



# WWF Uganda committed to the fight against Illegal Wildlife Trade

*Ensuring sustainable and impactful conservation for the benefit of People and Nature*

World Environment Day is a United Nations initiative celebrating and encouraging worldwide awareness and action for the protection of the environment. It is celebrated annually on June 5th and the theme for 2016 surrounds the crucial subject of addressing illegal wildlife trade - Go Wild for Life.

## Uganda's Wild and Wildlife

Uganda has unique and diverse biodiversity, partly due to its distinctive bio-geographical location. Seven of the eighteen (39%) plant kingdoms in Africa exist in Uganda and its biological diversity rates as one of the highest on the continent. More than half of all African bird species and 10% of bird species globally are represented in Uganda. Uganda is recognized as Africa's premier birding destination. As for the mammals, 345 mammal species are found in Uganda, the second largest collection in Africa. However illegal wildlife trade has brought iconic species such as the mountain gorilla, the chimpanzee and the African elephant, to critically endangered status and threatened species respectively.

## Addressing threats to Wildlife in Uganda

The threats to wildlife and other biodiversity in Uganda have led the World Wide Fund for Nature - Uganda Country Office (WWF UCO) to adopt varied approaches to conservation delivery in Uganda. Through addressing habitat loss and degradation, illegal hunting of wildlife, promotion of sustainable energy development and promotion of climate change adaptation, WWF has taken a holistic response to the national and global environmental challenges facing our planet. WWF has been working with partners and collaborating with various players including supporting Central and Local Government, supporting Civil Society Organizations, coalitions, and engaging the private sector to achieve shared goals. UCO is now much more engaged in working closely with local communities to find joint solutions for conservation issues which include alternative livelihoods and benefit sharing as well as innovative approaches that support reformed poachers and Collaborative Forest Management. WWF focuses on maintaining the forest habitats of global priority species thereby conserving much of Uganda's wildlife.

## About WWF

WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future, in which humans live in harmony with nature. In October 2009, WWF UCO was formally established as an integral part of WWF's global mission in East Africa.



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## Areas of WWF interventions in Uganda

Currently, over 80% of the UCO's conservation interventions in Uganda are focused in the Albertine Rift Region in Western Uganda, where it borders with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The region is one of WWF's global priority places (the African Rift Lakes) and has the highest biodiversity value in Uganda, as well as mainland Africa.



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## WWF UCO Programmatic Areas:

WWF UCO implements all its interventions in Uganda through three key programme areas, namely; Forestry and Biodiversity, Energy and Climate and Freshwater.

## Energy and Climate Programme

Uganda's demand for all forms of energy is projected to increase dramatically in the coming years. WWF's main goal for energy development is 100% access to renewable energy by 2050 and reduction of carbon footprint; due to the fact the amount of carbon dioxide and other carbon compounds emitted by consumption of fossil fuels by a particular person, group, contributes to dangerous climate change. WWF UCO's Energy and Climate Programme has developed several innovative projects and interventions which

support the government of Uganda in delivering on its energy development commitments in ways that can be economically and socially beneficial, as well as environmentally friendly without jeopardizing the health and well-being of people and wildlife.

## Forestry and Biodiversity Programme

Most Ugandans are reliant on natural resources to sur-



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vive. Forests play a significant role in national development through their contribution to ecological balance, habitation of wildlife, energy provision and industrial activities. Uganda has a unique bio-geographical location, where East African savannas and Central African rainforests meet.

WWF UCO has developed a programme to address the threats to savannah habitats for lions and African elephants as well as high conservation value forests which provide a home for critically endangered species of Great apes; the chimpanzees and the mountain gorillas. The main goal is conserving the integrity of Uganda's forest ecosystems to maintain ecological functions for sustainable socio-economic development.

## Freshwater Programme

Uganda appears to have abundant freshwater resources that provide numerous opportunities to support faster socio-economic transformation. However much of the supply comes from outside national borders so Uganda needs to maintain good relationships with its many neighbours. The water resources cover over a third of Uganda's surface area with large active storage capacity in lakes Victoria, Albert, Kyoga, George, and Edward. Uganda has a vast network of rivers that connect to these various lakes.

The River Nile is the longest river in Africa and its flow exceeds 25 km<sup>3</sup> per year and the Semuliki River is another very important trans-boundary resource in the Albertine Rift Region. WWF UCO's main aim is to support the sustainable management and effective stewardship of the country's priority water catchments in terms of water quantity and quality to maintain healthy ecosystem functions, to support livelihoods, wildlife and production.

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