

Press Release
14 June 2024

A majority of Ugandans (57%) say the climate is getting worse
A large majority (86%) say they are concerned about the impact of climate change on their lives

Friday, June 14, 2024, Kampala: Most citizens say the climate is getting worse, and the vast majority are concerned about the impact of climate change on their lives. Seven out of ten citizens report that agricultural yields have declined in recent years, and the same number say that securing basic necessities for their households is more challenging.

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *A burning planet? It's already happening: Ugandan citizens' opinions and experiences of the climate crisis* based on data from Sauti za Wananchi, Africa's first nationally representative high-frequency mobile phone survey. For this brief, data were collected from 2,762 respondents in the sixth round of calls to the second *Sauti za Wananchi* panel, conducted between 25 October and 25 November 2023.

Most citizens report experiencing the effects of climatic or environmental changes at household (82%) and community (83%) level. This is more common in rural areas, among poorer households, and households that depend more on agriculture for their livelihood. It is also reported in the Northern and Eastern parts of the country than in and around Kampala. The main effects of climatic or environmental changes affecting households are low crop yields (40%) and lack of food (17%). The same issues dominate community-level impacts at 32% low yields and 17% lack of food. Damage to roads is widely reported at community and national level.

Planting trees is the most recommended action to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change, with 52% of respondents endorsing this suggestion, and nearly as many (45%) claiming to have already undertaken this activity. Following closely behind is advocating for tree protection or planting cited by 36% of respondents. This matches with citizens' views on the causes of climate change, where 70% identify deforestation as a major cause of climate change.

Nevertheless, half of citizens (51%) agree with the statement that rich countries should take most of the blame for climate change, while one out of three (34%) disagree. The consensus among citizens is strong regarding the responsibility for climate change adaptation costs. A significant majority, approximately seven out of ten citizens (68%), support the notion that those accountable for climate change should shoulder the entirety of the burden for adapting to its effects.

Looking beyond this survey, while deforestation in East Africa may exert some minor influence on carbon dioxide levels and local weather patterns, the scientific consensus is that climate change predominantly stems from the carbon emissions of industrialized nations. Cumulative carbon dioxide emissions since 1750 originating from African countries are tiny when compared with emissions from wealthier countries and regions. For instance, emissions from the UK alone

surpass those from the entire continent of Africa, and emissions from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda barely register.

Violet Alinda, Country Lead for Twaweza in Uganda, said: *“Uganda is very vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and this new data tells us that citizens are already experiencing the kind of changes to agricultural production that climate scientists have predicted. The data also tells us that citizens are (understandably) worried. At the same time, there is no doubt that the main cause of climate change is wealthy nations’ carbon emissions, well above the impact of local activities like deforestation. But while it can be tempting to sit back and wait for high-income countries to pay for their actions, by doing so we risk denying ourselves the opportunity to engage meaningfully in critical negotiations and decisions. By acknowledging our part, we can be part of the solution.”*

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Notes to Editors

- This brief and the data contained can be accessed at www.twaweza.org/ www.twaweza.org/sauti
- Twaweza works to demonstrate how citizens can come together to collectively address their problems, and make government work better for them; enable citizens’ voices, interests and experiences to be heard and taken seriously in decision-making; promote and protect open civic space which enables citizens to freely assemble or organise, speak and act in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. Follow us at Twaweza Uganda (Facebook), @TwawezaUganda (X / Twitter), Twaweza East Africa (Instagram).