

# Wie betrifft euch Klimagerechtigkeit?

Ein Beitrag von Alice Kiingi

## Zur Person

Alice Kiingi ist aus Uganda. Sie hat ihren Master in Globalem Journalismus, Medien- und Kommunikationsstudien an der Örebro Universität, Schweden gemacht und arbeitete als Wirtschaftsjournalistin unter anderem für The New Vision Uganda und als Trainee im Globalen Journalismus für Deutsche Welle Radio in Bonn. Jetzt ist sie tätig als freiberufliche Journalistin und strategische Beraterin für den Markteintritt in ausländische Märkte. Sie engagiert sich als Menschenrechts- und Klimaaktivistin sowie als Forscherin für vulnerable und marginalisierte Gruppen. Zudem ist sie Gründerin der ugandischen gemeinnützigen Organisation "Climate Action Marginalised Voices Uganda Limited".

## Climate Change Impacts on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

States should formulate and implement effective climate change policies based on equality and non-discrimination, freedom of expression, freedom of information and informed participation in decision-making processes to tackle the climate crisis threatening the rights of all persons, particularly persons with disabilities majority of whom are living in poverty, stigmatised, discriminated and experience the worst effects of climate change.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 19 argues that freedom of opinion and expression, and freedom of information are crucial in understanding climate change and how to tackle the climate crisis. In democracies the citizenry, and the media have access to public information and free communication of information and ideas about public issues without censorship. This stimulates citizenry informed public participation to facilitate policy makers to make informed decisions in the formulation and implementation of climate change policies. However, in fragile democracies such as Uganda, the 1995 constitution stipulates the right to freedom of speech and expression, assembly (Article 29), and the right to access to information (Article 41). The enjoyment of these rights and freedoms are not absolute and are subject to restrictions in the Uganda Penal Code Act underpinning democracy and breaching the international human rights law.

Climate change threatens the right to life, adequate food, water, health, adequate housing, self-determination and education. The Convention On The Rights Of Persons With Disabilities (CRPD) highlighted poverty, stigma and discrimination of persons with disabilities exposing them to harmful climate effects than others. They face multiple forms of discrimination on the grounds of age, gender, sexuality, religion, impairment type, location, ethnicity, race heightening their risk to adverse impacts of climate change.

The CRPD obligates governments to adopt a disability-inclusive, human rights-based approach to enable persons with disabilities and their representative organizations to enjoy fundamental human rights and freedoms on equal basis with others to participate at all levels of decision

making in the development of inclusive and equitable climate policies that meet the needs of the vulnerable groups to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and build climate resilience.

The Status Report on Disability Inclusion in National Climate Commitments and Policies published in 2022, said 35 out of 192 signatories to the Paris Agreement adopted a disability-inclusive component in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). “For Ethiopia and Uganda references to persons with disabilities were subsequently removed in their updated NDCs, representing a step backwards with respect to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in climate action”, said the report. The rights of persons with disabilities were not prioritised making it difficult for policy makers to identify disaster risk reduction and appropriate adaptation measures that could be effective for, and carried out by persons with disabilities. The States breached the United Nations CRPD and the international human rights treaties on climate change to adopt a disability-inclusive human rights based approach in climate action. Uganda breached its constitutional human rights obligation to protect persons with disabilities (Article 35), allowing equality and freedom from discrimination (Article 21) and protecting the rights of minorities (Article 36).

A January, 2023, field survey in Karamoja sub region, Uganda found that persons with disabilities who are already living in poverty, stigmatised and discriminated are the most affected by climate change whose effects have resulted in malnutrition, hunger, death, child orphaned headed families, abduction of deaf young girls by cattle rustlers.

Contrary to the report, the Uganda Updated Nationally Determined Contribution report, 2022 said “the mitigation and adaptation actions outlined in this updated NDC will enable Uganda meet the global commitments stipulated under the Paris Agreement, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG13)”. With the invisibility of persons with disabilities in the climate action, it is unlikely that Uganda would deliver on its Goal 13 (Climate Action) because persons with disabilities were excluded in policy design and implementation. It implies the adaptation and mitigation policies were knowledge-based decisions detrimental for formulation and implementation of climate policies undermining the ability to predict and avert risks infringing on the rights of the PWDs that the State should protect.

Daniel Lindvall in Democracy and the Challenge of Climate Change, a discussion paper published in 2021 said, “Policies and decisions imposed from above without the involvement of the local community are often misdirected and inappropriately designed”. It questions the legitimacy of the policy report and its findings.

Disaggregated data is also important to track climate change impacts and resilience across vulnerable demographic groups to develop compliant and effective climate policies. “Low Income Countries must be supported to build their statistical capacity in order to increase the availability of high quality and timely data. While it may be complex and costly, it will not be possible to realise and evidence delivery of the Global Goals without significant improvements in the gathering, analysis and use of disaggregated data”, said the Data Disaggregation Action Plan report published in 2017.

If States exceed the 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels threshold to limit global warming, rising temperatures and extreme weather events will affect food production for economies primarily dependent on agriculture. The decline in food production will exacerbate poverty, food insecurity triggering rising food prices, hunger malnutrition and death affecting livelihoods particularly vulnerable groups. This could create unprecedented climate migration refugees

fleeing hunger, drought and poverty. In non-democracies dependent on agriculture rising temperatures will severely affect food production hiking subsistence food crops and cash crop prices triggering anti-government protests, riots and civil disorder calling for regime change.

Climate change affects all sectors of the economy and its impacts are severely felt in Least developed countries that have contributed the least to global warming. These economies should integrate climate change governance into their National Development Plan to transform their economies from low income to middle income status.

Research is recommended to examine the impact of climate change on demographic segmentation of persons with disabilities to examine their adaptive capacity and climate resilience. This outcome will deliver disaggregated data on persons with disabilities for climate action. The author of this article seeks partnership support for this project.