

# **Climate Change and Africa's Poor**

**Amie Gaye**

**Policy Specialist**

**Human Development Report Office**



# The Problem

- **Global community emitting more CO<sub>2</sub> than the world's atmosphere capacity to absorb—result CC**
- **CC—single greatest challenge to Human Development**
- **Potential to stall and reverse efforts to reduce poverty & achieve other MDGs**
  - **Africa will suffer the earliest and most damaging setbacks**



# Risk and vulnerability

- The **state of human development** shapes the process by which climate related risks is converted into vulnerability
- African people (women especially) are more vulnerable to climate related risks for many reasons
  - Traditional gender roles influence resources and opportunities avail to women and men



## The human development backdrop

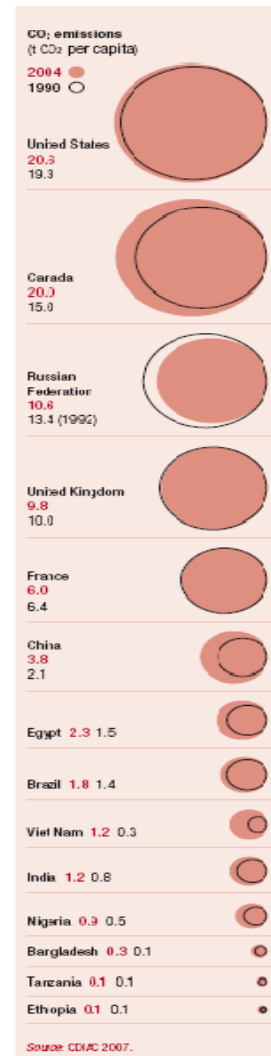
- Four out of 10 people in SSA live in absolute poverty—a majority of these are women
- Lowest average life expectancy (49.6 years)
- Around **32 per cent** of children do not live to celebrate their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday
- 1 in 2 women adult females are illiterate
- Nearly 1 in 3 girls of primary school going age are not in school



# The human development backdrop

- **SSA accounts for 68% of adults and nearly 90% of children infected with HIV**
  - More than 76% of global deaths due to AIDS-related illnesses in 2007 occurred in sub-Saharan Africa.
- **Accounts for 90% of deaths from malaria**
  - Around 800,000 children under 5 die each year from malaria
- **Women traditional roles place extra burden of their time with implication for their well being**
- **45% of the population do not have access to safe water**
  - In Tanzania women and their daughters spend on average 250 hours/person/year collecting water
  - Studies show that women are exposed to sexual abuse as they trek in search of wood in resource scarce regions like Darfur-Sudan
- **Climate change will worsen the situation of women if nothing is done**

# Inequality in carbon footprints



The distribution of current emissions points to an **inverse relationship** between climate change **vulnerability** and **responsibility**



# Rich countries deeper carbon footprint

- SSA accounts for 11% of the world's population but only 2% of global emission
- The **state of Texas** (population 23 million) has a deeper carbon footprint than the whole sub-Saharan Africa (720 million people)
- Women have made insignificant contribution to emissions because:
  - They are the least able to access modern energy services



# **Rich countries deeper carbon footprint**

- **Only one-third of SSA population has access to modern energy services**
- **Electrification rate is only 26%**
- **80% rely on traditional biomass for cooking**
  - **In Tanzania women use on average 700 hours/person/year to collect fuel-wood**
  - **Walking 5 kilometres on foot with a load of wood and often a baby on the back**
  - **Indoor air pollution kills 400 children each day—majority in Africa**

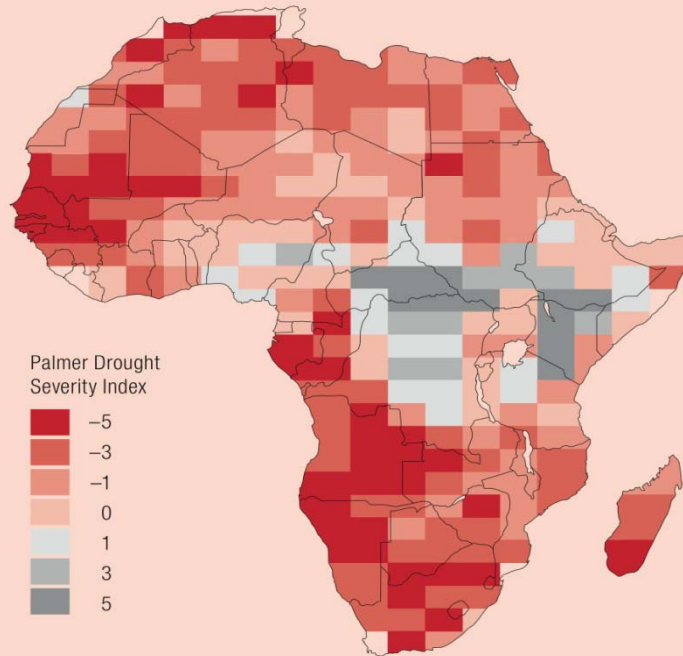


# Implications for SSA

Map 2.1

Drying out: Africa's drought area is expanding

Drought severity under IPCC scenario A2 (change relative to 2000 by 2090)



*Note:* The boundaries shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

**IPCC scenarios** describe plausible future patterns of population growth, economic growth, technological change and associated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The **A1 scenarios** assume rapid economic and population growth combined with reliance on fossil fuels (A1F1), non-fossil energy (A1T) or a combination (A1B). The **A2 scenario**, used here, assumes lower economic growth, less globalization and continued high population growth. A negative change in the Palmer Drought Severity Index, calculated based on precipitation and evaporation projections, implies more severe droughts.

*Source:* Met Office 2006.

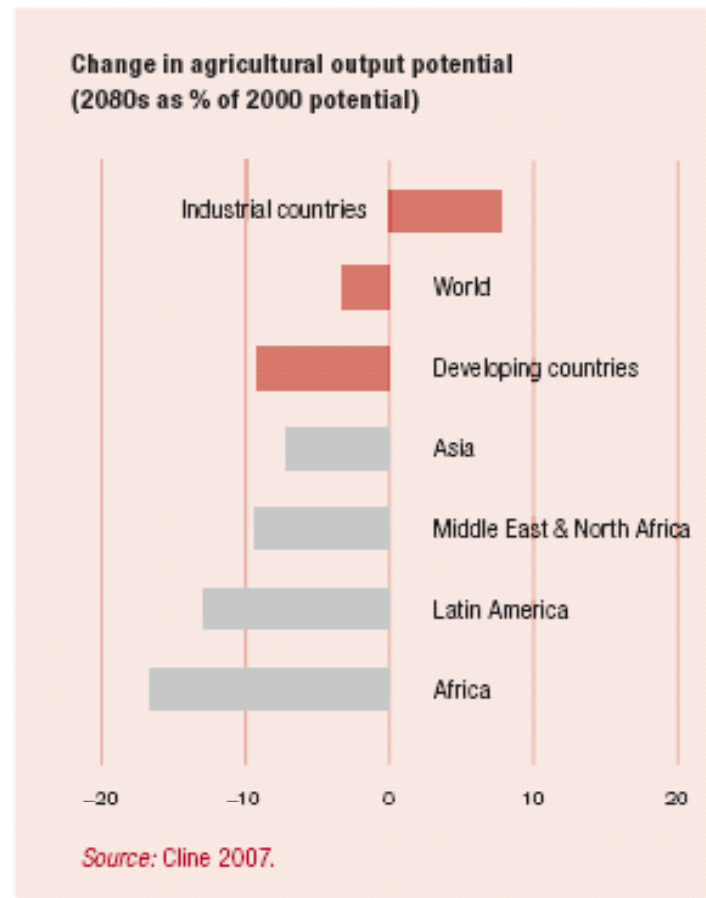
Normal =0

Drought =  
negative  
numbers

Rainfall =  
positive  
numbers:

# Implications for SSA

**Climate change will hurt developing country agriculture**



For dry-land SSA this could be as high as US\$26 billion in revenue losses



## **Women vulnerability to climate change effects**

- **Women's livelihood strategies depend more on natural resources**
- **Less able to cope because of**
  - **Limited asset ownership & control**
- **Traditional gender role**
  - **Increased labour intensity**
    - **The girl child may have to forgo education to help collect water & firewood**
  - **Increased time and income poverty**
  - **Effects on women's health**



## Women's knowledge in climate change adaptation

- Natural resources and women's livelihoods are closely linked-therefore great concern for the environment
- Traditionally, they play leadership roles in promoting an environmental ethic—reducing resource use, and reusing resources to minimize waste and excessive consumption.
- Indigenous women, have particular knowledge of ecological linkages and fragile ecosystem management
  - They know which crops are resistant to drought
- Yet they are under represented in climate change decisions



## Addressing the problems

- Address gender-climate change issues in macro policies
- Include women in climate change discussions
- Build women's adaptation knowledge through training and resource availability
- Strengthen disaster response system
- Finance transition from relief to recovery

# Addressing the problems

- **Put in place adaptation financing strategy—meet the aid target of 0.7% of GNI & provide additional funding for CC adaptation**
- **Integrate adaptation into poverty reduction strategies**
- **Re-orient public policies towards helping vulnerable people (mostly women) create and manage their own schemes for coping with potentially catastrophic risks.**
  - **Social protection measures: employment-based programmes to support cash or food transfer schemes (productive safety net programme in Ethiopia; Kalomo pilot project in Zambia)**



# Improving access to modern energy services

- National energy reforms to enhance energy efficiency
- Promote early adoption of clean energy technologies



- **Improve access to meteorological information**

- Expanding the continent's meteorological monitoring network, so that farmers can access better information about climate patterns in the region—1/25,460 km<sup>2</sup> (1/8 of WMO recommended minimum)
- Invest in water-storage or “water harvesting”
- Build on indigenous water harvesting technologies

- **This is not charity but social debt owed to poor and vulnerable people in Africa!**



**Please visit our web site**



***<http://hdr.undp.org>***

**Thank you!!!**