

Conference on “Urban Impact of Climate Change in Africa”

Planning for Adaptation

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SAPIENZA
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Climate change effects

Climate change effects are twofold:

1. Increase and worsening in extreme weather events
2. Progressive stress of natural systems

While the former asks for improving local capacity in disaster management (mainly in terms of prevention, early warning and recovering), the latter requires local authorities to undertake initiatives for supporting people in their efforts to adapt to new environmental conditions

People's adaptation in sub-Saharan cities

How do people adapt in sub-Saharan cities?

People autonomously adapt to new environmental conditions either in rural or urban areas, either in global North or South.

Notwithstanding, those who are more dependent on natural resources for their livelihood should borne a much heavier burden.

This is the case for most of sub-Saharan cities' residents who strongly rely on locally available natural resources for their basic needs.

Seawater intrusion impacts on access to water

As an example, let's consider seawater intrusion in coastal watershed. This phenomenon is largely occurring in coastal areas worldwide.

People living in cities serviced by water pipes are not even aware of it, while those who rely on their wells for accessing fresh water are compelled to find the way to cope with it.

In other terms, they should “adapt” (i.e. migrate to another place, look for another natural source of water, buy water, cut their water demand by changing their activities, ...)

Climate change is not the only driver

By the way we cannot forget that climate change is not the only driver for environmental transformation.

In fast growing sub-Saharan cities, urbanization affects natural resources crucial to people in a even stronger and faster way than climate change.

These two drivers combine their effects resulting in a series of challenging impacts on people livelihood.

As an example, sea water intrusion is linked to decreasing rainfall and rising sea level (climate change) but also, and even more, to increasing soil sealing (urbanization) and ground water extraction (human activities)

Planning for adaptation

How can urban governments support their people in the efforts they autonomously undertake to adapt to those change occurring in the living environment?

What might a local adaption plan of action look like?

What kind of knowledge and tools would be necessary?

What kind of competences should be developed?

What kind of decision-making process might be suitable?

Our expectations from this conference

We do not expect to provide an answers to those questions through a half-day conference.

Rather, we would like to provide all participants with an opportunity

- to exchange experiences in dealing with climate change impacts on sub-Saharan cities,
- to share results and lesson learned, and
- to have an open discussion on different approaches in planning for adaptation.

Last but not least

We invite who would like to know more about the EU co-funded project



to visit the web-site www.planning4adaptation.eu