform to discuss what kind of sustainable and just development solutions African women and their communities need to survive – now and in the future.

“Building the voices of rural women in climate action will make sure that there are real solutions to climate change,” Josiane Boyo Yebi from Côte d’Ivoire emphasised. “Rural women are doubly impacted, they suffer the loss of the land and the consequences of the climate crisis.”

SPECIFIC PROJECTS

WoMin is active in 17 African countries and supports numerous initiatives, including a collective of women working in the fish processing industry in Bargny, Senegal. They are opposing a coal-fired power plant that is planned for their community. They fear that the plant will further poison their already polluted coast and thereby destroy their livelihoods.

In Madagascar, WoMin is working with the organisation CRAAD-OI (Centre de Recherches et d’Appui pour les Alternatives de Développement-Océan Indien / Research and Support Center for Development Alternatives-Indian Ocean). It promotes climate justice for communities and sustainable development alternatives. The activists support a women-led resistance against the Australian mining project Base Toliara. The women believe that the planned extraction of minerals will threaten protected forests as well as the sovereignty of the indigenous Mikea community.

OPPOSING “GREEN” EXTRACTIVISM

In the Northern Cape province of South Africa, WoMin is directing its efforts against so-called green extractivism, which the organisation wants to expose as deceptive greenwashing.

International corporations and politicians continue to display a rapacious interest in Africa’s wealth of natural resources and markets. “Green” extractivism is a new form of raw material extraction. It refers to the extraction of the minerals and metals that are needed for the technologies that address climate change, such as lithium batteries, wind turbines, solar cells or electric vehicles.



Participants of the Women’s Climate Assembly in October 2022 in the Niger Delta.

It also includes generating energy through “green” gas, hydrogen, and mega-dams.

This kind of resource use is a false solution because it continues to violate human rights, destroying ecosystems in the name of fighting climate change. With regards to green extractivism, there are new proposals for raw-material extraction every week. Companies are working with the state agencies. All too often, the promises they make are empty. Ultimately, the communities are likely to be robbed of their land and, consequently, their livelihoods. Local people do not benefit from raw-material extraction, and they are not compensated for land seizure and pollution.

Across Africa, WoMin is organising resistance to the distorted concept of “development”. It is necessary to build movements that empower women, so communities can exercise their right to say “no” to harmful projects.

WoMin’s work also includes researching the cost and impact of destructive development projects, questioning the plans of governments and companies and supporting community-led actions. These efforts include legal support, advocacy campaigns

and building development alternatives from the ground up.

Communities that oppose these projects are often subjected to harsh reprisals when they express their opinions. For that reason, WoMin and a network of allies have created the platform “Rise Against Repression”. It collects the stories and testimonies of human-rights defenders who were sub-

jected to repression or have even died (also note essay by Suparna Banerjee on page 30 of this issue).

WoMin connects its demand for an end to destructive ‘development’ to a call for the payment of ecological debt for climate-related damage from historically responsible countries and polluters. The goal of all these activities is for women to come together in a pan-African movement to fight for climate justice. After all, their future is at stake.

LINK

Rise Against Repression:
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SOCIAL PROTECTION

The road to universal inclusion

When crises strike, the poor who depend on the informal sector suffer most. Governmental social protection hardly covers them. During the Covid-19 pandemic, however, Togo temporarily introduced an innovative guaranteed income which was accessible by text message. This kind of scheme is needed to protect vulnerable people from economic shocks.

By Samir Abi

Modernity and progress become evident in people travelling around the globe fast, scientists exploring outer space or international digital communications. At the same time, the UN Development Programme points out that 1.2 billion people live in acute poverty.

The gap between the rich and poor is widening, with social disparities getting worse in all countries. Global trends exacerbate problems – from climate change to inflation and the lingering impacts of Covid-19. In developing countries, many people still do not even have access to safe water and electric power. At the same time, far too many people even in prosperous nations do not have a secure livelihood or reliable access to health services, in spite of spectacular technological progress.

Things could be different. Solutions are feasible. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Togo introduced a basic income which poor people could access by text message.

It is commonly said that every crisis offers some opportunities. It proved true in the Covid-19 crisis, when protecting people became the political priority. To stem the spread of the disease, decisionmakers in both the public and private sectors had to respond creatively. An equally important challenge was to prevent masses of people dropping deeper into poverty.

In countries with high incomes, subsidies for private-sector enterprises and the established tools of social protection served these purposes. In many countries with low and middle incomes, that was not feasible however. The main reason was that a large share of economic activity is informal.

In West Africa, for example, some 80 % of the people depend on informal jobs. Whether they work as street vendors in small workshops or around the fields, the businesses are not registered, and there are no reliable employment statistics. The informal sector is operating in plain sight, but it is not monitored by government agencies. It is not illegal, but largely unregulated.

Neither income taxes, nor corporate taxes are collected. There is no equivalent of payroll taxes with which high-income countries fund social protection schemes. In less fortunate countries, governments thus lack both the financial means they would need for inclusive social protection programmes

and the data that would allow them to distribute the money sensibly. Some countries, however, have introduced mutual health insurance schemes.

€ 10 PER WEEK

When coronavirus surged, Togo's government opted for an innovation in 2020. It introduced a cash-transfer programme called "Novissi". This word means solidarity in Ewe, one of Togo's most spoken languages.

Various African countries use different kinds of cash-transfer programmes to fight rural poverty. The big advantage is that recipients decide how to use the money in ways that help them best. This approach has proven to be more efficient than supplying people, households or communities with specific predefined goods or services.

Novissi was particularly ambitious because it covered the entire nation, providing support to people with informal jobs in



Street vendor in Lomé: Togo temporarily offered informal workers social protection.

both rural and urban areas. All they needed was a mobile phone, so they could send and receive text messages. Today, almost everybody has one, and even first-generation devices can be used for text messaging.

To get access to Novissi, one had to indicate the number of one's identity card or voters card as well as the kind of informal job one had been doing. The number was then verified with government data. Smart, deep-learning computer programmes served Novissi to identify the poorest regions and the most vulnerable people. The



World Bank and two US-based universities lent technological support.

Those who were acknowledged to be deprived informal sector workers were then sent a code which allowed them to pick up money at a relay station. The system was simple, so people could use it even if they had no access to other kinds of financial services.

How much money a person got depended on their sex. Women were entitled to 12,500 CFA francs (the equivalent of €20) every two weeks, while men were only paid the equivalent of €16. The reason for this positive discrimination was that women typically manage family expenses in Togo.

According to the Novissi website, the programme had registered 1.6 million people or about 17% of Togo's people in early February 2023, and had disbursed about €20 million to 820 000 beneficiaries.

Because of the high costs, the government had to scale the programme down in early 2021. Novissi had been supported by institutions like the World Bank, the French governmental agency AFD and private do-

nors via the platform Give Directly. Togo has no mechanism to fund this kind of social protection scheme on its own in the long run and would need more international support to keep Novissi going for all people in need.

To eradicate poverty as envisioned in the UN development goals, every country needs sustainable social protection. Given that economic shocks are increasingly being caused by international phenomena such as global heating, the loss of eco-systems or inflation, there is a need for global solidarity. Small countries with low incomes have not caused these problems – and they cannot rise to the challenges on their own.

LINK

Novissi:

<https://novissi.gouv.tg/>



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KENYA

Devastating impacts

The climate crisis is a human tragedy. Countries in Africa are least responsible for causing it, but are among the countries most affected. Kenyans feel the impacts daily, including insecurity, hunger and death.

By Abigael Kima

Africa is the world's second largest continent – and yet it today accounts for less than four percent of global emissions, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA), and almost zero percent of historical emissions.

Climate justice demands that those responsible for causing the crisis must be held accountable, and those most affected must get adequate support to adapt to the problems and mitigate them.

I come from a small town in western Kenya called Iten. Agriculture is the backbone of my community's economy. My siblings and I had it easy at school because our parents could sell their farm produce after the harvest season to supplement the income from their day jobs and thus never struggled to pay our school fees. In schools in rural Kenya, sometimes parents have the option to provide food (a bag of maize and beans) for the school meals instead of paying the full amount of school money. This is supposed to help them pay the subsidised fees. However, last year, for example, they lacked crop to do so because of delayed rains.

Weather patterns have changed drastically in Kenya, threatening our most important livelihood. Our country depends on rain-fed agriculture. Farmers keep suffer-

ing losses due to the unpredictable weather conditions. They have no one to turn to for compensation and they do not know enough about the impacts of the climate crisis to try to address it.

Northern Kenya is currently suffering from a drought that is causing massive cattle deaths. Livestock is the main source of income for the pastoralist communities living in this region. As a result, we now see children suffering from malnutrition on a daily basis, women travelling miles to find water for their families and families taking turns to eat in shifts, doing their best to cope with food insecurity.

In many parts of the country, on the other hand, the rainy season brings the threat of raging floods and with it the loss of shelter, disease and death, rather than the prospect of a successful harvest.

Climate justice requires a number of changes at global and national levels. For example, we need a paradigm shift from energy systems based on fossil fuels to more sustainable and renewable energies such as wind and solar power.



Young people's outlook is darkening: dead livestock is a daily visible impact of the climate crisis in Kenya.

According to the International Trade Administration, a US government agency, Kenya's electric power use is 81% renewable energy. In transport and household usage, including fires for cooking, there is still much room for improvement. Most Kenyans use wood, dung, charcoal or kerosene for cooking. Measures for clean and efficient household energy would therefore benefit both health and the environment by generating more renewable energy for electricity that can be used for cooking and other household purposes. Lacking funds are the main bottleneck here. Africa has great potential for the generation and provision of renewable energy, but this can only be tapped if the corresponding financial resources are made available.

Over the years, we have failed to implement policies and regulations that hold companies and governments accountable for emissions and the resulting climate damage. Action has become more urgent than ever. The communities at the forefront of climate change continue to suffer extreme weather disasters, with little or no ability to recover. The lack of accountability and delivery on promises made at global climate summits is compounding the problems.

One of the pressing challenges in Kenya is the unequal distribution of resources, which leaves many communities vulnera-

ble. For communities to cope, we need more investment in infrastructure, such as water-storage systems and irrigation.

There is also a need for greater investment in education and training. Communities must understand the impacts of climate change in order to see how they can deal with them. It is problematic that they have always been portrayed as victims rather than agents of change. It is imperative to empower and educate those who are disproportionately affected, including women and other marginalised groups.

CLIMATE FEAR AMONG THE YOUTH

The young generation has currently inherited the worst effects of the climate crisis due to the inaction of the older generation. Countless young people suffer from climate anxiety because they do not know what the future will actually look like. Policy frameworks have proven to be inefficient and insufficient when it comes to creating a safe planet and a world worth living in for this generation and, even worse, for the generations to come. Those who have made profits from fossil-fuel development do not have to live with its consequences as long as we young people do.

As far as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

(UNFCCC) process is concerned, progress was made at the UN Climate Summit in Egypt with the establishment of a loss and damage fund. But it cannot stop there.

We need a mechanism to ensure that the outcome of the two major collective goals of past climate summits – the old pledge by high-income countries to mobilise \$100 billion annually to support low- and middle-income countries and the new loss and damage fund – are accessible to the vulnerable communities that need them most.

Climate justice means that the high-income countries responsible for this crisis finally deliver on their promises. They must provide the financial resources we need to adapt and transition to a green economy with sustainable livelihoods. Climate justice means that policymakers fully recognise that climate impacts exceed the capacity of many communities to adapt – and show real solidarity by ensuring that funding flows to communities like mine.



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Coal barges in Indonesia, 2019.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Facilitating the transition away from coal

In order to tackle the climate crisis, countries must switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy. However, closing coal mines causes hardship at the local level and often devastates communities long term. The World Bank assists countries in facilitating a just transition for mine workers and local communities.

By Elizabeth Ruppert Bulmer

More and more communities are suffering the impacts of extreme weather events, which damage homes, roads and other kinds of basic infrastructure on which people's wellbeing and livelihoods depend. While everyone agrees that taking action to address climate change in the long term is important, the rush to respond to immediate needs, repair damage and restore livelihoods takes priority in the moment, diverting attention from longer-term climate objectives. We tend to lose sight of the big picture – namely, the need to decarbonise in order to prevent or at least minimise future impacts of global warming.

Many responders, whether individuals, local governments or national

policymakers, are simply worn out or overwhelmed by the magnitude of the change needed. But if we are tired now, how will we feel in 10 years, when climate-change effects will have intensified? If our fiscal resources are strained just keeping up with ongoing climate shocks, how much worse off will we be a decade from now?

It is terrifying to ponder these questions, but it should help to spur action. At the individual level, adjusting our consumption patterns and energy-use behaviour could eventually add up to make a dent in carbon emissions. But governments could make a much bigger difference. On the one hand, they could shift their direct consumption and investment decisions in ways that reduce their carbon footprint. On the other, they could introduce policy incentives that induce action by a wide range of economic agents: large and small firms, high- and low-income households, state agencies at the national and subnational levels.

MOVING TO RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

One of the most important options for significant decarbonisation is to transi-

tion away from coal to renewable-energy sources. The past two decades saw a sharp increase in coal consumption in developing countries, due to strong economic growth and rising incomes. Since 1990, China's per capita electricity consumption increased by a factor of nine, Indonesia's rose by a factor of six and India's more than tripled, according to a recent World Bank report (Ruppert Bulmer et al., 2021).

During this period, low-income and lower-middle income countries also increased their dependence on coal. This commodity currently delivers nearly half of developing countries' total energy needs (see figure below). Richer countries, by contrast, have increasingly shifted towards natural gas, which until recently has been readily available at low prices and was deemed "cleaner" than coal. However, global markets and consumer sentiment are dramatically different today, as Russia's war in Ukraine rages on. Sadly, the ongoing oil and gas supply disruptions and resulting energy crisis have increased the appeal of coal. Coal prices have rebounded and mines are being reopened or expanded in many countries.

Reducing reliance on coal-fired electricity requires significant investment in renewable power generation and resilient distribution networks. Moreover, it is necessary to address the price distortions that make excessive energy consumption attractive. Carbon taxes can serve that purpose, and it also makes sense to introduce efficiency incentives to induce lower consumption. To achieve significant progress at the

global level, concurrent policy efforts and investment are needed at scale.

Today, 10 countries produce 90% of all coal mined globally each year. Once-dominant European and North American producers have been squeezed out by China, India, Indonesia, Australia and Russia, among others. For much of the last decade, global coal prices were declining, so many coal mines scaled back production and eliminated jobs. The level of coal sector employment is not high, with only 4.7 million jobs worldwide in 2019. This is one third below the level of 2008. Even in the most important coal producing countries, coal jobs account for less than 0.5% of national employment.

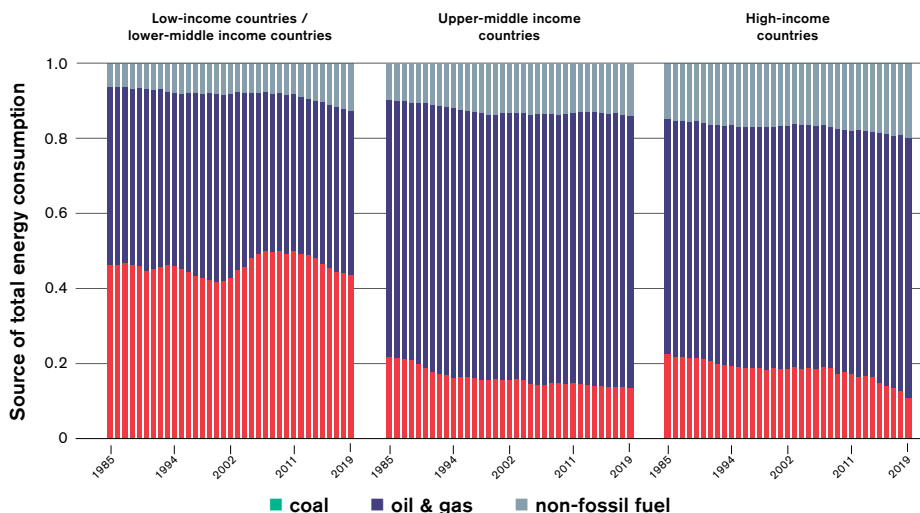
Despite small job numbers, coal sector jobs tend to play a disproportionate role in the local economies where coal mines operate. Mine workers earn salaries, and they spend their earnings on housing, food, health and other needs. Their expenditure sustains jobs in other sectors, and these jobs are at risk when a mine closes. Such indirect effects help to explain why mine closures cause enormous hardship, undermining local economies and hollowing out communities. In past decades, episodes of this kind occurred in many places. Unaddressed environmental damage further impeded economic recovery in many mining regions. Unhappy memories linger on, so the prospect of coal-mine closure is politically fraught.

Many coal-producing countries are grappling with the conflicting objectives of decarbonisation and job creation. Governments have sought technical assistance from international organisations to help plan for coal transition. Key is to ensure that future mine closures are well-managed. In order to avoid backlash, it is necessary to facilitate a just transition to viable economic alternatives for affected workers and their communities. Improving the environmental health of mining lands will benefit the health of the local population and at the same time create economic opportunities.

THE WORLD BANK'S APPROACH

The World Bank has developed a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to coal transition, with heavy emphasis on pre-closure diagnostics, institutional analyses and multi-stakeholder engagement. It

Energy consumption by source (1985-2019)



Note: Country income classification on the basis of 1991 WB classification. Source: Ruppert Bulmer et al., 2021: Global Perspective on Coal Jobs and Managing Labor Transition out of Coal. World Bank. Authors' calculations based on BP Statistical Review of World Energy.

is important to assess alternative energy pathways and their likely impact on jobs in affected communities from the start. Critical aspects include the scope of affected workers, their skill profiles and the alternative employment opportunities that may be available following mine closure. To some extent, that may include land clean-up and repurposing, for example for renewable energy or other activities. Such information is then used to design support policies that facilitate inclusive transition and mitigate income shocks in the adjustment period.

This comprehensive World Bank approach takes time and effort. Much coordination within and across government agencies is needed. Consulting communities on their concerns and priorities is essential. The result should be a thorough, consistent transition plan and an appropriate institutional governance structure to implement it. These elements can jointly facilitate government commitment and convince various stakeholders of the approach. When governments have a clear vision of the costs and benefits of coal transition, they can take the necessary bold action, allocating public resources to sustainable investments that adequately account for the climate crisis.

Both public and private financing will be needed to meet the scale of the challenge. At the recent COP and G20 summits, advanced economies committed to mobilising additional public and private financing to accelerate coal transition in some of the

largest coal-producing countries, including Indonesia and South Africa.

As more and more people around the world struggle with the impacts of global warming and government resources are strained by short-term crisis response, it is time to start addressing the structural challenges of decarbonisation. This requires careful planning, investing public resources at the necessary scale and aligning incentives that empower economic agents – individual consumers, families, local communities and private businesses of all sizes – to play a role.

FURTHER READING

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Plaintiff Saúl Luciano Lliuya by Lake Palcacocha, a glacier lake.

GROUNDBREAKING LAWSUIT

Holding corporations accountable

The effects of global warming can be felt in many parts of the world – worst of all in countries that have contributed the least to the climate crisis. In the Peruvian Andes, for example, glaciers are melting with potentially disastrous consequences. An Andean farmer took legal action in 2015 to hold a German corporation accountable.

By Sabine Balk

Over 50,000 residents of the Andean city of Huaraz are threatened by glacier melt. One of them is Saúl Luciano Lliuya, a farmer and mountain guide. According to data from the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Germanwatch, Lake Palcacocha, located several kilometres above Huaraz, has more than quadrupled in volume since 2003. It is



now 34 times larger than it was in 1970. Climate change is raising the risk that large ice blocks will break off the glacier and fall into the lake, which would cause a destructive tidal and inundate the city with a metre of water.

Saúl Luciano Lliuya refuses to simply accept this threat. In November 2015, with support from Germanwatch, he filed a lawsuit against the energy company RWE in a German civil court. The company is one of many corporations whose business model is based on fossil fuels. RWE is one of Europe's largest carbon emitters, and Germany's largest. It must therefore bear some responsibility for the climate crisis in general and the flooding risk in Huaraz in particular.

Special about this lawsuit is that, for the first time, someone affected by climate change is asking a private company to contribute in the necessary protective measures. Lliuya wants RWE to fund adaptation measures at Lake Palcacocha. He wants its contribution to be commensurate with the company's share of responsibility for the global climate crisis.

According to "Carbon Majors", a report published by the NGO Climate Justice Programme in 2014, RWE is accountable for

0.47 % of all greenhouse gases emitted globally since the beginning of the industrial era. According to data from Germanwatch, the construction of a levee on the Andean lake would cost around \$ 4 million. Approximately half a percent of that would be \$20,000, which would be RWE's contribution.

Should RWE be unable for legal reasons to fund protective measures along the lake, the plaintiff wants the conglomerate to pay a share of the costs for the measures that are needed to protect his house from the risk of flooding. From the start, it mattered to Lliuya that the lawsuit would not only benefit him personally. He is committed to protecting his home town and its people. In future, the glacier retreat may cause water shortages too.

The activist wants to educate residents of Huaraz about the existing risks. Moreover, he intends to involve them in the drafting of adaptation strategies.

Peru's authorities should be held responsible for upholding their duties too. Ultimately, the German law suit could set a precedent that others affected by climate change could invoke in court. That too would exert pressure on policymakers.

BIG WIN AFTER INITIAL DEFEAT

The Peruvian activist initially suffered a defeat. The Regional Court of Essen, Germany, dismissed his case in 2016. However, the court of next instance, the Higher Regional Court of Hamm, determined at the end of 2017 that a civil claim against RWE was possible in principle. It decided to start hearing evidence, and that was a big win for the climate movement. For the first time, judges confirmed that a private company is responsible in principle for its share of climate-related damage.

The Higher Regional Court of Hamm decided to gather evidence on-site in Huaraz. That procedure had to be postponed multiple times due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally, in late 2022, it became possible to make the trip, and two judges from the Higher Regional Court travelled to Peru with court-appointed experts. They wanted to determine whether the plaintiff's house would actually be threatened by a potential tidal wave.

The experts have not yet compiled their report. It will be submitted to the court

and the parties, and the litigants will get time to file their responses. Quite possibly, the report will then be discussed in an oral hearing as well. According to media reports, the Higher Regional Court expects the next oral hearing to take place in the first half of 2023.

RWE is casting doubt both on its liability and the admissibility of the climate lawsuit. Before the court, its attorneys expressed the concern that this case might trigger a flood of lawsuits against private-sector companies. The corporation is trying to show that it is impossible to attribute glacier melting in the Andes to the emissions caused by an individual company. RWE is

even questioning whether climate change is causing the melting. Scientists, meanwhile, have delivered new arguments in support of Lliuya. A research team from the University of Oxford has modelled the retreat of a glacier above Lake Palcacocha and the corresponding increase in the flood risk. They thus established a rather clear causal chain for a worsening flood risk in specific places due to climate change.

Climate activists have long argued that countries with high past and current emissions, as the instigators of global warming, should financially support low-income countries that are dealing with damage and losses. Companies like RWE should

also bear some of the costs of the risks and damages that are being incurred as a result of their business model. The lawsuit of Saül Luciano Lliuya is making an important facet of this international debate.

LINK

Climate lawsuit website:

<https://rwe.climatecase.org/de>



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Shell told to reduce emissions

In many countries, environmental activists are mobilising against companies and taking legal action to ensure compliance with the climate goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement. In the Netherlands, environmental organisations achieved one of the greatest legal victories so far. They defeated the multinational oil company Shell in 2021. The court ordered the company to reduce its net CO₂ emissions by 45% by 2030, relative to 2019.

The Hague District Court thereby acknowledged that Shell has contributed substantially to global warming, which is having disastrous consequences for residents of the Netherlands. The headquarters of Royal Dutch Shell used to be in the Hague, but the conglomerate moved to London in 2022, primarily for tax reasons. It renamed itself Shell.

Seven environmental groups and 17300 individuals sued the company for its failure to adhere to the climate goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement. And for the first time, a court

is attempting to force an international oil giant to actually implement the goals outlined in the agreement, and to do so at the global level. Indeed, the court order applies to the entire scope of the multinational corporation's operations.

According to experts, the decision was ground-breaking. For the first time, a multinational corporation is being legally obligated to provide climate protection. The implication is that these obligations are enforceable. It remains to be seen how effective the court's decision will be. Shell has appealed, and it's uncertain whether the judgement will be upheld in the second instance.

The corporation argues, among other things, that it is unjust for an individual company to be singled out, and that there is no legal precedent for courts to issue judgements against private companies regarding climate protection.

Worldwide, the number of lawsuits for greater climate protection continues to increase: according to media

reports, around 1700 proceedings are currently ongoing, several of which are directed against energy companies. For example, in Germany in 2021, the organisation Environmental Action Germany (Deutsche Umwelthilfe – DUH) took Mercedes-Benz, BMW and the oil company DEA to court, demanding, among other things, that cars with internal combustion engines should be phased out by 2030.

The DUH has brought several successful lawsuits against federal, state and local governments. In regard to Mercedes, the Regional Court of

Stuttgart dismissed the case in September 2022. Now the DUH is appealing its decision in the Higher Regional Court of Stuttgart.

The French oil company TotalEnergies was also sued by six civil-society organisations in France. The corporation wants to extract oil in Uganda and transport it via a pipeline through Tanzania. The plaintiffs state that the plans seriously threaten the local people's human rights. Moreover, they violate the Paris Agreement. The case has been pending before the Nanterre court since December 2021. SB



Dutch students protest against Shell.



Golomoti is the first commercially operated solar-power plant in Malawi. It is a public-private partnership between Canadian independent power producer JCM Power, investment company InfraCo Africa, the Malawian government and the state-owned Electricity Supply Corporation of Malawi.

IMPACT INVESTING

From billions to trillions

Official development assistance is insufficient for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and funding indispensable climate measures. The concept of “blended finance” should help to mobilise additional private funds. A good business environment is needed.

By Bruno Wenn

In 2020, global expenditure on official development assistance (ODA) was \$162 billion, according to the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). Much more money is needed to fund SDG-related programmes, including climate protection and adaptation measures in low-income countries. According to current estimates, there was a gap of \$3.9 trillion in SDG funding alone in 2020.

Accordingly, instruments for mobilising more private funding were created back in 2015. According to the motto “from billions to trillions of dollars”, ODA money is being used to unlock private capital for socially, environmental and economic pur-

poses with an eye to sustainable poverty alleviation in low-income countries.

For example, private companies are given guarantees that reduce regulatory and exchange rate risks. Moreover, subsidies serve to encourage them to invest in low-income countries. The approach is called “blended finance” and is typically taken by development finance institutions who serve the private sector directly or via investment funds.

However, enthusiasm for blended finance has waned somewhat. According to the latest available data from the OECD, a mere \$51.3 billion in private funds were mobilised for low-income countries in 2020. Critics bemoan that the money typically neither flows to the countries with the lowest incomes, nor to the sectors with greatest financial need. They have a point.

However, the state of affairs also shows two things:

- Donor governments’ expectations were unrealistic, and
- ODA is not geared properly to address underlying structural barriers to sustainable development.

The desired growth of private investments from billions to trillions of dollars will require comprehensive policy changes in low-income countries. A fundamental challenge is to radically reduce legal and regulatory risks. The countries with the greatest need for assistance tend to have rather limited financial resources as well as underdeveloped financial markets. Exchange-rate risks further limit their scope for attracting private investors.

REDUCING RISKS

The real bottleneck is thus not private funding as such, but rather the unsuitable business environment of many countries. By investing in renewable power generation in a low-income country, a private-sector company can indeed play a major role in granting more people access to sustainable energy. However, companies will only make such risky investments in places where rules and regulations permit commercial activities with an acceptably low risk level.

For example, private investors in the power sector rarely operate where states do not have feed-in tariffs for national grid. Companies depend on contracts being reliable in both legal and financial terms. Moreover, they must manage exchange-rate risks.

It is thus unsurprising that private investors so far tend to gravitate towards mid-

dle and higher-middle income countries. That is where they find the kind of economic and regulatory environment they can thrive in. For the same reasons, the small number of private investments in social sectors like health, education or water provision should not come as a shock. First of all, the public sector must step in and create the required regulatory environment and ensure legal certainty.

Donor governments and multilateral development banks must therefore do more to support low-income countries in the efforts to establish appropriate conditions. On that basis, the targeted application of blended finance could encourage pioneer investors to the low-income countries and social sectors that so far have been neglected.

If successful, such projects would send a powerful signal to other investors. Taking this comprehensive approach will allow significantly larger – and desperately needed –

amounts to be mobilised for the SDGs and climate financing.

The good news is that investment funds that apply clear environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria and pay attention to social and environmental impacts are becoming increasingly popular. The interest in sustainable finance and investments was inspired to a large degree by the Covid-19 pandemic, which revealed serious sustainability risks in global supply chains. At the same time, the boom in sustainable investments is being advanced by specific requirements made by central banks and banking regulators. Obviously, the specifications of the EU taxonomy on the uniform assessment of the sustainability of economic activities matter too. The boom in ESG investing should ultimately contribute to closing funding gaps in low-income countries.

In order for that to happen, however, the conditions for sustainable investment

must be created in these countries. Furthermore, significant efforts are required to measure and report on ESG criteria and their impact within a binding, transparent system.

Many circles around the globe, such as the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN) and the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB), are currently working on such a system in order to expand existing international policy on financial reporting and integrate this reporting appropriately. Doing so will be a decisive step towards mobilising private funds effectively and transparently to finance SDGs.



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GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Decline in human development

The Human Development Report warns that important global-development scores have declined significantly in 2020 and 2021. Progress made towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been reversed and many countries have fallen back to the 2016 levels of human development gains.

By Roli Mahajan

Globally, human development has declined for two consecutive years according to the Human Development Report (HDR) 2021/2022 published by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This is a first in the report's 32-year history. The report gives a picture of the average achievement of a country through the Human Development Index (HDI), which is based on longevity, education and standard of living.

For most of the last 30 years, the human-development score of least-developed countries improved significantly more than that of member countries of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), a club of prosperous nations and emerging markets. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the two groups have diverged. Inequalities are more pronounced now and are likely to stay. Gender inequality also increased.

Over 90% of all countries have registered a decline in their human-development score in either 2020 or 2021. Living standards have fallen significantly in South Asia, for example. Life expectancy dropped globally, down from 72.8 years in 2019 to 71.4 years in 2021, largely contributing to the HDI's recent decline. Covid-19 has significantly impacted life expectancy, along with many other areas of life, including employment and education.

The reversal of progress is not surprising. Global shocks like the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have stalled global recovery. Extreme temperatures, fires, storms and floods sound the alarm of planetary systems. Each shock has exposed limits of – and cracks in – current global governance. According to the report, the world is in a state of global paralysis. It is hurtling from one crisis to another, unable to tackle the root causes of issues that confront us. The authors question why the change needed is not happening.

UNCERTAINTY AND INSECURITY

The report stresses that even though humankind has faced diseases, wars and environmental disruptions before, worries about the future are increasing and different at present. Mental health and psychological problems are on the rise. The report names three new sources of uncertainty that are interacting to create a “new uncertainty complex”.

1. Anthropocene's inequalities: The term Anthropocene refers to a new geological age characterised by human-induced changes to our planet. It is defined by grow-

ing inequality and power imbalances. People who have contributed less to planetary pressures like the climate crisis are expected to bear its brunt the most. For instance, extreme heat will have a higher impact on mortality and labour reductions in low- and middle-income countries.

The threat of proliferation of nuclear weapons, the more frequent (re-)emergence of zoonotic diseases and extinction of over 1 million species are all also products of the Anthropocene. According to HDR, the uncertainties of the Anthropocene are expected to undermine people's mental wellbeing in four ways:

- traumatising events,
- physical illness,
- general climate anxiety and
- food insecurity.

Climate change itself is considered an "inequality multiplier".

2. Profound social and technological changes: If the Anthropocene brings forth a novel set of challenges and uncertainties, finding solutions to these challenges and reducing planetary pressures means fundamentally transforming how societies live, work and interact with nature. This could include policies that transition societies and industries to renewables and adopt new green technologies. It is an uncharted territory, which can have multiple, unprecedented and unequal outcomes. This is what the report calls "transitional uncertainty".

An example of this would be the uncertainties attached to creating additional 24 million green jobs globally by 2030 in order to transition away from fossil fuels. These jobs might not be in the same regions where people stand to lose jobs as fossil fuel industries shut down. Also, they might require a new skillset. Moreover, increased use of automation and artificial intelligence is fuelling technology transformation and transition related uncertainties.

3. Political and social polarisation: The report states that polarisation coupled with a decline of democratic characteristics in political systems is on the rise. This is powered by rampant spread of misinformation, which is leaving different groups with different selected facts, thereby adding another layer of uncertainty where people don't know what to believe. Consequently, there is a general feeling of lack of trust and a divide within and among societies.

The report argues that those who feel most insecure are also more likely to hold extreme political views. Moreover, in the aftermath of a shock, for example a financial crisis, support for political extremes increases. Insecurity and political polarisation are thus feeding off each other and preventing collective action.

In a nutshell, the report positions human development "not just as a goal but as a means to a path forward in uncertain times," as UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner writes in the foreword. It does so by emphasising the interdependence of solutions: in order to solve our domestic prob-

lems, we need to solve the global ones and vice versa.

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Title of the Human Development Report.

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Unfulfilled duties

The global environmental crisis is escalating. The international community has made progress on adopting agreements, but much more needs to happen. Online courses on the UNEP website help to get a deeper understanding of international law.

By Suparna Banerjee

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted three decades ago at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. It is humankind's attempt to get a grip on climate change, though so far the efforts have not been efficient to prevent calamities.

The context of the UNFCCC keeps developing. Annual Conferences of the Parties (COPs) serve that purpose. The last major agreement was concluded in Paris in 2015. It is not legally binding, but makes the commitment to keeping global temperature rise below 2°C – and preferably 1.5°C – below the preindustrial level.

All signatory countries are expected to make voluntary commitments to reducing carbon emissions and to scale those commitments up systematically. For this purpose, COPs must regularly take stock of the progress made towards mitigating global heating. So far, it remains insufficient. At current trends, average temperatures are set to rise by more than 3°C above preindustrial levels.

Anyone who wants to get a clear understanding of the Paris agreement is well advised to do the online course Climate Change International Legal Regime on the UNEP website. Relevant information includes that developed countries have an obligation to provide climate finance to developing countries, and that various sources, instruments and channels can be used to mobilise money. Moreover, the agreement includes the obligation to support capacity building in least developed countries and small island developing countries, both of which are particularly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of the climate crisis.

On the other hand, the Paris Agreement says nothing about compensations

for losses and damages that result from climate change. The decision to establish a mechanism for this purpose was taken at the most recent COP in Egypt last year. But then again, this summit did not achieve much in regard to mitigating the problems.

The UNEP course also provides information regarding the Kyoto Protocol. It was adopted in 1997 by a COP in the Japanese city of its name.

The UNFCCC makes a distinction between advanced high-income economies and the transition countries of the former Soviet bloc on the one hand (Annex 1 coun-

The Protocol offered some flexibility. For instance, it allowed Annex 1 countries to pool their efforts, with one country doing more than pledged and the other doing less. It also defined a clean development mechanism, according to which emissions reductions which were achieved in a non-Annex 1 country thanks to support from an Annex 1 country could be counted as reductions achieved by that Annex 1 country. For several reasons, the protocol is largely considered a failure:

- The USA did not ratify the agreement, with President George W. Bush declaring in 2002 that it would be detrimental to the nation's economy.
- Other Annex 1 countries later withdrew.
- As a group, the signatory Annex 1 countries achieved the defined goals, but that was mostly due to the economic collapse of the former Soviet bloc and sluggish



Successful activism: protestors from the Dongria Kondh community arriving at a rally against bauxite mining in the Indian state of Odisha in 2018.

tries) and all other nations on the other hand. The Kyoto Protocol spelt out percentages by which Annex 1 countries were supposed to reduce their greenhouse-gas emissions. In sum, emissions were meant to decline by at least five percent in these countries by 2012.

economies after the financial crisis of 2008.

The Kyoto Protocol thus did not lead to mitigation measures that facilitated environmentally safe growth. There were attempts to give it more teeth. Binding targets, however, proved very controversial, so they no longer figure in the Paris Agreement.

A lasting impact of the Kyoto Protocol, however, was the definition of what gases count as greenhouse gases. In 1997, that included carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride. Nitrogen trifluoride was added in 2012.

UNEP's Law and Environment Assistance Platform (LEAP) offers several interesting online courses regarding international legal regulations (see box). In early 2023, the total number of courses was 32.

ACTIVISM TO DEFEND THE ENVIRONMENT

Another course is called "Mini course on environmental defenders". It starts with elaborating what groups and individuals can collectively do to protect, promote and respect the right to a clean environment. It illustrates environmental activism around the world.

For example, the course considers a legal battle that went on for 12 years in India. In the end, the Supreme Court recognised the rights of the Dongria Kondh, an indigenous community. They demanded that the forests they depend on must not be de-

stroyed by bauxite mining and insisted that their religious values be protected. The full truth is that conflicts over natural resources often escalate violently.

According to the UNEP course, some 197 persons were killed because of their environmental activism in 2017. The authors do not count victims of civil-war-like strife and admit that the true number of casualties may be higher. They state that reporting is poor in many places. A strong point of the course is that it includes individual stories, and thus provides a sense of human touch, rather than hiding behind statistics.

Examples from around the globe demonstrate how similar struggles are, with projects that supposedly serve development all too often causing considerable environmental damage. The course indicates that murders often relate to competition over natural resources, with perpetrators benefiting from impunity, lawlessness and corruption.

Environmental damage often affects human rights, so governments have an obligation to protect activists. They fall within the scope of the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups

and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Both courses show that governments all too often do not live up to their responsibilities, whether they are spelled out in legally binding norms or not. UNEP helps to get a better understanding of the issues.



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Corrections: The original version of this essay misunderstood the meaning of Annex 1 and Annex 2. It was an editorial mistake.

Due to another editorial mistake, there was an inaccuracy concerning the Kyoto Protocol in André de Mello e Souza's essay on ODA in our previous Digital Monthly (2022/02, p. 4). The article stated that the advanced economies had failed to live up to the Kyoto pledges. It should have stated that they failed to turn the protocol into a long-term instrument for mitigating global heating. D+C/E+Z

UNEP's useful e-learning courses

Browsing the internet, one must be careful about what sources to trust. LEAP is reliable. The acronym stands for the Law and Environmental Assistance Platform, which is run by the UN Environment programme (UNEP). Its 32 online courses offer interesting insights into international law pertaining to ecological issues.

The courses cover a wide range of topics, from the international climate regime (see main story), which so far does not fulfil its purpose, to the international framework on ozone depletion, which has proven quite effective. Other courses deal with the Minamata convention on Mercury, the

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) or the protection of freshwater resources. Each course tackles a specific topic.

The platform is designed to reach internet users around the world. Users in regions with poor connectivity are encouraged to download resources so interrupted electro-power supply or internet access will not disrupt their studies.

The courses are well designed in a didactical way. One must sign up to take part. Quizzes serve to check the progress learners make. A certificate is provided when a certain number of questions are answered

correctly. These "badges" serve as an incentive for professionals who may want to document newly acquired knowledge.

The courses also provide options for chatting with peers, thus creating networks of like-minded individuals working on similar topics. Participants share experiences and discuss challenges. This approach helps to build global partnerships and campaign for stronger laws and more effective enforcement. Intercultural exchange on matters of global relevance can be quite fascinating – and valuable.

LEAP offers feedback sections where learners can state what they liked and disliked. On this basis, LEAP promises to improve its performance.

A weak point is that the language structure is rigid

and, at times, boring. The jargon used and the syntax could be made more compact and less repetitive. Unfortunately, moreover, some courses were not accessible to students in January. Topics concerned included the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

LEAP is based on the Montevideo Environmental Law Programme, an intergovernmental effort to review and document legal regulations. It was first launched in 1982. The current version is the fifth in the series and spans the years 2020 to 2029. UNEP hosts the Programme's secretariat. SB

LINK

<https://leap.unep.org/>



Germany's fuel taxes are back at the previous level after temporary reduction in 2022.

REDUCING EMISSIONS

Taking stock of carbon pricing

A recent publication of the OECD assesses carbon-pricing policies around the world. The authors are in favour of this approach and warn that energy subsidies remain a serious problem.

By Prince Thompson

Carbon pricing helps nations to achieve their climate goals while increasing tax revenues at the same time. According to the authors from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), more needs to happen for countries to achieve net-zero emissions. Their report highlights several strong points of the carbon pricing approach:

- It provides across-the-board incentives for firms and households to reduce carbon-intensive energy use and shift to cleaner fuels.
- It sends price signals for investors, making clean technologies more attractive.
- Unlike energy efficiency standards and other regulations, pricing systems leave households and businesses some flexibility.
- They boost government revenues wherever they apply.

- In developing countries, carbon pricing can be a component of scaling up national revenue systems and making tax systems more effective.

The OECD team warns, however, that too many governments subsidise fossil fuels, thus lowering the costs of carbon emissions. The result is more emissions and tighter government budgets.

Carbon pricing can be done in two ways. Either governments tax emissions, or they sell emission permits, which can then be sold or bought on markets at varying prices. Economists tend to prefer the second approach, because it provides more flexibility, with prices rising and falling according to demand.

The EU uses an emissions trading system (ETS). In actual terms, emitters in the EU paid €53 per tonne CO₂ in 2021. That was three times more than in 2018 (€17). In the UK, where a similar ETS is in force, the price was the equivalent of €56 in 2021. The main reason for the higher prices was that governments charged more for the initial permits. The systems keep evolving – and new ones are being introduced. China started a new national ETS in the electric-power sector.

The price is the equivalent of only six dollars so far, as the OECD authors report.

NO COHERENT STRATEGY

Many countries raise fuel taxes, for example on diesel or gasoline. These taxes are called “explicit carbon pricing” in the OECD’s technical jargon. In many places, these taxes have been increasing considerably before the Covid-19 pandemic. The OECD authors bemoan that there typically is no coherent taxation system. Around the world, taxes on coal tend to be more than 10 times below those for diesel or gasoline even though coal is the most polluting fuel.

Moreover, taxes do not apply to all sectors equally. The report states that road transport is affected by fuel taxes in many countries, whereas fuel is subsidised in agriculture, fisheries and in the context of buildings. Some countries subsidise fuel use on roads too. The various taxes charged in different countries typically do not add up to consistent efforts to reduce carbon emissions. The authors note that fuel taxes tend to be particularly high in Europe and particularly low in least-developed countries.

When carbon prices rise, government revenues increase. The exact impact, however, will fluctuate over time. If, as is intended, higher energy prices reduce energy consumption – and thus the related emissions – revenues will eventually decline

again. The OECD authors insist, however, that the additional revenue can be crucial during the transitional phase when adjustment costs are high. In principle, this money can be used for any public purpose. At the same time, the OECD experts make it very clear that subsidising fuel is destructive. It leads to more environmental damage and depletes government budgets.

Since climate change affects everyone, the OECD experts argue that it makes sense to impose energy prices on everyone too. They admit, however, that some people may be too poor to cope with the higher costs. In the authors' eyes, this is not a reason to keep prices low. They propose special support for the people concerned.

The report acknowledges that several countries have lowered energy taxes in response to rising global prices in the course of the war in Ukraine. Even where such tax relief is supposed to be temporary, the experts warn, it may prove hard to roll back. They point out that targeted support would help vulnerable people more, cost govern-

ments less and not distort price incentives to switch to renewable alternatives. If governments keep prices low, those benefit most who use most energy, and they tend to be prosperous, the OECD insists.

In Egypt, the report states, a successful reform of fuel subsidies resulted in financial savings, so the government was able to increase funding for health and education programmes. Moreover, it could afford a stimulus programme to help the economy recover from the Covid-19 crisis.

The OECD advises developing nations to avoid some of the transition costs that the rich world is experiencing. The point is not to build new infrastructure that will require fossil-fuel use for decades to come. Instead, it makes sense to opt for low-carbon technologies early on, and price incentives can help to make that happen.

Even though there has been progress in regard to carbon prices, the authors insist that there still is a very long way to go for the approach to fulfil its potential to reach net-zero. According to them,

- the bulk of energy use is still not covered internationally,
- the policies implemented by governments are still too timid, and
- the response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine has undone some of the progress made in the past.

LINK

OECD, 2022: Pricing greenhouse emissions (also available in French).

<https://www.oecd.org/tax/tax-policy/pricing-greenhouse-gas-emissions-turning-climate-targets-into-climate-action.htm>



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DISASTER CONTROL

Manage risks with targeted information

As disasters happen more frequently and with greater force, it is becoming increasingly important to take risks seriously. Around the world, we need better communication mechanisms, based on accurate maps and statistics.

By Suparna Banerjee

“We have limited knowledge of disaster risk management”, says Sade Gawanas, until January mayor of Windhoek, the capital of Namibia. Compounding the problems, the data on what kind of disaster would affect which communities in what ways, is quite limited – and that is not only true in African countries.

Indeed, no one had expected how devastating the heavy rains of summer 2021 would prove in Germany's Ahr valley. Flood waters killed at least 134 people. Experts pointed out that Germany had several lessons to learn.

One of them is that Germany needs an early warning system that relies on cell phones. Accordingly, 8 December was declared national warning day. At eleven in the morning, mobile devices were supposed to ring all at the same time together with the city sirens. But not all of them did.

Even if they had, experts wonder whether that would have been sufficient for effective disaster management. Once

warned, citizens will know that a catastrophe is on the way, but they also need to know how to respond. Should they run upward, or are they more likely to find some safe space in lower places? Which location nearby is safe? And what can be done in case of technological failure? Quite obviously, moreover, the response to a flood must be different from the response to a forest fire.

To protect people, adequate communication and information are essential. Risk assessments and disaster-management strategies should be designed with the support of scientific insights. Global challenges – such as the climate crisis – require action at the local level. These issues were debated at a symposium organised in Bonn in December by the Development and Peace Foundation (SEF) in cooperation with Engagement Global (EG) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

INVOLVING THE PEOPLE

Instead of implementing ideas top-down, experts agree that efforts should involve



In the summer of 2021, the German river Ahr burst its banks in many places and swept away entire villages. More than 130 people died.

grassroots communities. Involving stakeholders and taking their suggestions into account creates a sense of ownership, which fosters broad acceptance and deeper understanding of the issues.

Awareness raising is essential. People need to be trained to take risks seriously. Regular drills and workshops are helpful. Street-theatre performances can improve outreach. However the information is shared, it must be expressed in simple language, so everyone will understand it. In many countries, schools do not address disaster risks, their causes and appropriate behaviour properly. It makes sense to update curricula accordingly. Ramian Fathi of Wuppertal University argues that society in general must be involved in prudent disaster-communication strategies.

In disadvantaged world regions, resources are scarce. A big challenge is to use existing facilities as effectively as possible. It may simply be unaffordable to install a new siren system, for example, so relying on the mobile phones most people have makes more sense.

To spread information properly, however, those in positions of responsibility need reliable data. In low-income countries, there typically is a lack of good statistics. Countries should thus improve international cooperation on these matters, helping one another to close research gaps. Most disasters, moreover, do not stop at national borders. Climate-induced displacement can affect several countries and – indeed – the international community as a whole.

PROMISING INITIATIVES

The challenges are huge, but there are some promising initiatives across the globe. One example concerns Ahmedabad in India. In the summer, temperatures rise to over 45 degrees, and hundreds of people die every year in the heat. Dilip Mavalankar from the Indian Institute of Public Health explains that the institute launched a Heat Action Plan, which includes information campaigns regarding sensible behaviour. It also provides sunscreen lotions and coolers at the roadside.

In Malawi, reports Julius Ng'oma of the country's Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONECC), efforts are underway to combine traditional knowledge with modern science. He confirms that involving locals in planning and implementation of measures fosters a sense of ownership. Their interest in the issues increases when they see they are taken seriously and their inputs are prioritised.

The experts at the Bonn symposium agreed that human behaviour has caused – and is exacerbating – phenomena like deforestation, urban growth, resource extraction, the erosion of ecosystems and global heating. Harmful activities must be stopped. If the dangerous trends are not mitigated, adaptation and disaster management will prove impossible.



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Photo: Walter Huppu / Lapia / Germanwatch