

## BOTSWANA FEELING THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Following the recent Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Bab Ighli, Marrakech, Morocco from 7-18 November 2016, Botho University in partnership Climate Exploration Hub convened private sector, government, academic institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to help Botswana navigate a complex route to achieving climate resilience. In a one-day seminar held at Botho University, Botswana's situation was described as highly vulnerable but with opportunities such as solar energy and underground water storage. Diversifying the economy was also considered important for reducing the nation's vulnerability.

In her opening remarks, the UK High Commissioner, Ms. Kathrine Ransome noted that Africa is experiencing effects of climate change and Botswana is not spared. She cited the reoccurrence of drought and floods which have affected the country as examples of how real

climate change is. She also noted that there is funding available for climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies and said she was concerned as Botswana is not taking advantage of such funding.

Dr Opha Pauline Dube from the Department of Environmental Science, University of Botswana alluded that COP 22 Conference successfully demonstrated to the world that the implementation of the Paris Agreement is underway and the constructive spirit of multilateral cooperation on climate change continues. All Parties should strive to formulate and communicate long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies, taking into account their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances.

When reviewing the COP 22 outcomes and their implications in Botswana, Dr Opha Pauline Dube said Climate change is already being attributed to a number of changes in Botswana, including longer drought episodes, changes in rainfall patterns, outbreaks of crop diseases that affect the most important sector to rural households and subsistence agriculture. At a national level, Botswana is experiencing significant water shortages resulting in dependence on neighboring countries for inter-basin water transfers to augment its domestic supply. Botswana needs to do more to establish tangible and the intangible losses emanating from climate change. Furthermore, she said Developed countries are to take the lead and go beyond previous efforts in mobilizing climate finance. .



File Photo Mmegi: Letsibogo dam drying up



Panelists as they were giving their presentations at the seminar

Panelists also had their say on climate change, Ms. Verena Jensen; the Department of Meteorological Services said the government of Botswana has initiated nation-wide consultations to build climate change into all of its development activities. She said climate change is affecting everyone and networking is the best solution to all. Ms Chandapiwa Molefe, a researcher from UB working on the ASSAR project said some diseases may be influenced by the climate change; her personal

opinion was that the development of data bank should be invented for climate change, if the community won't act against the against change the this will lead to floods and drought and the main livelihoods of rural population is relying on agriculture, and forestry resources.

Another panelist, the organizer of the seminar, Mr Obakeng Sethamo said climate change lead into poverty if the country can be hit by the drought and floods, livestock rearing will be affected as it is based on the grazing of natural rangelands which are highly sensitive to climate variables.

“Economic growth offers an opportunity to alter for the long term the risk profile of countries with respect to climate change. There is the possibility to build climate resilience into decisions from the outset. To do this, adaptation plans need to systematically identify the opportunities, where proactive adaptation can be factored into development strategies and long-term investment plans, he said.

For his part, The Videre Global, Mr Robert Hanna said it's no longer the preserve of scientists and political activists; climate change has started to occupy the mainstream of everyday discussion. In the world of business and finance, climate change has developed from being a fringe concern, focusing on the company's brand and its Corporate and Social Responsibility, to an increasingly central topic for strategic deliberation and decision-making by executives and investors around the globe.

With more than 32 years of experience in natural resources conservation, KCS has become a lead in influencing environmental policy. The society, through CBNRM programme facilitation and conservation projects has mobilized mass community action in environmental management in Botswana; this includes actions towards climate change resilience In the face of life threatening water shortage within the Central Kgalagadi Game Reserve (CKGR) settlements, the Kalahari Conservation Society (KCS) drilling five boreholes to avert high mortalities of wildlife in the game reserve, resulting from the prevailing drought. Through ASSAR, KCS will be running a series of seminars about what research says to the general public.



Group photo of participants of the seminar at Botho University

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