Climate change gambia

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Climate change in the Gambia is having impacts on the natural environment and people of The Gambia.[4] Like other countries in West Africa, the impacts of climate change are expected to be varied and complex. Climate change adaptation is going to be important to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the country.[4][5]

The Sahel climate makes the eco region particularly vulnerable to changes in water.[5] Climate change is expected to increase or make more severe windstorms, floods, droughts, and coastal erosion and saltwater intrusion.[5][6]

Agriculture is 26% of the GDP and employs 68% of the labor force.[5] Much of the agriculture is rain fed, so changes in precipitation will have significant impacts.[5] In 2012, drought plus increased food prices led to a food crisis in the region.[6] Rice farmers near the coast are also experiencing saltwater intrusion.[6]

Fisheries are also vulnerable, with changes to breeding grounds for coastal fishery species putting additional pressure on already unsustainable fishery practices.[5]

Infrastructure is already seeing major losses from flooding and windstorms. For example, urban floods in 2020 severely damaged at least 2371 houses, and destroyed crops.[5]

United Nations Environment Programme started a $20.5 million project in partnership with the Government of Gambia to restore forests and marginal agricultural land.[8]

UN initiatives in The Gambia help farmers and coastal communities combat climate change, boosting resilience through training, sustainable practices, and policy

Across The Gambia, communities are grappling with the increasingly severe impacts of climate change. The challenges are multifaceted and complex, from erratic rainfall patterns disrupting agricultural cycles to rising sea levels threatening coastal livelihoods.

In 2023, the UN intensified its efforts to help The Gambia build resilience to these mounting risks. Our approach is two-pronged: equipping communities with the knowledge and tools to adapt to a changing climate while also supporting the government in developing more robust, climate-sensitive policies and plans.

At the local level, we work with farmers, fishers, and other climate-vulnerable groups to promote sustainable, resilient practices. For example, FAO trained 200 farmers on climate-smart agriculture techniques, such as agroforestry, intercropping, and soil and water conservation. These practices are helping farmers like Ebrima

Jallow in the Upper River Region to cope with increasingly unpredictable rainfall.

"Before, when the rains were late or too heavy, I would lose a significant portion of my crops," Mamadou shares. "But now, with the techniques I learned from FAO, my fields can better withstand these shocks. I"m using drought-tolerant seeds, practising mulching to retain soil moisture, and diversifying my crops to spread risk. Last year, despite the erratic weather, I had my best harvest yet."

Beyond agriculture, we also support climate change adaptation in other key sectors. In the coastal community of Gunjur, UNDP worked with local stakeholders to develop a participatory Climate Risk Management plan. The plan identified key vulnerabilities, such as coastal erosion and declining fish stocks, and outlined strategies to address them, such as mangrove restoration and improved fish processing techniques.

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