



CTPD'S MONDAY OPINION

This is a weekly column aimed at sharing CTPD's perspective and steering public debate on various issues pertaining to Trade & Investments Law, Public Finance Management, Extractives and Human Development.

TODAYS TOPIC

FLOODS & THEIR IMPLICATIONS ON LIVELIHOODS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES



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In this week's Monday Opinion, we are looking at the impacts of climate shocks and among them is flood events. We are discussing the implications floods on livelihoods, risk reduction measures, and implementation challenges faced by both government and communities.

The climate change induced risks such as floods have multiplied in recent years. The multiplication is attributed to unpredictable heavy rainfall patterns induced by climatic changes, socio-economic factors like population growth, increased infrastructure developments near water bodies, and land subsidence driven by overdrawing groundwater.

World Resources Institute (WRI) reports that floods have already caused damages amounting to over One trillion dollars globally since 1980, and the situation is poised to worsen. The Aqueduct Floods data tool from WRI indicates that affected number of people by riverine floods will increase to 132 million in 2023 from 65 million in 2010. In 2010, floods damaged property in urban areas that amounted to 157 billion dollars, and will increase to 535 billion dollars by 2030. Flooding is not only a threat to human lives but also to economies especially of developing countries due inadequate technology and infrastructure.

Like many other Sub-Saharan African countries, Zambia is exposed to a variety of hazards coupled with vulnerability that can lead to disasters. The frequency and intensity of climate variability and change have increased overtime with a share of both seasonal and flash floods, high temperatures and droughts, locking the poor into more poverty. The National Disaster Risk Management (NDRM) Framework (2017-2030) indicates that poverty and unsustainable land-use management have worsened the situation, thereby reducing the coping capacity and resilience of communities.

Moreover, the climate change impacts are clear on the Zambian population, with majority living below the national poverty line. The paper by Hambulo and others "Climate Shocks, Vulnerability, Resilience and Livelihoods in Rural Zambia" of 2015 report that climate shocks such as floods reduced cotton production by an estimated 68%, and both maize and groundnuts by 33%. In

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the 2017/2018 growing season, 202,257 farm households or nearly 12% were affected by the worst floods in Zambia. Additionally, the floods that occurred in the 2018/2019 season affected 11.3% of homes headed by women and 12.3% by men, respectively. Worth noting, women making up 80% of food producers both in male and female-headed households, indicating the vulnerability of women to climate shocks such as floods.

To combat the climate shocks such as floods, numerous policies, legislation or frameworks have been put in place at international, regional and local levels, and among them is the Paris Agreement on Climate change; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Sedai Framework; SADC Disaster Preparedness and Response Strategy Fund (2016-2030); National Disaster Management Policy (2015) and Act (2010). At national level, the NDRM Framework is one of the main documents operationalising the Sendai Framework under the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU). The framework builds on mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into the national development planning processes.

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of DRR strategies in planning; lack of disaster resilient infrastructure; inadequate resources such as technology and technical expertise as well as lack of awareness of DRR strategies among vulnerable communities. Community based early warning and early action has continued to be a challenge, leading to loss of livelihoods especially among farmers depending on rain fed agriculture.

The recent flash floods in Central, Eastern and Southern provinces confirm the challenges of flood resilient infrastructure and inadequacies in preparations. The flash floods swept away infrastructure such as settlements, roads networks, bridges as well as agriculture fields exposing the people to other risks such as diseases, water and food insecurities, relegating the communities into more poverty. Lusaka Water Supply and Sanitation Company (LWSC) recently reported that floods are affecting the quality of water from their sources [boreholes] and they have about 130 dotted within Lusaka. The Water Management Resources Agency (WARMA) also reported that ground water in Lusaka city is at risk of contamination arising from continuous floods experiences. This means that thousands of people who source their water from wells in areas like Chawama, Misisi, Kalikiliki and Kanyama are at a higher risk of contracting water borne diseases such as cholera, typhoid and others.

As such, it is imperative that all the stakeholders from community to national level effectively implement measures to ameliorate flood risks and climate change at large through concerted efforts. Government should enhance timely early warning information coupled with indigenous ways of communication and managing floods to reduce the costs.

About the author

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