

Case Study: Drought In Kenya

Transcript of Video Clip

I'm Adam Hart-Davis, and I've come here to Magadi in Massai country to see global warming actually happening. It seems to affect first the most marginal places on Earth, so in Alaska all the snow is melting, and here there has been no rain for three years.

The situation is desperate. This river, for example, should be flowing high and fast, but as it is, it's barely a stream.

In Massai country you can see it's an incredibly bare, barren landscape, very dry, and it only takes a tiny change in the global climate to make this place almost impossible to live in.

I spoke to Practical Action's project manager, Sharon Lorametta.

AHD "Sharon, when did it last rain here?"

SM *"The last rains that we received in Magadi, and I would say had an impact on the lives of the people, was about three years ago."*

AHD "Three years?!"

SM *"Yes."*

AHD "How often does it normally rain?"

SM *"It rains – we have two seasons in a year, that is April, which are the long rains, and October-December, the short rains. But for the last three years we have not had rains at all here in Magadi."*

SM *"The people survive by the Grace of God. You saw the river; where we were, it's all dry now. They have been fetching water from there the whole of this last year, 2005. It's been very difficult because the water levels went down. The communities are forced either to drink the saline water, or send water to Magadi, or to Kiserian, which is about 45 miles from here. They have to pay for the transport, and they also have to pay for the water."*

"It's really difficult, but all the same, they find that everything is changing. The clouds [skies] are ever blue. They used to have white clouds, grey clouds, but now they are – from here to here the clouds [skies], they are just blue – they are not forming."

"For the last 6 months it's gotten worse, and we are seeing a situation whereby the families are now having to move out of these small towns to go where there is water."

People here depend on animals for a living. If their animals die, they have no way of earning money for years into the future.

SM *"The animals have moved away from this place. They have been taken to the Mount Kenya region, where we were, and others are in the city of Nairobi. The owners are looking for pasture, they're looking for water. And by the time the animals come back, most of them will have acquired diseases, so very few animals, compared to what went to Nairobi or to Mount Kenya, will come back."*

You can see the state of the ground. They've got no water to drink, except a little salt water from the river. The animals are having to be moved to places where there is water and there is food for them. And the people are getting poorer, and poorer.

This is global warming happening for real.