



**The climate change agenda in Zambia  
National interests and the role of  
development cooperation**

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## CONTENTS

Abstract	4
1. Introduction	5
2. Political and economic overview	5
2.1 Political overview	5
2.2 Economic overview	6
3. Climate change in Zambia	7
3.1 The nature of climate change	7
3.2 The impacts of climate change	9
4. Development of the institutional framework for climate change	11
4.1 Emergence of the institutional framework	11
4.2 Current institutional arrangements	12
4.3 Policies and plans	14
4.4 Inter-ministerial relationships and competition	16
5. The role of aid in the climate change agenda	17
5.1 The politics of aid and foreign influence in Zambia	17
5.2 The role of donors in development of the climate change agenda	18
5.3 Current development assistance to climate change adaptation and mitigation	20
6. National interests in climate change	23
6.1 Nature of the state	23
6.2 Government interests in climate change	24
7. Conclusion	27
References	29

## **ABSTRACT**

In the past ten years a significant number of policies and projects have been implemented in African countries in order to address climate change. At the same time, African countries have become more vocal in the global climate change negotiations. And yet there has been little analysis of *domestic* climate change agendas in African countries.

This working paper is a modest first step in understanding the climate change agenda in one particular country, namely Zambia. The paper focuses on three features: It provides an overview of the disaster management and climate change framework at national level, it examines the role and extent of aid to climate change, and it discusses the interests of the central government in climate change.

The paper finds that donors have played a central role in nurturing and influencing the climate change agenda in Zambia, and in developing the institutional framework for disaster management and climate change. However, the climate change agenda in Zambia is not only a donor construction: Although the issue is not high on the political agenda, there are *de facto* government interests related to climate change. This includes securing funding for civil service activities on the ground; addressing sensitive political aspects of disasters and food security; and dealing with possible threats to the national economy and political stability.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the past ten years a multitude of policies, programmes and projects have been implemented in African countries in order to address climate change. At the same time, African countries have become more vocal in the global climate change negotiations. And yet there has been little analysis of *domestic* climate change agendas in African countries. How do national governments relate to this agenda, and what is the role of foreign aid in this respect?

This working paper is a modest first step in understanding the climate change agenda in one particular country, namely Zambia<sup>1</sup>. Large parts of Zambia are predicted to become severely hit by climate change in the near future, and even now there is evidence to suggest that changing weather patterns are bringing some parts of the country increasingly close to a “tipping point”, whereby existing livelihoods and production systems are unable to cope.

This has not gone unnoticed by donors: External funding for climate change interventions in Zambia is expected to reach USD 700 million in the next 7 years. In the following we discuss the role of development cooperation in the climate change agenda in Zambia, but suggest that it is not only a donor construction: There are also *de facto* government interests in the climate change agenda.

The working paper focuses on three features: It provides an overview of the disaster management and climate change framework at national level, examines the role and extent of aid to climate change, and discusses the interests of the central government in climate change.

<sup>1</sup> See Lange & Jensen (2013) for a DIIS study of national interests in climate change in the Mekong region.

The paper was produced under the 4-year Climate Change & Rural Institutions research programme, which examines institutional responses to climate change in Nepal, Vietnam, Uganda and Zambia. The paper is part of the programme’s national context analysis, and therefore focuses on the national level. Local climate change agendas will be addressed in separate publications.

It should be emphasized that the paper describes work in progress. As such it is not a fully-fledged analysis of the many dimensions of the domestic climate change agenda in Zambia. Rather it provides an overview of some of the key issues, and thereby hopes to point the way for further research.

## 2. POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

### 2.1 Political overview

Post-independence politics in Zambia (1964 onwards) were initially characterized by Kaunda’s well-known socialist “economic nationalism” and the “one-party participatory democracy” of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) from 1972-1991. Although unmistakably centralist and autocratic, Kaunda’s philosophy of “humanist development” initially had a fairly broad legitimacy in the population (Meyns 2005, Nason’o 2005, Phiri 2006). However, popular support to UNIP gradually waned in the face of plummeting copper prices and associated national economic decline.

With rising debts and donor dependency the UNIP government were increasingly forced into a wavering ideological and political course, and with the introduction of multiparty elections in 1991, power passed to Chiluba’s Movement for Multiparty De-

mocracy (MMD) in a landslide victory. This signalled a regime change towards neoliberal policies and privatisation of the mines and other national companies. The liberalisation policies were headed by the increasingly kleptocratic government of Chiluba (1991-2002), but were to a large extent the result of conditionalities imposed by the IMF, World Bank and donors. The subsequent MMD presidencies of Mwanamasa (2002-2008) and Banda (2008-2011) continued liberalisation policy to some extent, although in more moderate form and with a greater role for the state as leader in development (Meyns 2005, Larmer & Fraser 2007, Fraser 2008).

In the 2011 elections, power passed to the Patriotic Front (PF) and the current presidency of Sata. The PF win took place on the back of growing urban dissatisfaction with the effects of liberalisation and the MMD. Sata's strongly populist discourse on fighting poverty, corruption and foreign economic influence echoed these notions (Larmer & Fraser 2007, Helle & Rakner 2012). The full implications of this latest regime change remain to be seen, but have so far been characterized by a more pragmatic stance than was implied in pre-election rhetorics.

Unlike some other countries in the region, Zambia has had relatively peaceful transitions between governments, and the country has largely avoided major civil conflict (Duncan et al, 2003). However, in the late 1980s and especially in 1990, the country saw a number of food riots. These were mainly spurred on by price hikes on maize (essentially doubling in price) as subsidies were removed under structural adjustment. The riots became particularly severe in 1990 and are considered a contributing factor to Kaunda losing power in the elections the following year. Recent elections (2006 on-

wards) are judged to have been fairly open and with few instances of vote-rigging etc. At the same time, the recently booming economy has raised expectations among voters. In other words, elections do matter in Zambia: Votes and followers do not come automatically and politicians must be seen to "do something" - whether through broad development efforts or through factional patronage.

## 2.2 Economic overview

Zambia's economic fate has remained tied to the world copper market since independence, when it was classified as a middle income country, and enjoyed good progress during the early years of Kaunda's presidency. With the decline in copper prices during the 1970s, the national economy collapsed. Foreign debts amassed through the 1980s further crippled the national economy (see below). In the past 10-15 years the Zambian economy has rebounded, to a large extent as a result of a resurgence in copper prices and cancellation of debts. Zambia currently has one of the highest growth rates in Sub Saharan Africa at 6-7%. This has led to an emerging middle class. Growth is however largely focused on urban areas and 60% of the population remain below the national poverty line (World Bank 2013).

A key problem in the economy is its limited diversification and dual structure: Although the mining sector generates significant profits, they have not successfully been transferred into the other main sector: agriculture. As a result the main livelihood of rural populations – small-scale agriculture – has not developed significantly despite the significant agricultural potential in many parts of the country. Capital to invest in mining, commercial agriculture and other

sectors (eg tourism) remains largely on foreign hands (Reed 2001).

Despite a relatively high degree of urbanization at 40% of the population (World Bank 2013) and the significance of copper mining in the national economy, agriculture remains the central source of livelihood for the majority of Zambians. Service and industry employ just 15% of the adult workforce in Zambia, with the remaining 85% engaged in the agricultural sector in some form (Neubert et al 2011). As elsewhere, agriculture is a particularly critical component in the economy of rural areas.

Zambian farmers have been categorized into three groups, with 85% belonging to a “small-scale farmer” category. These cultivate between 0.1 to 5 hectares, and an estimated 40% hold land of 1 ha or less. Subsistence is an important part of their production but may involve cash crop to some limited extent. The poverty incidence in this group is high, with 79% being classified as below the poverty line and 66% “extremely poor”. Farming outputs for this group are considered low and studies show that small-scale farmers are frequently food insufficient (Neubert et al 2011).

So-called “emerging farmers” make up another 13% - characterized by having larger land holdings of 5-10 and are typically better off – but remain in a vulnerable position. Contract farming for tobacco farming is found among this group in some areas. Large scale commercial farmers make up about 2% of the farming population. Some originate from colonial estates, others have sprung from previously state-owned (not privatized) ventures, and yet others are new developments associated with foreign land investments and the agro-industry. Livestock plays an important role in the rural economy in some part of the country. This

is especially so in the southern parts, where limited rainfall make livestock a viable alternative and/or supplement to crop production.

### 3. CLIMATE CHANGE IN ZAMBIA

#### 3.1 The nature of climate change

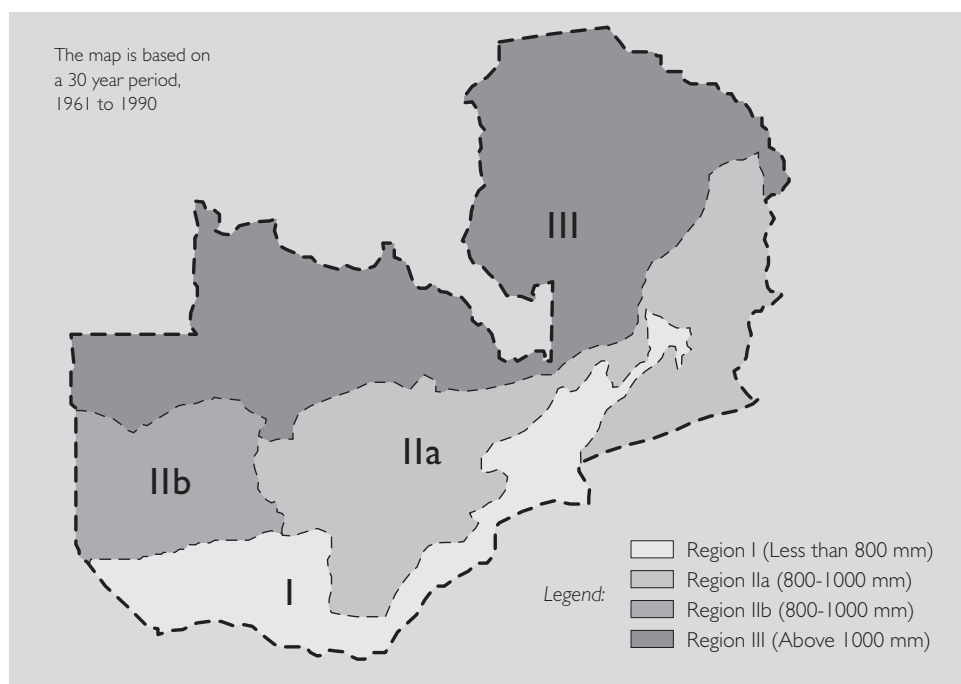
Since the 1960s, Zambia has been experiencing climate change and variability. The Zambia Meteorological Department (ZMD) analyzed climate variability in the last four decades and established that, there has been an increase in frequency of extreme events such as floods and droughts, and increases in temperature both cool and warm. The last four decades has also witnessed delayed onset of the rainfall and earlier cessation, resulting in shorter rainy seasons with more intense rainfall (MTENR, 2010).

#### *Rainfall Variability*

Baseline data collected for the period of 1970 to 2000, from 29 stations in Zambia revealed that there had been decreases in annual rainfall in the last 30 years (MTENR, 2007). The decrease translates to a mean annual average rate of 1.9 mm per month (2.3 percent) per decade since 1960 (MTENR, 2010; McSweeney et. al., 2008, Jain 2007). Major decreases in annual rainfall are especially observed in the dry Agro-Ecological Zone I (Figure 1).

Some authors furthermore claim a tendency towards increasingly short rainy seasons since the 1980s, and a change in the onset of rains from typically October/early November to second or third week of November (Kasali 2008). This is also reflected in household surveys of farmer’s percep-

Figure 1. Agro-ecological regions of Zambia



Source: Zambia Meteorological Department, 2004

tions in the region, in which farmers fairly consistently describe late onset and early withdrawal of rains as a growing problem (Mubaya et al 2010; SARDC 2010; Nyanga et al 2011).

### Temperature Increases

Assessment of the 1960 to 2003 UNDP Climate Change Country Profile of Zambia established that mean annual temperature has increased by 1.3°C since 1960, an average rate of 0.26°C per decade, with rapid increases observed in the winter at 0.34°C per decade (MTENR, 2010; McSweeney et.al, 2008). The mean temperature scenarios projected for all the regions (I, II and III) (Figure 1) for the period 2010 – 2070 show a similar trend of increasing mean temperatures. There is an average increase of about 2°C (24.5 to 26°C) with years 2013, 2040 and

2062 showing the lowest mean temperatures in Region I, 2013, 2041 and 2061 for Region II, and Region III recording higher number of low temperatures particularly after 2050 (MTENR, 2007).

The extent to which the gradual changes in rainfall and temperature reflect a permanent change or are part of a long-term cyclical variation (or are merely coincidental) remains to be seen.

### Extreme events

Much of the public and political attention to natural hazards in Zambia is focused on the floods and droughts that have affected a large number of people in the past two decades (table 1). For example, the Zambezi floods of 2007 and 2009 have been linked to climate change in a number of policy documents and media reports in and out-



Table I. Extreme floods and droughts in Zambia since 1980

Year	Event	Approx. no. of people impacted in Zambia
1989	Floods	800,000
1992	Drought	1,700,000
1995	Drought	1,273,204
1998	Floods	1,300,000
2001	Floods	617,900
2004	Floods	196,398
2005	Drought	1,200,000
2007	Floods	1,400,000
2009	Floods	614,814

*Source:* Based on data from the EMdat website.<sup>2</sup> Year given is for the end of the season in question. Eg 1991-1992 drought is shown as 1992.

side Zambia (GRZ 2011, IFRC 2011)<sup>3</sup>. Scientific data on the frequency and intensity of floods and droughts is less clear than for temperature and rainfall. Nevertheless, a number of studies and reports claim that these disasters are increasing in frequency (GRZ 2011, IFRC 2011, SARDC 201, Thurlow et al 2009). Apart from the major floods and droughts that have regional or nationwide impacts, individual localities often experience floods and droughts that are not reported.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.emdat.be/result-country-profile> This data source is also used in Zambia's draft National Climate Change Response Strategy (GRZ 2011)

<sup>3</sup> For media and web-articles linking the 2007 and 2009 floods to climate change, see eg BBC (2009); Guardian (2009); Global Times (2010); DFID (2009); Oxfam (no date); UNICEF (no date).

### 3.2 The impacts of climate change

Small-scale farming in Zambia is overwhelmingly rain-fed - just 5% of the cultivated land in Zambia is irrigated – and therefore highly vulnerable to both short-term disasters and longer-term change in rainfall patterns.

Impacts most commonly associated with climate change in Zambia are those of floods and droughts. The effects of floods in Zambia are indeed significant, and include loss of life, livestock and human diseases, destruction of agricultural crops resulting in food shortages, displacement of populations, damage of roads, housing, power infrastructure, damage of water infrastructure (including boreholes) and disruption of the accessibility and delivery of health services. The impacts of drought are equally significant, especially in the drought-sensitive areas of Zone 1 in Southern Zambia – indeed more so than

floods in absolute economic terms. The extreme droughts of the 1991-1992, 1994-1995 and 2004-2005 thus led to complete or near-complete crop failures in several parts of the country, with an average reduction in yields of 65-72% in Zone 1 in general (Thurlow et al 2009).

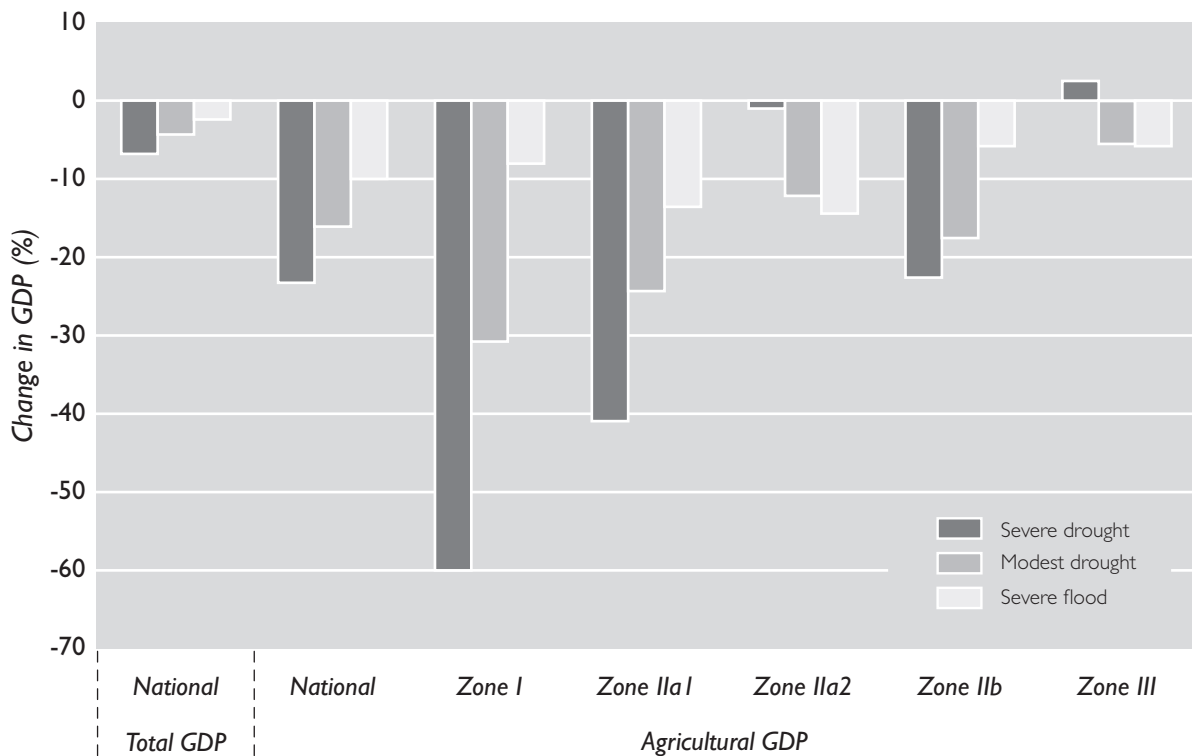
Apart from the direct livelihood impacts, drought and floods also have substantial effects on the local (and national) economy. Figure 2 below illustrates a model-based assessment by Thurlow et al (2009) of the GDP change for the different agro-ecological zones in Zambia as a result of major floods and drought.

Assessment of the impacts of more gradual impacts of climate change is made difficult by the fact that multiple other factors

have affected agricultural production in Zambia in recent years. This includes the withdrawal of state support (extension and subsidies) under Structural Adjustment, the effects of HIV on available hands etc (neubert et al 2009). A number of features thus account for the fact that maize production is declining in some parts of Zambia.

However, according to both Jain (2007) and Thurlow et al (2009) the increasing temperatures and declining average rainfall have contributed to declining agricultural production among smallholders. This is especially the case in Southern Zambia, where maize is the main crop and where mono-cropping is widespread. The close relationship between rainfall and maize production is illustrated for Southern Province in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Changes in Zambia's GDP during severe drought and flood years



Source: Thurlow et al 2009

Figure 3. Rainfall and maize production in Zambia's Southern Province



Source: Jain 2007

The shortening of the rainy season and rising temperatures means that some key varieties of maize do not have time to mature. This problem has been observed repeatedly in many districts over the past decade, and has undermined food security in many areas (MTENR 2007). The combination of gradually changing rainfall patterns, rising temperatures and extreme floods and droughts add considerable pressure on local production systems and livelihoods. An actual “tipping point” situation may thus be approaching for maize production in parts of Zambia, whereby the existing production system is no longer viable (Jain 2007, MTENR 2007, Thurlow 2009).

## 4. DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

### 4.1 Emergence of the institutional framework

Post-colonial responses to disasters in Zambia can be traced back to the so-called Contingency Planning Unit which was established in 1966. The Unit was responsible for dealing with “emergencies” in what was then the Office of the Prime Minister. This Unit existed until 1992, when Zambia along with most of Southern Africa was hit by an extremely severe drought.

The 1992 drought is frequently labeled “the worst drought in 100 years” in the re-

gion, and led to catastrophic crop failure throughout Zambia – including a 93% decline in crop production in Southern Province compared to the year before (Jain 2007). The drought led to a major relief operation in which governments, donors, NGOs and regional bodies collaborated to provide financial support and food relief. The handling of the relief operation is generally acclaimed to have been a success, as famine was largely avoided<sup>4</sup>. In Zambia, the drought is also significant in that it led to institutional changes in government and had follow-on effects in terms of donor assistance.

In response to and following the drought, national media, and relief organisations involved in food relief called for better state preparedness in disaster situations. As a result, the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Energy & Water and Community Development formed a committee responsible for drought response to replace the Contingency Planning Unit created under the Kaunda government. However, coordination and planning was poor and dominated by turf wars and mono-sector thinking. In order to bypass this, donor-funded relief and development programmes established separate structures (frequently with the backing of other Ministries) that could organize and coordinate disaster relief. This included a relief support programme which had a full national, district and village level structure and was supported by a national NGO focused explicitly on disaster relief, the Programme Against Malnutrition (PAM).

The resulting fragmentation of disaster responses eventually led in 1994 to the establishment of the *Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU)* under the Office of the Presi-

dent, with the aim of coordinating effort and providing a more clear line of command. Initially the DDMU was only present at the national level. However, following severe floods on the Zambezi and its tributaries in 2007 and 2009, the government came under pressure to decentralize DMMU operations in order to respond more quickly to disasters. Media attention and calls from donors, NGOs and local MPs to improve government responses to disasters led to the approval of a special Act in parliament in 2010, which expanded the scope of the DMMU further by providing for decentralized representation of the Unit at provincial, district and sub-district levels.

Alongside these developments, the *Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources (MTENR)* has been provided with responsibilities for climate change activities as such. Like many other African countries, Zambia's first Ministry of Environment was set up in 1992 as a direct follow-on from the Rio declaration of that year, spurred on by support from various donors. In 1993 Zambia ratified the UNFCCC and in 2006 the Kyoto protocol. The MTENR became the focal point for both.

## 4.2 Current institutional arrangements

As a result of the above developments, the following organisations are (or are planned to be) key players in coordinating and implementing cross-cutting national climate change efforts:

- The *Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit* in operation under the *Office of the President*, and is responsible for disaster preparedness, preventions, response and mitigation. Specifically the DMMU conducts vulnerability assessments, contingency plans for floods, and coordinates emergency re-

<sup>4</sup> Although some claim that this was more a result of successful coping strategies among the rural population, see Elridge 2002).

response efforts and disaster relief with other government agencies and international organisations. The provincial, district and sub-district levels of the DDMU provided for in the 2010 Act are still being established, currently with a single individual present at district level.

- The *Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources* leads international climate change negotiations, provides the National Communications on Climate Change to the UNFCCC, and has been instrumental in developing the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA). A number of these tasks have been conducted through a Climate Change Facilitation Unit (CCFU) housed in the Ministry. The MTENR is also ministry for the Forestry Department, who have recently become an actor in the climate change arena as a result of the donor focus on REDD issues in Zambia.
- In addition to this, *the Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MoFNP)* has in recent years taken on an increasingly central position in relation to promoting the mainstreaming of climate change across Ministries. The MoFNP is the main anchoring point for the Strategic Programme on Climate Resilience (SPCR) financed through the Climate Investment Fund (CIF), and given its pivotal position in planning and resource allocation it is able to strongly influence and assert its authority vis-à-vis other ministries.
- The National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS) currently in preparation proposes the establishment of a *National Climate Change and Development Council (NC-CDC)*, which is intended to ensure overall coordination and harmonization of climate change mitigation and adaptation policies and programmes. The Council would include representatives from rele-

vant Ministries, as well as from the House of Chiefs, civil society, the private sector and academia).

Apart from these coordinating bodies, key sector Ministries involved in climate change adaptation include:

- *Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL)* is mainstreaming its agricultural policies to climate change, although in practice the capacity and resources on the ground is limited. In principle, extension activities includes providing support to new variants, conservation agriculture measures etc. This is however to a large extent implemented on a donor-funded basis, and there is therefore a certain randomness in terms of which districts and areas of the country see an actual systematic effort to support climate adaptation in agriculture.
- In the *Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Development (MMEWD)*, climate change mainstreaming activities have to some extent been pursued in the Department of Water Affairs. For rural areas this includes efforts to secure water infrastructure against floods and drought, and (in principle) climate screening water use plans and permissions, although this remains difficult given a dearth of data and information. More recently the Ministry (and the government in general) have expressed interest in studies that predict an increasing risk to hydropower production in Zambia and the region.
- The *Ministry of Local Government and Housing (MLGH)* is responsible for supporting and facilitating the development of Local Government and decentralization. This includes supporting the development of local integrated development plans, although so far only a dozen of the more than 80 districts in the country districts have actu-

ally received funding to develop such plans. A main financial resource under the Ministry's control has been the Constituency Development Fund (USD 1million+ per district) which includes funds for small-scale local projects such as water and sanitation, smaller roads and agriculture and marketing. There are however no specific climate change adaptation requirements in this respect.

- The *Ministry of Communications and Transport (MCT)* houses the *Zambia Meteorological Department (ZMD)* which is responsible for national early warning and climate change assessments, early warning information and crop yield predictions in collaboration with the DMMU.

Preliminary data from the Zambia Civil Society Network who monitor government budget allocations to climate resilience activities in sector ministries can be seen in Table 2.

While allowances *are* thus made for climate change resilience in sector budgets, they are generally quite small. They are expected to increase somewhat in the coming years partly because climate change issues have been mainstreamed into the 2011-2015 national development plans, and possibly also as partial co-funding to the significant donor funding currently pledged to climate change adaptation in Zambia. The extent to which budgets will in fact increase remains to be seen.

### 4.3 Policies and plans

In the global UNFCCC negotiations, Zambia has generally aligned with the positions of the LDC group and SADC. This includes calls for emission reductions in the North and adaptation funding to the South. In terms of the latter, Zambia has argued that adaptation funding from the North should be additional to existing development assistance, ie not moved from

Table 2. Budget Allocations to Climate Resilient Programmes in Key Sector Ministries (2009-2011).

Sector	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Agriculture	54.0	68.7	73.5	65.2	23.7
Environment and Natural Resources	40.0	17.4	24.6	23.4	22.4
Energy and Water	14.7	16.0	10.9	15.9	15.6
Infrastructure:					
Works and Supply	0	16.5	0.2	0.7	1.7
Communications and Transport	2.9	3.7	1.3	4.1	2.2
Disaster Management	4.0	3.7	3.6	2.4	35.8
<b>TOTAL Above Sectors</b>	<b>115.5</b>	<b>126.0</b>	<b>114.2</b>	<b>111.7</b>	<b>101.4</b>

Source: GRZ/SPCR 2011. In ZMK Billions, at 2007 Constant Prices. ZMK 1 Billion = approx. USD 192,000

other ODA sectors. In Doha, Zambia pressed for more urgent action on the Green Fund.

National policies and plans on climate change and disasters include the following:

- Zambia's *Disaster Management Policy* was developed in 2005. Perhaps a little unusually, the policy identifies political economy issues as underlying causes of vulnerability in Zambia (lack of access to resources, lack of "political power" and representation) and highlights the "weak institutional structures to promote welfare" (DMMU 2005: 7). The practical aspects of the policy are more pragmatic and focus on developing capacity at all levels to prepare for and respond to disasters. Natural hazards such as drought and floods are a key element in the policy (far more so than eg civil conflict). The policy does not link these hazards to climate change, which is only sporadically mentioned in the document. Nevertheless, the policy potentially provides a relatively broad scope for the DMMU and donors and NGOs to "widen" disaster management activities into climate change adaptation and even broad development oriented activities<sup>5</sup>.
- Zambia's *National Adaptation Programme of Action* (NAPA) was developed in 2007 and identifies priority sectors for action, namely agriculture, natural resources, water, health and energy. According to observers the NAPA is to some extent an isolated plan

<sup>5</sup> For example, the guiding principles of the policy mentions the "promotion of sustainable development" as key to creating resilient communities (DMMU 2005:13). Mitigation activities mentioned also include livelihood diversification, irrigation and water harvesting, environmental management etc, thus providing a discursive entry point into both climate change and other areas for the DMMU, which the policy describes as the key implementing agency. These factors were mentioned by District representatives of the DMMU as key aspects in their coordination of adaptation activities among local line agencies and District Councils.

which is not broadly considered in individual sector planning.

- Climate change has been "maintreamed" into the 2011-2015 *Sixth National Development Plan* (SNDP) under the overall *Vision 2030*. In practice this means that the SNDP sets out 1-2 overall programmes within key sectors (agriculture, natural resources, transport, energy, mining, local government etc) aimed at adaptation, mitigation and/or disaster risk management. These programmes are not detailed but typically concern development of guidelines and interventions at national or "provincial" level. Limited government budgets are provided in the plan for some of these programmes, while others are implicitly expected to be funded through development cooperation.
- The government is currently drafting the *National Climate Change Response Strategy* (NCCRS), which essentially aims to and provide a cross-cutting policy and institutional framework. As mentioned above the strategy is a (donor-funded) response to the fragmentation and lack of clear roles and responsibilities in climate change and disaster management to date. The strategy therefore has a fairly strong focus on institutional arrangements, including establishing the National Climate change and Development Council (see above). The NCCRS builds on the NAPA with an additional focus on infrastructure development. It outlines five key themes for government intervention and development, namely (i) adaptation and disaster risk reduction, (ii) mitigation and low carbon development, (iii) research, awareness and communication, (iv) policy development, mainstreaming and UNFCCC negotiations and (v) financing and resource mobilization. The strategy is yet to be approved.

#### 4.4 Inter-ministerial relationships and competition

The relative influence and mutual relationships between these different agencies varies according to their share of government budgets, their ability to convene other agencies, and their presence on the ground, eg:

- The MTENR and DDMU represent a well-known dualism between “climate change” on the one hand and “disaster” on the other. The MTENR has in principle had the main responsibility for dealing with climate change resilience programmes as such. The DDMU is responsible for disaster management in general terms, and does not therefore have a specific climate change adaptation mandate. Until recently it has had a proportionally small government budget for “climate change” adaptation as such.
- However in practice the DMMU plays a significant role in the national and especially local climate change arena. As droughts and floods make up much of its work, it is very much the “hands-on” agency in the field, and tends to get national media attention in the wake of local flooding and droughts and associated debates about climate change. Unlike the MTENR, the DMMU also has formal powers to convene other Ministries and agencies, and is based in the Vice President’s Office with formal representation right through to sub-district level. The DMMU is establishing a donor-funded climate risk information system, and district DMMU officers tend to present themselves as “coordinators” of climate change adaptation issues.
- The recently more explicit role of the MoF-NP in climate change responses has recently shifted some of the climate change focus (and resources) away from the MTENR,

which has contributed to infighting and delays in approving national climate change policies and coordination frameworks.

- The fiscal budget is allocated by the MoF-NP on a sector basis, and a traditional sector like Agriculture tends to be better provided for than Environment and Local Government. Both of the latter ministries are considerably underfunded, and are particularly dependent on donor financing for specific programmes and activities. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock also traditionally has a stronger local presence.

In sum, the DMMU, MAL and DWA are stronger and better equipped in terms of position and capacity to act on the ground in climate change adaptation and disaster response, compared to eg the MLGH or the Forestry Department under the MTENR. However it should be noted that these are relative terms: As mentioned earlier, most government service structures suffered significantly during the economic decline of the 1980s, and the subsequent cuts in civil service under structural adjustment. For example, many hydrological stations were closed under the SAP requirements, and the agricultural and forestry extension services were significantly reduced. The combination of sectorial turf-wars and the policies of the past thus continue to constrain the capacity of national organisations to implement climate change adaptation policies on the ground.

This situation is further compounded by very slow progress in the *de facto* implementation of Zambia’s decentralisation policy, which has led to a significant disconnect between national and local levels in terms of policy development and coordination in sectors related to climate change. This feature will be explored in more detail in a separate working paper.



## 5. THE ROLE OF AID IN THE CLIMATE CHANGE AGENDA

### 5.1 The politics of aid and foreign influence in Zambia

Foreign capital and interests have played a significant role in Zambian politics and economy since the earliest colonial expansion in Southern Africa, and has often worked contrary to local efforts at economic development.

The substantial influence of the international development banks and multilateral and bilateral donors in Zambia is particularly well described (Andersson et al 2000, Eberlei 2005, Mutesa 2005, Fraser 2008, Phiri 2006, Rakner 2012). Following declining copper prices and unsuccessful attempts at broadening the economic base in the 1980s, Zambia's dependency on foreign grants and loans grew explosively. From 2000-2005, aid thus accounted for an average 43% of the annual state budget (Rakner 2012). The debt burden has been particularly problematic: Apart from the crippling economic effects, it provided the IMF, World Bank and bilateral donors with significant influence over government policy (Fraser 2008, Phiri 2006).

Donors have not hesitated to apply this influence, e.g. by holding back funds when the government did not comply with conditionalities attached to loans and grants. These conditionalities have particularly focused on liberalization of the economy under the well-known Structural Adjustment Programmes of the 1990s, most notably through the privatization of the mines and removal of associated state taxes, as well as curtailing agricultural subsidies etc. The subsequent introduction of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in the 2000s can be seen as a more subtle but neverthe-

less influential means of donor influence on policy development and poverty discourses, and on who took part in these and who did not (Fraser 2006).

Opinions differ on the extent to which Zambian politicians have sought - and been able - to counter the donor pressure (Fraser 2008). For Abrahamsen (2000) Zambia was essentially a "disciplined democracy" at the hand of donors in the 1990s. Such an interpretation is perhaps too rigid: Rakner (2012) sees Zambian political actors as playing a certain role in delaying and watering down the donor pressure for liberalization, as it threatened the basis for neo-patrimonial politics by privatizing critical state assets. Fraser (2008) takes a different perspective and focuses on the highly strategic nature of negotiation tactics between Zambian politicians/technocrats and donors, (including delayal, non-implementation and politicization), and thereby highlights the deeply tactical nature of donor-government interactions.

At the current time, donor influence in Zambia is declining. In 2005 the liberalisation programmes finally qualified Zambia for debt relief, and by 2008 aid had fallen to 28% of the national budget (Rakner 2012). At the same time, copper prices had risen strongly, greatly improving the economy in at least the short term. Indeed, improved commodity prices are probably the single biggest cause of what can be described as a renewed Zambian self confidence in aid relations (Kragelund 2011). These developments have improved government bargaining power vis-à-vis donors, and the evils of "donor dependency" have become a common theme in both political rhetorics and the media. Nevertheless, foreign aid from conventional donors is still an important part of the budget of some sector agencies,

and continues to play a role in development policies and Zambian politics<sup>6</sup>.

An increased influx of aid from China (and to a much lesser extent India and Brazil) has also provided an alternative and less conditional source of funds for government projects, although it does not yet compare with aid from conventional donors (Krage-lund in prep). The absence of conditionalities in Chinese aid, and its tendency to focus on tangible infrastructure projects etc, makes it attractive for government actors. China's aid is furthermore closely linked to trade and investments, whereby export credits and loans are used as an inroad for market access for Chinese companies (Rakner 2012).

Outside the aid field, China has become a major economic force in both the mining industry and the commercial sector in Zambia, and Chinese actors are even beginning to appear in the small-scale commercial farming sector. This has not gone down well in a country where much of the economy is already dominated by non-indigenous investors (including South African capital), and has played an important role in the rise of the nationalistic and anti-foreign discourse of the newly elected government. Here again, however, post-election positions appear to be more pragmatic, and so far there are no signs that the escalating Chinese investments are dropping off.

<sup>6</sup> Eg in 2012 the opposition sought to discredit the newly elected PF by writing an open letter to the donor community, in which they expressed concern over the new President's economic policies and autocratic style. Some donors have also been outspoken in the media, expressing similar concerns. The President, for his part, appears so far to have been less aggressive vis-à-vis donors that was sometimes implied in his pre-election speeches.

## 5.2 The role of donors in development of the climate change agenda

The historical influence of Western donors on Zambian policy agendas is also evident in the disaster management and climate change arena. Western donors have been crucial actors in the development of the entire institutional framework for addressing climate change and disaster management in Zambia. The following table presents an indicative overview of the role of donors vis-à-vis major developments in disaster and climate change framework in Zambia in the past twenty years.

In sum, more or less all the major events described have been funded and technically assisted through development cooperation in one form or another, including virtually the entire policy framework for climate change and disaster management. The UNDP and World Bank (ie multilateral institutions) have been particularly instrumental in this respect. In both the disaster management support and the climate change support, donors have first provided uncoordinated assistance which has contributed to fragmentation, whereafter support had been provided to the creation of overall bodies and policies that can improve national harmonization. A cynical view of this cycle might be that it conveniently justifies (consciously or not) continuous donor support.

Funding and TA has provided donors with significant influence on the nature of the institutional landscape of climate change in Zambia. One current example of this is the World Bank's persistent pressure on the government regarding the recent NCCRS. Although the Ministry of Environment (in various guises) has been the formal focal point for climate change matters since 1992, the World Bank has recently sought to shift more emphasis towards the Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MoFNP) and to create the

Table 3.

	<i>Major institutional changes/policies</i>	<i>Donor role</i>
1992	Cross-ministerial coord. unit for disaster management established.	Unit established in response to the major drought of 1991-92, which led to calls from international relief agencies for better state preparedness. Once established, some donors supported the unit, while others bypassed it via parallel NGO structures.
1992-1994	Ministry of Environment (1992) First NEAP (1994)	UNDP, World Bank, NORAD support to TA and main activities to establish ministry and prepare NEAP
1994	Disaster Management & Mitigation Unit (DMMU)	TA funded by UNDP. Rationale: Need for harmonisation of fragmented disaster management framework.
2000s	Cap. dev. in sector institutions Local pilot model testing	Virtually all activities are donor-funded (bilateral, multilateral, NGOs etc). Most are independently implemented.
2005	Disaster Management Policy	TA funded by UNDP, World Bank
2007	National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA)	TA funded by UNDP, GEF + GEF support to NAPA projects
2010	Disaster Management Act	TA funded by UNDP
2011	Sixth Nat. Dev. Plan mainstreamed	Cross-ministerial team + TA funded through World Bank / PPCR
2009-2013	Draft National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS), incl. National CC & Dev. Council	Process and TA funded through World Bank / PPCR. (Rationale: Need for harmonisation of fragmented climate change framework.)

cross-cutting National Climate Change and Development Council (NCCDC). This approach is based on the logic that the MoFNP is where the power to plan and allocate budgets – and mainstream across sectors – is located, and that the MTENR is unable to convene and harmonize across ministries (hence the need also for the NCCDC).

This rationale has met with resistance in some branches of the government, including the MTENR, and has resulted in infighting among departments and - as mentioned above - delays in the approval of the NCCRS. The Bank have nevertheless persistently pursued their strategy by eg inserting the MoFNP as a key anchoring point for the formulation of the SPCR, and facilitating the establishment of a small low-profile, free-floating unit that is not formally within any Ministry but which is preparing the ground for NCCRS implementation. The Bank has also worked directly with parliamentarians (awareness creation etc) to generate support for climate change adaptation in general and the NCCRS in particular. At the time of writing, it appears that the NCCRS will be approved in the form supported by the World Bank and other donors.

### **5.3 Current development assistance to climate change adaptation and mitigation**

While the general influence of Western donors on *Zambian* policies appears to be declining at the moment, climate change and disaster management remain arenas where other foreign interests such as China and South Africa are virtually absent, and where the traditional role and modalities of Western aid still dominates.

Indeed, Western-led development assistance to climate change related programmes

is booming. It is estimated that some USD 700 Million are currently pledged towards climate change supported programmes in Zambia for the period 2012-2017 (GRZ/SPCR 2011). Table 4 provides an overview of current major donor-funded activities with climate change elements as of 2011. The table should be seen only as an indication of the types of activities supported. It does not include the numerous small-scale projects, or past assistance to disaster management and relief efforts.

Apart from these and various smaller interventions, there is the *Zambian Strategic Programme for Climate Resilience (SPCR)*, which has emerged as a key programme in the planned development assistance to climate change adaptation at both the strategic and local level. The SPCR is funded through the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR) which is a global programme under the Climate Investment Funds (CIF). The programme is administered by the World Bank in collaboration with the African Development Bank and other partners. Zambia was one of the first countries to be selected for PPCR support.

The SPCR budget is still under preparation but appears to exceed USD 110 mio (60 as a concessionary loan, 50 as grant). The programme has three main components, namely:

- Participatory Adaptation, including vulnerability assessments and planning at district and sub-district levels to diversify agriculture and improve sustainable natural resource management, and enhancing disaster preparedness at districts and community level
- Climate Resilient Infrastructure, including infrastructure vulnerability assessments, development of standards and rehabilitation projects


Table 4. Overview of major development support with climate change components as of 2011

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Focus</i>
Norway and UNDP	Institutional Support to the Climate Change Facilitation Unit (CCFU)	Key strategic and policy studies; public awareness
Finland, Norway, Denmark and UNDP	Environment and Natural Resources Management and Mainstreaming Programme (ENRMMP)	Capacity development to mainstream environment. Interim Environmental Fund to support investment in the sector
World Food Programme	GIS-based Hazard Risk Map on Natural and Human-induced Disasters. Capacity Building Support to DMMU	Use of National Disaster Management and Early Warning Systems; Development of Spatial Information System for disaster risks
UNDP	UN-Reducing Emissions in the Forests (REDD)	Strengthen capacity to implement REDD-type investments. Provide financial incentives to reduce greenhouse emissions
Finland and Denmark (In collaboration with UNDP and COMESA)	Strengthening of Meteorological Services	Improvements in regional climate projections and strengthening of early warning
UN Global Mechanism	Integrating Sustainable Land Management into Climate Change Financing and Investment Frameworks	Mainstream Sustainable Land Management in climate change financing; innovative financing instruments for nexus of land-climate change; information for decision making processes.
Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) and World Bank Institute	Use of Crowdsourcing Support to RHoK Support to Climate Change Profile	Promote the use of crowdsourcing in early warning systems Sponsor to the Random Hacks of Kindness (Zambia) Development of Zambia's Climate profile
DFID	Support to Zambia Civil Society Network (ZCSN)	Climate change advocacy and implementation by civil society groups
Various Donors	Green Enviro-Watch	Youth Climate Change Conference; awareness and advocacy
Various partners, through Zabuntu/ MachaWorks	Random Hacks of Kindness- Zambia	Annual worldwide event joining the development community and IT experts willing to volunteer their time to develop software solutions to common development problems.
The Africa Carbon Credit Exchange (ACCE) Lloyds Financials	Low Carbon Africa Fund. Green Technology Credit Enhancement Fund	Investment fund designed to jump-start carbon projects Investment fund to stimulate financial sector, banks, insurance companies and pension funds in investing in clean technology businesses.
ESOKO	Information to farmers	Mobile platform company that promotes farmers information (including weather reports) using SMS technology
Access Micro-Finance Holding AG	AB Bank of Zambia Ltd	Micro-finance Bank aiming to provide specialized micro-finance services to small and medium-enterprises and low-income individuals in Zambia
Google, NASA, European Space Agency and Italian Government	Geospatial climate-related information system in Zambia	Interested partners in promoting the use of geospatial information systems in Zambia

(Tabel 4. continued)

Donor	Name	Focus
DANIDA	Phase 2 Support to integrate Water resources Management in the Zambezi Basin	Support Integrated water resources management in the Zambezi River Basin (including Zambia)
GEF	Adaptation to the Effects of Drought and Climate Change	Implementation of NAPA priorities in agro-ecological zones 1 and 2.
Millenium Challenge Account (MCA)	Greater Kafue National Park Economic Development	Baseline rehabilitation of the road to and from Kafue National Park (as well as related infrastructure)
Norway (In collaboration with FAO)	Conservation Farming Support to TerrAfrica	Promotion of conservation farming and climate-smart agriculture
DFID	Social Protection	Unconditional cash transfers to targeted households in the 10 poorest districts of Zambia (including Kazungula, Kalabo, Shang'ombo, Kalomo and Senanga in the two pilot sub-basins)
IUCN	Climate Change and Development	Climate change investments in Luapula, Western and Central Provinces.
Red Cross	Zambezi River Basin Initiative	Support to Sesheke and Kazungula districts (Western and Southern Zambia) to focus on disaster preparedness, response and risk reduction, strengthened food security, improved water and sanitation, and HIV, cholera and malaria prevention
World Fish Center	Aquatic Agriculture Systems (Zambia Component)	Aquaculture development, fisheries livelihood diversification and fisheries management plans in several districts of the Western and Southern Province, Kafue Floodplain and Luapula
CONCERN World Wide	Food Income and Market Programme in Western and Central Zambia	Adaptation, sustainable agriculture and support to livelihoods to 45,000 poor households in Western and Southern Provinces
National Heritage Conservation Commission (NHCC)	Barotse Canals - World Heritage Site	Preparation of nomination of Barotse canals as World Heritage Site.
Peace Parks Foundation	Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area	Collaboration with Governments of Zambia, Angola, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe to establish the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (the world largest planned conservation area). Completion of integrated development plan for the Zambia portion
Pellum	Sustainable Agriculture	Improved livelihoods of poor and vulnerable communities; campaign, advocacy and network

		Multilateral and Bilateral
Legend:		NGOs
		Private Sector

Source: GRZ/SPCR 2011

- Strategic Programme Support, aimed at national institutional strengthening, policy mainstreaming, improved climate information.

The SPCR thus works at all major levels related to climate change and is as such becoming the main vehicle for coordinating and facilitating (and thereby structuring) national responses to climate change.

Apart from the major multilateral and bilateral donors, a number of international and national NGOs currently work on disaster management and climate change related activities. This includes both development-, conservation and emergency oriented NGOs. While the NGO sector in Zambia is relatively well developed, it is to a large extent project-driven and dependent on funding from international sources, including the larger donors. The donor community (and especially the World Bank) have been instrumental in bringing NGOs into national policy meetings on climate change adaptation.

NGOs play a not insignificant role in promoting the disaster management and climate change discourse in Zambia at both local and national levels. For example, during the major regional drought of 1992, food relief NGOs developed a strategy of working through the media which they have since sustained (Pusnpath 1994). Likewise, international NGOs were vocal in linking the the 2007 and 2009 Zambezi floods to climate change in the media and on their websites<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> See eg Guardian (2009); Global Times (2010); DFID (2009); Oxfam (no date); UNICEF (no date)

## 6. NATIONAL INTERESTS IN CLIMATE CHANGE

There is little doubt, then, that donors have played a central role in developing the institutional framework and policy discourse on climate change and disaster management in Zambia, and that this arena remains a “stronghold” of Western development aid vis-à-vis the growing influence of China and other foreign actors. But does this mean that the climate change agenda in Zambia is only a donor construction? And if not, what are the state interests in promoting and addressing climate change adaptation?

### 6.1 Nature of the state

At the risk of over-simplification, most authors agree that Zambia’s political system continues to reflect neo-patrimonial characteristics (Meyns 2005, Nasong’o 2007). Patronage and clientilism are thus recurrent features in Zambian politics, despite the transition to multiparty elections and individual differences in the political regimes that have held power. A hybrid situation is thus evident, in which a legal rational system and relatively free elections co-exist with patrimonial characteristics (Bratton & van de Walle 1997, Meyns 2005)<sup>8</sup>.

An overly deterministic view should be avoided, however (Erdmann & Engel 2006). Firstly, the existence of clientilism is not incompatible with the simultaneous existence of actual political ideologies among state actors, which they may seek to pursue in eg policy development or negotiations with other forces such as donors (Fraser 2008). In other words,

<sup>8</sup> By “neopatrimonial” we follow Bratton & van de Walle’s (1997:62) definition as “those hybrid regimes in which the customs and patterns or patrimonialism co-exist with, and suffuse, rational-legal institutions.” [our emphasis].

the actions and strategies of state actors are not *always* and not *only* related to clientilism<sup>9</sup>.

Secondly, notions of a monolithic state headed by a strong ruling party in control of the political arena would be wrong. Since UNIP lost control a variety of new actors have emerged within and around the state, including new parties and political factions, business interests and new or re-emerging players who lay claim to public authority, such as Chiefs (Gould 2011). An increasingly strong discourse of an independent Western Province (the former Barotseland) is furthermore questioning the basic fabric and cohesion of the state created at Independence. Ethnic politics also persist, although their discursive articulation fluctuates (Posner 2005). In today's Zambia, a range of different forces thus compete for or restrain the power and legitimacy of the state.

The role of the state in development has also changed since independence. Under the nationalist developmentalist paradigm of Kaunda, the state was seen to play the key role in leading and steering economic development. During the 1990s, this notion was more or less dismantled in favour of market-driven development and a parallel political factionalism in which the short-term interests of small groups and followers were prioritized over larger-scale developmental efforts.

The dismantling of the state as a development leader was greatly fuelled by the IMF who pressed for deregulation and withdrawal of the state in a number of key sectors, including mining and agriculture. In consequence, the civil service - which already suffered from the declining economy in the 1980s - was severely cut back during the 1990s. The result

was a considerable set-back in what limited capacity has been established to plan and implement national and rural development and provide public service delivery (Chisala 2006, Phiri 2006). Effective state capacity and -reach on the ground has thus been severely limited and hampered by these developments, and has contributed to a general lack of sufficient planning and implementation capacity in a range of sectors.

From the 2000s onwards, the state has to some extent returned in the role of development leader, at least discursively. In the populist rhetorics that have characterized the two most recent elections, the notion of state-led national development has played an increasing role (Larmer & Fraser 2007).

For our purposes, these features of the Zambian state have two main implications. Firstly, they emphasize that state power and authority cannot be taken for granted. As different groups and factions compete for followers, voters and influence at national and local levels, there is a need for ruling elites and contending parties to be seen "to be doing something" for their supporters - however symbolic or superficial those actions may be.

Secondly, state actors are stuck with the difficult task of on the one hand justifying and delivering on the re-emerging discourse of the developmental state, while on the other hand having to do so on the basis of a civil service that lacks capacity and "reach", and which was severely set back during the structural adjustment years. This has implications for the national climate change agenda in several ways.

## 6.2 Government interests in climate change

It must be emphasized that climate change is in no way at "the top" of the agenda for political elites in Zambia. Indeed, President

<sup>9</sup> As Erdman & Engel (2006: 17) put it: "An understanding of politics in Africa which depicts *all* official relations as privatised or the *modus operandi* as being *essentially* informal does not reflect African realities." [authors' emphasis]



Sata has – true to style - on some occasions made somewhat sarcastic remarks about the interests of foreign donors on this issue (eg Lusaka Times 2012). This, however, does not mean that the government has no interests in the issue at all. On the contrary, the disaster management and climate change agenda can be relatively useful on a variety of fronts:

**(i) Funding the civil service**

The funds available through the current and pledged funds for climate change adaptation and mitigation are as mentioned not insignificant, and can help the government fund implementation of activities that might not otherwise be funded. This includes agricultural and natural resource management programmes and extension activities, which are chronically underfunded and which have so far been of little interest to Chinese investment and support, which tends to focus on major infrastructure and industrial development schemes.

Hence while development cooperation rarely includes core funding to the various line agencies, it is often the funding from development cooperation that allows actual implementation to take place. This is particularly so at the district level and below, where departments of agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forestry etc often only receive 10-25% of the budgets required for fulfilling their annual workplans. Moreover, given the significant cutbacks in the civil service under the structural adjustment programmes, many Ministries and their local departments are understaffed and inadequately trained.

In such circumstances, donor funded projects activities provide a welcome source of funds, and in some districts aid projects are key to the daily operations of local government staff. Examples of this include the

heavily climate impacted districts of Sesheke and Kazungula in Southern Zambia where the current research programme is working. Here, district departments depend to a large extent on funding from multilateral and bilateral donors to cover even basic operational costs such as fuel for an extension officer's motorbike.

Climate change funding thus dovetails nicely with a general tendency to “fuel the motorbikes” of the civil service with foreign aid, thereby freeing up central government funds for other purposes. It is thus not unusual for line agencies with donor-funded programmes to have their annual budgets cut accordingly<sup>10</sup>.

**(ii) Disasters as “must act” situations**

Since the early 1990s floods and droughts have increasingly become publicized in national newspapers and reported on TV in Zambia. The drought of 1992 appears to have been the initial trigger for this tendency, at that time spurred on by national and international NGOs (see eg Puspanath 1992). Today, floods and droughts in even the most isolated areas are typically picked up and reported on by national media, and questions are asked of responsible ministers how they will respond.

The dramatic and explicit nature of disasters not only makes them attractive to the media, but also creates an obvious platform for local politicians to show their worth. One example of this is the pressure exerted by local MPs and Chiefs on central government following the floods of 2007 and 2009. Through

<sup>10</sup> For example, when the Zambian Wildlife Authority recently began to receive funds from the regional “KAZA” programme – which includes climate change adaptation activities in communities – their core funding was immediately cut by the central government.

national newspapers and in parliament they complained that central government had not acted swiftly enough, and called for decentralisation and better response-readiness of the DMMU. These calls were echoed by NGOs, and contributed to the passing of the 2010 Disaster Management Act and its formal decentralisation of the DMMU.

That such disasters are not limited to rural areas has become evident in recent years: In the past 10 years floods have become an annual problem in the Lusaka, in some years so severe that the Red Cross and others have issued emergency appeals. The occurrence of these floods at the heart of the nation's capital has raised the attention of the media yet more, and brought urban voters into play – including both the emerging middle class and the poor urban population. The floods have been at their worst in the poor urban townships, where extreme downpours have hit hard due to neglected drainage systems<sup>11</sup>.

Responding to natural disasters is therefore a matter of some priority for the political leadership, in order to ensure continued support from followers and voters. As in most other countries, it also provides an opportunity for demonstrating statesmanship: Visits by Ministers to disaster-affected areas are thus a predictable part of the post-disaster process in Zambia.

The political need to act swiftly on disasters is also evident in the tendency to prioritise the operations of the DMMU in national policy and institutional development, as described earlier. Indeed, the political attention to dealing with disasters appears considerably more focused than the attention given to

addressing more long-term climatic change (such as rainfall and rising temperatures), with which the Ministries of agriculture and environment are charged.

### *(iii) The politics of food*

National political interests in the disaster and climate change agenda are also related to the somewhat sensitive issue of food security and food prices in Zambian politics. Both colonial and post-colonial agricultural policies have been detrimental to the development of smallholder agriculture. Heavy subsidies on maize led to the abandonment of traditional varieties and a widespread reliance of maize mono-cropping in most of the country, including in the dry areas of southern and western Zambia which are not really suited to maize. Having become dependent on the crop, farmers were then hit hard by the removal of maize subsidies in the 1990s.

The current policy is in principle focused on developing smallholder agriculture, but there is a parallel strong interest in government to promote large scale commercial farming on the fairly extensive farming land that is still available in Zambia. Moreover, Zambia's agricultural sector remains overshadowed by the copper industry and the tendency for capital flows and government policies to favour the latter. The very limited taxation of the now privatized copper industry means that the agricultural sector does not gain much from the current copper boom.

Nevertheless, providing some form of support to smallholder farmers through seed and fertilizer packages etc is important to ensure continued support. Moreover, in a relatively peaceful country, the riots and dissatisfaction with escalating food prices in the late 1980s and 1990s are well remembered in the national memory and by national politicians. That

<sup>11</sup> This in turn has spawned a local debate over whether the floods can in fact be said to be caused by climate change, or whether climate change is being used by government bureaucrats as an excuse for lack of attention to planning and development in poor townships.

this remains an issue in the current political discourse was reflected in a recent comment by President Sata who blamed millers for escalating mealie meal prices:

“Kaunda’s government was overthrown because of food riots. I do not want food riots.”

*President Sata,  
quoted in Daily Mail, Jan 8, 2012*

It should be emphasized that this comment was not related to natural disasters or climate change per se, and that these issues play a relatively small role in the national political debate on food security and escalating food prices. However, as the nature of donor-funded disaster management and climate change adaptation efforts are often related to agriculture and food security on the ground, they can be seen as a convenient means of displaying action on these issues - especially in relation to the strongly populist stance of the current leadership. A cynical analysis would also point out that addressing such issues conveniently detracts attention from less popular government policies, such as the increasing influence of China and the support to large scale commercial farming.

#### **(iv) National economic concerns**

Finally, there appear to be growing concerns in especially the central government sector ministries that climate change may impact the national economy negatively.

For example, the hydropower potential in Zambia is considerable, and is already a keystone in country’s energy production. Hydropower helps meet the growing energy demands of urban voters, and— in particular —fuels the vital copper industry. The latter is not only dependent on hydropower, but also

requires considerable water resources for its daily operation. Hydropower thus play a significant role in ensuring economic and political stability in Zambia, and in sustaining the current economic growth rates of 6-7%. Several new dams and dam enlargements are currently being planned and implemented on the Zambezi and its tributaries. Certain recent studies suggest that they may not produce as much as intended due to climate change, and this appears to have raised some concerns in central government (Beilfuss 2012, Fant et al 2013).

The government’s emphasis on developing large scale commercial agriculture also rests on the provision of adequate irrigation potential. Unlike many other countries in the region, Zambia has significant untapped surface and groundwater resources. This ultimately poses the country as a potential breadbasket for the region, and provides opportunities for the development of “virtual water” markets with e.g. South Africa.

Finally, protecting of infrastructure against flooding is a concern in some quarters of government. For example, the recurring Zambezi floods thus not only threaten local livelihoods, but also the infrastructure that connects Zambia to Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia, and which forms the basis of a rapidly expanding cross-border trade and long-haul transport to regional markets for this landlocked country.

## **7. Conclusion**

The Zambian climate change and disaster management agenda is thus not only a “foreign agenda”, but also of a certain interest and relevance to the government. This is particularly so with regard to disaster manage-

ment and mitigation, because of its acute nature and frequent occurrences on the ground and in the media. Climate change adaptation is a more recent concept and by comparison somewhat less conspicuous in the public debate, although it does feature fairly frequently in the printed and electronic media.

National climate change and disaster management policies and institutions in Zambia can thus be seen as the product of a “discourse coalition” (Hajer 2006) between government and donors. For Western donors, the climate change agenda provides an obvious foothold in a context where their long-standing influence is declining as a result of the currently strong Zambian economy, and the entry of China and other new actors. For the government, the agenda provides a means of addressing certain national economic concerns that are threatened by climate change; a means of fuelling the motorbikes of extension workers; and a means of displaying action on disasters, smallholder food security and rural development.

Importantly, climate change interventions do not necessarily lose their value just because they form part of a political agenda. Much is currently being done in Zambia to address climate change – not least at the local level. But a better understanding of the positions and interests of the involved actors can help provide a more informed basis for negotiating, developing and implementing climate change responses at all levels.

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