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Going after the money

To fulfil its climate change obligations, Kenya needs to make better use of existing funds

Kenya faces significant challenges from the negative impacts of climate change which pose a risk to its people's livelihoods and economy.

It's already been badly affected by changing temperatures. Changing rainfall patterns have led to bad harvests and a drop in agricultural production, leading to food insecurity. Meanwhile, decreasing water levels hampered energy production, since 70 per cent of the country's electricity comes from hydroelectric power.

To avoid escalating these crises further, more needs to be spent on helping Kenya adapt to climate change and mitigate its effects – that means making substantial allocations at both national and county levels.

Kenya must focus on the attainment of low carbon, climate resilient development.

Kenya has committed to a 30 per cent reduction of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 in a pledge to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), known as its 'Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)'. It's part of a worldwide effort to keep the increase in global average temperature to 'well below' two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, preferably below 1.5 degrees.

Kenya will only be able to fulfil its NDC commitment with international support in the form of finance, investment, technological development and transfer, and capacity building.

The Kenyan NDC estimates that over USD 40 billion will be required for mitigation and adaptation measures across all sectors up to 2030. The UNFCCC has established several financial mechanisms to make this happen, including the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund, and other bilateral and multilateral funding sources.

This is key as most of the developing countries' NDCs, like Kenya's, have a conditional component – commitments that are dependent on international support for their implementation.

Although Kenya made some use of the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund, it needs to enhance the capacity of local organisations to access and utilise these pots of money. This will involve greater cooperation between the government and NGOs.

In addition to international support, Kenya needs to allocate more in its national and local budgets for climate change adaptation and mitigation. Counties across Kenya have been tasked with formulating so-called Integrated Development Plans which support communities vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

There's been some progress: Kenya has already established a National Climate Change Fund under the Climate Change Act.

Kenya needs to strengthen the capacity of its institutions and other stakeholders to develop bankable projects with respect to the country's climate needs, in order to access more cash from the Adaptation Fund.

The National Climate Change Action Plan indicates that to support sustainable development, Kenya must focus on the attainment of low carbon, climate resilient development.

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