

Pastor Peters Omoragbon was not able to make his presentation during the Report from the Cancun Climate Change Talks CHE Partnership call. He has submitted the following written remarks and encourages CHE Partners to be in touch with comments or questions.

INTRODUCTION:

Nurses Across the Borders Humanitarian Initiative is an NGO registered in Nigeria with Incorporated Trustees, and in the USA as a Public Charity on 501 C 3 Status. It is an NGO with Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations-ECOSOC. It is the first NGO from Nigeria to be granted Observer Status by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change-UNFCCC and I am the Designated Contact Point. Nurses Across the Borders today sits on the Board of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN-CoNGOs—a body responsible for the coordination of activities of all NGOs in Status with the UN. At the Regional Level, NAB-HI acts as the Secretariat of the Regional Committee for Africa of CoNGO, and I was elected as the Coordinator of the Sub-Region-West Africa. In Nigeria, NAB-HI is Secretariat to the Civil Society Coalition on Climate Change in Nigeria. You will agree with me that NAB-HI has a good spread of networking nationally, sub regionally, regionally and internationally. It is this networking that brought about the present collaboration between NAB-HI and SeaTrust Institute.

THE NEED FOR COLLABORATION WITH SEATRUST:

Historical climate records show that Africa has already experienced a warming of 0.7°C, with global models predicting a further increase at a rate of 0.2–0.5°C per decade (IPCC, 2001). A WHO assessment, taking into account only a subset of the possible health impacts, concluded that the modest warming that has occurred since the 1970s was already causing over 140,000 excess deaths annually by the year 2047.

Even though Africa contributes ONLY about 4% of the world's greenhouse gas emission, Africa is more vulnerable to the effect of climate change with the resultant high impact on women more than men, Africa lack sufficient resources both financial and human to adapt to climate change and its extreme vulnerability. Globally, the number of reported weather-related natural disasters has more than tripled since the 1960s. Every year, these disasters result in over 60,000 deaths, mainly in developing countries—MAJORITY OF WHOM ARE WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

Since, the countries that contribute the most to the greenhouse gas emissions have both the financial and technological know-how to mitigate the effects of climate change, it is therefore plausible that, Africa should explore every available means to benefit from this advancement. The major effects of climate change on human health is noted in the increase of climate sensitive illnesses and diseases like diarrheal, cholera, malaria fever, air-borne diseases etc. Having regard to the efforts of SeaTrust Institute Research abilities with LCA of Malaria, we felt it was very apt to reach out and tap into this knowledge by training nurses and midwives—who constitute the largest single professional group in any health setting worldwide.

In December 2010, we were gladdened that the side event co-submitted by NAB and SeaTrust was approved by the UNFCCC. It was themed: HUMAN HEALTH: The Issue of/for Climate Change Adaptation Strategies, as part of catalyzing a COP 16 Health Coalition

Two specific objectives of the AU are addressed in the type of project used as an example in this talk.

- To advance the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science and technology;
- To work with relevant international partners in the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health in the continent.
- The goal of this project is to build capacity through sharing knowledge and professional partnerships among African nurses and other health practitioners as local leaders and educators, community representatives in climate change and health issues and participants with colleagues across national boundaries in climate change decisions and substantive data collection on climate change and health related diseases across Africa.
- This we intend to achieve by the training of Nurses to be provided by SeaTrust Institute on Malaria Prevention Intervention.
- Using a Life Cycle thinking approach, creating access to the areas of climate, medical and social science as these relate to malaria interventions through direct training and engagement with the science and processes of applying the knowledge in practice; providing tool for nurses to use in the education of the population that the nurses serve; and through learning to engage in the policy process in a meaningful way on health and climate change issues. These health professionals will at the same time be collecting data on the climate related diseases and sharing this information with others facing similar issues to help craft strategic and practical shared beneficial outcomes throughout Africa
- Assisting nurses in educating others, focusing on women
- Ensuring follow up activities and support for those nurses to learn to spread the knowledge among other health professionals as well as patients
- Honoring their professional expertise and position of trust as both disseminators of adaptation knowledge and as appropriate and well-placed collectors of local surveillance data on climate-related diseases.

WHAT ROLE FOR CHE PROFESSIONALS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS?

The idea of a coalition is not just for research or health promotion purposes but to sensitize everyone to the need to take the issue of climate change seriously as the world could be subsumed in a matter of years if efforts are not geared towards individual contribution to the reduction in greenhouse gas emission.

Secondly is to challenge everyone listening to us to equally in their own way at their local levels reinforce the awareness campaign by organizing and coordinating efforts towards the above directions. Once you subscribe to the coalition, at any UNFCCC events

organized all over the world, we all meet to exchange notes on best practices and reports of successes or challenges recorded so far in our campaign. As we do this, it becomes ingrained in the minds of all, and the more the people are aware, the more those responsible in formulating policies and documents at the UNFCCC will have no choice but to take health as the ONLY indicator for any success recorded in the campaign against climate change.

This is one beautiful achievement of COP 16! The WHO was very involved—even with its Friends of Health Group, they actively participated and identified with our side-events-I think I have Lynn (Lynn Wilson of SeaTrust Institute) to thank for this efforts.

I welcome comments and questions please.

Thanks