

# ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE WATER AND ENVIRONMENT SECTOR



L-R Mr. Paul Mafabi- Director DEA, Dr. Christopher Briggs Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention, Hon. Prof. Ephraim Kamuntu, Minister of Water and Environment and Hon. Flavia Munaba, State Minister for Environment.

## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT SECTOR SERVICES (DESS)

The Department of Environment Sector Support Services has carried out the restoration of the river Nile banks protection zone. The Kalagala Sustainable Management Plan (KSMP) was prepared by Government of Uganda purposely for addressing the obligations between Government of Uganda and the International Development Association (IDA) /World Bank as stipulated in the Indemnity Agreement No. B-0130-UG (Indemnity Agreement (Partial Risks Guarantee for the Private Power Generation Project (Bujagali) between (IDA) and the Republic of Uganda in July 2007.

Restoration of degraded river banks is among the major planned outputs of the KSMP. River banks restoration requires a variety of ecological, physical, spatial and management measures and practices aimed at restoring the natural state and functioning of the river ecosystem in order to support production, biodiversity, recreation, flood management and landscape development.

One of the measures prescribed in the Kalagala Offset sustainable management plan is demarcation of the river banks to create buffer zones along the River. Kalagala Offset refers to measures for ensuring sound environmental management of the Mabira ecosystem housing Bujagali Falls/Dam for purposes of "counter balancing or making up for" some of the negative effects caused by Bujagali Hydropower Project (BHPP) on the environment.

The Kalagala Offset Sustainable Management Plan (SMP) is an ecosystem level plan developed by applying ecosystem management approach to provide information on the strategies and actions that will be implemented as means to achieve the obligations stated in the Indemnity Agreement.

This is aimed at protecting them from further encroachment and to guide communities on activities that are permitted in the protection zone, their regulated use.

The river banks have been heavily encroached on by human activities like agriculture, urbanization, deforestation, poor waste disposal practices among others. The poor management practices have resulted into degradation of the river in form of silting, water pollution, loss of biodiversity, loss of habitat, and reduced aesthetics among others.

A number of activities are being carried out aimed at ensuring the River Nile is protected. Among these are delineating of the river

bank boundaries, sensitizations of the communities about the need to restore the degraded banks and working with communities to re-vegetate the river banks.

Some sections of the River Nile protection zone have been demarcated, using a participatory approach where the communities participate in the boundary assessments and the actual planting of pillars and beacons/mark stones. The river banks restoration activities have been embraced by the local communities. This can be attributed to the prior intensive community mobilization and sensitization about the project, and the participatory approaches used to bring the local communities on board during all restoration activities.

### Activities carried out

A number of activities have been carried out including the following:

- Popularization of the management plan;
- Sensitization of the communities on the need to sustainably manage the river banks and central forest reserves;
- Boundary assessment and;
- An inventory of land owners along the river banks;
- Procurement of pillars and beacons;
- Sensitization of communities on the demarcation process;
- Demarcation of the river banks to create buffer zones along the Kalagala and Itanda falls and to protect the Central Forest Reserves falling within the catchment.

## WETLANDS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

Wetland Management Department is mandated to manage wetland resources in Uganda.

The WMD of MWE is the lead agency of Government for spearheading wetland management in the country. According to the Local government act 1997, the management of natural resources including wetlands, is decentralized to the Local governments.

Wetlands contribute directly to poverty reduction hence contributing to the National Development Plan and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Every 2nd February, the Wetlands Management Department joins the rest of the world to celebrate World Wetlands Day. Given the importance that the Government of Uganda attaches to matters of sustainable wetland management, it is befitting to commemorate the day to reflect on the vital functions of wetlands.

Last year's celebration focused on the critical role that wetlands play as natural capital and infrastructure for national development.

The celebration was graced by the presence of the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention Dr. Christopher Briggs. This year's celebration will be held in Otuke district in the northern Uganda under the theme "Wetlands for our Future. Sustainable livelihoods".

Almost 30% of wetlands in the country have been lost and As a result government recently issued a directive that all land titles issued in wetlands after 1995 be cancelled and the wetlands restored.

The Department was tasked to prepare a wetland Atlas to guide the cancellation of titles starting with Kampala. To this effect, Production of Volume I of the Atlas was completed and covers areas of Kampala, Mukono and Wakiso. This volume of the Atlas was launched by the UN under Secretary General on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2015.

Volume II of the Uganda National Wetland Atlas which has a national coverage is in advanced stages with 60% of the work completed but only awaiting provision of satellite imagery by UNEP.



Wetlands officials demarcate a wetland using pillars

A total of 173 kms of wetlands were demarcated with pillars and mark stones. The areas demarcated are Nyaruzinga wetland in Bushenyi, Namatala wetland in Mbale, Pece wetland in Gulu, Okole wetland in Lira, Kirinya wetland in Jinja, of Walugogo wetland in Iganga and Budumbuli-Masese wetland in Jinja. Rapid assessments for Pallisa, Dokolo, Hoima, Kisoro, Wakiso wetlands were also undertaken.

### Challenges faced:

- Continued issuance of land titles in wetlands and this makes enforcement not to achieve its desired outcomes.
- Inadequate coordination among the institutions that have a stake in wetland management, coupled with conflicting mandates to manage wetlands has resulted into limited performance.
- Political interference, Political leaders tend to side with communities to achieve the short term gains vis-à-vis the benefits from wetlands management.
- Delays in the procurement processes hindering completion of outputs as had been planned.
- EIA process is not transparent and sometimes projects are approved in fragile ecosystems.
- Impunity and open resistance by some individuals and communities who are utilizing the wetlands.
- Delays in finalization of the wetland bill
- Delays in the completion of court cases and execution of offenders which can be attributed to backlogs in the Judiciary.

## FOREST SECTOR SUPPORT DEPARTMENT



The UNEP ED, Mr. Achim Steiner, Hon. Prof. Ephraim Kamuntu, Minister of Water and Environment and Hon. Flavia Munaba, State Minister for Environment launch the greening Ugandan economy through massive tree planting campaign

Forests are the most biologically-diverse ecosystems on land, home to more than half of the terrestrial species of animals, plants and insects.

They provide shelter, jobs, security for forest-dependent populations. Forests contribute to the balance of oxygen, carbon dioxide and humidity and play a role in battle against climate change.

Uganda's forest cover is estimated to be 3.6 Million hectares, of which 17% consist of Central Forest Reserves (CFRs) are managed by the National Forestry Authority (NFA), 18% consists of National Parks and Wildlife Reserves (NPs & WRs) managed by Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), 0.85% is jointly managed by NFA and UWA, and about 70% managed by local governments (LGs) in collaboration with private and local community forest owners (National Forestry Plan 2002).

Over 2.7 million people living in communities adjacent to forest reserves are particularly dependent on forests for energy and construction materials, food security, clean water, and even their livelihoods. For these people, forest products contribute about 20% to household incomes.

Global deforestation continues at an alarming rate of 13 million hectares annually and this accounts for 12 to 20% of the global carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to climate change. FAO (2000) estimated the deforestation rate in Uganda to be 55,000 ha per year based on the change in the amount of bush-land and woodlands from 1990 to 1995. The government of Uganda recognizes the importance of forests economically, and socially.

To this effect a number of interventions aimed at protecting forests have been put in place. They include:

1. Sawlog Production Scheme Grant.
2. Farm Income Enhancement and Forestry Conservation
3. Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation Programme (REDD-Plus).

A National Forestry Monitoring System (NFMS): The system will be used to monitor whether the strategy options are actually leading to reduced emissions. Uganda is also working with several non-governmental organizations which are supporting different aspects in forestry management such as World Wide Fund , IUCN Environmental Alert and so many others.

Tree planting is being emphasized because it is multi-faceted. When farmers have trees on land it will help them commercially but also it will mean Ugandans will have forest products on farm and thus no need to go to the forests. This will therefore ensure protection of the natural forests which have got high biodiversity and catchment functions. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of August 2015, the UNEP – ED Mr. Achim Steiner launched the greening the Ugandan economy through massive tree planting campaign to support the tree planting drive.

Fellow Ugandans let us plant trees especially in degraded areas that no longer support Agriculture and fragile ecosystems that are prone to soil erosion.

## CLIMATE CHANGE DEPARTMENT

Climate change threats continue to pose the greatest challenges not only at the global level but also in Uganda. It is a threat to its fragile ecosystems, people's livelihoods and ultimately the national economic development efforts. Uganda therefore made a decision to join the Community of Nations in the global cooperation to address the problem in a time frame safe for life and development sustainability.

Global efforts aimed at tackling the rising emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) associated with global warming due to human activities continue to dominate the international agenda. Uganda, as a Party to the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol, has commitments and obligations to comply with as part of contributing to tackling climate change.

At the national level, the institutional arrangements to handle climate change Adaptation and Mitigation including addressing the cross-cutting areas of awareness, mainstreaming and means of implementation through Financing, Technology Transfer and Capacity Building, are already in place.

Climate Change Mitigation which broadly covers the root cause of greenhouse gas emissions and taking advantage of clean technologies is important in Uganda's context as part of contributing to the sustainable development of the country.

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges affecting the world today. As the world's climate changes and continues to change at rates unprecedented in recent human history, it is true that the impacts and risks related with these changes are existent.

Also in Uganda these changes are already influencing many systems essential for human livelihood, including water resources, food security and health.

This causes a great challenge for sustainability of life, ecosystems, livelihoods and indeed the development of the economy in Uganda. Accordingly there is need to adapt to the inevitable effects of climate change as well as to facilitate the development of techniques that can assist increase resilience to the climate change impacts.

Considering the cross-sectoral nature of climate change interventions and the broad functions and tasks under the mandate of the Climate Change Department, strategic frameworks have been created;

- a) The Climate Change Policy Committee (CCPC), the main functions of the CCPC are;
  1. To offer policy guidance to the Minister of Water and Environment on matters related to Climate Change
  2. To assist the Minister of Environment to take decisions on carbon finance activities in our capacity as the CDM Designated National Authority (DNA) for Uganda.
  3. To re-constitute themselves into a Project Steering Committee to guide implementation of Climate Change Projects in the Ministry
- b) The Inter-institutional Climate Change Technical Committee (ICCTC), whose main functions include;
  1. To bridge the gap between the Climate Change Department and the respective institutions, facilitating exchange of information.
  2. They also assist in technical activities of the Department including Climate Change Project development and reviews.

Last year COP 21 took place in Paris, France, Attended by approximately 40,000 delegates from both Annex and non-Annex countries that ratified to the convention. Uganda participated in this COP meeting that took place between 30<sup>th</sup> November and 11<sup>th</sup> December 2015. It marked the end of five years of hard persistent work by Parties across the globe, and at the same time the beginning of efforts to implement the outcomes, by governments. COP 21, like other COPs was organized in three weeks segments to enable Parties within each negotiating bloc to re-examine and strategize their negotiating positions.

The Ministry will continue to serve the country through various initiatives and priority programs that subscribe to Uganda's development agenda, vision 2040 including strengthening the monitoring and enforcement of water permits conditions, management and protection of the environment i.e. wetland and forest natural resources. By increasing access to clean and safe water to 100% through the construction of various water supply facilities and lessening the burden of women and children who still carry jerrycans of water on their heads for long distances, the ministry redirects itself to implementing the NRM manifesto 2011-2016. All citizens and stakeholders are urged to comply with the laws and regulations to safe guard our resources for the present and future generations.



The Minister of Water and Environment, Prof. Ephraim Kamuntu and Achim Steiner, the Under-Secretary General of the United Nation launch the Uganda Wetland Atlas for Kampala City, Mukono and Wakiso