Financing – the backbone to building a resilient climate

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- It needs concerted and deliberate efforts to reason and act unanimously with a common understanding that the Kenyan people through the government have to take the lead in financing all targeted areas of mitigation

LANCER WAO

Investing in a resilient climate may seem like a daunting task. However, it can be the only way to future-proof sustainable development in Kenya.

The World Water Week, kicked off this week, under the theme *Building resilience Faster*. This year, the event focuses on the formulation of concrete solutions to solve climate-related disasters. As stakeholders gather to discusses, question, and agree, this is the time for Kenya to have an honest conversation on where we are at building a resilient climate that can stand the test of time.

Kenya is vulnerable to the effects of climate change. In 2019, the Kenya Meteorological Department showed the worrying trends of weather patterns and their adverse impacts on lives and livelihood in different parts of the country. For example, the months, March, April, and May are typically long-rain seasons and key in the agricultural production and related sectors. Sadly, in 2019, they received low rainfall (under 50%). Consequently, crop yields adversely decreased leading to a subsequent hike in food prices. Come to October-November-December, period during the same year, heavy rains and floods were reported. Consequently, there were floods, landslides, and there were reports of rivers like Tana bursting their banks. The calamities led to the loss of lives, properties, and people being displaced.

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It is happening as the country continues to record negligible reduction in Green House Gases (GHC) emissions contrary to its commitment as provided in the National Determined Contribution

Goats assemble at awater drinking point in lodwar,turkana county. [Gerard Nyele]

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Lancer Wao, Communications and Knowledge Management Consultant

(NDC) to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

In the 2015 period, through the National Climate Change Action Plan, Kenya estimated that it would require KES 4,040 billion to achieve the 30 percent GHC emissions reduction target by 2030 on the condition of receiving international support in form of capacity building, financial, technological development, and investment. In 2020, the NDC target was revised 6,775 billion shillings for the period 2020-2030 for a 32 percent reduction by 2030 as per the Business as Usual (BAU) plan.

The commitments, targets, and reality of financing in building resilient climate show that there is a mismatch that not only need to be accurately detected but also urgently addressed to achieve sustainability as per the laid-out plans.

One of the problems with the current approach in financing is that it is largely dependent on private sector entities, development partner countries, international public sector institutions, and international financial institutions.

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While the goodwill of the government and other public sector entities is evident from commitment to financing given the competing needs in the economy, the implicit dominance of the private sector is threatening the autonomy and leadership of the government in scaling up climate action at the domestic level.

Also, financing is largely allocated to renewable energy while starving other equally significant sectors in achieving NDC targets. In 2018, nearly 99.7% of the funds invested by the private sector were channeled towards renewable energy-related projects. This leaves questions on what is supporting other climate action mitigation and adaptation areas like water and wastewater, capacity building and policy support, agriculture, forestry, management of natural resources, and land use, and

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reduction of non-energy related GHG emissions. Understandably, enhancing the capacity of Kenya in renewable energy accelerates positive change in achieving the NDC target. However, by leaving some areas behind, the future of zero GHC emissions is bleak.

Furthermore, the current financing targets do not adequately address the need to help people to understand their contribution to climate degradation and best practice in mitigation and adaptation.

Admittedly, many Kenyans have come across incentives to adapt and overcome biases in behavior that are contributing to climate change problems. However, more financing needs to be channeled towards making information about the role of common "mwananchi" to climate change accessible and comprehensive. Otherwise, people will not see the need to care for sustainable financing in climate action, face challenges in mitigating climate-related disasters, and adamantly adapt to sustainable behavior related to climate change.

Climate financing is the backbone of building a resilient climate. It needs concerted and deliberate efforts to reason and act unanimously with a common understanding that the Kenyan people through the government have to take the lead in financing, all targeted areas of mitigation and adaptation are important, and actions towards climate change have to be understood by the ordinary citizen.

The writer is a Communications and Knowledge Management Consultant