

Workshop on the role of Churches in addressing Climate Change

with an exposure visit to RDIS's Stove project

In Rwanda, from 16th to 18th March 2016

Review of Climate Protection Programme

Richard Madete, March 2016

UEM Climate Protection Programme – African region

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Let me start immediately by presenting what I normally say at the end: For me we are confronted with two important facts.

First, the World Bank's study which was published towards the end of last year with a title: "**Shock Waves: Managing the Impacts of Climate Change on Poverty**" emphasised on bold emissions reductions and a radical rethinking of the global economy. The World Bank warns, without adoption of mitigation, adaptation and emission reduction policies; human-caused climate change could push more than 100 million people into extreme poverty within just 15 years. Recent estimate puts the number of people currently living in extreme poverty at 702million about 10% of the world's population.

Secondly, also towards the end of last year, we were impressed by the positive outcome of the Paris Climate Conference (COP21): **The world leaders at COP21 succeeded to settle on a new global climate protection agreement, which is expected to take effect in 2020.** The United Evangelical Mission (UEM) and her partners participated in many ways in bringing about the new global climate protection agreement at the Paris Climate Conference at the end of last year.

A lot of discussions are going on since its adoption in terms of what it means; what it may achieve; and its implications (especially to developing countries including African countries). Maybe we can simplify this by asking ourselves simple questions such as:

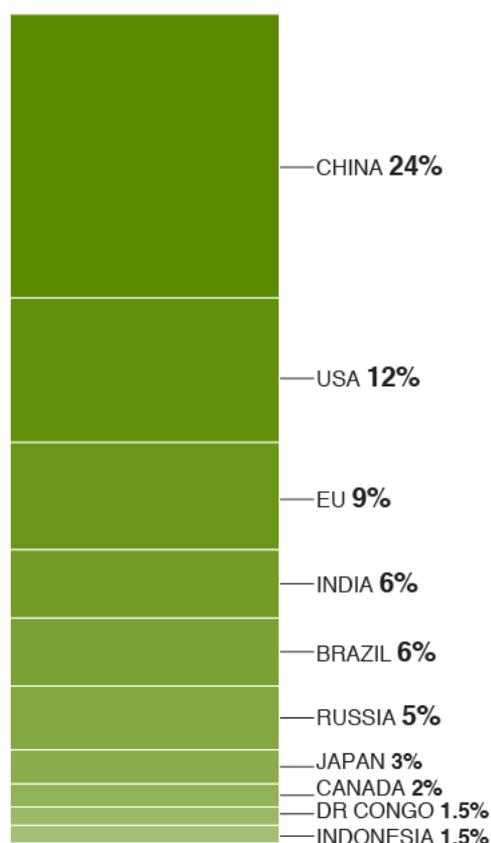
What does the Paris climate agreement mean for us? 195 nations have agreed to attempt to cut greenhouse gas emissions to a level that will limit the global average temperature to a rise "well below" 2C (3.6F) compared to pre-industrial levels - a level of warming deemed to be the point when dangerous climate change could threaten life on Earth.

How good is the Paris Outcome? The Paris Outcome is a turning point for action to limit climate change below dangerous levels. It signals the end of business as usual for the energy industries. Future investment will need to be compatible with a clean development/clean technologies – for example application of renewable energy instead of fossil fuels, energy efficiency and recycling.

The Paris Agreement establishes an enduring, binding and transparent legal regime where all **countries make commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and manage the impacts of climate change. It will shape climate action for decades into the future.**

World's top ten emitters

The top 10 greenhouse gas emitters make up over 70% of total emission



Source: Carbon Brief, figures are for 2012

For us in the African region, the warning from the World Bank is a reality. We are experiencing the negative impacts of Climate Change in our daily life as climate change is affecting mostly the poor people in the South. But on the other hand, it is you the UEM member churches, the church leaders who through the council decision in 2008 facilitated the creation of UEM Climate Protection Programme to do what COP21 is suggesting.

So, the outcome of COP21 – that all nations at last are recognising the urgency to the call for emissions reduction and rethinking of the global economy, is also not new. You were there before! I believe the sharing by my colleagues from different UEM member churches will show how the churches have been active in fighting climate change.

But, this is not the time to sit down and praise ourselves. The warning is still valid. I would say, we are asked to work even harder in the fight against Climate Change. Through the working groups you will also discuss about challenges and future plans as well as how Churches can continue to address Climate Change effectively.

Africa is currently suffering high economic costs due to extreme events due to climate change. The costs include low crop and livestock yields due to drought and floods, damages to fragile infrastructures and loss of lives due to floods as well as increased cases of malaria and other diseases. Climate Change is directly affecting agriculture and food security.

However, the woes of climate-related disasters are not limited to Africa alone, across the world people experience loss of lives, livelihoods and property due to climate change. But, it is important to highlight the vulnerability of Africa and the minimal contribution of Africa to the global greenhouse gas emissions.

Since mid 2010 the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) is implementing a special programme -- **Climate Protection Programme** -- to help member churches in the South not only to overcome the current effects of Climate Change but also to avert the worst effects of climate change in the future. These are adaptation interventions to cope with the short-term impacts of climate change and pro-poor mitigation measures for sustainable eradication of poverty.

The objective of this Programme is to support, assist and empower churches in Africa in developing, implementing and funding projects for Climate Justice and environmental protection; To promote information sharing, advocacy initiatives, networking and awareness raising on Climate Justice and environmental protection at regional and at international level; as well as to co-ordinate and apply UEM strategies in the region.

Two climate and environmental consultants were appointed to work in the African and Asian region for a six years period – myself being responsible for the African region – to assist member churches in these UEM regions to implement the above mentioned goals.



UEM is supporting tree-planting projects in almost all member churches in Africa. These projects help reduce the carbon footprint; increase building materials; protect water sources; provide fruits to boost agro-processing etc.

The program has so far been successful in not only raising the awareness for environmental protection in member churches, but also in offering technical and financial support for a number of adaptation and mitigation projects.

The UEM has in the past six years supported interventions of UEM member Churches in Africa in combating the effects of Climate Change such as supporting farmers to attain food security (agricultural diversification, modern farming, land/water management, organic farming, access to appropriate seeds), promoting application of renewable energy, forestation projects (planting of trees and protection of forests, reduction of Greenhouse Gas(GHG) emissions; promoting use of Energy Saving Stoves(ESS)) and so on. In addition, during this period, UEM Member churches such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania has developed an environmental policy, which is taken as a guide for all dioceses in formulating action plans.

Publications:

As a summary of the activities, we have published a documentation of an overview of what has been achieved by UEM member churches in Asia and Africa in recent years: Programmes and Activities in the UEM Member Churches of Africa and Asia.

Further examples:

See Slides.

What next?

This programme is going to end in the mid of this year 2016.

There is a need now to evaluate the programme and to discuss how the work of Climate Protection Programme is going to be carried on further by member churches in the future. The UEM's JPIC department and Africa department in collaboration with our host the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda (EPR) have therefore planned this workshop for member Churches in Central Africa: Workshop on the role of Churches in addressing Climate Change in Rwanda, from 16th to 18th March 2016.

During the workshop we shall make an exposure visit to an example of such projects, namely the Carbon project for producing and disseminating Energy Saving Stoves and Ceramic Water filters, which is currently being implemented by the Anglican Church in Rwanda. This project is planned to be scaled-up in other member churches in the Rwanda and if possible to other church members in the neighbouring countries as well.

Among the objectives of this workshop is sharing from the Churches on implemented activities, challenges and future plans. And finally to discuss about strategies for addressing Climate challenges effectively and continuation of Climate Protection Programme.

Thank you.
