

CLIMATE CHANGE PARTNESHIP WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN EAST AFRICA PROGRAM POLICY BRIEF

Impacts of Climate Change Mitigation Strategies on Indigenous Peoples Livelihoods: A Case of Tanzania



Photo 1 Maasai resisting eviction in the name of climate change in Ngorongoro District. (Elie Chansa/PINGO's Forum)

Introduction

Despite the pre-and post-colonial alienation of indigenous peoples' lands, the current climate mitigation interventions pose yet further threats of dispossession and indigenous peoples are blamed as a cause of environmental degradation and visible climate change.

The eviction of indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands is one of the most destructive and degrading mitigation strategies undertaken by modern governments in developing countries to address climate change. Armed police and even soldiers are used to forcibly evict indigenous peoples in order to pave the way for investors and conservation in the guise of climate change mitigation. The advent of climate change in Tanzania has contributed to increased rates of eviction of indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands for reasons ranging from land-based investments to the enlargement of protected areas. This info brief examines the problem and offers some recommendations.

Are indigenous peoples responsible for the current problem of climate change?



Photo 2 Cattle slashed in a climate change induced conflict between pastoralists and farmers in Morogoro Region. (PAICODEO)

There is no doubt that anthropogenic activities are to blame for the current state of the world environment in general, and climate change in particular. Adverse effects of climate change are evident everywhere and governments worldwide are taking various steps to mitigate or adapt to climate change. Protection of forest resources in particular has become a top priority in international climate change negotiations and on Tanzania's national environmental agendas. Forest resources act as "carbon sinks" and thus play a significant and central role in the climate change equation. However, the protection of forest resources was an integral part of indigenous (sustainable) livelihood strategies long before it was placed on the international agenda because these forests and other natural surroundings often happen to be the ancestral lands of indigenous peoples. As a matter of fact, these lands still comprise "forests" precisely because the indigenous peoples living in them have conserved them.



Photo 3 Pastoralism co-exists with environment sustainably. (Elie Chansa/PINGO's Forum)

Land-based investment

There is nothing without land. Land is the most important natural resource as it is the producer of life-sustaining items such as food, clothing, shelter, and valuable resources such as fuel, metal or precious stones. Indigenous peoples worldwide have a special attachment to their land but are also uniquely dependent on its natural resources. Water and land rights are of fundamental importance to indigenous peoples because they constitute the basis of their economic livelihood and are the source of their spiritual, cultural and social identity.

The indigenous peoples of Tanzania, as elsewhere in the world, happen to live in areas rich in natural resources, including wildlife, forests, minerals and water catchments. These areas are, however, increasingly becoming a source of competing interests, as international and multinational companies seek to do business there. If care is not taken, indigenous peoples will continue to be evicted not only in the name of climate change mitigation but also as a consequence of state-sanctioned land-based investments. What can be done to rectify the situation? The next section expounds.

Social and environmental safeguarding policies

Safeguards are very important at both international and national level to set standards for the protection of indigenous peoples and their right to livelihood and other human rights. Violations of indigenous peoples' rights have been a matter of concern given their historical marginalization, which dates back to colonial times. In the current climate change negotiations, as we approach agreements during the COP21, it is very important to Tanzania's and the world's indigenous peoples that human rights form an integral part of the negotiated agreements as a means of safeguarding indigenous peoples' rights.

In 2014, it came to the attention of PINGOs Forum and other organizations that the World Bank was revising its social and environmental safeguarding policies by merging them all into one set of standards. In a statement made on 5 December 2014, PINGOs Forum and 13 other indigenous peoples' organizations expressed their concern at the overall weakening of the World Bank's policy requirements on indigenous peoples. Considering its international role, the World Bank must take the lead in ensuring that indigenous peoples' rights to land and other natural resources are protected and respected.

Environmental procedural rights

“Environmental procedural rights” is an umbrella concept that encompasses the right to access information, the right to public participation and the right to access justice.

The right to access information is included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, among other human rights instruments. It refers to “the right of individuals and non-governmental organizations to be informed of environmental problems relevant to them, to have the necessary access to information, and to participate in the formulation and implementation of decisions likely to affect their environment”.

The right to public participation is provided by article 25 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania and article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In conservation circles, it entails replacing the traditional “command and control” approach and giving people a voice and a say in major decision-making processes. Meaningful participation requires that the respective local communities and representatives are afforded capacity-building instruments to help them contribute meaningfully to issues affecting their rights.



Photo 4 An informed community is vital on making decision pertaining land matters. (Elie Chansa/PINGO's Forum)

The right to access justice is one of the most important rights. In order to ensure the accountability of the Tanzanian government, as all other governments, in the matter of environmental issues and climate change in particular, access to the justice system and ensuring legal transparency is essential. In order to avert government actions that may compromise or negatively affect the environment, it is imperative for lobbying and advocacy groups, civil society, NGOs and individuals to gain access to legal documents and hearings in the courts of law.

What do climate change agreements need to safeguard for indigenous peoples nationally and internationally?

- Indigenous peoples need participation in governance and management of their resources. They need international human rights standards to be applied on any matters that affect their land and natural resources.
- Proper land-use plans that take security of land tenure into account and which support livelihoods based on an indigenous knowledge system that allows for indigenous peoples' co-existence with their biodiversity.
- Modern technological improvements in their natural resources management to complement existing indigenous knowledge.
- Indigenous peoples need to be part of the monitoring, reporting and verification of any climate change-related initiative that may be established on their territory.
- Indigenous peoples demand a human rights-based approach to any development programme or intervention that may be established on their territories, and this must apply free, prior and informed consent (FPIC).
- Capacity to understand issues and negotiate with anybody that affects their livelihood.

- Indigenous people demand transparency in all climate change deals and programmes through a good governance foundation and safeguarding standards that protect them.
- Indigenous peoples demand more finance for adaptation as a key priority element and the capacity to improve their indigenous knowledge adaptive strategies as an important aspect of addressing climate change impacts.

PINGOs Forum (The Pastoralists' Indigenous Non-Governmental Organizations' Forum) is an advocacy coalition of (currently) 53 indigenous peoples' organizations that have been working in Tanzania for the rights of marginalized indigenous pastoralists and hunter-gatherers communities since 1994. As a human rights and development network, PINGOs Forum seeks to advocate and support the development of competences on the sustainable livelihoods of pastoralist and hunter-gatherer communities in Tanzania. It endeavours to amplify the voices and foster the interests of pastoralists and hunter-gatherers by advocating for change on good governance and human rights. PINGOs Forum also addresses issues of gender, HIV/AIDS, environment, and climate change (www.pingosforum.or.tz).

IWGIA is an international human rights organization staffed by specialists and advisors on indigenous affairs. IWGIA supports indigenous peoples' struggles for human rights, self-determination, the right to territory, control of land and resources, cultural integrity, and the right to development. IWGIA was founded in 1968 with the aim of establishing a network of concerned researchers and human right activists to document the situation of indigenous peoples and advocate for an improvement in their rights. Today indigenous peoples from all over the world are involved in IWGIA's global network (www.iwgia.org).

TIPTCC was formed in 2013 by a committee consisting of seven key indigenous organizations¹ with the goal of creating a mechanism to raise awareness of climate change and its effects on indigenous peoples' livelihoods in Tanzania and to promote the integration of indigenous peoples' livelihoods and rights in climate change policies and initiatives. TIPTCC has since its formation, provided a forum for discussing indigenous peoples' positions on different climate change and REDD+-related policies and initiatives, including the draft REDD+ policy, REDD+ safeguards, and the REDD+ information and communication system plus the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework.



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¹ PINGOs Forum, the Association for Law and Advocacy for Pastoralists (ALAPA), Community Research and Development Services (CORDS), Parakuiyo Pastoralists Indigenous Community Development Organization (PAICODEO), Ujamaa Community Resource Team (UCRT), Sunya, Lengatei and Dongo (SULEDO), and the Hadzabe Survival Council (HSC).