

**Integrating Health and FP/RH into Climate Change Action: From Lilongwe to Nairobi to  
Dubai and Beyond**

**BUILD project's contribution**

**Report by BUILD Project, September 2023**

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction and Background .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.0 REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH, LILONGWE- MALAWI 22-24<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2023.....</b>	<b>4</b>
The outcome of the conference was the Lilongwe Declaration: .....	5
<b>2.0 AFRICA CLIMATE SUMMIT AND AFRICA CLIMATE WEEK ACTIVITIES 4<sup>TH</sup> TO 8<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023- NAIROBI-KENYA .....</b>	<b>6</b>
a) High-level Ministerial Dinner Meeting: September 3, 2023; Sarova Stanley Hotel Nairobi-Kenya.....	7
b) SIDE EVENT: “Climate-Health Ministerial Meeting at Africa Climate Summit (ACS).....	9
c) BUILD side event: The Health Impacts of Climate Change on Vulnerable Populations in Africa .....	11
<b>3.0 OTHER RELATED BUILD EVENTS.....</b>	<b>15</b>
a) BUILD Webinar Series 1.....	15
b) First National Chiefs’ Forum on Natural Resources Management and Transition to Sustainable Agriculture in Malawi .....	17

## Introduction and Background

The Building Capacity for Integrated Family Planning (FP) and Reproductive Health (RH) and Population, Environment and Development (PED) Action ([BUILD](#)) is a global program designed to leverage the interconnectedness of Population, Environment and Development, to spur strong political commitment, sustained financial resources, and accountability for voluntary family planning and reproductive health in low-and middle-income countries (LMICs). The BUILD Project seeks to address interlinked Population, Environment and Development (PED) for sustainable development in LMICs to enable integrated FP/RH and PED action using the Systems thinking approach. A

As the 28<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) draws close, the project has heightened its advocacy and influencing activities to help position and make visible its call to action for strong political commitment, sustained financial resources, and accountability for voluntary family planning and reproductive health in low-and middle-income countries (LMICs) specifically within the climate change discourses and action.

The project and its partners including Amref Health among others are demanding the end of the exclusion of health in climate change discourses, climate action and financing, particularly through the mainstream United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) processes.

In addition, the BUILD Project is calling upon national governments to adopt a system-thinking approach for integrated population, health, environment and development for sustainability.

## 1.0 REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH, LILONGWE- MALAWI 22-24<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2023



The BULD project teamed up with Amref Health and with financial support from the Wellcome Trust to host the first regional workshop on the nexus between climate change and health. The goal of the workshop was to come up with and amplify an African Position on Health and Climate Change by incorporating health as a work programme within the UNFCCC discourse processes and climate action. Specifically, the regional workshop was to;

- Build a shared understanding among key actors in Africa's common position on health and climate change.
- Explore and elevate the health conversation in the context of mitigation, adaptation, and climate financing frameworks.
- Foster collaborative partnerships with the AGN in advancing Africa's common health and climate change position in strategic convenings, regionally and globally.
- Build consensus among the health and climate change stakeholders' road map towards COP28

Giving his remarks, Dr Eliya Zulu, the executive director of AFIDEP) and BUILD Project Principal Investigator urged African climate change and health professionals to brainstorm on the nexus of climate change and implored the participants to widen the horizon and include reproductive health so that we invest in wider perspectives and not merely climate justice.

Clive Mutunga, BUILD Project Director cautioned against restricting discussions of health dimensions in climate change to only communicable diseases such as malaria or cholera. Besides contributing to the discussions, the BUILD Project team also moderated and facilitated several sessions, namely;

- a. Clive Mutunga facilitated the Breakout Session 5 which looked at the ***Enabling environment for Climate Change and Health policies and strategies Enhancing an enabling environment for effective CC&H policies and strategies in African countries.***
- b. Further, BUILD's Dr John Mushomi chaired a Group discussion on Data and evidence for effective policies and practice

- c. During Session 7 titled **Breakout Roundtables Discussions on Policy Gaps toward a Common Africa Position**, Prof Sosten Chiotha, from BUILD Project's LEAD SEA consortium partner chaired a group that looked into **Strategies and Modalities for Capacity Building and institutional Strengthening**.
- d. Consortium partner, PACJA's Philip Kilonzo-Head of Policy, Advocacy and Communication and Benson Simba, Lead, Climate Change and Health also had opportunities to chair sessions. Mr Kilonzo moderated Session 6 which looked into Africa Group of Negotiators (AGN) Processes that sought to clarify the AGN Processes, more specifically, the entry points for climate change and health in AGN work streams and recommendations on steps toward the work programme.
- e. In the end, the outcome of the Malawi meeting included;
  - Adoption of Africa's common position on health and climate change.
  - Commitment from the African Group of Negotiators in adopting Africa's common position on health and climate change.
  - A road map for health and climate change stakeholders towards COP28

At the end of the Regional Conference, stakeholders came up with a common position. Download it from here: <https://amref.org/download/the-common-africa-position-on-climate-change-and-health/>

### ***The outcome of the conference was the Lilongwe Declaration:***

**T**he position paper titled "**Exploiting the Potential of One Health Approach for Low-Carbon, Climate Resilient Health Systems in Africa**" represents the collective perspective of African regional stakeholders on climate change and health. The paper acknowledges the importance of a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a universal human right and emphasizes the complex interplay between climate change, health indicators, and environmental management. It highlights the need for integrated planning and systems thinking to address climate-driven health challenges.

The paper mentions the effects of climate change being compounded by population dynamics and settlement patterns, exacerbating environmental degradation, food insecurity, poverty, and poor health outcomes. It therefore advocates for the One Health concept, which recognizes the interdependence of human health, animal health, and environmental health, as a comprehensive approach to tackle these challenges. It also calls for urgent action to reduce emissions and build resilience in the health sector, emphasizing the role of both African governments and developed countries. It also discusses the need for integrated planning and systems thinking at all policy, planning, and program execution levels to address complex synergistic challenges. It also mentions the importance of enhancing the capacity of health infrastructure to meet growing health challenges triggered by climate change, which aligns with development goals.

Furthermore, the paper outlines specific recommendations for various stakeholders, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the African Group of Negotiators (AGN), the African Union (AU), regional economic blocks (REBs), national governments, and developed countries. These recommendations cover areas such as setting health-related goals, mainstreaming health considerations, addressing loss and damage, and promoting collaboration across sectors.

Overall, the position paper underscores the importance of considering the environment, development, and population dynamics in the context of climate change and health in Africa, with a focus on comprehensive, integrated approaches to address the challenges posed by climate change on health and well-being.

The Lilongwe declaration can be accessed here:

#### Media coverage

- Modern Ghana, Ghana: Health sector fights for space in climate change discussions - <https://www.modernghana.com/news/1253803/health-sector-fights-for-space-in-climate-change.html>
- Citizen TV, Kenya: Africa Leads The Globe In Push To Include Health Narrative As Part Of Climate Change Agenda - <https://www.citizen.digital/news/africa-leads-the-globe-in-push-to-include-health-narrative-as-part-of-climate-change-agenda-n325934>
- Standard Media, Kenya: Health adversely hit by climate change, experts say- <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/health/health-science/article/2001480223/health-adversely-hit-by-climate-change-experts-say>
- Society News: Africa seeks Climate Justice for Health - <https://www.socialnews.xyz/2023/08/22/africa-seeks-climate-justice-for-health/>
- Malawi 24, Malawi: Climate change affecting health and well-being of communities — Chiponda - <https://malawi24.com/2023/08/24/climate-change-affecting-health-and-well-being-of-communities-chiponda/>
- Modern Ghana, Ghana: Climate Change-Health nexus: Reproductive health key but a forgotten component in the talks- <https://www.modernghana.com/news/1253894/climate-change-health-nexus-reproductive-health.html>
- Standard Media, Kenya: Time to look at the link between climate change and population growth- <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/farmkenya/article/2001480016/time-to-look-at-link-between-climate-change-and-population-growth>
- News Ghana, Ghana: Climate Change-Health nexus: Reproductive health key but forgotten in talks- <https://newsghana.com.gh/climate-change-health-nexus-reproductive-health-key-but-forgotten-in-talks/>
- KTN News: <https://youtu.be/vMA-ypzIBgU>
- Citizen <https://youtu.be/q4ZcuRBSz4E>

## 2.0 AFRICA CLIMATE SUMMIT AND AFRICA CLIMATE WEEK ACTIVITIES 4<sup>TH</sup> TO 8<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023- NAIROBI-KENYA

The Africa Climate Summit (ACS) convened bringing together global leaders, intergovernmental organizations, Regional Economic Communities, United Nations agencies, private sector, civil society organizations, indigenous peoples, local communities, farmer organizations, children, youth, women and academia to discuss Africa's climate change challenges and formulate sustainable solutions. The

leaders affirmed numerous reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCCC) which paints Africa as a continent that faces disproportionate burdens and risks from climate change-related, unpredictable weather events and patterns leading to negative impacts such as prolonged droughts, devastating floods, wild and forest fires, which cause massive humanitarian crisis with detrimental impacts on economies, health, education, peace and security. Underlining the fact that Africa was not historically responsible for global warming, but bore the brunt of its effect, the leaders emphasized that the continent possessed the potential and the ambition to be a vital component of the global solution to climate change. They finally came up with a document termed the [Nairobi Declaration](#).

Concerns were raised by delegates and organizations in attendance on the fact that health was not given priority during the declaration. Health was mentioned as a preamble on the declaration as point 5 which states *“Express concern that many African countries face disproportionate burdens and risks arising from climate change-related, unpredictable weather events and patterns, including prolonged droughts, devastating floods, wild/forest fires, which cause massive humanitarian crisis with detrimental impacts on economies, health, education, peace and security, among other risks;”*

Some of the key highlight events under the BUILD project were:

***a) High-level Ministerial Dinner Meeting: September 3, 2023; Sarova Stanley Hotel Nairobi-Kenya***

**U**nder the BUILD project, AFIDEP partnered with other organizations to host a high-level dinner meeting along the sideline of the Africa Climate Summit held in Nairobi- Kenya. The dinner was led by Amref Health at the **Sarova Stanley Hotel** in Nairobi on **September 3, 2023**, under the theme ***“Building Stronger Collaboration for Climate & Health Resilience: Strategic Dinner Dialogue with African Ministers and Donors on Climate and Health at the margins of ACS.”***

The sole aim of the event was to forge solid multi-sectoral partnerships for a common position on climate change and health. This was to be achieved through driving actionable commitments for substantial, sustained investment in climate and health resilience in the lead-up to COP 28 and enhancing the understanding of the COP 28 Presidency's ambitions and priorities for Climate and Health and potential opportunities for embracing the Common Position on Climate and Health as a Central Resolution during COP 28. The dinner was graced by government officials, private sector partners, non-governmental organizations, development partners, and civil society organizations amongst others.

Dr Eliya Zulu the Executive Director of AFIDEP during his remarks emphasized that as delegates are looking forward to the upcoming COP28 there is a need to have relevant stakeholders at the climate negotiation table. This means having the health experts who have been in the system and understand it, to speak the health language not only at the national level but also at the global level. Dr Zulu highlighted the Malawi meeting that had earlier been hosted under the BUILD project and the position that came out as he echoed having health at the centre of the climate change negotiations.



We need health representatives in climate change negotiations. As BUILD we are happy to push this African-driven agenda to put health at the center of climate negotiations.



Dr. Eliya Zulu  
Executive Director: AFIDEP



Key outcomes of the dinner were:

- Investment is crucial if climate change is to be addressed in a sustainable way
- Health and climate should not be separated
- At the end of the dinner, there was an announcement of donor initiatives and investments in climate change and health



***b) SIDE EVENT: “Climate-Health Ministerial Meeting at Africa Climate Summit (ACS)***

**T**he BUILD project was also a partner in a high-level ministerial side event led by Amref Health Africa. The meeting was held at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre (KICC) in Nairobi Kenya during the Africa Climate Summit on the **5<sup>th</sup> of September 2023** under the theme **“Climate-Health Ministerial at Africa Climate Summit (ACS) 2023: Catalyzing Momentum for Institutionalizing Health Negotiations within UNFCCC at COP28.”**

This meeting saw the BUILD project get an opportunity to contribute to the ongoing efforts by stakeholders in the continent to foster an African common position on climate and health. BUILD Project shared key findings that highlighted population dynamics and cross-sectoral approaches in the outcome document of the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) held between 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> August 2023, and the Regional Workshop Towards a Common Africa Position and Health and Climate Change being held in Lilongwe, Malawi, between 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> August 2023. The participants who graced the session were public sector space, development partners, NGOs, CSOs and the private sector.

The ministerial convening at the ACS held significant potential to establish a Pan-African unified stance on climate and health, providing the African Health Ministers a crucial platform to actively interact with climate action dialogues and synchronize their strategies and messages in preparation for the Health Day at COP28. This collaborative venture also included high-level participation from other sectors that intersect with climate and health, such as energy, finance, foreign affairs, and the environment.

The side event’s main objectives were to;

- Provide a platform for commitments from African governments to accelerate progress on the implementation of climate change and health commitments
- Socialize and discuss the pan-African common stance on climate and health
- Share knowledge, experiences, and innovations to catalyze action towards strengthening systems for accelerated delivery of climate change and health interventions
- Act as a platform for announcing Africa's common position and renewed commitments on climate change and health initiative/s, with a roadmap leading to a strong representation of Africa's health community at COP 28.



c) **BUILD side event: The Health Impacts of Climate Change on Vulnerable Populations in Africa**



“Health is the face of climate change”

Clive Mutunga  
Project Director: BUILD

USAID lead PATH Foundation PACJA fhi360 AFIDEP

During the side session hosted by the BUILD project during the Africa Climate Summit (ACS) held on **7<sup>th</sup> September 2023** in Nairobi, Kenya, Clive Mutunga during his opening remarks reiterated that “*Health is the face of climate change*” as he ushered in the panel of speakers who touched on the theme “**The Health Impacts of Climate Change on Vulnerable Populations in Africa**”.

The session was well attended with close to 400 people in attendance. The carefully selected panel comprised of;

- Edith Ngunjiri, Technical Advisor for Health-Environment Partnerships, Blue Ventures (BV), Kenya
- Anicet Durand Oboue, National Coordinator PACJA Côte d’Ivoire
- Charles Kabiswa, Executive Director, Regenerate Africa - Uganda
- Sheilla Cindy Anyango, Chief Engagement Officer at Youth Senate Kenya
- Ellyanne Wanjiku, Young Climate Advocate – Kenya
- The moderator (standing) is Dr Bernard Onyango, Senior Research and Policy Analyst and BUILD Project PED Director · African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)



**Key areas that the speakers addressed during the session touched on different aspects of health and climate. These were:**

- Interconnection between environmental degradation, climate change and health
- Addressing linkages between Gender, health and climate change
- The message that resonates with communities on issues of climate change
- Children's voices and young people; what's to expect and it was crucial to give youths and children the chance to have their input taken into consideration.
- Partnerships and climate discussions

“

It is clear that we need to harness the power of indigenous knowledge in climate change action



**Dr. Bernard Onyango**  
Sr. Research and Policy Analyst  
Afidep



The panel discussions that led to a Q&A session saw audiences give their insight on how climate change affects vulnerable populations with adolescent girls' menstrual needs being highlighted. There was also a cry to ensure that when talking about climate and health, mental health issues are addressed. There has been an open call for partners and governments to incorporate health into the climate discussions as the climate change being experienced impacts on the health of people. This hopefully will come out clearly at the upcoming COP28 in Dubai.



**The main outcome of the Africa Climate Summit (ACS) was the Nairobi Declaration.**

The ACS brought together global leaders, intergovernmental organizations, Regional Economic Communities, United Nations agencies, the private sector, civil society organizations, indigenous peoples, local communities, farmer organizations, children, youth, women and academia to discuss Africa's climate change challenges and formulate sustainable solutions.

The leaders affirmed numerous reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCCC) which paints Africa as a continent that faces disproportionate burdens and risks from climate change-related, unpredictable weather events and patterns leading to negative impacts such as prolonged droughts, devastating floods, wild and forest fires, which cause massive humanitarian crisis with detrimental impacts on economies, health, education, peace and security. Underlining the fact that Africa was not historically responsible for global warming, but bore the brunt of its effect, the leaders emphasized that the continent possessed the potential and the ambition to be a vital component of the global solution to climate change. They finally came up with a document termed the Nairobi Declaration.

**The Nairobi Declaration link can be accessed below:**

[https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/2023/09/08/the\\_african\\_leaders\\_nairobi\\_declaration\\_on\\_climate\\_change-rev-eng.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/2023/09/08/the_african_leaders_nairobi_declaration_on_climate_change-rev-eng.pdf)



Picture: The heads of state during the signing of the Nairobi Declaration.

### Media coverage

- **The Modern Woman:** <https://modenwoman.com/africa-climate-week-concludes-with-urgent-call-for-health-and-climate-integration/>- Africa Climate Week Concludes with Urgent Call for Health and Climate Integration
- **The CEO Africa:** <https://ceoafrika.co.ke/africa-climate-week-advocates-for-health-climate-integration/>
- **KBC TV, Kenya:** Africa Climate Week meeting urges integration of health, climate change discourses- <https://www.kbc.co.ke/africa-climate-week-meeting-urges-integration-of-health-climate-change-discourses/>
- **News Ghana, Ghana:** Africa Climate Week Meeting urges Integration of health and climate change discourses - <https://newsghana.com.gh/africa-climate-week-meeting-urges-integration-of-health-climate-change-discourses/>
- **K24 TV** in Kiswahili language: During the ACS, Clive Mutunga, BUILD Project Director, together with Mr Josephat Mshigati, from Pathfinder International Tanzania were hosted by K24 TV for close to 2 hours discussing the nexus between climate change and health in Swahili.
  - [https://www.youtube.com/live/3vSSpMLdFxY?si=\\_GatZGY\\_krcojpzc](https://www.youtube.com/live/3vSSpMLdFxY?si=_GatZGY_krcojpzc)
  - [https://www.youtube.com/live/KXbook\\_Nu2Y?si=vPuuAFO7JtogyI8L](https://www.youtube.com/live/KXbook_Nu2Y?si=vPuuAFO7JtogyI8L)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/live/s-Sd72uxkWE?si=GMoSTO7by9jhZ5wl>
  - [https://www.youtube.com/live/hw\\_Rf3dFbi4?si=7NyHslxwPml0Ws17](https://www.youtube.com/live/hw_Rf3dFbi4?si=7NyHslxwPml0Ws17)
- Clive's TV presentation in English – the date and key issues explained **KTN TV News Live Clive Mutunga and Charles Kabiswa** appearance <https://youtu.be/WFWjHAaJ2Q8?si=wZ8XLkJC5-bGaEKu>
- During the ACS, Clive Mutunga, BUILD Project Director, together with Mr Josephat Mshigati, from Pathfinder International Tanzania were hosted by K24 TV for close to 2 hours discussing the nexus between climate change and health in Swahili.

### 3.0 OTHER RELATED BUILD EVENTS

#### a) BUILD Webinar Series 1

**WEBINAR SERIES**

**Prioritising Health in Climate Change Action in Africa**

**WEBINAR 1**

**22 AUGUST 2023**  
3.00 - 4.30 PM EAT

**Objective:** To provide an overview of the linkages between climate change and health in the African context, emphasising the impacts on vulnerable populations.

**MODERATOR**

**SPEAKERS**

**Bernard Onyango, PhD,**  
Senior Research and Policy Analyst & BUILD Project Population, Environment and Development (PED) Director, African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)

**Jeni Miller, PhD,**  
Executive Director, Global Climate and Health Alliance

**Zakari Ali, PhD,**  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, MRC Unit The Gambia

**Yaw Afrane, PhD,**  
Associate Professor, University of Ghana

**Dr Elizabeth Kimani-Murage, PhD,**  
Senior Research Scientists Lead, Health and Wellbeing Theme, African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC)

**zoom** <https://bit.ly/300sxbz>



The webinar series on **Prioritizing Health in Climate Change Action in Africa** is aimed to unite global stakeholders for a dialogue on the intersectionality between health and climate change, focusing on Africa. the webinar series will consist of three sessions from July to November 2023. The first Webinar focused on the *Public Health Impacts of Climate Change, more specifically, on Unravelling the Science and Solutions for Sustainable Adaptation and Mitigation in Africa*. Its objective was to provide an overview of the linkages between climate change and health in the African context, emphasising the impacts on vulnerable populations.

- The health risks and impact of climate change associated with population health
- Promoting climate-resilient health systems
- Systems thinking and cross-sectoral collaboration to address public health in climate change action

During the webinar moderated by Bernard Onyango, the participants were introduced to the BUILD project which focuses on building political and financial commitment towards reproductive health and family planning while at the same time exploring the intersection between health and climate change. Bernard highlighted some of the challenges that are currently being experienced amidst climate discussions such as:

- Lack of health at the periphery of climate discussions as this was a great miss despite evidence showing a clear linkage
- Increased heat, flooding and storms
- Environmental conditions, social infrastructure
- Public health systems' ability or inability to adapt
- Water scarcity and food production and its impact on health

## **Panel Discussions Snippet:**

It was clear that there was enough evidence to take action on climate change and health. However, political action on climate change has been delayed for decades due to claims of too much uncertainty such as questions on whether climate change is happening or not and what its main cause is. to increase investment in the research space in the region.

**Prof. Yaw Afrane:** stated during his remarks *“I know that many people don't think that climate change is taking place and is due to human activities, but evidence exists to show that it is around us”* He highlighted that there is a call to forecast the future and be better prepared. He referred to the COVID-19 pandemic and how the world was caught unaware. *“Are we prepared for diseases that are climate-driven?”* Prof. paused this question to the participants. **Dr Zachari Ali** added that though there is data, unfortunately, the data that exists only shows a fraction of what is happening in Africa. There is a need to have data that reflects the local context and how climate change affects different populations differently.

**Dr Elizabeth Murage** mentioned that though there is enough evidence there is a gap in quantifying the data through traditional or scientific methods. Thus, there is a need for more research to be done and evidence produced that can be used while negotiating for funds to be set aside towards climate change. There is a need to engage more with grassroots people and communities that are mostly affected and look at mitigation and adaptation methods.

In her remarks, **Dr Jeni Miller reinstated that** climate change being a complex issue needs all hands on deck so to speak and that It was unfortunate that wealthier countries are driving the climate change agenda.

**In** conclusion, this particular discussion aimed at utilizing and fostering discussions on prioritizing health in climate change action in Africa. The above webinar was crucial as it set the stage for the Africa Climate Summit (ACS) that was to take place from 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya. It was clear that partnerships were crucial if climate discussions and health were to be discussed on the same table as there was a need for capacitation to be done in raising awareness amongst communities and the public on what climate change is. There was a need for adequate evidence for action to be taken to address climate change. However, more needs to be done around inter-linkages, understanding data linkages and articulating them to inform communication and advocacy, but also to make sure that we look at climate change and health as one.

## **Media coverage**

- KBC, Kenya: Climate Change directly affects women and girls’ reproductive health - <https://www.kbc.co.ke/climate-change-directly-affects-women-and-girls-reproductive-health/>
- The Star, Kenya: Scientists call for investment in climate change and health nexus research - <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/realtime/2023-08-25-scientists-call-for-investment-in-climate-change-and-health-nexus-research/>
- The link to the webinar recording is [here](#):

## ***b) First National Chiefs' Forum on Natural Resources Management and Transition to Sustainable Agriculture in Malawi***

The BUILD Project co-organized the nation's 1st National Chiefs' Forum on Natural Resources Management Governance in Malawi themed; ***'Chiefs for people and nature'***. The purpose of the chiefs' forum was to improve chiefs' involvement and leadership in the management of land, forests and natural resources and to develop an agreement for improved governance of natural resources including roles and responsibilities of chiefs in Malawi.

The forum was organized by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change, in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government, Unity and Culture. It received financial and technical support from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety, and Consumer Protection (BMUV), IUCN, GIZ, AREECA, the USAID-funded BUILD project (LEAD SEA and AFIDEP), The Tobacco Commission, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), National Herbarium and Botanic Gardens of Malawi, and NWRA.

This discussion took place from **30<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023** and highlighted the chiefs' role in natural resource governance. It was evident that chiefs play a pivotal role in the stewardship of forests and natural resources in Malawi. Recognizing their indispensable leadership in natural resource governance, Malawi has integrated chiefs as vital stakeholders within its technical and governance frameworks, as evident in policy documents and strategies outlined by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change.

Serving as custodians of several communal elements, chiefs facilitate the establishment and enforcement of fundamental common practices within their communities. Their influential voices, coupled with the respect and authority they command, lay a robust foundation for advancing sustainable forest and natural resource management locally.



His Excellency, Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi.



*The president of Malawi, vice president and first lady with members of the organizing committee for the forum.*

His Excellency, Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi graced the event as a total of 350 participants including 6 paramount chiefs, 137 senior chiefs and 142 traditional authorities were present amongst other delegates. The overarching objective of the forum was to delineate the roles and responsibilities of chiefs across Malawi and construct a collaborative framework to enhance the governance of natural resources while providing sustainable livelihoods that take into account the health of the population and the overall development of the country was crucial. This collective effort is anticipated to fortify and elevate local structures, as encapsulated in a **"Call to Action."**

The Call to Action noted: *"As the stewards of natural resources and culture, we recognize the interconnectedness of **population, health, environment, and sustainable development**. We pledge to promote renewed and prudent management of natural resources to enhance sustainable ecosystem services and resilience."*

During the meeting, several issues came up for discussion and BUILD's experts played key roles in either facilitating and moderating or offering expert views in the discussions. These included;

- A session on the importance of cross-sectoral integration in natural resources moderated by Prof Sosten Chiotha. The session looked into interlinkages between population growth, FPRH, and changes in the landscape in Malawi.
- In addition, there was a session for a day with selected chiefs (listening session, some systems thinking) ably moderated by Winnie Shame.

### **Media coverage**

1. [https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN\\_GKoT-GK1C&mibextid=2Rb1fB&ref=watch\\_permalink&v=288369337157376](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN_GKoT-GK1C&mibextid=2Rb1fB&ref=watch_permalink&v=288369337157376) (MBC ENG)
2. <https://fb.watch/mNHoMOFAO5/?mibextid=Nif5oz> (MBC Chichewa)

For more information reach out to:

Clive M. Mutunga

Director, BUILD Project

[Clive.Mutunga@afidep.org](mailto:Clive.Mutunga@afidep.org)



Building Capacity for Integrated Family Planning/Reproductive Health and Population, Environment Development Action (BUILD) is a five-year project made possible by the generous support of the American people through the U.S. Agency for International Development under cooperative agreement number 7200AA21CA00002. The BUILD project is led by the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) (prime) in partnership with Leadership for Environment and Development Southern and Eastern Africa (LEAD SEA); PATH Foundation Philippines Inc. (PFPI); FHI 360; and Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA).

*The contents of this page are the responsibility of AFIDEP who authored the announcement and do not necessarily reflect those of USAID or the United States Government.*