



Civil Society Interrogates Botswana's Readiness to Implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change

Climate change has become a household topic, making its way into everyday talk. Just like the AIDS pandemic and the Global Crunch in the early 2000s, climate change has become a global phenomenon. Its impacts are already felt by most countries and thus necessitating dialogue on how to reduce global warming and help nations cope with the impacts. While global conventions on other environmental matters such as biological diversity, climate change and desertification were first ratified in between 1993 and 1995, the framework convention on climate change has had more active dialogue, running at 22 Conferences of Parties (COP) while others are still at 12 COPs.

In a workshop organised by Botswana Climate Change Network (BCCN), 'adaptation' was highlighted as a more urgent priority for developing countries as compared to 'mitigation'. Mitigation entails a reduction in the amount of carbon that a nation emits into the atmosphere. Mitigation is more relevant to developed nations as they have much high carbon-emission levels than developing countries. The workshop was held at Woodlane Hotel, Gaborone on the 4th of May 2017 under the agenda 'A Readiness Framework for Implementing the Paris Agreement 2016-2020'.



Ms Sony addressing the workshop attendants.

The chairperson of BCCN, Ms Tracy Sony, highlighted that before the 22nd Conference of Parties (COP 22) which was held in Marrakech, Morocco, they put together their three key requests on behalf of the civil society with an attempt to influence the outcome of that conference. COP 22 intended to operationalise the climate change goals agreed at COP 21 (Paris Agreement) in Paris, France. One of those goals was to hold the global average temperature rise within 2 degrees Celsius.



Loss of forest cover to agriculture is a challenge that Africa still has to contend with.

Photo Credit: Photograph - Howard Burditt/Reuters

Speaking at the workshop, Ms Sony explained that climate adaptation is a priority for developing countries such as Botswana. She warned that while climate change mitigation is important for reducing carbon-emissions, it would present huge economic challenges in many developing nations.

Alternative technologies are costly and many developing countries lack the skills to manage such technologies. These two factors hamper the pursuit of low carbon-emission development in developing countries. The 22nd Conference of Parties has therefore agreed that developing countries will continue their development path as planned while availing themselves of opportunities to adopt technologies that emit less carbon dioxide. These include the use of solar energy and harvesting of biogas from cow dung and food waste.

“There is still a debate between the developing and developed countries. Developing countries are saying we still need fossil fuel for our economic stability while some developed countries are suggesting shutting down of these high



*Bamagwato Concessions Limited mine in Selibe Phikwe.
The closure of the plant led to more than 5000 job losses
Photo credit: Sunday Standard*

greenhouse gases emitters. Imagine an economy such as South Africa’s, that intensively relies on energy; telling them to shut down the Medupe Power Station is like shutting down their economy. This is a very sensitive issue especially for us in Africa,” Ms Sony said.

Most countries in Africa rely on agriculture and non-renewable energy. Botswana serves as an example of an economy that partly survives on agriculture. Even though agriculture can boost an economy, it negatively impacts on the climate through carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and other greenhouse gases emitted by fertilizers, pesticides, and smoke from farm machineries. The negative impact of fossil fuels is also undeniable. However, ordering countries to stop their dependence on these might ultimately reduce their potential to graduate out of poverty.

A second request by Botswana’s civil society was that there be ‘more action and less talk’! The third request was that the number of instruments required of developing countries by the Paris Agreement implementation framework should be streamlined so as not to overwhelm the developing countries’ institutional capacities. Such instruments include the National Adaptation Plan (NAPs), National Adaptation and Mitigation Action (NAMAs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) amongst others.

Oarabile Monnawatlala, KCS PR team

The Kalahari Conservation Society

Plot 398, Extension 4

Off Independence Avenue, Kgasa Close

P. O. Box 859

Gaborone, Botswana

Cell: +(267) 75214502

Tel: +(267) 3974557

Fax: +(267) 3974259

Email: publicrelations@kcs.org.bw website: www.kcs.org.bw