

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITIZEN FORA

Theme: Climate Change Mainstreaming and Resilience

Date: 15 August 2024

Venue: CDF Hall



1. Opening Remarks

The Chairperson welcomed participants and emphasized the Municipality's commitment to integrating climate change mitigation and adaptation into urban planning and service delivery. The meeting underscored the importance of community participation in building local climate resilience.

2. Presentation by Municipal Technical Team

During the forum, the Municipal Technical Team led by the Environment Officer Morris Abere delivered a comprehensive presentation led by the Municipal Environment Officer. The presentation outlined the current status of climate change mainstreaming within municipal planning and budgeting processes. It was noted that climate considerations have begun to be integrated into infrastructure design, land-use control, and annual investment prioritization, particularly in drainage improvement, solid waste management, and urban greening initiatives. The officer highlighted ongoing drainage rehabilitation works in flood-prone sections of the municipality, including desilting of existing stormwater channels and redesign of undersized culverts to accommodate increased runoff linked to changing rainfall patterns. The presentation further outlined proposed urban greening initiatives aimed at enhancing environmental quality, reducing heat stress, and improving urban aesthetics. These include tree planting along major streets, protection of existing green corridors, and the identification of land for public parks. Renewable energy opportunities were also discussed, particularly the potential for solar street lighting, rooftop solar installations on municipal buildings, and energy-efficient lighting systems in markets and public facilities to reduce operational costs and carbon emissions.

3. Key Issues Raised by Citizens

Following the presentation, citizens actively engaged in discussion and raised several concerns and proposals. On urban green spaces, participants expressed concern over the increasing encroachment into open spaces and environmentally sensitive areas due to unregulated development. Residents emphasized the need to formally designate, survey, and protect community parks and public utility land to prevent further loss. There was strong support for structured tree-planting initiatives in schools, markets, churches, and along road reserves, with community groups volunteering to participate in maintenance efforts.

Regarding flood risk and drainage, participants reported frequent flooding in low-lying neighbourhoods during heavy rains, attributing the problem to blocked drains, inadequate stormwater infrastructure, and construction along riparian reserves. There were calls for more regular maintenance, stricter enforcement of development control regulations, and removal of illegal structures obstructing natural watercourses. Some residents proposed the formation of

community monitoring committees to report blocked drainage systems and environmental violations.

On renewable energy, residents welcomed the proposal for solar street lighting and urged the municipality to expand coverage to poorly lit areas to enhance security. Participants further recommended exploring incentive mechanisms, such as awareness campaigns and partnerships with financial institutions, to promote household and business adoption of solar technologies. It was noted that renewable energy could both reduce electricity costs and improve resilience during power outages.

In relation to disaster preparedness, citizens highlighted the absence of structured early warning systems for floods and storms. Participants requested improved communication channels, including SMS alerts and public address systems in high-risk areas. There were also calls for community-based disaster response training, particularly for youth groups and local leaders, to strengthen first-response capacity before external support arrives.

4. Municipal Responses and Resolutions

In response to the issues raised, the Municipal Manager and Municipal Board chair reaffirmed its commitment to mapping flood-prone zones using updated spatial data and strengthening enforcement against development on riparian and environmentally sensitive land. The Municipality confirmed that budgetary provisions had been allocated for drainage rehabilitation and routine maintenance in the current financial year. It was also announced that a pilot solar street lighting project would be implemented in selected wards, with plans for gradual scaling based on performance and available resources. Additionally, the Municipal Disaster management officer, Isaiah Nyariki, committed to collaborating with the County Disaster Management Unit to organize community disaster preparedness training and to explore the establishment of an early warning communication framework.

The forum resolved to establish a structured community-based urban greening program involving schools, community groups, and local institutions; to undertake participatory flood risk mapping to inform planning and enforcement; to progressively expand solar lighting coverage across the municipality; and to ensure that all citizen proposals are integrated into the planning and budgeting process for the 2025/2026 financial year.

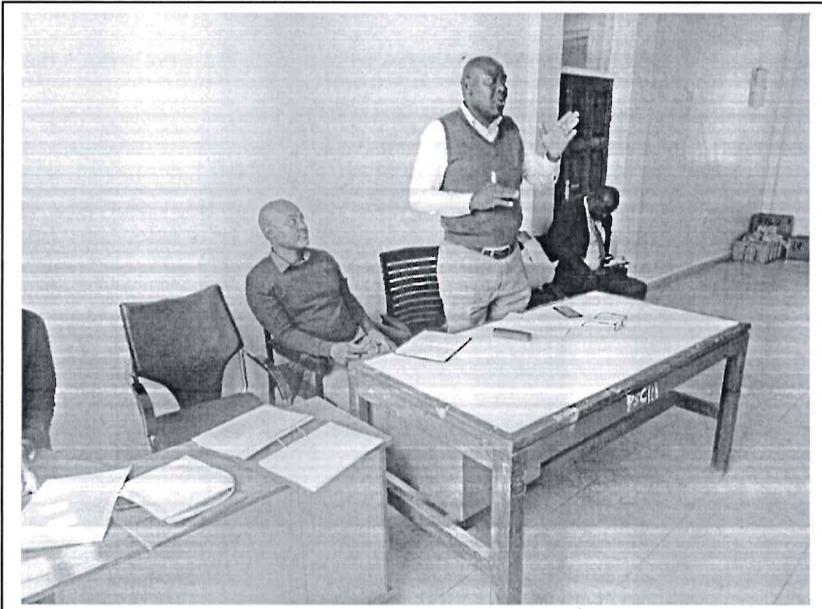
Overall, the deliberations reinforced the importance of linking climate resilience, environmental protection, and citizen participation within the Municipality's development agenda.

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