

A topographic map of the African continent, showing terrain features like mountains and valleys in shades of brown and tan. The map is centered on the continent, with the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the Indian Ocean to the east.

# IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES IN AFRICA

A Case Study of  
Nigeria, Cameroon,  
Togo, and South Africa



Corporate  
Accountability &  
Public  
Participation  
Africa



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### Acknowledgment

Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA) appreciates Corporate Accountability for supporting our quest to document the impacts of climate change in frontline communities in four African countries. The choice of Nigeria, Togo, Cameroon, and South Africa is to show how widespread the impacts of climate change are on the continent and how communities are coping with a crisis that they are not responsible for.

Thanks to our partners: Ndivile Mokoena of Gender CC South Africa, Kwami Kponzo of Centre for Environmental Justice Togo, and Younoussa Abbosouka of African Centre for Advocacy (ACA) in Cameroon for their field work and in-country reports. We also want to acknowledge the work of the CAPPA team - Ogunlade Olamide and Philip Jakpor for putting this report together.





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report, Impacts of Climate Change in Frontline Communities in Africa reinforces the fact that Africa is not protected from the impacts of climate change despite contributing the least to global greenhouse emissions. In fact, Africa is getting more than its fair share of the impacts. The increasing displacements and loss of lives experienced across the region are not only worrying, but they are also testaments of a sad reality.

The 2022 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report<sup>1</sup> paints a worrying picture of climate impacts on Africa and cautioned that things will get much worse if vulnerable countries won't adopt "swift, deep cuts on carbon emissions and scale up climate change adaptation measures." From Nigeria's coastal regions where sea level rise continues to displace locals, to Uganda's changing weather patterns and drop in water levels, to the increasing temperature in Togo and recent floods in South Africa,<sup>2</sup> residents of frontline communities in the region continue to count their losses. Livelihoods are gone, new diseases and social conflicts are taking a sweep, and there is growing pressure on their economy.

Durban, in South Africa, experienced a deadly landslide<sup>3</sup> in April 2022 brought on by above-normal rainfall which left 443 people dead in KwaZulu-Natal and over 40,000 declared missing. More than 40,000 people were displaced, nearly 4,000 houses destroyed, and more than 8,000 others damaged, mostly across the Durban City axis.

The Kara and Savannah regions of Togo are experiencing constant droughts that have led to the temperature rise of about 40°C while increased temperatures and prolonged drought in the northern regions of Cameroon have already resulted in the migration of local populations into neighboring countries or forced them further south in search

of water and arable land.<sup>4</sup> Crop yields have been affected by shortened rainy season and an increase in temperature. Nigeria's coastal lands are now prone to flooding and inundations while the northern part of the country continues to grapple with drought caused by the decline in precipitation and rise in temperature. Lake Chad and other lakes in the country are drying up and at risk of disappearing in a few years.<sup>5</sup>

These incidents are happening on the heels of the 2019 Cyclone Idai which devastated Mozambique with unprecedented impacts on Madagascar, Malawi, and Zimbabwe resulting in about 1,000 people dead and about 3 million others being affected.<sup>6</sup>

Ironically, these strange and worrying incidents are increasing across the region even as calls mount on African governments to hold Big Polluters liable for their generations-long infractions. African governments must shut their climate policy space from the infiltration of corporations that are behind the consequences the region is now trying to solve. They must pay for their deliberate acts of indolence and insensitivity.

**This report documents the impacts faced by frontline communities in Nigeria, South Africa, Togo, and Cameroon. It also features direct testimonials of local community people, especially women who bear the brunt of climate change but are not part of or considered relevant in the decision-making processes to address the crisis.**

1 <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>

2 <https://www.voanews.com/a/south-african-flood-victims-shelters-damaged-by-more-rains/6588616.html>

3 <https://reliefweb.int/map/south-africa/landslide-and-flash-floods-impact-analysis-west-durban-ethekwini-metropolitan>

4 <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2021/11/618ba0ac4/dwinding-rains-northern-cameroon-spark-conflict-displacement.html>

5 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-43500314>

6 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-africa-cyclone-toll-idUSKCN1RR0NA>



**Okun Alfa in  
Eti Osa Local  
Government  
Area of Lagos State**

# NIGERIA

**Community: Okun Alfa in Eti Osa Local Government  
Area of Lagos State, Nigeria**

## Rationale:

Nigeria occupies an area of 923,769 square kilometers (356,669 sq mi) that stretches across several climatic regions: a narrow coastal belt of mangrove swamps; a somewhat wider section of rolling hills and tropical rainforests; a still larger dry central plateau, with open woodlands and savanna; and a strip of semi-desert on the fringes of the Sahel. The country's major geographical features are the Niger and Benue Rivers while its highest peaks are in the eastern highlands bordering Cameroon, with elevations up to 7,936 feet. The most extensive upland area is the Jos Plateau in east-central Nigeria, a region 2000 to 4000 feet above sea level with elevations up to 5841 feet.<sup>7</sup>

Once a leisure resort, Okun Alfa<sup>8</sup>, otherwise known as the Alpha beach community, sits close to the Atlantic. It is one of many coastline communities that had once reaped bountifully from the tourism potential of Lagos beaches but is now at the mercy of the Atlantic Ocean, no thanks to climate change and rising sea levels. The plight of the Okun Alfa communities is worsened by the Eko Atlantic City<sup>9</sup>, a 1,037,763 hectares real estate project with the backing of the state, and the Dangote Refinery, a \$19 billion project that continues to affect coastal communities.<sup>10</sup>

Residents and dwellers along the coastline are faced with the stark reality of leaving their livelihood and social dignity behind. The latest in a series of surges happened in May 2022. The surge, more intense than others before, grounded activities in the community for seven days. Homes were flooded, makeshift shops were washed away, and electricity poles and cables were uprooted. The community's lone tarred road is now underwater. The nerve center of its economy—the



A young boy in the Okun Alfa community packs sand at the seashore. Plastic bottles and wrappers litter the sea shore.

waterfront of Alpha beach—is still plastered with gaunt reminders of the havoc wreaked by that surge. The Okun Alfa community folks are typically fish farmers, and their youths exploit the tourism potentials offered by the Atlantic to set up restrooms for tourists along the Atlantic coastline, but their livelihoods are now gone, and the prospects of a bright future replaced by near hopelessness and destitution.

CAPPA visited the Okun Alfa community on July 21, 2022, to document the impacts the rising sea level and how the incessant inundations have affected their socioeconomic well-being with a view to facilitating sustainable actions on adaptation and mitigation. Over 60 residents, mostly women, youth, and persons with disability were interviewed to get a clear picture of what they have experienced and what they want the government to do.

7 <https://www.countryreports.org/country/Nigeria/geography.htm>

8 <https://www.sunnewsonline.com/on-the-brink-of-extinction/>

9 <https://www.ekoatlantic.com/>

10 <https://www.thecable.ng/investigation-2-in-nigeria-refining-oil-costs-more-than-human-lives>

# Testimonials

**Nojima Dupe, 37-year-old, petty trader,  
Okun Alfa resident**

“The last fifteen of the thirty years I have lived in Elegushi has been the worst of all. The rising seawater which often leaves behind sand dunes has engulfed my mini shop. Fishing is now impossible because the fishes have gone deeper into the Atlantic. People here now engage in anything to survive.”

**Hafsat Sanni, 75-year-old, farmer, Mopopo resident**

“I was once a homeowner but now I have become a tenant of a slumpy apartment, no thanks to the dredged Atlantic Ocean that washed away my building in 2018. Though it will be hard to vacate the community that I have lived in for over 22 years, I am now totally exhausted. I am really depressed.”

**Alhaja Olabisi Hamzalat, 100-year-old,  
Elegushi resident**

“The loud silence of government to the plights of the people of Elegushi is very disturbing. The embankments constructed by the government are weak and need urgent replacement or the whole community will soon be under water. I am now being forced to say goodbye to a community I invested so much in due to the ravages of the Atlantic Ocean.”



Alhaja Olabisi Hamzalat, the oldest person in Okun Alfa community, narrates the adverse impacts of the sea rise on the residents and the lack of support from the government.

**Alhaji Yekini Ogun, 66-year-old, farmer,  
Okun Alpha resident**

“I find it hard to see that the community that supported my childhood is now on the brink of extinction. In my early years in Elegushi things were beautiful and prospects of a bright future high but things have changed, and my hopes faded.”

**Aminat Yesuf, 20-year-old, student,  
and resident of Okun Alpha**

“I have missed school many times because of the floods caused by the sea level rise. When the recent flood happened, vehicles could not access the community because the roads were under water. The motorcycle riders popularly known as okada who meander some parts of the community out of town now charge between eight hundred and one thousand naira. This has become a routine whenever it rains.”

**Ngozi Amara, middle-aged woman, food seller,  
Elegushi resident**

“I have lost count of the number of times I have had to visit the hospital for treatment of water-borne infections. The flood doesn’t just come and inundate; it also poisons our wells that we depend on for drinking.”

**Baale Okun Alfa, 70-year-old, traditional ruler  
of Elegushi**

“What locals here contend with is totally disheartening. We had thought the government would do something because their projects have aggravated the climate crisis but unfortunately, since I became the traditional ruler of Elegushi, all I have heard is they plan to use ecological funds to address the crisis, but nothing has been done. I am talking of about 20 years now. My people are ready to relocate if the government is serious about our concerns, but the government is not ready. They have abandoned us to our fate.”





A woman walks along the eroded beach shore. Regular flooding has kept children from school, poisoned the wells that people depend on for water, and created sand dunes that engulf local businesses.

### **Observation:**

The visit confirmed climate impacts beyond the control of residents. The helplessness of the community folks, despite their outcry in the last 10 years, shows that the government is only interested in the multibillion-dollar projects around Okun Alfa but not the plight of the ordinary community people experiencing the twin challenge of climate change and the impacts of projects around them, including the Dangote refinery which may not have complied with standard Environmental and Social Impacts Assessment (ESIA).<sup>11</sup>

11 <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/nov/20/what-will-be-left-for-us-lagos-fishermen-lament-the-oil-refinery>  
Photos and content by Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa



**CAMEROON**

Kakou Community

Ouro Garga Community

NIGERIA

CHAD

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

PRINCIPE

GABON

CONGO

CENTRAL AFRICAN  
REPUBLIC

DEMOCRATIC  
REPUBLIC

# CAMEROON

**Communities: Kakou and Ouro Garga**

## Rationale:

Cameroon is in west central Africa, on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea, at a latitude of 3- 13° N. The southern regions of Cameroon are generally humid and equatorial, but the climate becomes semi-arid in the northern regions.

The geography of Cameroon is highly diverse, and its topographic features superimpose climatic variations on this north-south gradient. The low-lying coastal plain rises rapidly to the inland regions of high plateaus and mountain ranges. The Cameroon mountain range stretches along the country's northern border with Nigeria, with peaks of more than 3000m. The semi-arid north of Cameroon (north of 6° N) is the hottest and driest part of the country, experiencing average temperatures between 25-27° C while temperatures in the southern regions are largely dependent on an altitude ranging from 20-25° C, and vary little with the season. Annual rainfall is highest in the coastal and mountainous regions of Cameroon.<sup>12</sup>

This study was carried out in Kakou and Ouro Garga communities in the northern region of Cameroon. Climate change induced drought in northern Cameroon has led to a decrease in agricultural yields and disruption of agricultural calendars.<sup>13</sup> In the affected communities of Kakou and Ouro Garga, there has been an increase in the cost of food, instability in food prices, increased malnutrition and poverty rates, and food insecurity. Locals contend with soil degradation, reduction in cultivable land, and an increase in insect attacks, among others.

The impact of the droughts is also causing the drying up of rivers and lowering of the existing water table. Fisherfolks believe some fish species have totally

disappeared. It is usually extremely difficult to get water for domestic or other uses all year round. That scarcity of water has increased the incidence of water-borne diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, meningitis, and measles. These diseases particularly affect children.

Beyond water for consumption and agricultural purposes, energy generation in Cameroon is highly dependent on the availability of water resources and climatic conditions. All of northern Cameroon (North, Far North, and Adamaoua) depends on a single hydroelectric dam, the Lagdo Dam in the region. Due to the drought, the water resource of the dam is endangered.<sup>14</sup> The water level in the dam continues to decline and necessitates power outages (sometimes two days without electricity in some localities), the damage of household appliances, and the decrease in the degradation of the supply reserves. This phenomenon began half a decade ago.

These impacts have been exacerbated by activities of a company called ROCA, located close to Kakou village. The company exploits of the quarry and conduct abusive cutting of green wood to heat the stones, for years now. This company contributes enormously to the destruction of the environment and is the subject of major disputes in the area,<sup>15</sup> but as this company has ramifications at the highest level of the State, the population do not know where to turn.

Another notable finding from our communities meetings was that some of the residents understand the climate challenges they face, they know the causes

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/climate/projects/undp-cp/UNDP\\_reports/Cameroon/Cameroon.hires.report.pdf](https://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/climate/projects/undp-cp/UNDP_reports/Cameroon/Cameroon.hires.report.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24432589>

<sup>14</sup> [https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/cd67/3e4e57ac781e9cec363213cf4b5ec2ffca3.pdf?\\_ga=2.43306981.1904697113.1664319504-1093679789.1664319504](https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/cd67/3e4e57ac781e9cec363213cf4b5ec2ffca3.pdf?_ga=2.43306981.1904697113.1664319504-1093679789.1664319504)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.afrik21.africa/en/cameroon-climate-bruised-northerners-cry-out-to-cop27/>

and the perpetrators, and have the solution to their problem, but they are afraid to speak out in confidence and with safety. Government structures in Cameroon are slow in responding to local needs, especially those of the most vulnerable. Communities like Kakou and Ouro Garga are a few examples. Kakou and Ouro Garga's communities do not have a strong 'voice' or an organization that can amplify their voice, up to now.

African Center for Advocacy engaged the two communities to gather climate change impacts and their testimonials.



A young herder is adversely affected by the drastic decrease in water resources due to the lack of rainfall.

## Testimonials

### **Ndeomie Marceline, 41-year-old, farmer and seller in Ouro Garga village**

"The variation in rainfall is a recent occurrence. We face difficulty in accessing good quality water, as most people get their water from streams that have almost dried up. People now make holes to collect water to drink and water their animals. It used to be easy to find groundwater at a depth of less than 1 meter, but since 2021 people have had to dig two meters or more to find water.

Additionally, the irregularity of the rains favors the multiplication of mosquitoes that transmit malaria

to the population. This year, there has been the appearance of a new disease in children called 'diaper rash'. This disease is due to the scarcity or absence of water for the children's hygiene."

### **Al H adjji Saliou, 52-year-old, President of the Fishermen's Association of Kakou village**

"The more water is available, the more hippos come, the more fish are present. Because of the drastic decrease in water resources, the fish no longer come, and there is no reproduction. Around 2016, the water stayed in the river until March. But now, the water passes and does not stay anymore, and the river is overgrown with weeds.

The fishermen used to have a daily income of 30,000 to 50,000 FCFA (about USD 47-78) per day, and they were able to meet the basic needs of their families. Today, they console themselves with small fish and make barely 1000f of income per day. Therefore they can no longer provide their families with a balanced diet. The children, especially the girls, are no longer in school."

### **Zalai Philipe, 37-year-old, farmer of Ouro Garga village**

"There are now variations in the rainfall. During the agricultural season, the rains start, and as soon as people sow, the rains stop. The seeds are destroyed, and we have to buy new seeds. Most of the population does not have the income to buy seeds twice in a season. This year, we have lost hope to practice our only activity, which is agriculture. The rains did not start in the usual season. It is only now that there is some rain and we are trying to plant cotton, corn, beans, peanuts, and millet.

In previous years, the rainy seasons were controlled. Agricultural products such as millet and beans were sown towards the end of the rainy season. Now with the climatic variations, we are obliged to sow everything at the same time. This situation does not favor good yields, and agricultural soils are increasingly less fertile, which requires the heavy use of chemical fertilizers to have an average yield.

On the socio-economic level, the continuous decline in agricultural yields over the years due to climate change leads to a considerable decline in income, households are no longer able to fully satisfy their vital needs such as food intake, which is reduced, malnutrition in children and parents can no longer pay for the schooling of their children.”



A woman Adjara from Kakou village explains the difficulties women face in the village in the face of climate change.



Chiefs of the Kakou village community share their experiences with ACA.

### **Observation:**

The impacts of climate change are evident in northern Cameroon and this is adversely affecting food yield and productivity. The economy of the local residents is seriously affected and if not quickly addressed, it might trigger social unrest. Only the implementation of community-based adaptation initiatives will salvage the situation.



MALI

NI

BURKINA  
FASO

BENIN

NIGERIA

IVORY  
COAST

**TOGO**

GHANA

Doevi Kope,  
Baguda District

EQUATORIAL C

SAO TOME & PRINCIPE

# TOGO

**Communities: Doevi Kope, Baguda District**

## Rationale

A coastal country of 56,000 km<sup>2</sup>, Togo's economy is mostly climate dependent with 70% of the population involved in farming, fisheries, and other related agricultural livelihood activities. Climate change in the country is characterized by extreme events, floods, erratic rainfalls, dry spells, droughts, increased temperature, sea-level rise, coastal erosion, etc.

Communities along the relatively small coastline of about 50 km face a lot of challenges that range from low rainfall to coastal erosion. Coastal erosion has been the major threat for these communities. Due to sea level rise and coastal retreat, many coastal communities have experienced the devastating effects of floodings, which led to infrastructure destruction, including roads, houses, hotels, and restaurants. Even though these challenges are reported, the men and women in such communities made up of mostly fisherfolks who suffer from climate change impacts are not given full attention as required.

This study examines the experiences of a coastal community in Togo called Doevi Kope, which faces climate change effects. The concerned coastal community used to host a vegetation cover of semi-deciduous forests. This was back in the 1970s and 1980s, and included palm trees, coco trees, and perennial agricultural crops (maize, cassava, etc.). Doevi Kope (Latitude 6.155277, Longitude 1.327504) is a village in the Baguida Commune aka Golfe 6 of 1500 peoples, seriously threatened by coastal erosion and coastal flooding. Bolloré Africa Logistics, the company that is currently constructing the Port of Lome, is reported to be responsible for sand mining and land grabbing that is said to be triggering the impacts of climate change currently being experienced by the residents of Doevi Kope, a suburb settlement



Sea advancement continues to increase in Doevi Kope, a coastline community in Togo.

near the seaport.<sup>16</sup>

Access to basic social services and infrastructure remains a challenge for the village due to the sea level rise and coastal erosion, which caused many of the community lands with houses and properties to be under water, swallowed by the Atlantic Ocean. Most of the village's wells collapsed as sea water rise and coastal erosion hits.

The only existing primary school is no longer in use due to coastal erosion, which led to its abandonment. The disruption of family dynamics within the household due to frequent relocation, and the precariousness of livelihoods have led to social ills (smoking, early pregnancy, early marriage, banditry, etc.), and misery of which the first victims are young people and women.

This is a source of inequality between men and women in the village. The area possesses only one borehole, forcing women and girls to spend a lot of time fetching water. In addition, the village has no health center for primary care and no sanitation facilities.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.oaklandinstitute.org/people-call-united-nations-end-business-bolloré-group>

# Testimonials

**Kossigan, 58-year-old, fisherman,  
resident of Doevi Kope**

“Nowadays, there is more wind blowing on the coastline of Doevi Kope and less rain. In the month of June, it rains less than in the old days.”

**Francis Akoli, 44-year-old, fisherman,  
resident of Doeki Kope**

“We are fishermen and used to catch a lot of fish before, but in these recent times catching fishes in good quantity remains a challenge for Doevi Kope.”

**Ganyova Eligodo, 50-year-old, fisherman, resident  
of Doeki Kope**

“Due to the erosion of the coastline in our community, many of us can no longer practice fishing here; we have now to move to other areas to do fishing.”

**Togbui Jean Doevi, 65-year-old, Local Chief of  
Doevi Kope Community**

“Because of the erosion, we have lost almost all our lands where we used to farm. Our village used to be far from the coast; nowadays the sea is just at our doorsteps. The sea gets closer and closer each year; leading to people’s houses being destroyed. In addition to climate change, other factors that accelerated coastal erosion in Doevi Kope include activities like sand mining and the construction of the Port of Lome that is being facilitated by the government, and its positioning on the coast. Villages located after the Port, like Doevi Kope experience the worst impacts of coastal erosion and floodings.”

“We lost all of our lands, houses, and livelihood activities we practice like horticulture and farming. Lands of Doevi Kope dwell in the sea and there is no place for farming.”

“One effect of climate change in our community is the disappearance of our primary school of Baguida Plage. Since its devastation by the sea, our children have to walk very far to attend classes.”

“We have noticed that in the period of September-October, every year, the sea moves further in our lands; causing inondations, falling out of our houses, After the first coastal erosion we experienced in 1968, our royal palace has gone, swallowed by the sea. And from then to now we have constructed four more royal palaces, which are all also washed off by the sea.”

“One of the worst experiences we have with the sea and the only time we get assistance from the State was in 2014, where many were relocated for a while in Baguida Secondary School and got later on a one-year paid rental fees and goods. However, the following year these peoples were left unattended and remain on their own till today.”



Residents of Doevi Kope take a group survey on the impact of climate change on the residents during the Center for Environmental Justice Togo’s visit.



**Abra, 25-year-old, student and resident Doevi Kope**

“Our wells where we get water from are all swallowed by the sea. The toilets also the same and we struggle as we lack water and sanitation facilities.”

**Kossi Paul Ametepe, 38-year-old, fisherman, resident of Doevi Kope**

“My house has been destroyed and I now lodge my aunt’s house.”

**A 34-year-old local fisherman**

“The monsoon has increased in intensity over the years – making children fall sick more often. We have to also mention that wastewater dumping in the sea from agroindustries erected on the coast contributes to sea pollution and the killing of our fisheries.”

**Akouvi Akpene Gbogbo, 35-year-old, fish seller and resident of Doevi Kope**

“As women who sell fish, as men can no longer catch fish in large quantity, we cannot sell and get enough money to cater for our family needs.”

“In the face of climate change, what can we do, we are powerless, our belongings in this village are gone in the sea, and our well where we used to fetch water from is now in the sea.”

**Kossi Gbeliko, 30-year-old, fisherman, resident of Doevi Kope**

“I am constrained to fish in the Port of Lome Harbour as I no longer have a place in my village.”

**Kodjo Alipoti, 47-year-old, fisherman, resident of Doevi Kope**

“You have to go and relocate elsewhere because of the losses and damages caused by sea-level rise and coastal erosion.”

**Nevagnon Adjavon, 56-year-old, fisherman and a resident**

“We are worried and can not sleep peacefully as the sea can hit anytime in the night.”

**A community leader, in his mid-forties**

“Our children, especially girls and ladies, as we can not cater for them properly have to look out for themselves and in so doing they must seek non-decent works like house girls, bar servers, and the worst is they get into prostitution.”

**Observation:**

Doevi Kope is seriously hit by sea-level rise and coastal erosion. This community is a victim of climate change and corporate abuses. Residents helplessly watch their historic lands being washed away by the sea. Agricultural industries in the neighborhood are also polluting the water thereby impacting gravely on the health and well-being of residents. The likelihood of Doevi Kope disappearing in the coming decade is rife if urgent actions are not taken to arrest the current threats.



NAMIBIA

ZIMBABWE

BOTSWANA

Eldorado Park

ESWATINI

Kathlehong

LESOTHO

**SOUTH AFRICA**

## South Africa

### Community: Eldorado Park and Kathlehong communities in south of Johannesburg

#### Rationale:

South Africa is classified as a semi-arid country with only 11% of its land considered to be arable while only 3% is fertile soil. The country has a moderate climate with sunny days and cool nights. The most southerly point has a mean yearly temperature of 16.5 ° C, while Johannesburg, situated at 5,700 feet above sea level, has an annual mean of 16 ° C. Pretoria, at 4,452 feet above sea level, is warmer with a mean annual temperature of 17.5 ° C.

The temperatures can be deceiving because of the very bright conditions during most of the year, especially in the Highveld inland plateau areas. Although South Africa lies close to the Tropic of Capricorn, the high altitude of the inland areas results in a temperate climate in most of the country. In the Southern Hemisphere, seasons are opposite those of the Northern Hemisphere-summer extends from October to March; winter from June to September. The rainy season in the Pretoria-Johannesburg area is during summer, and the temperature seldom rises above 32° C, with cool nights. Winter is dry and cool with daily temperatures varying from as low as -1°C during the night to as high as 24°C during the day.<sup>17</sup>

In the last decade climate change has resulted in erratic weather patterns which alternate between flooding in some parts of the country and drought conditions in others,<sup>18</sup> posing a threat to the country's agricultural sector. Consequently, food prices have been increasing steadily with the latest Household

Affordability Index by the Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity group (PMBEJD) showing that food prices continued to climb in July with the average cost of its Household Food Basket at R4,748 in July 2022, up R60.06 – or 1.3% – from R4,688 in June. Year on year, the average cost of the Household Food Basket increased by R611.44 (14.8%), from R4,137 in July 2021.

The choice of Eldorado and Katlehong communities, both peri-urban areas in Johannesburg East and South, Gauteng Province is largely connected to their incessant exposure to drought and heat waves.<sup>19</sup> These humanly triggered occurrences are now adversely affecting farming in those areas leaving the small-scale farmers suffering as survival is now a struggle. Eldorado and Kagiso are hardest hit as 90% of those who can work in these communities are unemployed.<sup>20</sup>

These communities live below the poverty line and small-scale farming is their only source of livelihood, food and means of surviving. With no means of adapting to these impacts, denial of credit and technological supports, these small-scale farmers remain despondent and vulnerable.

The measures advanced by the government and big farm owners are clearly profit-driven, biodiversity destroying, carbon intensive, and toxic agribusiness at the expense of poor and vulnerable small scale farmers whose only resources (soil) is now being destroyed without corresponding compensation from these culprits.

17 <https://www.countryreports.org/country/SouthAfrica/geography.htm>

18 <https://news.mit.edu/2021/scientists-project-increased-risk-water-supplies-south-africa-this-century-1105>

19 <https://krugersdorpnews.co.za/277779/council-looking-for-solutions-as-heat-wave-wreaks-havoc/>

20 <https://ewn.co.za/2022/08/07/trust-deficit-between-police-and-the-west-rand-community-widens>

# Testimonials

## **Miriam Heyes, middle aged, small-scale farmer from Eldorado**

“Our soil is so much exposed to the sun, requiring more compost and water to maintain soil nutrients such as nitrogen and moisture. These new realities are affecting food production in our community.”

## **Victor Ngobese, middle aged, farmer from Katlehong community**

“Growing food is difficult these days due to excessive heat. The soil is too dry. And when it rains, the soil loses nutrients and crops do not grow and they must regenerate the soil organically.”

## **Victor, 35-year-old, Moringa tree farmer and a native**

“During summer, planting of moringa thrives under hot conditions even in clay soil but the story is not the same as they don’t survive the scorching sun rays.”

### **Observations:**

**The community is suffering from extreme weather patterns caused by climate change. They face extreme heat and dry weather that now affecting production areas. In most cases, the soil is compacted and dry. As evident from the residents interviewed, there is a massive loss of investments in food production leaving the people highly impoverished.**

Photos and content by Gender CC South Africa.



Tshabalala, a farmer in the Kathelong community, points to the destruction caused by adverse environmental conditions on his crops.

# Make Big Polluters Pay

Demands for governments, media, and activists to support frontline communities in Africa



Coastal erosion in the Baguda District in Togo, home of the Doevi Kope community.

# Making Climate Change Instigators Pay

The Make Big Polluter Pay Campaign was launched in September 2019 by a global coalition of climate justice activists on the sidelines of the United Nations Secretary General's Climate Action Summit in New York. Chief among the campaign's objective is to protect the rights of frontline communities to ownership of their ancestral homelands. They must not be victims of rising seas, floods, droughts, deforestation, land grabs and other destructive fall outs of fossil fuel extraction.

The industries that have consciously fuelled the climate crisis, funded climate denial, and blocked just climate progress for decades must pay for the damage they have caused. Holding them liable means ensuring that they are held criminally and financially responsible and that they are made to end the practices that have driven this crisis in the first place. The campaign stresses the need for joint and organized actions against these corporations to pay the debt owed and commit them to no further infractions. In view of the above, crucial stakeholders must also play critical roles.



Heavily flooded farmland in Eldorado Park, South Africa.

**The following reflect the demands of frontline communities:**

## **AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS MUST:**

- Project the concerns of frontline communities in their climate change mitigation and adaptation priorities and policies.
- Establish and effectively fund dedicated institutions that will solely address the impacts of climate change in frontline communities to cater for funding, personnel training, and capacity building.
- Ensure that their climate change policies or legal framework are independent and insulated from corporate suggestions and influence, before, during, and post-implementation.
- Constitute structured committees consisting of state and non-state actors (residents of frontline communities) to monitor the impacts of climate change and recommend compensations for victims.
- Institutionalize climate crisis victims' support fund and ensure its full operationalization.
- Carry out timely and systemic environmental audits on regions prone to climate crises.
- Ensure adherence to the development of environmental impact assessment for any projects.
- Recognise and support the constitution of the Community Development Agreement (CDAs) as a liaising and engaging association.
- Review existing policies to accommodate stiffer punishments and fines on Big Polluters.

### **CLIMATE JUSTICE GROUPS MUST:**

- Work collaboratively with frontline communities to monitor and report infractions committed and perpetuated by corporations and Big Polluters in their localities and communities.
- Assist frontline communities to identify and adopt local climate change mitigation measures that will reduce carbon footprint.
- Leverage communal organizing opportunities to resist and demand sustainable climate actions.
- Adopt and advance common climate change agenda (African climate change demands/Joint Position Paper).
- Work with and promote community-driven approaches and solutions that will prioritize and reclaim their environmental and social rights.

### **THE MEDIA MUST:**

- Expose and amplify the concerns of frontline communities on climate change and the need for inclusivity in the UNFCCC processes.
- Conduct structured interviews and opinion pools to garner testimonials from residents of frontline communities.
- Be the bridge between state and non-state actors to effectively communicate climate policies.
- Strengthen advocacy efforts targeting decision-makers for concrete political actions.
- Help to deepen the public knowledge of the dangers of climate change and assist in awareness campaigns among frontline communities.
- Assist in advancing the Loss and Damage Agenda, especially for frontline communities across the globe.



Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPAA) is a Pan-African non-governmental organization that works to advance human rights, challenge corporate abuse of natural resources and build community power for inclusive development and participatory governance.

More information can be found on CAPPAA website here:

<https://cappaafrica.org/>



Cover image: NASA/JPL/NIMA