**THE IMPORTANCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE LITERACY IN AFRICA**

In the 21st century, climate change stands as one of the greatest challenges to mankind and to our home, planet Earth. Climate change literacy refers to “the understanding and knowledge about all the elements of climate change: its causes, its consequences and its solutions” (Johnston, 2020 as cited in Alenda-Demoutiez, 2021).

The concept of climate change literacy is a process, that is, it occurs in steps. It begins from awareness, then the understanding of how human actions contribute to climate change, appreciation of the negative repercussions and the efficacy of the climate change if we act against it. For this reason, literacy in this matter requires that individuals have a full grasp of climate change in order to first promote knowledge and create a desire for action among people (Alenda-Demoutiez, 2021).

Climate change literacy is of utmost importance. A basic reason supporting this claim is that climate change stands as a serious threat especially to Africa’s ecosystems and species. It is a huge potential threat because of the severe ramifications it has on the environment in terms of extreme weather conditions (i.e. rising sea levels, drought, flooding, famine, loss of biodiversity [plant and animal species]).

Also, without climate change literacy people are not able to adapt to negative economic and environmental impacts of the changes that are already happening (Bafana, 2022; Helbling, 2021). The African continent already experiences, disproportionately, the effects of the phenomenon. The continent bears the brunt of such climate change effects though the continent only produces 3 percent of global emissions compared to China’s 23 percent, the United States’ 19 percent and the European Union’s 13 percent.

Another reason that backs the need for climate literacy is the existing paradox the continent experiences. While emissions are comparatively low, the situation is not the same in reference to experiencing consequences of climate change in the short term and medium term. It is predicted that Africa will face more challenges in terms of water and food security, sustainable development, and political and economic sustainability (Tadesse, 2010). Further, extensive reliance on agriculture, in many African countries, highlights their vulnerability as agriculture is an extremely climate dependent sector.

The need for greater climate change literacy amongst Africans further centers on the argument that climate change could lead to acute conflicts. Therefore it becomes imperative to achieve a proper understanding of the phenomenon in Africa. For this reason, more public, political and academic attention is now being devoted to the issue of global warming and climate change (Tadesse, 2010). For instance, in a 2018 survey (covering 33 representative African states), by *Afrobarometer*, it was found that climate change literacy differed considerably across African states. To put things into perspective, while, 83 percent of Mauritians, 78 percent of Ugandans and 65 percent of Kenyans show this awareness of the subject; only 52 percent of Ghanaians, 50 percent of Nigerians and 31 percent of Tanzanians display this basic familiarity. Averagely, majority of African citizens, 58 percent, or 6 of 10 Africans expressed familiarity with climate change. Despite this high percentage, awareness is only the first stage to climate change literacy, a phenomenon vital for achieving SDG 13 on taking urgent climate action and addressing climate change (Afrobarometer, 2019).

It is highly important for citizens’ knowledge to grow beyond awareness to cover experience and understanding of the negative impacts of climate change. *Afrobarometer* further states that 6 out of 10 Africans are not aware of the basic downsides of climate change. Given the potential negative effects of climate change it is highly important that, as Africans, we turn towards improving understanding and knowledge of the threat climate change poses to us and future generations. This is one way to ensure that our policies on adaptation and mitigation can actualized and made effective on the continent. We hold that one way to ensure this, is to employ methods that combine modern media options (e.g. social media, TV) and authentic African modes of information-sharing like storytelling and music. Also, inclusion in education syllabi and the creation of youth-centered programs on the subject will aid in promoting greater awareness, understanding and knowledge about the elements of climate change.

**Exchange Rates**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Country** | **Year Open 31-Dec-2021** | **Week Close** | **YTD Change** | **YTD** |
| **Ghana** | 6.095 | 7.5514 | 1.4564 | -19.29% |
| **Nigeria** | 411.148 | 414.67 | 3.522 | -0.85% |
| **Kenya** | 112.216 | 114.69 | 2.474 | -2.16% |
| **Cote d'Ivoire** | 579.178 | 604.086 | 24.908 | -4.12% |

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| **Economic Rates** |  |  |  |
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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Country** | **91 Day T-Bill** | **182 Day T-Bill** | **Inflation (%)** | **Policy Rate (%)** |
| **Ghana** | 14.80% | 15.40% | 15.70% | 17.00% |
| **Nigeria** | 1.75% | 3.00% | 15.70% | 11.50% |
| **Kenya** | 7.42% | 8.32% | 5.56% | 7.00% |
| **Cote d'Ivoire** | 2.26% | 2.43% | 4.60% | 2.50% |

 Source: Various Central Banks. |  |  |