Greetings!

Parliament Approves Climate Change Policy

Amidst all the gloomy news about drying rivers and increasing rate of deforestation within our major water towers, something positive happened for the environment in the past week. Parliament approved the passage of the National Policy on Climate Change, which will see the government investing approximately KSH 200 million annually over the next five years to help lay measures to reduce the impacts of climate change on the people and the environment.

The Members of Parliament noted that global warming caused by climate change will have adverse effects on all sectors of the economy including agriculture, industry, water, energy, trade and tourism. Therefore there is need to pass this legislation to cushion Kenyans and their businesses against climate change impacts. Leader of Majority Aden Duale expressed that;

“If climate change is left unattended to, it will impede Vision 2030 whose aim is to transform Kenya into a global competitive, middle-income country”.

Kenya is among the most vulnerable countries to climate change impacts, due to its high dependency on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, livestock (pastoralism), fisheries, water, tourism, transport, energy, forestry and wildlife; coupled with a low adaptive capacity. The Sessional Paper No. 5 of 2016 – National Climate Change Framework Policy spearheaded by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources seeks to provide a clear and concise dissemination of overall response priorities to climate variability and change.
Why is it necessary to have a climate change policy?

According to the Ministry of Environment, this policy was developed to facilitate a coordinated, coherent and effective response to the local, national and global challenges and opportunities presented by climate change.

This policy utilizes an overall mainstreaming approach which has been adopted to ensure there is integration of climate change efforts into development planning, budgeting and implementation in all sectors and at all levels of government.

Therefore the main aim of this policy is to enhance adaptive capacity and build resilience to climate change and the uncertainties that come with it.

**Objectives of the Climate Change Policy**

1) To enhancing climate resilience and adaptive capacity
2) To promote low carbon growth
3) To mainstream climate change into the planning process
4) To enable a regulatory framework to guide the implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies

What does it mean to have adaptive capacity?

Building climate resilience demands that Kenyan systems of governance, ecosystems and society have the capability to sustain competent functionality in spite of climate change. Adaptive capacity means to enhance improving socio-economic characteristics of households, communities and businesses through adjustments in behavior, resources and technologies. It is a necessity for effective adaptations strategies. This is particularly relevant for the tourism industry, where there is urgent and continuous need to build resilience towards business operations.

By adopting this policy, the government aims at safeguarding the interests and wellbeing of its citizens, their property and prosperity in the face of a changing climate.