

Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss and Pollution

There is a significant disconnection between people and the planet. People do not view nature and the environment as their home, business ground, and cycle of life. This lack of responsibility for treating the environment leads to rising global temperatures and loss of critical natural services. Understanding that we are part of nature makes us realize it is everyone's responsibility and our future. Therefore, we must combine our efforts to achieve a greater goal faster: adaptation and mitigation of climate change.

Kenya's Climate Policy Landscape

The climate change agenda is critical to Kenya, mainly since 42% of Kenya's Gross Domestic Product and 72% of overall employment is derived from natural resource-dependent sectors, including tourism, agriculture, fishing, and forestry, which are highly sensitive to climate change. This makes Kenya highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and variability.

As we aim to become a competitive middle-income country with a high quality of life for its citizens by 2030, communities must deal with factors that continue to impact their livelihoods and assets. Take, for instance, the recurring droughts that render their members susceptible to malnutrition and, in most cases, death. Floods leave a sequence of crop damage in their wake. With the more significant erratic burden of climate variability on the nation's economic development, we must consider the issue of climate change so apt and act fast!

On a national level, Kenya has set ambitious goals to combat climate change as outlined in several climate change strategies and plans, including the National Climate Change Action Plan 2018-2022, the Green Economy Strategy and Implementation Plan 2016-2022, and the National Determined Contributions (NDCs) among others. As a country, we aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 32% below the business-as-usual scenario by 2030, per the recently submitted NDCs to the UNFCCC. This represents a more ambitious target than the previous target of 30% and aligns with the strive to attain economic, social, and environmental development.

The private sector, through KEPSA, under which SIB-K is nested, is keen to adopt forestry and work with the government to plant the required seedlings to address the current effects of climate change. Kenya's forest and tree cover was reported at 8.8% and 12.13%, respectively, by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. Public-private partnerships played a critical role, aiming to achieve a 10% forest cover by the end of 2022. KEPSA has been at the forefront of organizing tree-growing initiatives and rallying the private sector's engagement. Towards this dedication, in May 2022, the private sector led by KEPSA committed over Ksh 6.4 billion towards an accelerated national tree-growing campaign.

From adopting clean energy, water harvesting, and proper waste management to reducing drainage clogging to tree planting, there is a role for all of us, from the community level to businesses, to re-nature before it's too late. It is time to reconnect the dots between environmental and human well-being and provide accessible and affordable models to support the transformation.

Kenya has made impressive strides in establishing a legislative framework at the national and county levels, notwithstanding her international commitment to ratifying the Paris Agreement. At the national level, the Climate Change Act 2016 has shaped and enhanced Kenya's efforts to address the impacts of climate change.

First, it resulted in the establishment of a Climate Change Fund to catalyze climate finance mobilization, which has been a great hindrance to implementing climate actions. Second, it recognized that climate change impacts are local and require local solutions. Through the Act, provisions for county

governments to establish local mechanisms to address climate change were made mandatory. Through this, around ten counties have already enacted county climate change legislation.

The Climate Change Act 2016 also strengthened climate change governance by establishing a directorate of climate change at the national level, which has been instrumental in steering Kenya's ambitions to address climate change drivers and their impacts.

Despite this, only real action and the reconnection between people and the planet will lead to sustainable change. If the Covid-19 pandemic is anything to go by, we must understand that without a balanced planet, there is no future. Sustainable Inclusive Business works with businesses in Kenya and across the continent to help them understand and appreciate their relationship with biodiversity while applying nature-based solutions, carbon offset-setting, and climate change. We believe in combining efforts to achieve a greater goal, faster – adaptation and mitigation of climate change to enhance resilience.

Food and Agriculture

According to data by the FAO, "Agriculture is vital to Kenya's economy, contributing 26 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and another 27 percent of GDP indirectly through linkages with other sectors. The sector employs more than 40 percent of the population and more than 70 percent of Kenya's rural people.

Agriculture in Kenya is large and complex, with many public, parastatal, non-governmental, and private sectors. The sector accounts for 65 percent of the export earnings and provides the livelihood (employment, income, and food security needs) for more than 80 percent of the Kenyan population."

Food Nutrition Security (FNS) is one of Kenya's top priority areas, as highlighted in the agenda for the big four. Agriculture is the second-largest contributor to the country's GDP after the service industry. The demand for food is on the rise, evidenced by the increased population, with the country having 47 million people (2019 Census); this is a growth of 23% from the last census conducted in 2009.

To sustain its population, Kenya is keen to adopt technologies and innovations to increase productivity per acre, provide nutritious value, efficiently use resources, and reduce post-harvest loss while conserving biodiversity.

The adoption of circularity in the agriculture sector is seen as a game-changer. Food loss is linked to the amount of greenhouse gas emissions, hence the potential for achieving Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). As of the end of 2020, Kenya committed to reducing its GHG by 32% by 2030. To date, it is crystal clear that food security and safety must go hand in hand. Short-term production increases will not lead to better yields in the long term. It is time to look at soil quality, regenerative techniques, and climate-smart solutions to produce better and more food with only a positive impact on the earth that provides for us (and our health).

To illustrate the opportunities for circular agriculture in Kenya, we executed a report commissioned by the Netherlands Embassy, dubbed "Kenya and the Netherlands working together towards circular agriculture in Kenya." The report provides 11 farming trends and opportunities that indicate the transition towards circular agriculture. It includes a selection of best practices across five areas hoped to inspire anyone working in the agricultural sector. [Download the report.](#)

Further, we're working with the *Beyond Cultural Limits Foundation (BCL)*, a Maasai community-driven organization that strives to create sustainable communities and environments. Founded by Faith Supeet, BCL aims to promote sustainable livelihoods within the Maasai community by providing clean

water, creating community and kitchen gardens, and educating the community on resilience, collective living, economic sustainability, and climate-smart regenerative agricultural practices.

Water

Water scarcity and 'day zero' have been common phrases used over the past few years, for example, in South Africa and many others. In Kenya and Ethiopia, droughts are a yearly phenomenon. Yet, we are not conscious enough of water usage when available, with many people lacking access to potable water in East and Southern Africa. These droughts caused by global warming pose a serious threat to Kenya and Africa at large. The rainy seasons have become more unpredictable, and farmers fear their crops will be lost due to a lack of water.

In 2022, we surveyed the private sector, and 46% of the participants identified drought/water as the top sustainability issue they are addressing. For this reason, Sustainable Inclusive Business aims to increasingly partner with water and WASH experts to illuminate what sustainable water consumption means and the available technologies to optimize sustainable systems by applying the Circular Economy principles.

Energy

Non-renewable energy sources, particularly fossil fuels such as coal, are the dominant energy sources for electricity generation in most African countries. As the world transforms into a low-carbon and inclusive society, how can using renewable energy sources, such as biomass and biofuels, assist Africa in its transition to a low-carbon economy? South Africa has been criticized as the most intensive G20 economy with the highest coal reliance, and it is estimated that 85% of the nation's electricity is generated using coal.

On the other hand, "Kenya has a liberalized energy sector and has made significant progress in recent years in formulating renewable energy policies. Kenya's electricity power mix is among the most sustainable in the world, with 85% of electricity coming from renewable sources."

Let us collectively seek solutions, such as renewable energy, regenerative models, and a just transition in Africa. Exchange knowledge, compare national and private best practices, and address challenges that hinder the achievement of more sustainable alternatives.