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Research-2-Practice Forum on Renewable Energy, Water and Climate Security in Africa
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Category: Research and Scientific Contributions

The main topics of the extended abstract should fit within the areas of water, energy, climate change, the nexus within water, energy and climate change. The abstract should also be in line with ongoing projects and priorities of the research agenda at PAUWES as a contribution to the Agenda 2063 of the African union.

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Non-state actors and climate change adaptation processes: A case study from Tanzania

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Short Abstract

Climate change is now considered as one of the most serious global threat to sustainable development. Currently, knowledge is plentiful on how to adapt to climate change and build resilience to its impacts, but putting that expertise into practice remains a problem around the world, especially in the least developed countries. This study seeks to contribute to empirical evidence on the barriers that constrain non-state actors in developing countries to facilitate and promote actions for adaptation to climate change. The aim is to identify practical examples to support international initiatives under the Paris Agreement that would support adaptation in developing countries with appropriate actions. The study used in-depth semi structured interviews to 40 experts specialized in climate science and environmental change from Tanzania, to investigate the country's barriers and how has the government attempted to overcome them. The results indicate absence of rightful solutions and their relevance to the local situation that support and explicitly recognize the role of non-state actors to sustainable development solutions. The experts argued that current mechanisms that could increase active involvement and representation of non-state actors lack clear specification. These findings have implications on how to better integrate non-state actors into local climate adaptation initiatives.

Keywords: climate adaptation, barriers, non-state actors, experts, Tanzania

1. Introduction

Globalization is known to broaden the range of problems including environmental change. As these problems are escalating, the capacity of governments expected to address them is increasingly strained (Chen et al. 2009). This in turn has brought a remarkable decline in the role of states as the agent for environmental governance (Lemos and Agrawal 2006; Marshall, Hine, and East 2017). The fall of the leading role of governments as key actors to curtail the most pressing environmental problems have rendered a growing recognition of non-state actors like companies, NGOs, federal states, provinces, regions and cities and individuals to be an integral part in negotiating and implementing solutions to environmental problems (Nasiritousi, Hjerpe, and Linnér 2016). One area where cooperation and a wide range of governance activities by non-state actors has been identified as particularly crucial is climate change action (O'Brien 2015; Ostrom 2014). Recent research for example reveals a growing number of non-state actors participating as observers in climate change negotiations (Abbott 2012; Nasiritousi and Linnér 2014). While states are increasing delivering inadequate commitments in international climate negotiations, non-state actors are expected to play a more pronounced role (Andonova, Betsill, and Bulkeley 2009; Hjerpe and Linnér 2010).

The progress made in international climate change negotiations has brought to the front the emphasis of non-state actors. Since the onset of Paris Agreement (PA), the subsequent Conference of Parties (CoP) meetings have made it clear the need to seek more meaningful participation of non-state actors. This however, does not intend to scrap governments from their dominant role in the governance that is required to successfully address large-scale problems of collective action that would be required to address major environmental problems such as climate change (Marshall, Hine, and East 2017). There is much information already on involvement of non-state actors in global governance especially from developed countries. Little emphasis however, has been placed to examine what and how non-state actors have been successful in playing key roles at local, national and regional governance levels, and more precisely how such actors are fulfilling their duties in the countries of sub Saharan Africa. Even if international bodies such as the UNFCCC are aware of the diverse roles of non-state actors (NSAs) including information sharing, capacity building and implementation

and rule setting across the whole policy setting (Andonova, Betsill, and Bulkeley 2009), little is known on how they influence policy makers to take actions independent of states in developing world.

This article builds on experiences of non-state actors in Tanzania, particularly CSOs. The article adopts the definition of CSOs from Scholte (2007) who stated that CSOs are voluntary associations institutionally separate from the state (government), which seek to influence policy-making processes or the rules that govern them, while not pursuing political office or direct economic profit. Interestingly, the article seeks to examine whether the Tanzanian government has granted CSOs access and opportunity to the international climate policy process especially negotiations under the auspices of UNFCCC and other international bodies dealing with climate change politics. Furthermore, the article review and discuss participation of CSOs in adaptation initiatives, the meeting of parties, lobby government, prepare policy reports and their interaction with the public and media. The underlying hypothesis is whether CSOs as key non-state actors in Tanzania have a capacity and are a significant part of political landscape and on which premised could these institutions push for achievement of sustainable development goals by addressing issues related to climate change adaptation.

2. Methods

The present study employed interviews with 40 experts from CSOs, government officials, research organisations and bureaucrats. The interviews were conducted in the form of semi-structured questions where several queries regarding current and future interests of CSOs in climate change negotiations, needs and expectations, networks and institutions of which they are part, roles in global climate politics were included in an explorative manner. These interviews were conducted on face to face. On average, the interviews took less than one hour and were conducted in Swahili. The interview respondents were also asked to identify other potential interviewees. The study also used open source research exercise to identify the leading CSOs in Tanzania that were active in climate governance processes. With this high level information, programmes and individuals who could be potential subjects for interview were identified. These key informants provided further information on programmes where non state actors have taken active role, and also key insights into barriers and capacity of CSOs in designing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

3. Results

Access of CSOs to climate change adaptation negotiations

Information collected during interviews and further information acquired from secondary sources especially unpublished reports demonstrate large variations in levels of access and participation of CSOs in climate change adaptation negotiations. Over 80% of interview respondents indicated that a substantial fraction of CSOs that focus on environmental issues have never participated in the processes that lead to climate negotiations at national level. Among those CSOs with at least a non-zero participation, and these were the one especially based in Dar es Salaam, which is the capital and main business city of Tanzania, their access varied by more than four orders of magnitude. Procedure barriers to access include lack of structure and mechanisms that could bring them in the climate processes at national level, and a lack of exposure to international climate change issues. A vast majority of interview respondents mentioned that hierarchies within government bodies and agencies responsible for climate change issue create obstacles for many CSOs to access and get involved climate negotiations. Key informants revealed that despite the CSOs in upcountry regions of Tanzania being active in addressing environmental problems, they are very poorly represented, some are often entirely absent from participation in initiatives related to climate negotiations.

Incorporation of CSOs in climate change adaptation planning

Interviews show absence of tools and framework that could have been used to incorporate non-state actors in planning and implementation of SDGs and NDCs. Many key informants highlighted that only few personnel from CSOs occasionally are invited to participate in planning process based on their expertise and connections with officials from the climate change focal office in the country. In other words, many respondents argued that the interaction between government and CSOs in climate change issues is not strong and does appear sporadically. This has many consequences, including making CSOs as passive players in implementation of

climate change activities. Most interview participants raised concerns on how to leverage CSOs and other capacities in the country to help implementation of climate agenda. Promoting practical partnership between CSOs and the government is not clear. Such partnerships however, are crucial for helping national authorities to create innovations for sustainable development that can be put into practice quickly. Some key informants suggested that they should be matchmaking events that will be held. Such events would bring together representatives from universities, research institutions and businesses, as well as policy-makers and practitioners from the field of development cooperation.

Contribution of CSOs in adaptation activities

Very few of the CSOs mentioned by respondents had any programmes that were specifically aimed at adaptation activities. While the focus of these organisations is on environment and sustainability broadly, it is an example of avenue that could link them directly with the state. These organisations as described during interviews could use this opportunity to actively support implementation of NDCs and other mechanisms related to climate change. Many of the CSOs referred in this study deliver specific environmental protection programmes, but are themselves fashioned as networks of individuals who are primary participants, with an often role with the UNFCCC focal office. In other words, it is notable that many organisations engaged in environmental protection rely on small cadre of staff members who have expertise that could be trusted by the state. It was learnt during interviews that climate planning is highly institutionalized. This has direct impact for these organisations to intermingle with government in different forums where priorities, targets and initial approaches are discussed. This becomes a barrier for CSOs to actively take part in international climate negotiations starting from local level.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study show that CSOs could play a major role in international climate processes provided that the government will grant them access. The government as often being explained in literature should remain as the leading agency when it comes to global governance and especially for environmental challenges such as climate change. Importantly, the government should regards CSOs as crucial partners, rather than a substitute where a lot of conflicts would eventually happen. While hierarchical problems are mounting up, it is clear that inclusion of CSOs improves people's assessment of transparency and representational quality of climate governance to a considerable degree (Bernauer et al. 2016).

Although CSOs seem to have provide information that could form the basis for climate negotiations (Bernauer and Betzold 2012; Burstein and Hirsh 2007), the findings of this study depict a different picture. The study uncovered that the government has not provided the necessary incentives to grant CSOs access to negotiations in the form of participating in delegations. As it is now, the interaction of CSOs with national institutes is sporadic. This poses a critical gap that needs to be addressed urgently as presence of CSOs would bridge the information asymmetric between government actors and non-government actors. This in turn would make government to gain from including CSOs as these organisations have an advantage in providing policy advice, scientific inputs and information that the government might be lacking regarding the issue at hand (Sarewitz 2004). As is common in such studies (e.g. Bernauer et al., 2016; Scholte, 2007; Schroeder, 2010), the findings of this study suggest that, all else equal, increased involvement of CSOs could help the government adopt and implement more ambitious climate policies. This however, should go hand in hand with increasing capacity of people involved in negotiations especially those that could be selected from CSOs. At the international level, Tanzania committed to important mitigation measures especially after ratifying the Paris Agreement, but post implementation of these measures is likely to face multiple domestic obstacles. The government could attempt to leverage increased popular legitimacy among citizens from stronger CSO involvement in order to counter opposition against mitigation measures by influential industrial interests.

5. Conclusion

As the role of state actors in solving escalating environmental problems such as climate change is increasingly stretched, it is crucial that non-state actors have to take over. This however, will succeed if there would be mechanisms and institutions to ensure that these non-state actors especially the CSOs produce solutions to



these problems. The findings of this study contributes to knowledge on how this might be achieved. This article has produced evidence that when CSOs are more linked to among each other, an avenue for more inclusive dialogue will be opened up. This in turn would boost CSOs to operate as conduits for disseminating information on activities and issues to complement government efforts. The change of CSOs to pursue specific issue and interest will also increase and this will make these organisations engage closer in supplying solution to challenges.

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