



REPORT OF THE WEBINAR HELD ON 13TH APRIL, 2021

Sub-theme: Enlivening and Integrating Indigenous Knowledge in Climate Action at the Subnational Level in the Wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Objective: To deliberate and engage on sustainable solutions that can be drawn from indigenous knowledge to address climate change in the COVID-19 period

1.0 Preamble

The Council of Governors (CoG) in collaboration with stakeholders in the Indigenous Knowledge (IK) Sector Breakaway Session planned to be held at the forthcoming 7th Annual Devolution Conference convened a webinar on Tuesday 13th April 2021 under the sub-theme, “*Enlivening and integrating indigenous knowledge in climate action at the subnational level in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic*”. The objective of the webinar was to brainstorm on sustainable solutions that can be drawn from indigenous knowledge to address climate change in the COVID-19 period as a build-up to the Devolution Conference to be held from 23rd to 26th August 2021. The webinar attracted participants from National Government Agencies and Departments, County Governments, Academia and Research Institutions, Civil Society Organisations, Indigenous Communities and the overall public, translating to over 500 participants. The webinar created a platform for participants to deliberate, share experiences and ideas and approaches that can be adopted to promote the integration of indigenous knowledge into climate action.

“By relying on biodiversity and natural resources, indigenous communities have acquired immense knowledge of the resources (food, forest, medicine and water) around them. Indigenous people have extensive knowledge on wildlife, plants, land-use patterns, seasons, climate, water and soil. But often, governments and development partners have ignored indigenous knowledge in development of climate change programs and projects. The result is that some initiatives fail to take off due to lack of integration of traditional and local resources.”

H.E. Prof. Paul Chepkwony, Governor, Kericho County

The event was graced by H.E. Prof. Paul Chepkwony, the Governor for Kericho County and Chairman of the Resource Mobilisation and ICT Committee of the CoG. It was moderated by Mr. Mwaniki Mageria and executed through a panel of 5 well-experienced panellists from various backgrounds. In his opening remarks, the Governor noted the importance of infusing traditional

knowledge with modern technologies in climate action since not all countries can deal with the impacts of climate change using sophisticated technology. In this regard, such countries can draw climate change solutions from available indigenous knowledge. Capitalizing on traditional knowledge can lead to the development of effective mitigation and adaptation strategies that are cost-effective, participatory and sustainable.

The learning forum was convened by the Maarifa Center.

2.0 Participants

Over five hundred (500) participants attended the virtual forum, drawn from the following stakeholder groups:

1. Council of Governors
2. County Governments
3. National Government Agencies and Departments
4. Development Partners
5. Academia: Lecturers and students
6. Research Institutions
7. Consultants
8. Civil Society
9. Indigenous Communities

3.0 Panellists and Moderator

Moderator: Mr. Mwaniki Mageria; Host, Foods of Kenya (TV show)

Opening Remarks: H.E. Prof. Paul Chepkwony, Governor, Kericho County

Panellists:

- Mr. Lerenten Lelekoitien
Climate Change Directorate (CCD), Ministry of Environment and Forestry
- Dr. Esther Matu
Kenya Medical Research Institute
- Dr. Evans Taracha, BVM, MSc, PhD
National Coordinator, Natural Products Industry Vision 2030 Flagship Project, National Museums of Kenya
- Mr. Kimaren Riamit
Executive Director, Indigenous Livelihood Enhancement Partners (ILEPA)
- Mr. Barsosio K. Abraham
County Executive Committee Member (CECM) in charge of Water, Lands, Environment and Climate, Elgeyo Marakwet County

4.0 Deliberations of the Forum and Emerging Issues

Kenya is not short of a policy and legal framework to guide the integration of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) into mainstream programs and projects. The Constitution of Kenya 2010 and the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Expressions Act, 2016, among other laws, give County Governments the key mandate to identify, document, protect, preserve and promote indigenous knowledge. However, the Directorates of Culture are mostly underfunded and this has been one of the challenges in implementing IK at the County level. The deliberations focused on defining IK and discussed various ways of establishing stakeholder buy-in and promoting IK in the country.

The following issues emerged during the discussions:

- There is a clear roadmap to guide IK holders and policy-makers on documentation, preservation and utilisation/commercialisation of IK. However, there is poor implementation of IK policy and law at both levels of government- little of scaling up of IK into innovations. There is need for policy-makers to invest in protection of IK.
- The country has very rich knowledge critical to climate change adaptation and there is need for rigorous documentation for use now and and future generations.
- IK has been introduced at the higher institution level in the country, and that is why there is scepticism around it. Many people are ignorant on its application because it is usually presented as knowledge that should be archived. Incorporate issues of IK at primary school level going up.
- There is low implementation of IK policies and legislation.
- A lot of emphasis is being placed on preservation and little is done on IK use in day-to-day living. For example, our people relied on herbal remedies to cure many ailments, including pneumonia and other respiratory diseases which have always been there. The emergence of COVID-19 has brought about the need to go back to these remedies.
- There is an enormous gap between the IK holders, academia/researchers and the policymakers.

- Pastoral communities largely rely on and apply IK in their everyday life, hence have been able to cope in arid semi-arid lands. However, this is now being interfered with by land privatisation. Further, traditional people have always experienced floods and droughts and have developed survival mechanisms. This knowledge is worth adopting instead of re-inventing the wheel.
- IK is landscape and ecosystem-specific.
- IK is not for quick-fix solutions; it is not to be privatised and sold.
- Pastoralist communities' literacy levels are at about 40% yet they have been able to sustainably live in arid areas by using IK in managing the rangelands they inhabit.
- Citizens have been indoctrinated with modernity and foreign civilisation and there is a need to address the stigma associated with IK. Those that rely on and still utilise IK are considered backward. There is a high level of institutional rigidity towards IK, signalling the need to change mindsets among key policy/decision-makers in both levels of government.
- The introduction of animal breeds and crop varieties not suited to our environment but which grow faster and yield more, translating into more money has affected our climate change resilience.
- Different players are contributing to IK, however, there is a lack of synergy in these efforts.
- There are various opportunities that IK offers, e.g. the youth can integrate music and dance with technology and commercialise it to earn them money.
- Civil society can play the role of capacity building in IK to increase opportunities for employment for the many unemployed graduates.
- With modernization, IK is now often left to the older generation. There is a need to ensure the youth converge around IK.
- Kakamega County has formed a partnership with National Museums of Kenya (NMK) through Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure and the Nagoya Protocol [*The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international agreement which aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way*].
- Government can integrate IK medicine into our health systems to co-exist with modern medicine. In China, hospitals have two types of pharmacies, i.e. for traditional medicine and for modern medicine. Patients can choose between the two. Often, they choose traditional medicine, except for bacterial infections that require treatment with antibiotics.
- Patent rights last 20 years before they expire and the invention becomes available for public use.
- We should bring back the climate-hardy, adaptable and nutrient-rich traditional crops into our food system, instead of relying on chemical-dependent crops and processed foods that bring about lifestyle diseases.
- The new beef cattle breeds are fed soya bean supplements, which has led to the clearing of forests to plant the soya.
- The introduction of animal breeds and crop varieties not suited to our environment but that grow faster and yield more, translating into more money has affected our climate change resilience.

5.0 Emerging Good Practices

- In determining where to dig boreholes, local elders use a stick the size of a pen to point to the place where water can be found and how deep down it is. In one such case in Elgeyo Marakwet County, the elders correctly pointed a place to drill and predicted water the well would be 40 metres and the drilling would encounter rocks at a depth of 5–8 metres. This matched the surveyors' prediction of a 165-metre well at the same place. .
- Local communities have for years used *aloe vera* juice mixed with water to keep off poultry diseases.

- India is a world leader in investments towards documenting the IK of its over 500 indigenous communities. India has a deliberate programme to identify, document and secure IK in a Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) which is password-protected. To access it, one must formally engage the Government of India.
- The Chinese earn more money from their traditional medicine than we get from tea and coffee. IK can be an income earner for local communities if we engage with them about preserving our forests as they gain from them. We should avoid prosecuting IK holders for coming up with traditional herbal medicine unless if they plagiarise.
- Elders in some indigenous communities can observe the behaviour of the flora and fauna in anticipation of rains.
- Elgeyo Marakwet County is integrating indigenous knowledge, e.g. Tugen Hills & Elgeyo Hills Meteorological Departments in Elgeyo Marakwet County works with Wazee wa Mazingira who use the stars, the moon and the direction of the hills' shadows to tell the weather and their predictions are integrated within the Meteorological Department's forecast.

6.0 Conclusion and Way Forward

From the webinar discussions, it emerged that there is a need for/to:

- Increased awareness of the Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expressions Act, which is housed under the Ministry of Culture. There is need to capacity build policy makers at both levels of government on IK.
- Link scientific research and Indigenous Knowledge in natural resource management.
- County Governments to take up their role and lead in the integration Indigenous knowledge in climate action.
- There is need to incorporate issues of IK at primary school level to ensure that it is embraced from early stages of formal education.
- Involve IK holders and local communities when designing climate action programmes and projects from an early stage to guarantee their buy-in.
- Build capacity of IK holders on patenting in order to secure the intellectual property domiciled in IK.
- There has to be deliberate intergovernmental cooperation to protect IK. The national government should empower Counties to document and archive IK.
- Both levels of government to implement national and international IK policies and laws.
- Continuous documentation of IK to secure and scale up available IK.
- Deliberate intergovernmental action to protect IK. In this regard, both levels of government need to invest in registers- digital repositories. Both levels of government to also embark on identifying IK assets for documentation and storage in the National Digital Repository.
- Establish strategic partnerships to give life to the IK assets.
- Involve the youth in the IK conversation and look for the best avenues for them to promote IK.
- Integrate scientific knowledge with IK in climate change action.
- Both levels of government to work together, to avail funding for research, capacity building for inventors/innovators, and facilitate in patenting and enforcement.
- Counties to on-board young Kenyans from their respective ethnic communities and regions and mould them into IK champions.
- Continuously market indigenous products and link IK holders to beneficial value chains. There is need to take measures that ensure IK holders benefit from their IK even before innovation happens.
- We need to incentivise local communities to preserve IK. Let us avoid going to them as interview respondents when doing research.

7.0 Resolutions

The following resolutions were reached at the end of the webinar for immediate action and strategic action:

	Recommendation/Commitment	Action by	Timeline	Follow-up by
1.	The National Government and County Governments to work collaboratively in identifying, protecting and storing existing IK in the National Digital Repository.	National Museums of Kenya County Governments	Continuous	CoG- Maarifa Centre/Gender & Culture Committee
2.	The National Government and County Governments to work collaboratively with local communities to facilitate patenting of indigenous knowledge and products.	Ministry of Sports, Culture and Heritage County Governments	Continuous	CoG- Maarifa Centre/ Gender & Culture Committee
3.	County Governments to codify a budget line for IK- provide a code for the funding of IK (codification of an IK budget line).	County Governments	Government budgeting cycle	CoG- Finance Committee
4.	County Governments to nominate IK focal points to champion integration of IK into formal climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.	County Governments	End of June 2021	CoG- Maarifa Centre
5.	County Governments to work collaboratively with IK stakeholders in designing projects and programmes that integrate IK into climate governance.	County Governments	Continuous	CoG- All Sectoral Committees
6.	The Council of Governors to work collaboratively with National Government Agencies, Development Partners, Civil Society Organisations and the Private Sector to facilitate forums that promote learning and information sharing on IK.	Council of Governors	Annually	Maarifa Centre/ CoG Committees

	Recommendation/Commitment	Action by	Timeline	Follow-up by
7.	National Government and County Governments to work with Civil Society Organisations, Development Partners and Private Sector in implementing existing IK policy and legislation. A clear roadmap to be developed in this regard.	Ministry of Sports, Culture and Heritage County Governments	Immediate	CoG- Legal and Intergovernmental Committee/ Maarifa Centre
8.	National Government and County Governments to invest in setting up IK Centers of Excellence/ IK Hubs.	Ministry of Sports, Culture and Heritage County Governments	Continuous	CoG- Maarifa Centre/ Gender & Culture Committee
9.	The regulatory body for traditional medicine anticipated in Part X of the Health Act to be set up.	Ministry of Health	Immediate	CoG Health Committee
10.	All state and non-state actors in the IK space to collaborate and coordinate their IK related work to avoid duplication.	All IK stakeholders	Immediate	-

Annexes:

I: Webinar recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grktgtIAeOs>

II: Opening remarks by the Governor and Concept Note



Opening Remarks
for HE Paul Chepkw



Concept Note-IK-
Breakaway Session 2

III. Guiding Questions for the Webinar Questions

1. Deliberate on the extent or the level of implementation of the Indigenous Knowledge (IK) policy and the legislative frameworks into climate action projects and programmes
 - a. What are some opportunities and gaps?
 - b. What steps has the government taken to ensure the integration of IK into programmes (*give examples*)?
 - c. What would you do differently? How can County Governments integrate IK into climate change programming-?

To: CCD, ILEPA, CECM

2. What are some practical steps that are being taken by civil society to make indigenous knowledge impactful in climate change? What role is civil society playing in this space of IK?

To: ILEPA

3. How is the National Museums of Kenya (NMK) facilitating the inter-generational transfer of indigenous knowledge?
 - a. What are some programmes in place? Do these involve County Governments?
 - b. What are the gaps and opportunities thereof?

To: NMK, CECM

4. What are some practical examples of the application of Indigenous Knowledge for climate change resilience? (*Give practical examples*)

To: All

5. To what extent have research institutions and academia integrated Indigenous Knowledge in their work?
 - a. What are some opportunities and gaps?
 - b. What can we do, moving forward, to strengthen the nexus between research and existing Indigenous Knowledge systems?

To: KEMRI



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

GUEST SPEAKER



H.E. Prof. Paul Chepkwony
Governor, Kericho County

MODERATOR



Mr. Mwaniki Mageria
Host, Foods of Kenya TV Show

PANELISTS



Mr. Barsosio K. Abraham
CECM, Water, Lands, Environment
and Climate Change
Elgeyo Marakwet County



Dr. Esther Matu
Deputy Director, Centre for Community
Driven Research (CCDR) Kenya Medical
Research Institute (KEMRI)



Dr. Evans Taracha, BVM, MSc, PhD
National Coordinator, Natural Products
Industry Vision 2030 Flagship Project
National Museums of Kenya



Mr. Lerenten Lelekoitien
Deputy Director, Climate Change
Adaptation, Climate Change Directorate
Ministry of Environment and Forestry



Mr. Kimaren Ole Riamit
Executive Director, Indigenous Livelihood
Enhancement Partners (ILEPA)

THEME

ENLIVENING & INTEGRATING INDIGENOUS
KNOWLEDGE IN CLIMATE ACTION AT THE
SUBNATIONAL LEVEL IN THE WAKE OF
COVID-19 PANDEMIC



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