

ActionAid Ethiopia Launches Climate Justice Campaign

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ActionAid Ethiopia called up on the global polluting powers to pay attention to the rapidly deteriorating climate that is devastating the lives of world population.



ActionAid Ethiopia's Country Director, Tinebeb Berhane making opening remark (Photo: AAE)

In the national Climate Justice Campaign launching event aligned with ActionAid's global campaign with the motto **#Fund_Our_Future** held in Addis Ababa on October 16, 2023, panellist scholars in the event stressed that the Global North is solely accountable for the horrifying climate crises and responsible to fund climate-friendly human activities, especially agroecology or eco-friendly agriculture to save our world and its population.

In her opening remark, ActionAid Ethiopia's Country Director, Tinebeb Berhane, stated that fossil fuel and industrial agriculture are the major causes of climate crises such as drought, flood, desert locust invasion, displacement, and migration that lead to conflicts; and that it is the Global South countries that bear the whole suffering despite their zero or insignificant contribution for the crises. She also said that the developed countries have not kept their promises to decrease their climate damaging activities and to fund climate resilient initiatives. New research by ActionAid shows that "banks have provided an annual average of 20 times more financing to fossil fuel and industrial agriculture than Global North governments have provided as climate finance to countries on the frontlines of the climate crisis."

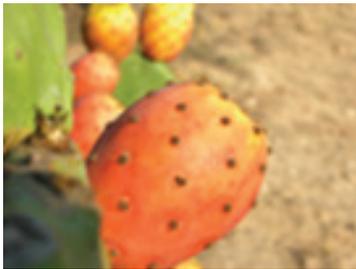


Governments must effectively regulate the banking, finance, fossil fuel and industrial agriculture sectors to stop fossil fuel expansion, including ensuring mandatory development of climate transition plans consistent with 1.5 Degree Celsius climate goal



ActionAid's Research entitled "How the Finance Flows".

Communities coming from Borana, Raya, and West Shoa areas that have been severely impacted by Climate Crises like drought and flood gave witnessing stories about the suffering their communities have faced and the supports they got from ActionAid Ethiopia during the emergencies.



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Beles (fruit of cactus) is very popular fruit in Tigray that has good contribution for food security. In the olden times when the fruit was attacked by pests, the rain used to give us the solution by washing away the pests, but now as there is no rain the pests are destroying our fruit.

”

A community representative from Tigray participating in the event.

During the campaign launch, volunteer young people and members of Global Platforms Ethiopia working with ActionAid Ethiopia staged a short drama showcasing the destructive and criminal practises of humankind and their devastative effects on the lives of millions on planet Earth.



Volunteer young people staging a short drama on climate crisis and its consequences on communities. (Picture:AAE/Communications)

As part of the launching of climate justice campaign, areas and communities affected by flood in Ejere woreda of Western Shoa were visited to eyewitness the damage and express solidarity with the people affected.



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We are used to the outflow of Awash River that has five tributaries. We have our own preparedness mechanism for every rainy season. But this year's flood volume was so huge that we couldnot save our livestock and house items from being washed away

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A representative from flood-affected community in Ejere wereda of Southwest Shewa.

PANELLISTS & THEIR CALLS



Professor Belay Simane is a Professor of Environmental Studies and Agricultural Development at Addis Ababa University (AAU).

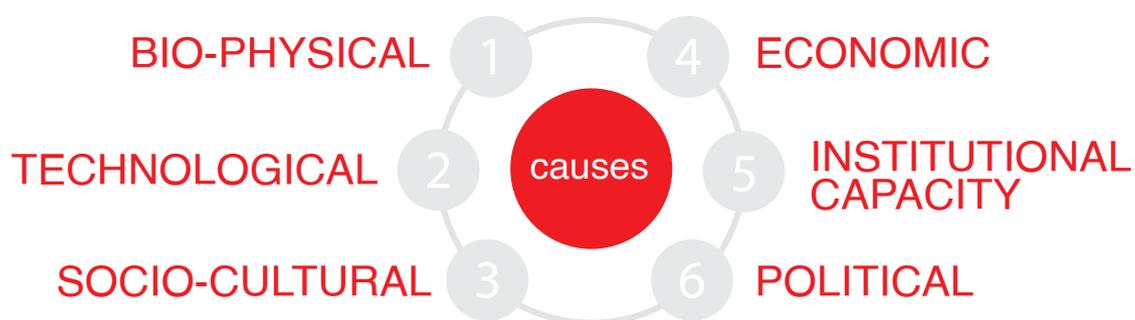
He is also a fellow of the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences.

He is currently serving as a Multi-disciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG) member for UNEP and a Member of the National Panel of Experts for the Grand



In his presentation on the causes and solutions of the concurrent climate change and crisis, after giving elaborations on tangible evidence and acclaimed research findings, he forwarded major measures that all stakeholders should take to mitigate climate change:

- The causes for the occurrence of concurrent climate crisis, climate change and disaster are complex and multi-dimensional. These include, among others, bio-physical, technological, socio-cultural, economic, institutional capacity, and political. If we can't solve the problems around these factors, we cannot solve or mitigate the climate change and disaster we are encountering presently.



- Lack of multi-level interaction and integration among the different climate actors that range from small holder farmers, NGOs and global institutions is causing the climate related problem to persist. Unless these actors act interconnectedly and harmoniously and stop behaving in silo, the situation will continue to worsen.
- As Ethiopia is diverse in many terms like ecology, soil, climate, and farming systems, in-depth and thorough research should be undertaken, and consensus reached among stakeholders on how to address adaptation and mitigation approaches. For this to happen, research institutes like Addis Ababa University, donors, government bodies and other should be cautious when setting their theory of change and transformational agenda which requires knowing the causes that make climate crisis beyond the controlling system of mankind..

- Considering the alarming population growth of Ethiopia, to maintain food security as it is now, we should either disturb the eco system by increasing the farm-lands we use by 75% or increase productivity guided by technology and sustainability specification, by 75%.



- In Ethiopian context, nearly 75% of the disaster we face relates to climate change. We could prevent these disasters by designing proper climate change adaptation and linking them with disaster risk management instruments we apply; and we need to explore our current policies in this regard.



“

Even though we want to start farming for better food security, we can't do that as we have lost all our livestock due to the severe drought we experienced in the last couple of years. The cost of ploughing using rental tractors is as high as 7000Birr/per hectare which we cannot even imagine having it at this destitute time.

”

Community representative from Arero woreda of Borana zone, Oromia.



Ato Gebru Asrat is the Regional Lead MRV, Climate Diplomacy and Institutions development, GGGI.



Ato Gebru, the second panellist, presented on what has been done globally by different initiatives on climate change. The major issues he put include:

- Most of the time, Climate related problems are seen at national level, but their solutions are both national and global. We need to make aware the global community of what we are doing and what support we need.
- It has been over thirty years since climate negotiations started globally, but as climate negotiations are not purely science, their results have been made very slow due to political, economic, and other related reasons.
- Our failure on mitigation has led us to ponder with adaptation. Likewise, our failure to properly implement adaptation we are found in 'Disaster Era' or Loss and Damage.
- Ethiopia is one of global leaders in climate diplomacy. It is the first country to prepare its sustainable climate adaptation plan back in 2010/11; but to materialize this plan, only 20% of finance can be leveraged domestically whereas 80% of the climate finance should come from bilateral and multilateral financial sources. Moreover, Ethiopia has launched its Long-term Net Zero Strategy this year.
- Policies and plans would be resultful only if they get enough fiancé and are integrated with existing long term socioeconomic development plans with bottom-up approach that engages woredas, zones, and regions; project-based approach is not the solution.
- All countries including Ethiopia should voluntarily enter commitments in a bottom-up approach to design climate change reduction and adaptation as Nationally Determined Contribution that is tabled to global leadership-UNCC.
- In a scenario where there is no globally agreed definition of climate financing, the so-called 100billion dollar pledge of Copenhagen Accord in 2012 was not based on evidence was on rather promises of leaders of few countries. With this limitation, negotiations are ongoing to scale up climate financing with a new accord beginning 2025.

- We no longer consider climate finance as a mere pledge or donation but as soft loan that engages multilateral institutions and banks mainstreaming climate component when releasing loans.
- In meeting global commitments, Ethiopia is in good shape in terms of plans but is challenged not only by lack of finance but also by weak institutional capacity to integrate its plans and implementations vertically and horizontally. Recording data and measuring our achievements starting from kebele and woreda level upwards regularly is important as this is a global requirement to report every other year.
- Globally, the world is not on the right track towards reaching the desired goal. Ato Gebru disagrees with the assertion that says there are limitations in preparing bankable resource mobilization proposals to attract climate financing to developing countries. He believes there is enough capacity but what misses is knowing how to use that capacity properly mentioning the number of universities Ethiopia presently has as an example.

Dr. Hailu Araya - PELUM Ethiopia Consortium, Executive Director

Dr. Hailu Araya is a Soil Scientist, Organic Soil. He has worked more than 15 years in the Institute for Sustainable Development (ISD) and more than 7 years in PELUM Ethiopia.

Dr. Hailu's experience falls predominantly under smallholder managed farming system. He brought his practical experiences and views on how agroecology can contribute to mitigate climate change and mechanisms to develop climate change-resilient, gender inclusive, and bio-diversified livelihood in Ethiopia. The following were the major views and recommendations he presented:



- We could observe that it is smallholder farmer that became conscious of the trend in climate change occurrence seventy and eighty years earlier than elites or scientists of the sector.
- For years, smallholder farmers applied homegrown climate change coping and adaptive mechanisms on their farmlands to feed themselves and us to this day. To the contrary, what governments and scientists are used to is investing on research or relief activities that hardly contribute to the sustainable life of farmers, pastoralists, and nation at large. So, we must give recognition and respect and be thankful to the farmers and pastoralists for their irreplaceable contribution to climate change adaptation (Participants stood and applauded when he stated this).

- There is nothing better climate change coping mechanism than Agroecology which mainly comprises of establishing healthy and fertile soil by applying only organic matters, diversifying farm produce, and plant protection. All these methods can be applied by giving recognition to the indigenous knowledge and wisdom of small-holder farmers, pastoralists, and semi-pastoralists in all eco systems. Women are best practitioners of inside approach (home gardening) by which they grow diverse vegetables, spices, medicinal plants and other commercially needed plants in their backyards. This practice empowers women, children, and disabled persons economically and ensures their food security, balanced diet/nutrition, and decreases stress at family level. This inside approach can also be scaled up to outside approach (field farming) by men farmers too to broaden climate change resilient livelihood.
- It is highly suggested if such events could be held nearby farmland to visit and triangulate theories and says with farmers who are living and adapting to climate change.

Dr. Yitebitu Moges has been trained in forestry science, tropical forestry, and forest ecology for his studies.

He works now for Ethiopian Forestry Development (EFD) as National REDD+ Coordinator, in which he has played a key leadership role in the design of several bankable forestry projects and has enabled the mobilization of over 150 million USD from

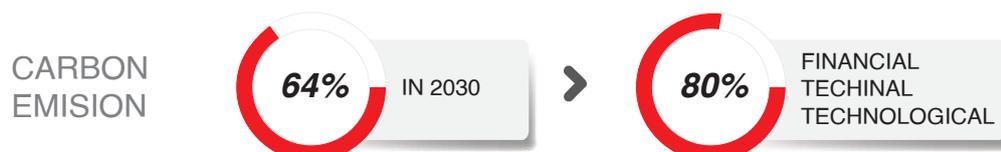


Dr. Yitebitu's presentation and views covered three major areas, namely, 1) the implementation status of Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) which Ethiopia has ratified to reduce climate change crisis; 2) The contribution of NDC to reduce climate change crisis and to ensure climate justice; and 3) How we can we achieve climate justice based on human rights based approach in Ethiopia.

Dr. Yitebitu gave broad explanation on the leading roles Ethiopia played the commitments it entered globally to reduce climate change crisis including mitigation and adaptation. Put in brief, these were the major explanations he gave:

- Ethiopia is well acclaimed as the pioneer to bring green policy by preparing Climate change Resilient Growth (CRG) as a global agenda in 2011. In that document, Ethiopia promised to reduce its carbon emission by 64% in 2030 in the condition that it gets 80% of the financial, technical and technological support the task requires from global sources. This was in addition to the adaptation works it was and is implementing to contribute to drop global warmth by 1.5degree celsius. In furtherance to this, it has ratified Nationally Determined Commitment (NDC) in 2021 by improving its promise of reducing carbon emission to 70% by 2030 if it gets the support from the developed world.

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- Wide afforestation, establishment of climate-friendly industrial parks, hydro power expansion, and mass transport transformational initiatives are excellent indicators for Ethiopia's commitment to its promises of reducing 15% carbon emission by its own resource.
- Successful mitigation leads to adaptation, and considering Ethiopia's potential, 85% of Ethiopia's mitigation component comprises of afforestation or agroforestry on which the country is in good shape to reduce climate change. Moreover, as the country is widely mountainous, afforestation is the best choice to reduce erosion and cover the mountains with trees thereby reduce climate change by cooling the atmosphere and absorbing carbon.

- Climate Justice arises from two centuries of imbalance between the developed countries and developing countries. Developed nations, in their quest for industrialization, dug out carbon from Earth's underground and released it to the atmosphere resulting in the current climate change crisis which they should be accountable for. Climate justice is indeed a human right agenda, not a donation agenda. Civil society organizations (CSOs) must make the society aware and mobilize it in right-based approach to ask developed countries to stop the injustice and compensate for the damages they have made so far.
- Climate justice is interrelated with gender justice as women bear the burden caused by climate change crisis. We need to see more women decision makers and leaders upfront to address issues connected with accessible, affordable, and efficient sources of energy like energy saving stoves. Movements shouldn't be confined to cities and meeting halls; they should rather reach to grassroot level to solve problems in practice.

W/ro Mihret Teklemariam –Director, PETCO Ethiopia

W/ro Mihret has M.A. degree in Development Studies, and she is Circular Economy specialist.



W/ro. Mihret presented on urban environment protection as well as on initiatives to build up women's resilience to climate change crisis and adaptation.

- When we think of urban environment protection, what comes to our mind is population growth in urban areas and industrialization. Ethiopia's CRG national strategic documents stipulate its commitment to realize green and resilient economy and to develop green or smart and sustainable cities.
- National Solid Waste Management and Circularity Strategy which the country has developed recently for the first time gives emphasis on shifting resource utilization from the old-fashioned linear (use and throw or take-make-dispose) approach to sustainable circularity approach which promotes reusing and recycling natural resources to build up circular economy.
- In connection with National Solid Waste Management and Circularity Strategy, a directive entitled Extended Producers' Responsibility (EPR) which forces industries to shape all their production, packaging, and distribution processes with circular thinking is being drafted.
- There are encouraging waste to wealth initiatives implemented by different actors like civil society organizations, corporate industries, and private sectors including the government.
Some volunteer producers and businesses have shown commitment to invest on circular economy by creating environment protection-centred green jobs (solid waste collection and recycling) in big cities like Addis Ababa, Hawassa, Bahirdar, and Diredawa. There are also initiatives that integrate organic waste composting with urban agriculture/greening in these cities.
- 80% of the workforce in waste management are women. However, these women are not benefiting from the contribution they make due to low wages and inability to upgrade their occupation as most of them are not literate. Even though there are few women economic empowerment initiatives in some cities, these are a

After the presentations by the invited panellists, participants were given the chance to raise questions and reflections in relation to climate change, early warning, impacts of climate change on lives of urban and rural communities, integrating top down and bottom-up approaches and others. All questions were addressed, and reflections noted.

REFLECTION BY PARTICIPANTS

“Local research made on climate change and environmental protection overlook issues like banning the use of plastic bags which many other African countries have been appreciated for. The government should commit itself to ban plastic bags not only because they don’t decay for over 500 years but also are blocking urban sewerage flows resulting in flashes that cause deaths and destructions of huge resources”.

“On top of being a model in global negotiations on climate justice, we citizens are more interested to see our political leadership enforcing local policies, plans and proper budget allocation to climate adaptation initiatives that directly impact the livelihood of communities.”

“Research made on climate change adaptation and mitigation by universities and other higher institutes should meaningfully feed into and influence the government to design and improve policies on climate change mitigation to protect climate change vulnerable communities”.

“75% of climate change related disasters can be prevented through having early warning system; thus we need to invest on it properly to be cost effective by avoiding huge resources on post-disaster intervention.”



CLOSING REMARK

In her closing remark, ActionAid Ethiopia's Country Director, Tinebeb Berhane thanked all the participants and panellists for coming to official launch of Climate Justice Campaign and joining ActionAid's movement nationally and globally and gave the following closing remark:

ActionAid as a learning organization of development and justice, has learned from the researches presented, discussions made and experiences shared by prestigious scholars, government representatives, leaders of institutes, CSOs, and communities living in climate change affected areas from this event that climate justice is scientific, social, and political issue requiring meaningful system change instead of piecemeal steps.

We could also see that how the researches and their findings on climate change presented by experts are manifested at ground level as community representatives shared their experiences today.

Different evidence indicate that banks and financial institutions are hugely funding businesses that are exacerbating climate change and destructing our world; and we are highly alarmed by this irresponsible act.

Presently, the world is not in global warming, rather we have reached a stage where we can say it is boiling. Now it seems that the big and developed countries are feeling the pinch of climate change on their economy and societies forcing them to feel our long-lived suffering. By looking at this opportunity, ActionAid chose this time to launch Fund Our Future campaign globally of which this event is the Ethiopian version. When we say Fund Our Future, it is a call to defund climate change contributors and fund fundamental solutions and systems that stabilize our country and the world by reversing climate change and its crises.

What bothers us most is that billions of people in the Global South are disproportionately suffering because of climate change by losing their livelihoods and assets and they can hardly restore their livelihoods. As building resilience is too much expensive, humanitarian actors focus on saving lives. That is why we always demand that emphasis should be given to prevention.



It is with the intention of cutting the vicious circle of communities' dependency on aid that we need to unitedly campaign against manmade deforestation, aggressive agrochemical markets, and other greenhouse damaging acts that are wiping out agroecological farms of billions of smallholder farmers, especially women farmers that feed the world. Thus, financing fossil fuel and industrial agricultures are letting societies in developing countries lead difficult life and forcing their governments get immersed in expensive debts to construct infrastructures to mitigate these calamities; and this erodes their cashflow capacity to invest on sustainable development initiatives like renewable energy and agroecology.



Finally, Tinebeb concluded her closing remark by putting the major takeaways from the campaign launch event:

- Such platforms should link and bring together policy makers, researchers, and farmers. In this regard, the good practice of some Ethiopian universities that invite and engage farmers and communities in their research and development initiatives can be systemized and adapted to other platforms.
- Civil Society Organizations and media at all levels must sensitize the public and create awareness on policies and regulations. Moreover, CSOs and media need to contribute to shape up this campaign to a movement from the grassroot level up to the global level.
- As global climate financing negotiations are also political negotiations, civil society organization must play leading role in giving all the necessary support to government leadership so that they can properly handle the global decisions on funding streams and financial commitments in a way that can best benefit developing countries.
- Platforms and spaces should facilitate and entertain community level engagement, especially women farmers, to voice and share their experiences and issues to policy makers and to the media.



In the event, there was interpretation service both in sign language and other national and international languages.



ActionAid Ethiopia's Country Director, Tinebeb Berhane welcoming one of the invited guests that came to the event.

HOME TAKEN ACTIVITIES

In the panel venue, all the participants made oath-like loud promises and raised placards bearing messages about diverse measures to contribute to climate justice.





Young people and members of Global Platform Ethiopia were all behind the creativity of varieties of modes of conveying advocacy messages on climate change mitigation measures that governments, institutions, and citizens should take. Placards were used to post advocacy and call-to-action messages; board of commitment served to put palm prints of participants to express their commitment for climate justice; using wheel of commitment, participants took away their personal commitments in an entertaining fashion; and the short drama brought forward how the evil deed of mankind on nature is devastating lives of millions.

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