CAPACITY BUILDING ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN CAMEROON; A LEGAL APPRAISAL

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INTRODUCTION

Climate change is a global phenomenon affecting every corner of the planet earth (Iintergovernmental panel report on climate change 2021 (IPCC Report 2021)). The melting of polar ice sheets and glaciers has resulted in a surge in sea levels putting coastal cities at risk of flooding (Jack 2023). In 2022, East Africa nations witnessed drought and desertification (BBC NEWS 2022) which affected crop yields and livestock. Wild fires consume states across Europe in 2022 (European summer wild fire emissions 2022) leading to destruction of property and ecosystems. These wild fires even consumed lives of victims in Europe and across North America.

Cameroon on its part has arid and semi-arid climatic conditions in the northern regions which are characterized by desertification and droughts. According to a World Bank report of 2023, 2 million Cameroonians living in these regions under these climatic conditions are victims of drought and desertification. This report equally states that land degradation and drought are exacerbating conflicts over dwindling natural resources. As a coastal nation, cities such as Douala, Limbe and Tiko are witnessing floods in an unprecedented scale, with poor drainage systems, illegal settlements by the urban poor, lives and property are constantly at risk with fatalities recorded in recent times. In the forest zones of Cameroon deforestation for agricultural, mining and timber has destroyed 1.5million hectares of forest between 2001 - 2020(world bank report 2023 press release no 2023/017/AFW). Cameroon highlands have in recent years witnessed variation in climatic conditions where there is excessive rain fall and in other times prolong sunshine which has affected agriculture. These adverse climatic conditions have affected crop yield negatively, hence putting lives at risk.

Capacity building on climate change is closely associated with the United Nations framework convention on climate change of 1992 and its subsequent protocols. In nearly all of annual conference of parties from 1992 till present capacity building has always been one of its prerogatives. It has its time line clearly demonstrated in the various conferences of parties. Capacity building under the united nation framework convention on climate change has a timeline it has been discussed in the different conference of parties (cop), the first review came in 1992 where the UNFCCC adopted in its article 6 which focused on training and education. In 1992, the united nation under the specialized organ, the united nation framework convention for climate change held a conference and signed an international environmental treaty adopted on May 9 1992. It was opened for signature at the earth summit in Rio de Janero from 3 to 14 June 1992. It then entered into force on 21 March 1994 after a sufficient number of countries had ratified it. The main objective of is to stabilize greenhouse gas. The framework has non-binding limits on greenhouse gas emission. This multilateral environment agreement has been signed by 165 countries ratified by 50 states with 197 parties.

Article 6 of the UNFCCC is dedicated to promoting education, public awareness, public access to climate change information, public participation in addressing climate change and training of scientific technical and managerial personnel (United Nation Framework for Combating Climate change 1992).

In 2007, the Delhi work program adopted at cop13 extending the 2001 work program for five years to 2012.

The UNFCCC continued in Durban South Africa in 2011 which is an annual meeting of states still on capacity building called the Durban forum on capacity building created as a multi-task holder forum that meets annually during negotiations to share ideas and best practices (UNFCCC Durban, South Africa Accord 2011).

In 2012, the Doha work program was an annual session dialogue on article 6 of the UNFCCC, it equally makes review of its prerogatives.
In 2014, in the conference of parties (cop20), which is an annual ministerial dialogue, it was agreed that an online portal on article 6 of the UNFCCC be launched. This effort makes it possible for information on capacity building to be readily available online for states and non-state actors, another milestone on combating climate change.

And finally, the UNFCCC time line continue to the 2015 Paris agreement on climate change cop21, article 11 was on climate change precisely capacity building, a committee on climate change was created.
It also concentrated on the transfer of technology to these nations, climate finance and developing nations should design capacity building programs depending on their needs.
Article 11 of the agreement states inter alia that;

"Capacity building under this agreement should enhance the capacity and ability of developing country parties, in particular countries with the least capacity such as the least developed countries, and those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, such as small island developing states. To take effective actions, including inter alia, to implement adaptation and mitigation and action, and should facilitate technology development, dissemination and development, access to climate finance, relevant aspects of education, training and public awareness, and the transparent, timely and accurate communication of information."

1. "Capacity building should be country-driven, based on and responsive to national needs, and foster country ownership of parties, in particular, for developing country parties including at the national, subnational and local levels. Capacity building should be guided by lessons learned, including those from capacity building activities under the convention, and should be an effective, iterative process that is participatory, cross-cutting and gender-responsive
2. "All parties should cooperate to enhance the capacity of developing country parties to implement this agreement. Developed country parties should enhance support for capacity building actions in developing country parties"
3. "All parties enhancing the capacity of developing country parties to implement this agreement, including through regional, bilateral and multilateral approaches, shall regularly communicate on these actions or measures on capacity building. Developing country parties should regularly communicate progress made on implementing capacity building plans, politics, actions or measures to implement this agreement"
4. "Capacity building activities shall be enhanced through appropriate institutional arrangement to support the implementation of this agreement, including the appropriate institutional agreements established under the convention that serve this agreement shall, at its first session, consider and adopts a decision on the initial institutional arrangement for capacity-building".

Developing nations stand to be the most affected from consequences of climate change although being the least on carbon emissions. It is for this reason that article 11 of the Paris agreement stated that capacities in the countries be build, through education, training, transfer of technology, aid by developed countries towards combating climate change and follow up.

Cameroon is not new to capacity building. The northern region of Cameroon lies within the Sahel zone. In the 80s, the government of president Ahidjo launched the operation green Sahel where trees were planted in the northern regions to combat desertification.

PART I - CAPACITY BUILDING EFFORTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN CAMEROON

Section One: Measures taken by the state on Climate Change Adaptation

The state of Cameroon honoured her commitment in the global effort to combat climate change by putting in place measures to reduce greenhouse house emissions. The main institution on climate change in Cameroon is the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development, as a focal point. The Ministry of Forestry and wild life plays a complementary role. Together they work hand in glove to oversee the task of implementing Cameroon's vision on combatting climate change. In 2015 the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development submitted Cameroon's National Adaptation Plan on climate change to the intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC), this is in line with provisions of the Paris conventions on climate change of 2015.

The National Observatory on Climate Change known by its French acronym ONACC (ONACC 2022) is also Cameroon's commitment to combat climate change it was announce during the 13th conference of parties by the Head of State President Paul Biya in 2007.

Section Two: Non-Governmental Organizations

The state has not been alone in the efforts on combatting climate change, non- state actors such as domestic, international NGOs and individuals are equally playing a role.

A: Domestic Non-Governmental Organizations

The 1996 Constitution of Cameroon recognizes freedom of association as a constitutional right. As policy, grass root organizations are involved in environmental protection through different initiatives such as creating workshops, education, training etc. On protecting the environment, the Constitution of Cameroon also declares on the right to healthy environment. Cameroonians therefore have the right to a healthy environment and an obligation to maintain this healthy environment. It is for this reason that organizations sprang up with efforts in environmental issues in general and climate change in particular.

B: International Non-Governmental Organizations in Cameroon

The Worldwide Fund for Nature is an international non-governmental organization founded in 1961 that has its primary objective the preservation of the wilderness and the reduction of human impact on the environment. They are concerned with environmentalism, conservation, and ecology. They are located in over 100 countries and supervising over 3000 conservation projects. WWF aims to stop deforestation of the planet, natural environment and to build a future which humans live in harmony with nature. WWF is based in Cameroon attracted by the Congo basin and other forest reserves and natural habitats in Cameroon. This makes their presence inevitable as they are a global environment conservation organization. In Cameroon, the WWF are engaged in several environmental projects, some include: sustainable forest management, education for sustainable development and conservation of the Congo basin.

The United Nations Development Programme UNDP has been working to build capacity on climate change in Cameroon through various initiatives. One of their key programs is the "Strengthening the Resilience of Local Communities to Climate Change in Cameroon" project, which aims to enhance the adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities in the country.

Section Three: Some Initiatives by other Non-State Actors

1. Youth and Contemporary Development (YCD) in partnership with Climate Beacon Network

i: Education on sustainable agriculture practices

Agriculture in Cameroon is still the most dominant economic sector with 80% (CIA world fact book GDP of Cameroon 2019.) In rural areas, subsistence farming is the most widely form of agriculture practice by local farmers firstly for survival and the surplus sold in local market; the YCD in partnership with Climate Beacon Network Cameroon have targeted fanners in rural areas such as those in Bambili etc. And introduce sustainable agricultural practices. It is noticed that some old agricultural practices are harmful to the environment. These practices are responsible for the degradation and destruction of the environment, ecology etc. Reducing or a complete overhaul of these practices is essential for the natural environment.

ii: Urban farming

Urban areas and semi urban areas in Cameroon usually consume their crops from long distances. Recently urban agriculture is encouraged by this organization due to the availability of sustainable initiative. The urban farmers can therefore plant vegetables, crops in relatively smaller allotment for personal consumption. They can use plastic containers, unwanted tires around their residence. This is a guarantee of their vegetable, crops, fruits etc. A scheme that is widely practice in Tubah sub division a semi urban area were families have engaged in planting of vegetable crops in tyres, flower pots, used plastic containers.

iii: Planting of trees as commercial venture

It has been proven that planting of trees can greatly reduce or mitigate the effects of climate change. Trees acts as the lungs of the earth as they consume carbon dioxide emitted from human activities. Some people are reluctant to plant trees as they think the trees would not directly benefit them. The YCD discovered this impediment and initiated rewarding scheme to the planting of trees, their research and findings from individuals on why they were not keen in planting trees let them to introduce, improve species of grafted fruit trees as a commercial venture.

iv: Sustainable use of farm chemicals such as pesticides and fungicides

Market garden and the cultivation of cash crops in around the northwest region is one of the major economic activities of the inhabitants. The farm produce such as vegetables, spices, and other crops are commonly cultivated. Some farmers have been abusing the use of fertilizers due to an appetite for huge profits. These fertilizers have an adverse effect on human health (Elsevier 2018). Disease is linked to those fertilizers as they are not use moderately. Some form of cancer is linked to excessive fertilizers and the degradation of soil quality. Unscrupulous farmers who are driven by the zeal to make abnormal profit prefer fertilizers since it is affordable and convenient to use but have hazardous effects on health. Some of the farmers are ignorant of the effects of these fertilizers to human health and the environment. Fertilizers are applied in highlands with poor or no drainage system during the rainy season. These chemicals are washed down stream into water bodies. This has an adverse effect on the environment such as marine life etc. It is therefore important for these farmers to be educated on such excess.

YCD and their partner have enumerated the negative effects of excessive use of chemicals and fertilizers to human health and environment. They have been educating farmers in Ndop plane, Bambili and kejem ketingoh involved in cultivation of cash crops, vegetables fruits etc. Community leaders and farming groups are being drill on the ills of such schemes.

v: Over grazing
Cattle breeding in the North West region of Cameroon and the northern regions are one of the main cultural and economic activities done from generations to generations. Grazing is predominantly in these parts of Cameroon. The youth and contemporary development came to a conclusion after working in Mbiame, Bui division and Bambili and Wey in Wum that over grazing on land was a disaster to the natural environment. It is important for these cattle owners to use these grazing lands sustainably. Over grazing leave the field bare and these grazing fields are susceptible or prone to erosion. In the rainy season and weathering in the dry season downhill. It is therefore vital to minimize the impact of over grazing.
They have encouraged these cattle breeders to create paddocks in their different fields for cattles to be rotated in them over different periods to enable the paddocks to regain vegetation. This initiative is beneficial for the environment and the cattle is fed in a chronological method and over grazing is avoided.

vi: Planting of environmentally friendly trees
Climate change is a reality; tree planting is one of the many methods of combatting climate change for the reason that trees act as lungs of the earth. They help to absorb the C02 from the activities of man on earth.
Cameroon is home to equatorial rainforest a natural forest that stretched across many nations in the sub region such as Gabon, Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea etc. The activities on this natural habitat pose a great danger to the environment. Forest exploitation in Cameroon is an economic activity. The exploitation of timber for domestic use and export is vital for the economy of Cameroon but it must be done sustainably. Mature trees only should be harvested and endangered species should be completed avoided. Reforestation by the timber company should be highly regulated through checks and balances by the forest department. Cameroon has a population of about 27 million people and if every citizen could plant a single tree a year, it would mitigate the effects of climate change.

vii. Protecting Water Catchments
Most water sources in rural Cameroon are natural springs. Tubah subdivision is a good example where the population of over 50000 inhabitants depend solely on these springs for drinking water and for utility. The population of this sub division is growing at a progressive rate with the presence of the University of Bamenda and the urban sprawl from the city of Bamenda there is already pressure on water as a resource. Population growth in Tubah equally means there is pressure on agriculture land, etc. These natural water catchments are seriously under threats from human activities agriculture and deforestation.
The YCD are currently working with the Bambili water authority in the protection of these water catchments through educational schemes on the need to plant more trees around water catchments.

viii. Climate change seminars/workshops
The YCD have design grass root training/ workshop programme on climate change which is aim at building the capacity of the masses of the grass roots. It should be highlighted that the common man in the local or rural Cameroon is less informed about climate change. They are at risk due to their activities around the different environment. It is vital they are educated on the dangers of neglecting adverse activities which would affect them. It is for this reason that the YCD arc working closely with the rural community on climate change.

- The concept of climate change
The common man really doesn't comprehend what climate change is. The YCD on their part educate the local populace on climate change, stating the problem which warrants action (Nathanuil Rich 2019). The risk involved in the local landscape and on man as a whole. It is the prerogatives of the YCD to bring this life by defining this to the youths, YCD therefore make a good use of the natives of their community who are educated to disseminate this

concept to their tribe men and women some who are not educate. Their local languages are therefore a tool of necessity. With this initiative, the message is gradually sinking in.

- Who is at risk?
The YCD highlights here that every living human on earth is at risk of climate change including their animals and environment. The risk is flood, drought, shortage in crop yields which might have untold misery to humankind. It is therefore important for everyone to jump onboard and involve on the global fight on climate change. YCD identifies some effects of climate change already affecting the local population like Hood in 2020 in the month of July which as responsible for carrying away agricultural lands, destroying crops, destruction of some houses, flooding of homes etc. Irregular sunshine from the month of March 2020 etc. Shortage of drinking water from their local sources like springs, the local lake of Bambili witnessed low water table. The lake is at a risk of drying out, the arbitrary disposal of waste. It is therefore important to highlight here that the waste disposal by household, markets is not conducive to the environment. The Tubah council disposes some of the waste in landfills around mile 13 Bambili. There is a waste disposal unit which happens to be around a water catchment. This is a practice that should be condemned.

- What are the activities which causes climate change?
The YCD have identified so many activities that are been responsible for climate change, firstly, massive deforestation, rural community food cultivation and traditions over centuries demands them to use wood as a source of fuel for cooking. The felling of trees over years is none of the causes of climate change. It is now a commercial activity, unsustainable method or practices of agriculture such as slash and burn, agriculture on hilly zones, illegal; disposal of waste and much other area responsible for climate change. This is highlighted to the local population.

- What can be done to mitigate these activities by man?
Mitigating activities responsible for climate change could be a game changer. Looking at deforestation, it should be sustainable. Trees should be harvested instead of green tree. Sustainable trees such as eucalyptus trees and cypress trees have been identified as sustainable. They take seven years to be mature. In Tubah people are encouraged to plant more of these trees as a source of energy for cooking.

EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) has been highlighted due to its benefit effects in settlements, agriculture and nearly all activities under taken by man in the environment where they live. In agricultural land in the hilly zone, fruit trees could be planted, contour ploughing can be used as a method of farming. In build in community drainage system should allowed, swamps should not be reclaimed it would be risky to construct houses along risky areas. Trees should be equally planted to prevent landslides.

These workshops have been one of the many activities of the YCD, after a thorough identification in the community as environmental hazard; the local council equally needs to play an important role to enforce sustainable agriculture practices. Settlement laws should be strictly implemented not neglecting proper waste disposal. The passive attitude of the local council is responsible for environmental ills.

2. RETAFO (REAFFORESTATION TASK FORCE)
As earlier stated, combatting climate change in Cameroon can lead to employment. RETAFO is a good example; it is an entrepreneurial initiative by a young Cameroonian which aims at producing tree species, fruit trees and horticulture capacity building on en environmental ills. This environmental initiative was created on 03 March 2016 in mile 7 Nkwen along route no 11 by Berinyuy Emile.

The project has produced over 100.000 trees, these trees are mainly environmentally friendly trees, agroforestry trees, water catchment trees, and some species with medicinal properties, timber, others rich in soil fertility. He has therefore created employment for himself and others as he needs permanent staff of 7 to run his business venture. He is actively involved with students of environmental science and forestry, agriculture, law who are interns he therefore offers his services to these youths on the need of environmental protection, the need to combat climate change, organic farming etc. Nkwen and Tubah which happens to be close to his nursery has benefited from his initiative due to their proximity. He runs capacity building, training and awareness on the importance of trees around catchment area with local water authorities like those of Bamenda iii, Nkwen, Babanki, Bambili and some local councils.

As of august 2020, he was running a three-month free training of some students, youths on setting up a tree nursery business. This initiative is aim at protecting the environment at the same time creating jobs, with an aim to make profit. At the end of this training, the youth shall receive a certificate of training and a stipend. His mission is therefore to protect the environment while alleviating poverty amongst youths.

Traditional rulers in and around North West region have been his partners. The late Fon of Mankon ANGWAFOR planted more than 20.000 trees in his Fondom, fon of Nkwen has planted 2000 trees in his locality, Menteh community in the Nkwen Fondom has planted 2000 water catchment trees to protect the local water catchment. UNVDA in Ndop has equally acquired about 3000 trees around their rice field. Belo council has incorporated 200 mahogany trees in their council forest, other noted trees planting initiative is that of GP DERODEP of the N.W Region association with RETAFO they have together planted 16000trees in 2020 along the farm to market roads. It includes the kejom ketingoh to Abongfen and kejom ketingoh through the hills of bambili towards the cattle market at Medankwe, other Fondoms include Chomba, 5000trees, Balikumbat 3000trees. RETAFO is therefore an example of how youths can be involved in climate change, mitigation and adaptation while alleviating poverty. Its future goal is to increase his nursery capacity by creating branches in all divisions of the North West region, training other youths to create such initiatives in different subdivision. RETAFO is therefore at the service of the general public of the North West region. This example should be an inspiration to youths who are facing unemployment. RETAFO has proven to be a successful venture.

PART TWO: EFFECTIVENESS OF CAPACITY BUILDING EFFORTS IN CAMEROON

Despite numerous efforts by state and non-state actors to build the capacity of the local population to reduce greenhouse gas emissions several challenges have affected the implementation.

- In adequate Climate Finance for Capacity Building

Cameroon is a developing country that is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including droughts, floods, and sea-level rise. The country has been receiving climate finance from the international community to support its efforts to adapt to and mitigate climate change.

According to the Climate Funds Update database, Cameroon has received funding from various climate finance mechanisms, including the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Adaptation Fund, and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

- Limited Technology in Developing Nations in general and Cameroon in particular

The Paris agreement on climate change of 2015 recognizes technology (Paris Agreement on climate change 2015) as a game changer in the global fight to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Technology on climate change shall ensure a shift from fossil fuel era to

environmentally friendly technology in areas such as transportation, agriculture, infrastructure, industries etc. Developing nations general often lack access to the latest technologies that can help them adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change. This is due to several factors, including limited financial resources, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of technical expertise. As a result, these countries are often unable to implement the most effective solutions to address climate change.

- Technology Transfer in Developing Nations in general and Cameroon in particular

The Paris Agreement on climate change of 2015 reiterate the fact that developed nations should facilitate the transfer of the available technology on climate change to less developed nations. (Paris Agreement on climate change 2015). Technology development and transfer would ensure resilience to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Technology transfer is the process of sharing technology between countries. It is an essential component of climate change efforts in developing nations because it can help these countries access the latest technologies and implement effective solutions to address climate change. However, technology transfer is often limited in developing nations due to several factors.

- Excessive deforestation

Deforestation in Cameroon is at alarming scale. Timber exploitation by logging companies is a source of revenue for logging companies and the state through issuance of timber licensing schemes and taxes from the logging coming. Cameroon, one of the states hosting the Congo basin rain forest, the second largest natural forest in the world after the Amazon rain forest is a global carbon sink. The importance of this forest is for the good of humanity as it absorbs greenhouse gases. Statistics from global forest watch (World bank group 2023) 2010 highlighted that Cameroon had 30.4Mha of natural forest, extending over 66% of its land area. In 2021, it lost 167k Ha of natural forest, equivalent to 105Mt of CO_2 emissions.

- Slow implementation of National Adaptation

Climate change is a pressing global issue that requires proactive measures to mitigate its impacts. National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) play a crucial role in helping countries address climate change vulnerabilities and build resilience. However, the Cameroon NAP has encountered significant challenges, hindering its effectiveness and leading to its failure. One of the primary reasons for the failure of the Cameroon NAP is inadequate funding.

SECTION TWO: PROSPECTS

- Inculcating Climate Change Education into main stream education and beyond

Despite the importance of climate change education, there is a lack of it in many developing countries in general and Cameroon in particular. This is due to several factors, including limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of trained educators. As a result, many individuals and communities in Cameroon lack the knowledge and skills needed to understand and address the impacts of climate change.

One area where the lack of climate change education is affecting capacity building efforts is in agriculture. Agriculture is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, and it is also highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. However, many farmers in developing countries in general lack the knowledge and skills needed to adopt sustainable agricultural practices that can help reduce emissions and build resilience to climate change. For example, they may not know how to implement conservation agriculture techniques or use climate-smart crop varieties.

- The Role of the Media in Capacity Building

The media can be a powerful tool for building capacity on climate change in developing countries in general and Cameroon in particular. It can help to raise awareness of the issue, disseminate information, and promote public engagement. The media can also provide a

platform for dialogue and debate, which can lead to the development of innovative solutions to address climate change.

- Raising Awareness
One of the primary roles of the media in capacity building is to raise awareness of climate change and its impacts. By providing information on the causes and effects of climate change, the media can help to educate the public and policymakers on the importance of taking action. This can help to create a sense of urgency and motivate individuals and organizations to take steps to address climate change.

- Disseminating Information
The media can also play a critical role in disseminating information on climate change. This includes providing updates on the latest scientific research, policy developments, and technological innovations. By providing accurate and up-to-date information, the media can help to ensure that policymakers and the public are well-informed and able to make informed decisions.

- Promoting Public Engagement
The media can also promote public engagement on climate change by providing a platform for dialogue and debate. This can help to raise awareness, build consensus, and develop innovative solutions to address climate change. The media can also provide opportunities for individuals and organizations to share their experiences and best practices, which can help to build capacity and promote learning.

CONCLUSION

The state of Cameroon is already suffering from the effects of climate change. The national adaptation plan is a working tool on how to address the various sectors which are at risk on climate make change. Despite state and non-state actors involved in their various spheres to reduced greenhouse gas emissions more need to be done. The industrialize nations must double their efforts in areas of transfer of technology to combat climate change and the provision of funding to less developed and vulnerable states like Cameroon.

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