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REPORT ON THE YOUTH-LED DIALOGUE ON CLIMATE CHANGE-INDUCED MIGRATION IN UGANDA.

Introduction

The Youth-Led Dialogue on "***Contextualizing the Link Between the Environment and Climate Change-Induced Migration Nexus in Uganda***" convened on Friday, June 21, 2024, from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at Cavendish University Uganda. Organized by the Climate Impact Initiative Uganda in collaboration with the Uganda Council on Foreign Relations, the event gathered a diverse array of stakeholders including youth, climate change activists, humanitarian actors, policymakers, academicians, private sector representatives, and civil society members. Together, they explored strategies to address the complex challenges posed by climate change-induced migration and fostered dialogue aimed at sustainable development.

Background

Uganda faces widespread environmental degradation and high vulnerability to climate change impacts that cause livelihood hardships, inducing human mobility. However, the environment, climate change and migration nexus is not well understood and documented, although advocacy to address the livelihood challenges associated with environmental and climate-induced migrations is on the rise. Climate change effects such as frequent draught and food disasters, livestock pests and crop diseases influence migration and displacement. On the other hand, rising sea levels pose imminent risks that can cause migration if adaptation measures are not taken. Response to draught or livestock and crop diseases, be it localized adjustment or out-migration are determined by household's adaptive capacity. For rapid onset climate events such as floods, the most vulnerable are the less fortunate living in poorly constructed structures in flood prone zones (Chetto, 2024). Hunger, food insecurity and conflicts are linked to slow-onset processes/events related to environmental degradation, rising temperatures and desertification, compounded by sudden-onset events/disasters including; drought, rainstorms, flooding and landslides that threaten livelihood security and trigger voluntary

and forced migrations. Migration also occurs as a coping strategy to environment and climate shocks and stresses. (Twinomuhangi, 2023). Going forward, awareness strategies and engagements are vital to incorporate spatial analyses on how the environment and climate parameters induce migrations to provide an evidence base to inform transformative policy processes and actions that address human mobility challenges, knowledge gaps, strengthen the climate framework by mainstreaming climate change migration adaptation plans, promote alternative livelihood activities as adaptation strategies to lessen climate-induced migration and displacement and build resilient societies in Uganda.

OBJECTIVES OF THE DIALOGUE

1. To deepen understanding among stakeholders regarding the complex interplay between environmental degradation, climate change, and migration in Uganda.
2. To provide a platform for stakeholders from diverse sectors, including government agencies, NGOs, academia, and local communities, to engage in meaningful dialogue on the environmental and climate-induced migration nexus.
3. To encourage knowledge sharing of research findings, best practices, and local experiences related to environmental challenges, climate impacts, and migration dynamics in Uganda.
4. To incorporate spatial analyses to dissect the spatial dimensions of environmental and climate parameters influencing migration patterns, enabling a more nuanced understanding of migration dynamics.
5. Generate insights and evidence to inform policy development and implementation processes aimed at addressing the challenges of human mobility induced by environmental and climate changes in Uganda.
6. The dialogue also seeks to highlight on the environment and climate change induced migration landscape in Uganda and beyond, existing policies and opportunities that young people in Uganda can leverage to address challenges within this nexus.
7. This dialogue will enlighten participants on UNFCCC existing mitigation and adaptation.

Expected outcomes of the dialogue

1. Stakeholders will gain a deeper awareness and appreciation of the multifaceted relationships between environmental degradation, climate change, and migration, leading to more informed decision-making and action.
2. Foster collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders across sectors to address the interconnected challenges of environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and migration management.
3. Generation of evidence-based recommendations and insights that are relevant for informing policy processes and actions aimed at mitigating the adverse impacts of environmental and climate-induced migration in Uganda.
4. Empowered communities with knowledge and tools to adapt to environmental changes, mitigate migration risks, and build resilient livelihoods.
5. Identified priority areas for further research and data collection to fill knowledge gaps and strengthen understanding of the environmental and climate-induced migration nexus in Uganda.

Remarks by Dr. Alice Wabule, Dean of Faculty of Socio-Economic Sciences, Cavendish University Uganda.

Honored Guests, Esteemed Speakers, Panelists, and Participants,

Good morning and a warm welcome to Cavendish University Uganda. It is with great pleasure that we host this pivotal Youth-Led Dialogue on "Contextualizing the Link between the Environment and Climate Change-Induced Migration Nexus in Uganda." We extend our sincere appreciation to the Climate Impact Initiative Uganda for organizing this crucial event, and we are proud to partner with them in addressing these pressing issues.

At Cavendish University Uganda, we recognize the profound impact of climate change on our communities, particularly in regions like Kasese and Bududa, which have faced devastating floods and landslides. These events not only disrupt lives and livelihoods but also underscore the urgent need for sustainable solutions that enhance resilience and mitigate migration pressures.

Today's dialogue is timely as it brings together diverse stakeholders – youth leaders, climate activists, policymakers, academia, and civil society – to explore innovative strategies and actionable insights.

As we engage in discussions today, let us leverage our collective expertise and passion to generate solutions that promote environmental sustainability and social equity. The

outcomes of today's dialogue will contribute to evidence-based policy development and inspire impactful initiatives that benefit our communities and beyond.

In closing, I extend my gratitude to all participants for your active engagement and commitment to advancing climate action. Together, let us harness the power of education, innovation, and collaboration to build a resilient future for Uganda and the world. Thank you.

Remarks by Uganda Council on Foreign Relations (UCFR), by Ambassador James Mugume.

Today marks a significant milestone as we gather for the Youth-Led Dialogue on "Contextualizing the Link between Environment and Climate Change-Induced Migration Nexus in Uganda," organized by the Climate Impact Initiative Uganda. On behalf of the Uganda Council on Foreign Relations, I extend our sincere gratitude to the organizers for their steadfast commitment to addressing the complex intersections of climate change and migration. This event underscores our collective responsibility to confront the profound challenges posed by environmental degradation, which threaten both our ecosystems and livelihoods across Uganda.

At the Uganda Council on Foreign Relations, we champion dialogue and collaboration as essential tools in navigating the intricate landscapes of international relations. This gathering brings together a diverse array of stakeholders—from youth activists and policymakers to academia, civil society, and international organizations—all united by a shared goal: to deepen our understanding of the environmental and migration nexus and to foster sustainable solutions. It is through such inclusive platforms that we can harness the collective expertise and creativity needed to forge resilient communities resilient in the face of climate uncertainties.

Uganda, like many nations, faces the harsh realities of climate change, impacting agriculture, water resources, and human settlements, driving migration and displacement. Today's dialogue is crucial in generating actionable insights and evidence to inform policy formulation and implementation. As we engage in robust discussions and knowledge-sharing sessions, let us harness the power of collaboration to translate ideas into concrete actions that will safeguard our environment, empower our youth, and build a sustainable future for generations to come

Remarks by the Chief Guest

Dr. Sarah Carl, the Head of Programs, representing the Chief of Mission of IOM, articulated Uganda's acute vulnerability to climate change impacts, emphasizing how rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events disrupt

agricultural productivity and threaten water resources. Her remarks underscored the intricate nexus between environmental degradation and human mobility, particularly noting Uganda's role as a significant host country for refugees fleeing climate-induced stresses. Dr. Sarah highlighted the imperative of prioritizing youth empowerment through initiatives like eco clubs, aligning with global commitments such as the Paris Agreement and commitment to Kampala Ministerial Declaration on Migration, Environment, and Climate Change (KDMECC). These agreements emphasize integrating climate action into national policies to foster resilience and sustainability, crucial for mitigating displacement and enhancing adaptive capacities in vulnerable communities.

Remarks by the Special Guest

Hon. Amongin Jacqueline, Chairperson of the East African Parliament's sub-committee on Environment and Climate Change, offered a legislative perspective on addressing climate change impacts and migration. She underscored Uganda's proactive stance in aligning with international agreements and developing robust national frameworks to mitigate environmental risks. Hon. Amongin emphasized the disproportionate burden faced by vulnerable groups, including women, children, and the elderly, advocating for gender-sensitive policies and inclusive governance models. Her insights resonated with the Kampala Ministerial Declaration on Migration, Environment, and Climate Change, emphasizing the need for cohesive legislative actions to safeguard livelihoods amidst environmental pressures and promote sustainable development.

Remarks by the Keynote Speaker

Mr. Bob Natifu, Assistant Commissioner, Climate Change Department, Ministry of Water and Environment, provided practical insights into sustainable development strategies tailored to Uganda's context. He highlighted successful community-led initiatives such as the Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration project, showcasing how localized efforts can restore ecosystems, enhance agricultural productivity, and build resilience against climate impacts. Mr. Natifu emphasized the integration of circular economy principles and technological innovations in climate-smart agriculture and renewable energy sectors to mitigate environmental degradation while fostering economic opportunities. His emphasis on scalable solutions aligned with global efforts to promote sustainable development goals and underscored the potential for innovative approaches to effectively address climate-induced migration challenges.

Panel Discussions

1. Enhancing Community Adaptation to Reduce Climate-Induced Migration

The panel delved into effective strategies that have successfully bolstered community resilience against climate change impacts, thus alleviating migration pressures. They emphasized the pivotal role of community-based adaptation initiatives tailored to local contexts. These include empowering communities through capacity-building workshops on sustainable agriculture and disaster preparedness, fostering early warning systems for weather-related disasters, and promoting diversified livelihoods beyond agriculture. Integrated water resource management was highlighted as crucial, advocating for the implementation of small-scale irrigation systems and rainwater harvesting techniques to ensure sustainable water use. Moreover, robust policy frameworks supporting land tenure security and access to climate information were underscored as essential for enhancing adaptive capacity at the grassroots level. By fostering these strategies, communities can better withstand climate shocks, reducing the need for migration as a coping mechanism.

2. Strategies for Mitigating Climate Change Impacts on Vulnerable Populations

Addressing the vulnerabilities of women, children, and the elderly to climate change impacts, the panel recommended targeted strategies to enhance resilience and mitigate adverse effects. Gender-sensitive approaches were prioritized, advocating for policies that empower women through improved access to resources, decision-making processes, and adaptive technologies. Child-centered interventions included integrating climate-resilient infrastructure in schools and ensuring child-friendly disaster preparedness programs and health services. The panel also emphasized the importance of social protection systems and age-friendly infrastructure to support elderly populations in climate-sensitive areas. Furthermore, promoting community engagement and inclusive decision-making processes were highlighted as critical to ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of climate adaptation efforts for vulnerable groups.

3. Integrating Circular Economy Principles to Promote Sustainability

The discussion on integrating circular economy principles into Uganda's development strategies focused on enhancing sustainability and resilience against climate change impacts. Panelists advocated for resource-efficient practices such as recycling, upcycling, and waste-to-energy initiatives to minimize environmental footprint and create economic opportunities. They emphasized the role of eco-design and product innovation in promoting longer product lifecycles and sustainable consumption patterns. Closing resource loops through initiatives like industrial symbiosis was highlighted as key to reducing dependency on virgin resources and enhancing supply chain resilience. Policy support, including extended producer responsibility schemes and green procurement policies, was identified as crucial for incentivizing circular economy practices among

businesses and industries. By mainstreaming these principles, Uganda can achieve sustainable development goals while mitigating climate risks and promoting efficient resource management.

4. Empowering Youth through Eco Clubs for Community Resilience

The panel explored the transformative role of eco clubs in empowering youth to contribute actively to community resilience against climate change impacts. They discussed the importance of educating youth about climate change impacts and equipping them with practical skills in environmental conservation, sustainable agriculture, and renewable energy technologies. Eco clubs were highlighted as platforms for hands-on learning, fostering youth-led initiatives such as tree planting campaigns and waste management projects. Networking opportunities within eco clubs were seen as essential for youth to collaborate with peers, local communities, and stakeholders on climate action initiatives. Moreover, the panel underscored the significance of empowering youth as advocates for climate policy at local, national, and international levels, amplifying their voices in decision-making processes. By investing in eco clubs and nurturing youth leadership, Uganda can harness the potential of its young population to drive sustainable development and build resilient communities amidst climate change challenges.

Paper Presentation by Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU)

The presentations by the Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU) during the dialogue emphasized crucial strategies to address social inequalities and enhance adaptive capacity in the face of climate-induced migration. PSFU highlighted the profound impact of climate change on vulnerable populations in Uganda, stressing how disparities in access to resources and economic opportunities exacerbate communities' susceptibility to environmental shocks. Their insights underscored the urgent need for inclusive economic policies that promote resilience among marginalized groups, such as women, youth, and rural communities.

PSFU's presentations also showcased their initiatives aimed at integrating climate-smart practices into private sector operations. They emphasized the role of sustainable business models, including climate-resilient agriculture and renewable energy solutions, in building adaptive capacity at the community level. By advocating for policy frameworks that support these initiatives, PSFU seeks to foster economic diversification and reduce dependence on climate-sensitive sectors, thus enhancing overall resilience to climate impacts.

Furthermore, PSFU's approach highlighted their commitment to collaboration with stakeholders across sectors, including government agencies, international organizations, and civil society. Their efforts aim to empower local businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs), through capacity-building programs and strategic

partnerships. This holistic approach not only addresses immediate climate challenges but also contributes to long-term sustainable development goals in Uganda.

In conclusion, PSFU's presentations at the dialogue underscored the importance of integrating private sector engagement with national climate resilience strategies. Their advocacy for inclusive growth and sustainable business practices reflects a comprehensive approach to mitigating climate risks while promoting economic stability and social equity in Uganda

Recommendations and Action Points from the Youth-Led Dialogue

- 1. Integrate Indigenous Knowledge and Practices:** Indigenous knowledge systems have proven effective in adapting to local environmental conditions over generations. By integrating these practices into climate adaptation strategies, such as traditional farming techniques that enhance soil fertility and water conservation methods tailored to local ecosystems, communities can improve their resilience to climate impacts. This approach not only preserves cultural heritage but also fosters sustainable solutions that are context-specific and community-driven.
- 2. Strengthen Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships:** Collaboration among diverse stakeholders is crucial for scaling up climate resilience efforts. Local communities, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academic institutions, and the private sector each bring unique expertise and resources to the table. Establishing platforms for joint planning, resource mobilization, and knowledge-sharing can amplify the impact of adaptation initiatives. By empowering communities to lead and participate in decision-making processes, partnerships can ensure that interventions are inclusive and responsive to local needs.
- 3. Promote Ecosystem-Based Approaches:** Ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, and coastal habitats provide essential services that buffer communities against climate impacts. Protecting and restoring these natural systems not only enhances biodiversity but also strengthens resilience to extreme weather events. For example, mangrove restoration along coastlines can reduce storm surges and erosion, while reforestation efforts can stabilize soil, regulate water flows, and sequester carbon dioxide. Integrating ecosystem-based adaptation into national policies and local planning processes ensures sustainable management of natural resources for future generations.
- 4. Enhance Climate-Resilient Agriculture:** Agriculture is central to Uganda's economy and livelihoods, yet it is highly vulnerable to climate variability and change. Climate-smart agricultural practices emphasize resilience through techniques such as agroforestry, which combines trees with crops to improve soil

fertility and water retention. Providing farmers with climate information services, improved seeds, and training in sustainable land management empowers them to adapt to changing conditions. Investing in agricultural research and extension services further enhances the sector's adaptive capacity and promotes food security amidst climate challenges.

- 5. Develop Climate-Resilient Infrastructure:** Infrastructure development plays a critical role in reducing vulnerabilities to climate hazards. Designing and constructing resilient infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and buildings, considers climate projections to withstand floods, storms, and temperature extremes. Green infrastructure solutions, such as permeable pavements and urban green spaces, can mitigate urban heat islands and enhance water absorption during heavy rains. By integrating climate resilience into infrastructure planning and investment, Uganda can minimize disruption and economic losses from climate-related disasters.
- 6. Empower Vulnerable Groups:** Vulnerable populations, including women, children, the elderly, and marginalized communities, face heightened risks from climate impacts due to social inequalities and limited access to resources. Gender-sensitive approaches ensure that adaptation strategies address specific needs and capacities. For instance, empowering women through access to land, finance, and education enhances their resilience as primary caregivers and agricultural producers. Social protection systems, including cash transfers and insurance schemes, provide safety nets during climate-related crises, reducing vulnerabilities and promoting inclusive development.
- 7. Promote Circular Economy Principles:** Transitioning to a circular economy minimizes resource extraction, waste generation, and environmental degradation. Emphasizing reuse, recycling, and resource efficiency in production and consumption processes reduces greenhouse gas emissions and promotes sustainable development. Businesses can adopt circular business models that extend product lifecycles, promote eco-design, and incorporate renewable materials. Circular economy principles not only conserve natural resources but also create economic opportunities and enhance resilience to global market fluctuations and environmental risks.
- 8. Scale-Up Renewable Energy Deployment:** Access to affordable and clean energy is essential for reducing dependence on fossil fuels and mitigating climate change. Scaling up renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, and small-scale hydropower, diversifies Uganda's energy mix and enhances energy security. Investing in decentralized renewable energy solutions empowers rural

communities and improves access to electricity, which is crucial for powering sustainable development initiatives. Supporting local enterprises and innovators in renewable energy technologies stimulates economic growth while reducing carbon emissions.

- 9. Enhance Climate Education and Awareness:** Building public understanding of climate change impacts and adaptation strategies is fundamental to fostering informed decision-making and behavior change. Integrating climate change education into school curricula equips future generations with knowledge and skills to address environmental challenges. Public awareness campaigns through various media platforms raise consciousness about sustainable practices and encourage community participation in climate action. Engaging youth through environmental clubs and experiential learning opportunities cultivates a culture of environmental stewardship and empowers them as catalysts for change.
- 10. Strengthen Policy and Governance Frameworks:** Effective climate governance requires robust policy frameworks that integrate adaptation and mitigation measures across sectors. Aligning national development plans with climate objectives ensures coherence and prioritization of climate actions. Enhancing transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement in policy-making processes promotes inclusive decision-making and builds trust. Strengthening institutional capacities at local, national, and regional levels supports effective implementation and monitoring of climate policies, fostering resilience and sustainability in Uganda's development trajectory.



Some of the Critical Questions that arose during the Youth with the Mic session

Given the increasing frequency of extreme weather events in Uganda, how can national policies better integrate climate adaptation strategies to mitigate displacement and migration?

What role can international partnerships, such as those with IOM and IGAD, play in supporting Uganda's efforts to build resilience against climate impacts and migration?

Considering the economic implications, how can private sector initiatives align with government policies to promote sustainable development and reduce vulnerability to climate-related displacement?

To what extent are gender-specific vulnerabilities being addressed in national strategies to enhance adaptive capacity and reduce climate-induced migration?

How can local communities be empowered to participate more effectively in decision-making processes regarding climate adaptation and migration policies?

In light of the Paris Agreement goals, how can Uganda ensure that climate finance is effectively mobilized and utilized to support adaptation efforts that prevent migration driven by environmental factors?



Conclusion

In conclusion, the youth-led dialogue on "Contextualizing the Link between Environment and Climate Change-Induced Migration Nexus in Uganda" has underscored the urgent need for integrated and inclusive approaches to address the complex challenges posed by climate change. Throughout the dialogue, stakeholders from diverse sectors including government, academia, civil society, and international organizations reaffirmed the critical importance of collective action in building resilience and sustainable development pathways.

Key insights emerged from the discussions, emphasizing the need to prioritize indigenous knowledge systems in climate adaptation strategies and integrate ecosystem-based approaches to enhance community resilience. Participants highlighted the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in scaling up climate resilience efforts, promoting inclusive governance, and empowering vulnerable populations, particularly women and youth.

Recommendations put forward include scaling up climate-resilient agriculture, promoting circular economy principles, and advancing renewable energy deployment to reduce carbon emissions and foster economic growth. Education and awareness were underscored as pivotal in fostering climate literacy and empowering communities to adopt sustainable practices.

Looking ahead, the dialogue calls for strengthened policy frameworks that align national development plans with climate objectives, ensuring coherence and effectiveness in climate action implementation. It emphasizes the importance of leveraging global partnerships and funding opportunities to support Uganda's efforts in climate adaptation and resilience-building, contributing to broader international commitments under the Paris Agreement and sustainable development agendas.

As Uganda prepares for future climate negotiations and policy dialogues, the outcomes of this dialogue serve as a robust foundation for shaping inclusive, equitable, and sustainable pathways towards a climate-resilient future. By harnessing the creativity, innovation, and commitment of its youth, Uganda can lead by example in addressing climate challenges while fostering socio-economic development that leaves no one behind.

Concluding Remarks by the CEO of Climate Impact Initiative Uganda, Ms. Moreen Twikirize

Esteemed Guests, Members of the Diplomatic Mission, Embassies, Distinguished Partners, Colleagues, and Friends,

Today, we stand united in gratitude and determination, having witnessed a remarkable gathering focused on the urgent nexus of environment, climate change, and human mobility. I am profoundly honored to address this esteemed assembly, reflecting on the profound impact of our collective efforts.

First and foremost, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for their steadfast commitment to advancing the dialogue on climate-induced migration. Your guidance and expertise have been invaluable in shaping today's discussions and informing actionable strategies.

To the Embassy of Denmark in Uganda, your unwavering support and dedication to sustainable development initiatives, including your pivotal role in environmental conservation and renewable energy, are truly commendable. Your partnership underscores the importance of international cooperation in addressing global challenges.

The Ministry of Water and Environment of Uganda, under whose purview the country's environmental policies and strategies are crafted, your presence and insights have been crucial in grounding our discussions in local realities and policy imperatives.

The Uganda Council on Foreign Relations, represented eloquently by Ambassador James Mugume, has provided essential perspectives on international relations and governance, highlighting the interconnectedness of climate impacts and migration on a global scale.

Honorable Amongin Jacqueline, Chairperson of the East African Parliament's sub-committee on Environment and Climate Change, your visionary leadership and advocacy for climate action resonate deeply. Your presence as our special guest has underscored the parliamentary commitment to integrating climate resilience into regional policies.

To our esteemed panelists and moderators, your expertise and thought leadership have illuminated pathways towards community resilience and sustainable development. Your contributions have not only enriched our understanding but have also catalyzed actionable recommendations.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the youth participants whose energy, creativity, and determination have been the driving force behind today's dialogue. Your engagement underscores the vital role of youth in shaping a sustainable future and advocating for climate justice.

As we conclude this transformative dialogue, let us carry forward the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and resilience. Together, let us translate our discussions into

concrete actions that safeguard our communities, preserve our ecosystems, and uphold the dignity of all individuals affected by climate change-induced migration.

In closing, I invite all stakeholders, partners, and supporters to join us in our ongoing efforts. Together, we can forge a path towards a more sustainable and resilient future, where no one is left behind.

Thank you all for your unwavering commitment and dedication to this crucial cause.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

