



The ENR CSOs Newsletter

World Environment Day, 5th June 2024

Environment and Natural Resources Civil Society Organisations Network

Land restoration for climate resilience

EDITORIAL

Warm greetings to you all our readers from the Environment and Natural Resources Civil Society Organizations' Network, with over 60 CSOs as members.

We congratulate you upon traversing this first half of 2024 and commend your resilience amidst all the challenges and setbacks.

We now come together as partners in the ENR sector to celebrate World Environment Day 2024. We mark, recognize and remind ourselves of the critical role that our environment plays in sustaining life on earth and the role to play in this symbiotic relationship.

The theme of this year is, "Land restoration for Climate Resilience". It is with pleasure that we present and share with you this compilation of various works from several members of our Network. We hope that it will be an informative experience giving you a lot to ponder on and think about in line with the theme of the day.

Special appreciation goes to the Editorial Board, the Network Steering Committee and our members that have contributed articles towards this Newsletter. We thank you for taking the time out of your hectic schedules and working tirelessly towards the successful completion of this literary work. We hope to continue to produce similar Newsletter periodically in the future i.e. on a quarterly basis for purposes of learning, sharing, exchange of ideas, and for replication or scale up of best practices. Watch the space!

Message form ENR CSO Network

World Environment Day remains a notable event in the celebration but also a reflection on the unwavering contribution of nature to humanity. Nature's provisioning to mankind is meant to be on a quid pro quo basis, in which people reward back through sustainable and prudent use.

As such, there exists a natural contract for nature and humanity to coexist. As a country, we have further cemented that contract. Section 4 of Uganda's National Environment Act stipulates nature's right to exist, persist, and regenerate, among others. Today is thus yet another opportunity to report with the environment and nature, to raise awareness of this interconnected and existential right, but also to take stock, reflect, and evaluate our actions.

On behalf of the Environment and Natural Resources Civil Society Organization network, we are happy to join and rally behind other actors and congratulate Ugandans and our development partners on this occasion. As moral duty bearers, we take pride in our commitment and ability to supplement government efforts. We are happy to celebrate and have contributed in all areas, including awareness and advocacy, restoration, capacity building, monitoring, and resource mobilization, to mention but a few. In the 2022–2023 financial year, for example, just 29 CSOs contributed over USD 4 million towards environment management. We further acknowledge other key

milestones, particularly those by the government. The gazettement of all wetlands in the country, the different restoration, rehabilitation, and regeneration efforts, the improvement in the processing time of Environment and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA), the operationalization of a Climate Change Unit, and most recently, the new National Air Quality Standards, among others. These are supportive efforts towards land restoration for climate resilience.

There are, however, areas that require urgent action. Delay in approval of supportive frameworks, particularly the forest policy and carbon financing regulations, continued biodiversity loss and damage in the context of climate change, continued encroachment on wetlands for industrial establishments, and destructive floods, landslides, and erosive power around Elgon and Rwenzori, among others. There are also missed opportunities. The many presidential directives on wetland encroachers remain in balance. The 2023 Administrative Express Penalty Scheme for environmental breaches appears not to be working as planned. This would have provided instant action on particularly persistent irritating misdemeanors and breaches of



littering, use of plastic carrier bags below 30 microns, and noise pollution among others.

These action areas call for re-strategizing but, more importantly, enhanced partnership and collaboration with all stakeholders. We call upon government agencies to step up action and increase the involvement of all stakeholders. It is important to support citizens in taking responsible actions and emphasize that every person must enhance the environment. There is a further need for increased environmental awareness and education, along with compliance and enforcement. We equally commit to better action and stronger relationships with all actors. I take this opportunity to thank all our partners who support our network and its members in delivering products and services. Development and local partners and government are much appreciated, especially the Ministry of Water and Environment, Environmental Alert, Uganda Biodiversity Fund, EMLI Bwaise Facility, and the Albertine Rift Conservation Society, among others.

Together, we will achieve more.

George Muganga PhD
ARCOS Network
Chairperson, ENR CSO Network

Integrating Biodiversity in Sustainable Land Use and Agrifood Systems

By Carolyn Nakajubi, Program Manager, Environmental Alert



Biodiversity is defined as life at genetic, species, and ecosystem levels and plays a critical role in supporting all life systems. Although Uganda occupies only 2% of the world's area, it hosts a recorded 18,783 species of fauna and flora (NEMA, 2009), ranking it among the top ten most bio-diverse countries in the world.

However, biodiversity loss in the country continues to increase at unprecedented rates calculated in 2004 to be between 10-11% per decade (MWLE, 2003) especially in unprotected forest and wetland resources, lakes, and rivers, on private farmlands among others.

Several pressures are driving this decline, mainly associated with agrifood systems, including land-use change, overexploitation, pollution, and unsustainable consumption patterns. As a result, we are witnessing an increase in soil erosion, loss of soil nutrients, and use of agrochemicals which has directly negatively destroyed the habitats of animals and plants on land-based ecosystems such as forests and wetlands. This has resulted in decreased food production and productivity, leading to food scarcity and high threats of food insecurity given the dependency on land.

As such, last year FAO Uganda (under the 2021-23 Action Plan, strategy and Framework for Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture) and Environmental Alert piloted a project on "Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agrifood sectors" that sought to contribute solutions to address the above challenge. Interventions and processes including studies, capacity building, and documentation of best practices underpinned policy coherences, interactions, synergies, and conflicts amongst various agrifood policies concerning biodiversity conservation. An example is the current National Agricultural Policy, 2013 which doesn't address the critical issue of pollution prevention and control (GBF Target 7, adopted to the CBD in 2022) in the face of extensive and mechanized agriculture that demands the use of vast quantities of agrochemicals that negatively affect biodiversity. The interlinkage and dependence between and amongst land use systems, biodiversity conservation, and agrifood systems cannot be ignored, and thus a need to re-focus efforts in mainstreaming.

Therefore as we celebrate WED 2024 under the theme 'Land restoration, Desertification and Drought resilience,' we need to re-think our approaches as various stakeholders including civil society, academia, media, and especially government to agrifood policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring to ensure integration of biodiversity aspects especially on ecosystem restoration, pollution prevention and control, use harvesting and trade in wild species, the invasive alien species debate, and on the access and benefit sharing from the use of genetic resources among other GBF targets across the sectors. This is timely as it can take advantage of the existing opportunity of ongoing policy reviews such as Forestry policy, Wetlands Policy, NBSAPII, etc.

This will not only build an understanding of the interrelatedness between biodiversity, land use systems, food production, and agriculture amongst actors but also the capacity enhancement and harmonization of implementation strategies for the common goal. However, multi-stakeholder engagement, capacity enhancement, and biodiversity financing will be critical to effectively mainstream biodiversity in the agrifood sectors for sustainability.

Fighting Climate Change, Improving Lives through Tree Planting, Growing, Protection, and Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration.

By Gaster Kiyangi, Tree Talk Plus



Tree Talk Plus (TTP) is one of the players in Uganda's efforts to combat climate change and improve livelihoods through innovative approaches like tree planting, growing, protection, and Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration.

Its initiatives have shown significant environmental and socioeconomic benefits.

1. Tree Planting, Growing, and Protection

TTP collaborates with local communities to plant trees on communal and private lands. It has supported its fellow CSOs with seedlings which are planted in various places. It has directly involved the Uganda People Defence Forces to plant trees in Bombo Barracks to fight climate change. It has partnered with Laudato Si, of Mbuya Catholic Mission to plant and grow trees in among followers in urban areas. It also has supported tree planting events in schools, implementing School Greening Projects, engaging schools in tree planting activities to promote environmental education among students. As such, it established a tree nursery to provide seedlings for reforestation and afforestation projects.

As an impact, its actions mitigate climate by sequestering carbon dioxide, contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. It enhances biodiversity through planting native tree species that help preserve local biodiversity and restore natural habitats. In addition, it enhances economic benefits through communities that earn income from the sale of tree products such as fruits, nuts, and timber.

2. Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration

Tree Talk Plus hosts the Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration Network. Through the Network, it conducts training programs for farmers on how to manage and regenerate trees naturally on their farmland. It also established demonstration sites/plots to showcase best practices and successful regeneration techniques. FMNR enhances soil fertility through the natural addition of organic matter and nitrogen fixation by leguminous trees. It enhances water conservation as it increased tree cover, allowing water infiltration and reduce soil erosion, improving water availability for crops. In addition, it increases agricultural productivity as farmers report higher crop yields due to improved soil health and microclimate regulation by trees.

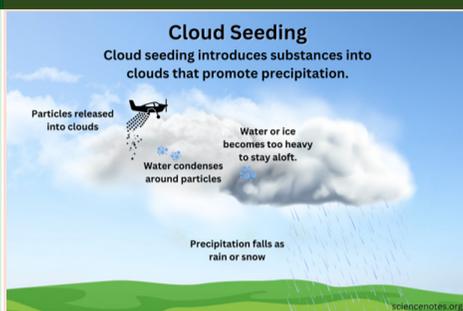
3. Policy and Advocacy

Together with ENR CSOs, TTP engages with policymakers to advocate for supportive policies and frameworks that promote sustainable forestry and land management practices. It particularly played a part in the review of the forest policies and is now looking at the forestry law in preparation. It involves in advocacy efforts that relate development of policies that support reforestation, sustainable land use, and community-led conservation initiatives.

Tree Talk Plus's initiatives in tree planting, growing, protection, and FMNR demonstrate a comprehensive approach to fighting climate change and improving livelihoods in Uganda.

Cloud Seeding and its Associated Impacts:

Dr. Bazira Henry Mugisha (PhD), Executive Director,
Water Governance Institute (WGI)



On April 16, 2024, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) experienced an uncontrollable and unprecedented storm and flooding of 142 millimeters of rainfall over 24 hours that resulted in the loss of lives, property and damaged infrastructure worth trillions of shillings.

It was reported to have been caused by cloud seeding. Ordinarily, the UAE receives 94.7 millimeters of rain annually. It also rained in Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia demonstrating the transboundary nature of cloud seeding. Cloud seeding is an intriguing and controversial practice of attempting to influence rainfall and ultimately weather with varying effectiveness and environmental impacts.

It is achieved by dispersing nanoparticles or chemical substances into the atmosphere that cause water to condense around them. The particles then become too heavy to stay afloat and eventually fall as rain, hail, or snow. Examples of chemical substances commonly used in cloud seeding include Silver Iodide, Potassium Iodide, condensed Carbon Dioxide, dry ice, urea, table salt (Sodium Chloride), and Calcium Chloride. Pollen, bacteria (e.g. *Pseudomonas spp*), and dust have surfaces that enhance the nucleation of water around them and consequently rainfall. Silver Iodide is often preferred because it can be delivered as smoke into the air. Other methods involve pulsing lasers or delivering electrical charges that coalesce water molecules or affect latent heat within clouds causing updrafts and eventually rainfall.

Cloud seeding can be done aurally using an aeroplane dispersing the particles or chemicals directly into the air or from the ground using gadgets to disperse the particles into the air at certain elevations. The most common method is ground-

based cloud seeding.

Cloud seeding is done by States that do not naturally experience rainfall such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, and Arizona in the US, among others to modify the weather and eventually climate. There are both positive and negative as well as physical, chemical, and biological effects/impacts of cloud seeding. The effects include:

- Cloud seeding enhances rainfall which may benefit agriculture and water reservoirs as well as mitigate the negative impacts of harsh dry and hot weather. However, it has a temporary effect or impact and may have little or no impact on mitigating climate change.
- Cloud seeding is a relatively cheap way of augmenting/manipulating water (rainfall) availability.
- The effectiveness of cloud seeding is variable with uncertain outcomes depending on atmospheric conditions.
- There are environmental concerns arising from the risk of chemical toxicity attributed to the chemicals used in cloud seeding. For example, excessive Urea, sodium chloride, and calcium chloride may increase the salinity of soils, thus affecting their fertility and productivity.
- Silver is toxic to fish.
- Carbon dioxide is one of the greenhouse gases accelerating climate change. Any additional volumes introduced into the atmosphere can exacerbate the climate change problem.
- In situations where bacteria (*Pseudomonas spp*) are used as a nucleus for water aggregation in the atmosphere and therefore rainfall, it could trigger unintended diseases in the affected population.
- There are people allergic to pollen. An increase in pollen in the atmosphere could increase the incidence of allergies.
- Manipulating the weather in one area by cloud seeding may unintentionally affect the weather in another area i.e. weather interference. So, when the question is asked whether cloud seeding is a risk to Uganda, the answer is yes.

Youth access to land for restoration: Perspectives from TEENS Uganda *By Richard Hamba (TEENS)*



Access to land has been cited as one of the major bottlenecks to young people's ability to meaningfully participate and contribute to productive sectors, particularly agriculture. In Uganda, agriculture remains the backbone of the economy and is a potential source of income and livelihood for the majority of the population.

Given agriculture's primary reliance on land, its access is a prime factor. Access however remains to be limited for all people but is disproportionately experienced by youth. This limitation is furthered by the existing gaps in land resources, ownership, and control and compounded by many other gender-blind resource components that are represented in tradition, law, and customs. Traditional cultures and current legal systems often do not protect land rights for youth and provide for a system of inheritance that makes it difficult for some youth, especially young women to obtain, own, and control land as an asset.

It often affects young women in both the rural and urban areas. This thus calls for interventions to safeguard youth and promote their access to land and agricultural production. This article highlights a few of the many sound practices that appear promising concerning the promotion of youth access to agricultural land. Some of these have been promoted by TEENS Uganda in partnership with other actors including Food Rights Alliance, Shelter & Settlement Alternatives, Kakuuto Development Initiative, and Environmental Alert.

At TEENS Uganda, we have been able to host capacity workshops for young people through Heritage and TEENS clubs at school, youth advocacy with partner youth focus organizations as well as site visits. As a result, youth have become master minds of initiatives to advance the conversation of restoration without limit to agriculture but extending into wise use of wetlands and natural forests. They have further contributed to positive energy during national and global days of activism focusing on environment/climate action as well as natural resource justice. Youth are also increasingly benefiting from opportunities for land awareness incorporated with restoration for both land and the diverse ecosystems by way of education and participation in Wetlands Day commemoration annually, Habitat Day as well as Land Awareness Week.

Also, youth are exploring the use of talent, and creative skills to demonstrate the potential of creative methodologies to educate communities, influence decisions, and cause positive change concerning building a critical mass for future policy advocacy and action. In this respect, TEENS Uganda in collaboration with the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU) and the Wetlands Management Department under MoWE has organized wetlands dialogues for youth, poetry, performance arts, and awards to promote the wise use of wetlands and conservation.

Recreational activities have also been used to engage youth. As part of World Cities Day 2022, TEENS Uganda, Advocacy for Public Spaces, UST-Network for better physical planning practices, and SSA organized farmers' visits to Luwero and Buikwe for smart agriculture, Nakwa-Kinawattaka. These events brought several actors both in the rural and urban sectors and highlighted the need for sustainable land-use planning and Management.

There are several other ongoing interventions but more needs to be done as youth have been a missing link in the access to land and agricultural productivity realm. Youth have the potential to break existing barriers to spear actions to achieve the much-desired restoration of land and ecosystem conservation in Uganda and the region. There is more need for increasing initiatives by all stakeholders to bring young people to the forefront of restoration through dialogue, debate, and activism. This supplemented by concerted efforts, financial support, and capacity development will spur sustainable development and help Uganda effectively tap into its demographic dividend.

Supporting Land Restoration through Assisted Natural Forest Regeneration Practices

By Susan Nakanwagi (PhD), Natural Resources Governance and Sustainability Program Lead at Regenerate Africa.



Dr. Hafashimana David monitors a regeneration site in Sisa

As we commemorate World Environment Day, let us be reminded of our collective role under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 to ensure the safeguarding of life on land by protecting, restoring, and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainable managing forests, combating desertification, and halting and reversing land degradation and halting biodiversity loss.

According to the Global Forest Watch, from 2013 to 2023, 100% of tree cover loss in Uganda occurred

within natural forests, with the total loss within the natural forest being equivalent to 345 Mt. of CO₂e. Assisted natural regeneration can help us achieve global land restoration targets. Let me point out two case studies:

In our commitment to nurturing a biodiverse ecosystem, Regenerate Africa has embarked on a transformative journey of rewilding part of the forest at the Great Outdoors, Kalanamu, after harvesting eucalyptus trees. The forest is seated on 120 acres and

is home to over 300 tropical plant species of conservational, medicinal and cultural significance. With the technical support of our resident soil and plant taxonomists and natural resources management at Regenerate Africa, we are creating a dynamic and sustainable environment where biodiversity can flourish, by removing the monoculture of eucalyptus and replacing it with indigenous tree species.

As the indigenous tree species take root and grow, they help to rebuild the intricate web of life that supports a diverse array of flora and fauna. The rewilding process involves restoring natural habitats, reintroducing native plant species, and allowing ecosystems to regenerate and thrive. We also carefully select and plant indigenous trees well-suited to the local climate and soil conditions. These include *mivule*, *misizi*, mahogany, *mituba* etc. These trees not only provide essential habitat and food sources for a variety of wildlife but also contribute to the overall health and resilience of the

forest ecosystem.

Under our Nalumuli Bay Ecosystem Regeneration and Restoration Project (1000 ha) in Buikwe District, 1000 ha of natural forest is under assisted natural regeneration and restoration and is co-managed with 1000 households surrounding the forests. Preparations are underway to Quantify Tree Diversity, Carbon Stocks, and Carbon Sequestration Potential of Nalumuli forest.

Through our rewilding efforts, we are restoring the natural beauty of the land and fostering a deeper connection between people and nature. Through collective efforts, we can all support land restoration through assisted natural regeneration practices to create a more balanced and diverse forest landscape, enhance the resilience of the ecosystem, promote soil health, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Harnessing Solar Energy for Climate Resilience

- By Peninah Atwine, Environment Alert

Over 90 percent of Ugandans heavily depend on nature resources for their improved livelihood and energy for cooking.

Access to electricity remains at 57% (19% grid & 38% off grid) where about 24% have access to electricity for more than 4 hours per day while around one-third of people in the unserved communities live on less than US\$2 a day and spend up to a third of their income on kerosene for heating and lighting. With the current increase on fuel price, the price of kerosene is likely to rise even more and not afforded by the poor in the villages.

Limited access to a reliable source of energy does not isolate government entities. It is evident that most of the public institutions like health centers, especially in remote locations of the country, operate with no reliable source of energy. Only 37% of Ugandan health facilities are electrified (Uganda National Electrification

Strategy 2022) but experience power outage and high terrific bills that are not/under budgeted yet 80% of Ugandans receive healthcare from Government health centers. Due to lack of access to reliable source of energy and infrastructures, 25%-50% of all vaccines in health centers are wasted each year (WHO,2020) and this hinders quality health service delivery.

It's high time the government invested in solar power plants by providing an enabling environment to investors for example protecting them against fake producers and given access to land resource. This will increase community access to cheap and reliable energy at all levels. A solar power plant is a facility that converts solar radiation, made up of light, heat, and ultraviolet radiation, into electricity suitable to be supplied to homes, institutions and industries. Once the plant is installed it can supply energy to large population both households and institutions and hence reducing government burden on rural electrification but

also contributes to government's efforts of emission reduction.

In order to respond to the energy challenges faced by the health system, in 2021/22, Environmental Alert installed 5 hybrid solar systems in the two health centres (HCs) of Maisuka HC III in Kibaale (hard-to-reach) and Kasonga HC II in Kikuube district (refugee district). A total of 35 Solar Panels, 11 lithium batteries, with storage capacity of 9.6KWH and with earthing & lightning arrestor were installed in the two HCs. Installation of solar panels contributed to the transformation of lives of patients and health workers as well as community assurance of the quality health service through improved lighting in the wards such as maternity wards and for security; heating; running computers; and conducting timely laboratory tests. In Maisuka HC alone, deliveries of babies increased from 8 to 45 per month. However, the energy gap remains a big challenge especially in refugee hosting communities whose energy needs are still high both for cooking and lighting. There remains limited/or no access to clean technologies, a lot of counter fake solar products on the markets,

and unsustainable/un defined disposal of used energy products that all end up in the environment hence causing environment/land degradation.

With solar power plants constructed and/or installed in specified locations there will be increased access to energy at cheap price that even government institutions like health centers can afford with minimal budget. To achieve this, the following must be supported by Government of Uganda;

- Private sector should be supported with necessary resources especially land for investment to promote renewable energy access for all.
- Need to strengthen advocacy on renewable energy, establish community learning centers, research, and documentation.
- Need for effective training of communities on the maintenance of these renewable energy systems e.g youth trainings (vocational trainings) on solar development and maintenance.
- Government to strengthen implementation of renewable energy policy to avoid fake products on the market.

Cultivating Resilience to Climate Change through the Eco-Schools Programme.

By Wako Joel – Programme Officer, Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS)

Climate change is one of the most critical issues of our time, with huge implications for our planet and its inhabitants. In a world grappling with global warming, it becomes of the essence to instill in future generations knowledge, skills, and passion for tackling such a complex issue.

The Eco-Schools program, now more than ever, calls for a global initiative to spearhead building resilience to climate change through education, community engagement, and the spreading of sustainable practices.

The Eco-Schools program is an international initiative that brings environmental topics into the curriculum. It helps learners grasp the causes, impacts, and solutions to climate change. With practical activities and projects, students develop a deep appreciation of the natural world and the skills necessary to mitigate the effects of climate change. In so doing, it inspires responsible citizenship and environmental stewardship in the knowledge of sustainable practices for energy conservation, waste reduction, and water management. It energizes students with responsible citizenship and environmental stewardship over issues of climate change.

The program helps mobilize communities towards environmental causes, thereby increasing community involvement in environmental initiatives and provoking collective action. Students, learners, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders in the community work as one to conceptualize and implement sustainable projects such as school gardens, renewable energy systems, and eco-friendly systems. Resilience and an appreciation of shared responsibility toward the environment are built by bringing communities together in efforts to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The eco-schools adopt sustainable practices and develop eco-friendly infrastructure to reduce their carbon footprint and foster environmental

sustainability. Schools practice energy efficiency, saving water, reducing waste, and promoting eco-friendly modes of transportation. With the creation of green spaces, the adoption of renewable energy, and the reduction in carbon emissions, eco-schools have become the benchmark for sustainable development and climate change resilience.

The program creates students who are climate leaders and change agents, providing training, workshops, and networking to build their skills and confidence in driving environmental initiatives and the uptake of sustainable practices in communities. It therefore creates an element of ownership and agency for young people to take up an active role in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

The Eco-School program may be used to shape environmentally conscious citizens, achieve community involvement, and facilitate actions that contribute to a sustainable future. Let us build climate change resilience and make the world a better place for generations to come.

In conclusion, the Eco-School program is a very essential framework for building resilience to climate change by educating and involving learners, teachers, and the community in environmental sustainability and sustainable practices. The program prepares future generations to respond to the challenge of climate change and to set the world on a sustainable course through responsibility and ownership. As the world continues to grapple with the complexities of global warming, the Eco-School program remains a beacon of hope that can inspire collective action and resilience to climate change.

Uganda's voice notes at the COP28 Dubai conference

By Christine Mbatuusa Senior programs officer, EMLI-Uganda

The 2023 Conference of Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, commonly known as COP28, was the 28th United Nations Climate Change conference, held from 30th November to 13th December 2023 at Expo City, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Over 85,000 participants were in attendance, including Heads of State and Government, Civil Society, Indigenous Peoples, youth, philanthropy, and international organizations.

Prior to the conference, Civil Society Organizations in Uganda developed a CSO position paper, under the coordination of the Climate Action Network Uganda and the Environment and Natural Resources Civil Society Organizations Network. The position paper is a key document that feeds into Uganda's Position Paper to COP. Below is a reflection of Uganda's voice notes at COP 28.



Uganda's Pavilion at the CoP28, in Dubai.

Global Goal on Adaptation

Uganda called upon parties to fast-track the finalization of the Global Goal on Adaptation framework with targets and indicators. The goal must demonstrate a higher ambition, be easy to communicate, holistic, and be globally applicable including the guarantee of the requisite means of implementation and support to the most vulnerable especially in Africa.

Climate Finance

Uganda called upon Parties to provide greater transparency and

accountability on climate financing – including the total amount committed and disbursed for easy tracking and reporting by the receipt parties. Additionally, a call for structured allocation of at least 5% of the Climate Adaptation Funds to support the implementation of the Gender Action Plan was made.

Loss and Damage

The Transitional Committee on Loss and Damage was also called upon to clearly define the funding arrangements, allocation,

and funding sources of the Loss and Damage fund. The funding should assist developing countries, particularly those vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change to respond to economic and non-economic losses. Access to these funds should be made easier for the frontline communities and non-state actors.

In addition, Uganda called upon developed country parties to make substantial and adequate pledges to capitalize on the new Loss and Damage Fund at COP 28.

Global Stock take

Uganda supported the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) position in pushing for separation of Adaptation from Loss in the Global Stock Take (GST) report, as one of the approaches to enhance visibility of Loss and Damage.

Key COP 28 outcome

Parties agreed on the operationalization of the funding arrangements to address loss and damage, including the establishment of a dedicated Fund (loss and damage fund), with financial commitments totaling USD 661.

Biodiversity and climate change financing priorities for NDP IV

By Levand Turyomurugyendo, Projects Manager, Uganda Biodiversity Trust Fund

The National Climate Change Policy estimates that Uganda requires US \$ 2.9 billion in 15 years to implement the impacts of climate change across all socio-economic sectors. This was in addition to the existing financing interventions.

Forestry alone was estimated to require an additional financing need of US\$ 6,501,655 over the next 15 years, and when combined with other ecosystem services under the same sector of Water and Environment, the estimate was put at US\$ 8,315,933 annually. This is enormous for government Uganda.

However, like it is world over, the biodiversity conservation role for our country is a sole responsibility of the government of Uganda and her peoples. Tackling this involves addressing and mitigating drivers of environmental destruction and degradation including community livelihoods; private sector economic quests especially those directly

dependent on nature; exasperating pollution and waste management; and socio-economic infrastructure establishments in fragile environments and biodiversity ecosystems. No doubt, government is pre-occupied with socio-economic transformation and wellbeing of human population.

Compared to the socio-economic transformation needs, government financing for safeguarding the ecosystems and the environments associated with biodiversity security remains low and will be so for a long time. It is for this reason that efforts such as those of Uganda Biodiversity Trust Fund (UBF) to mobilize financial resources for biodiversity conservation are critical. In line with the Vision 2040, NDP IV, and the government's global commitments to tackle climate change, UBF governed by a Trust Deed and Board of Trustees is contributing to the government's effort and reducing the funding gap by mobilizing funds to be used by

public and private sector. Funds are mobilized to restore and conserve biodiversity as well as build climate change resilience for the benefit of Uganda's people and sustainable development. As Uganda celebrates the World Environment Day, UBF in partnership with ENR-CSO Network counts and appreciates the role of individuals, philanthropists, private sector including corporations, and governments at all levels towards achieving the enormous mission: Mobilize funds for Uganda biodiversity conservation, restoration and climate change resilience in Uganda.

To sustainably finance biodiversity restoration and conservation, concerted effort is needed from all private and public actors to tap into opportunities such as global Carbon Financing mechanisms, Payment for Ecosystem Services, investment, and debt off-sets and swaps, crowd funding campaigns, donors and foundations, and levying and equity strategies to mention but a few.

Debates on how to apply all these is healthy and the way to go. Given the declining access to global financing, the government of Uganda could consider implementation of the 2008 Cabinet proposal of a small levy tax of 0.005% of the market value of resources generated out of hydroelectricity and the production of hydrocarbons towards financing the biodiversity conservation efforts. **Other opportunities for to exploration e** to capitalize the biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation financing could include a small levy to a specified category of visitors leaving the country through the airports and all our country's borders and a very small levy small carbon levy on imported old technologies (such as vehicles and machinery), and on gross sales of companies carrying out forestry and other nature-based related businesses.

Proceedings of the 7th Uganda Water and Environment Week 2024

By Edwin Muhumuza CEO & Founder, Youth Go Green

The Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK) 2024, a significant event in Uganda's environmental calendar, was held in Kampala, bringing together diverse stakeholders for knowledge exchange and dialogue on critical water and environment resource issues. This year, UWEWK 2024 was organized under the theme: "Rethinking Collective Action and Innovative Solutions to Water, Environment, and Climate Change Crisis in Uganda," and aligned with the World Environment Day theme: "Ecosystem Restoration."

The UWEWK 2024 included numerous pre-event activities aimed at engaging stakeholders and raising awareness across the country, which were conducted through the six regional de-concentrated structures of the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), to ensure wide participation and contribution to resource conservation and protection. The pre-event activities included: the 518KM Walk for Water, Environment, and Climate Change spanning from Fort Portal through Southwestern Uganda to the MWE headquarters in Kampala. Secondly, were the UWEWK Regional Activities, again held in the six regional centers of MWE to engage local stakeholders in discussions and actions related to water and environment conservation.

There were Regional Youth Debates led by Youth Go Green and the UWEWK Youth Subcommittee, that were conducted in Mbarara, Gulu, Mbale, Fort Portal, and Kampala to empower and provide a platform for young people to voice their perspectives on environmental issues. There were also Community-Based Programs that involved collaborating with stakeholders such as the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) and Buganda Kingdom focusing on water and environment restoration (e.g. through tree planting), community clean-ups, and awareness. There was a University Hackathon too that brought together university students to develop innovative solutions for environmental challenges. Prayers for UWEWK were also held by the churches under the UJCC to support the event and its objectives.

The main event of UWEWK 2024 was marked by various sessions and

activities with a strong focus on ecosystem restoration. The Opening Ceremony was officiated by His Lordship, Justice Alfonse Owiny-Dollo, the Chief Justice of Uganda and represented by the Deputy Chief Justice who emphasized the importance of collective action and innovative solutions. In his keynote address, he underscored the urgent need for sustainable practices and the critical role of ecosystem restoration in combating climate change. Plenary sessions followed covering a range of topics and providing a platform for knowledge sharing and dialogue. Major sessions included: Sustainable Access and Utilization of Resources; Nature-Based Solutions; Resilient Urban Infrastructure; and protection of Lives and Livelihoods. Workshops and Technical Sessions were also organized to provide hands-on training and in-depth discussions on important sector issues such as Water Quality Monitoring; Climate-Smart Agriculture; and Renewable Energy Solutions. A high-level session on Youth and Climate Migration was convened by Youth Go Green and IOM Uganda. The session underscored the critical role of youth in addressing climate-induced migration and highlighted various initiatives, challenges, and collaborative efforts required to support vulnerable communities.

The UWEWK also provided opportunity for Exhibitions and Networking with an exhibition area that featured booths from government agencies, NGOs, and private companies, displaying innovative products and services related to water and environmental management. The event concluded with a Closing Ceremony that provided a summary of discussions and the presentation of the UWEWK 2024 Declaration, outlining key action points and commitments. The 7th UWEWK 2024 was officially closed by the 3rd Deputy Prime Minister represented by the Government Chief Whip Hon. Hamson Denis Obua.

In conclusion, UWEWK 2024 was a great success, fostering dialogue, innovation, and partnerships crucial for addressing water and environmental challenges in Uganda.

LAND DEGRADATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE INDUCED MIGRATION – WHO SUFFERS MOST?

By Jacinta Nekesa Nangabo, *Environmental Alert*.

While Uganda's natural climate is moderate, the country has been experiencing increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events such as more erratic rainfalls leading to frequent busting of rivers, mudslides and landslides that lead to loss of lives and property of communities especially those living in the mountainous areas (e.g. in Elgon region in Bududa district).

At the same time those in the lowlands experience floods (e.g. in Katakwi district). Prolonged dry seasons are also frequent, especially in the cattle corridor, resulting in water shortage and inadequate forage for the agro-pastoral communities (e.g. in Amudat in Karamoja region), leading to loss of crops and livestock; consequently, triggering seasonal forced or climate induced migrations in search of water and pastures for their livestock. The accumulative damage caused by those natural disasters amounts to over 200,000 deaths and at least \$80 million economic loss (World Bank, 2023). However, the question remains: when all this happens, who suffers most and how? In order to establish the answer in 2023, Environmental Alert (EA), with funding support from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), conducted an assessment on Gender, Migration and Climate Change (MECC) nexus

in the three districts of Bududa, Katakwi and Amudat.

The assessment established that when there is food insecurity, women whose primary responsibility is securing food for their families and preparing meals in the homesteads feel the pinch more compared to their male counterparts. In case of prolonged droughts and water shortages, women move for long distances to fetch water as most of the water points are not centrally located and dry out. Droughts cause shortage of water not only for humans but also for livestock and lead to poor quality pastures which compels pastoral and agro-pastoral communities to migrate with their livestock in search for water and pasture in the greener belts of the neighboring regions (mostly river valleys and wetland areas e.g. in Sebei, Teso, Lango and Acholi sub-regions) which rises the competition for the few remaining water sources often degenerating into violent resources conflicts, insecurity and ultimately displacement or forced migration.

Frequent and prolonged droughts also cause many youths to migrate to Kakira Sugar Works factory in Jinja district to take up casual work; while some men migrate to urban centers as they do not have any activities left during the dry seasons leaving behind women, children and the elderly persons. Those who remain behind suffer hunger as they survive on shrubs and the little food

kept in the granaries. The resource driven movement of men and boys also increase the domestic work burden to women and girls who are left behind and this was reported to encroach on the time that girl-children spend in schools. It reduces the time that men spend with their families which was reported to be a cause of misunderstandings between partners. Men also reported contracting diseases such as malaria since they stay in the bush and do not use mosquito nets and as well suffer other challenges such as snake bites in the process.

It is evident that women, children and the elderly are most vulnerable to climate change impacts because women depend on natural resources more than men due to their socially ascribed roles such as securing energy, water, and food for their households (Balikoowa et al; 2019, Bomuhangi et al., 2021). In a bid to address these challenges especially targeting women to cope and adapt to the impacts of climate change, development partners such as IOM have provided recommendations such as implementation of nature-based solutions to tackling long term migration, environment, and social economic challenges in the affected districts. To ensure that these nature-based solutions such as climate smart interventions are successful, they need to recognize the different roles and needs of men and women as well as the importance of their equal roles in identifying relevant

problems, solutions, management, and decision-making.

Moving forward into the future, there is need for detailed analysis of the gender issues in the affected locations and understand the gender gaps if effective gender inclusivity in climate smart initiatives is to be achieved. This will guide the development of adequate and durable responses to climate change that meet the various needs of people of different gender and age groups including how existing gender inequities shape people's ability to adapt to climate impacts. Important to note is that consideration of gender issues benefits everyone. It begins with understanding that women and men differ in needs, priorities, power and vulnerability, equality, and equity issues. These differences define/determine how they relate with one another and with the natural resources in their community. Development partners also need to appreciate that gender issues are complex and often not project specific. As such, project developers or implementers need to understand and address gender issues within their historical, political, socio-economic, cultural, ecological –contexts, and recognize diversity among women within and across communities. Understanding gender gaps and devising strategies to address them in climate change projects will be very important for the achievement of gender equality.

ENR CSO Network Planned Activities for 2024

By Kasaija Rachel, ENR-CSO Network Coordinator

With guidance from the ENR-CSO Network's mission ("to mobilize CSOs to effectively promote good governance, effective management and sustainable utilization of Uganda's natural resources"), all activities of the Network for 2024 are framed around 6 core/focus areas:

1. Enhance the governance and regulatory mechanisms of the network
2. Increase the membership base of the network
3. Improve publicity and visibility of the network
4. Strengthen the networks collaboration with strategic partners
5. Enhance reporting and fulfill the networks reporting of obligations
6. Mobilize resources for enhanced functionality of the network

To attain the above six core areas, the network seeks to strengthen networking and collaboration with strategic partners, particularly joining Government of Uganda and other partners to celebrate the 2024 World Environment Day.

The Network recruits new members and has just endorsed a total of 5 CSOs joined the Network including the Uganda Biodiversity Fund (UBF), Global Initiative for Young Environmental Stewards, Regenerate Africa, Centre for Ecosystem Research and Development (CERD) and Friends of the Earth (FOE). This increased membership of the Network from 57 to 62 CSOs.

To enhance the Network's reporting obligations to GoU, a total of 29 CSOs provided information for the consolidated report highlighting the CSOs contribution to the Environment, Natural Resources, Climate change, Land and Water Management program in financial year 2022/23. The 29 CSOs contributed to projects worth USD 4,208,666 during the reporting period .

The network held Steering Committee meeting for last year, and has held 2 steering committee meetings to discuss key issues pertaining to the Network, including holding the Annual General meeting for 2024.

Various policy related engagements have been conducted which included post-CoP 28 feedback meeting, engagements on Just Energy Transition, climate financing, biodiversity and land management issues among others.

We call upon all potential organisations that meet the requirements to join the network. Applicants are required to have registered with the National Bureau of NGOs and operating in the field of environment and natural resources.

YOUTH CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS LAND RESTORATION, By R. Mugooda, KECP, ENR CSO Eastern node



Mr. Mugooda Rogers, Kaliro Environment Conservation Project, engages students in tree planting

Youth in school and out of school have a role to play towards land restoration though young and old people face similar negative consequences of land degradation.

Young people form the biggest population segment, therefore, their initiatives towards environment conservation is paramount in that their age bracket is of the most energetic labour force. For the past ten years, our community based organization has been engaging school students from primary, secondary and tertiary institutions by using different approaches aimed at protecting national resources which has enabled those youth to acquire practical knowledge on different models such as farmer managed natural regeneration, food forests and woodlot establishment all aimed at land restoration.

We emphasized promoting the low

cost approaches like farmer managed natural regeneration which does not require buying seedlings but rather to nurture those one which are growing naturally onto the tree stamps which were harvested previously and roots. Our initiatives towards environment conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, Kaliro Environment conservation Project has supported schools to establish environment clubs with management structures among the students themselves by electing their leadership assisted by the patron who must be a teacher and part of the school staff. As the saying goes In Lusoga that *emiti emito nekyibira*, meaning that “the young trees is the forest”, it is important for the youth to take lead on land restoration, environment conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation. It is believed that young people have more time on earth hence being the biggest beneficiaries once natural resources are well utilized and protected.

Loss and damage debate. What does it mean for Uganda? By Anthony Wolimbwa, CANU

Over the last two and half decades, the intensity and severity of climate-induced disasters have increased with floods and prolonged dry spells taking the biggest share.

This continues to impact sectors such as agriculture, water infrastructure, health, and energy. Total estimated losses are likely to be 2-4% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2050, with annual costs ranging between US\$ 3.2 billion to US\$ 5.9 billion, hence rolling back decades of hard-earned development.

With increased climate-induced disasters, Uganda's achievement of the Nationally Determined Contributions is likely to be missed which will put Uganda's image in the international arena in jeopardy. Uganda is one of the most vulnerable countries in the World. It is ranked 10th out of 182 countries in terms of countries that are vulnerable indicating its severely low adaptive capacity and resilience to climate-induced shocks that contribute to losses and damages.

Uganda is advocating for a Loss and Damage Fund at the UNFCCC aimed at providing financial assistance to address likely impacts from climate-induced losses and damages. At COP28, a decision was reached on the establishment of the loss and damage fund aimed at providing financial assistance to the most vulnerable countries affected by the impacts of climate change. Initial pledges stood at just over USD 700 million from the governments of Germany, Denmark, and UAE,



The author (standing left) during the SB 58 in Bonn Germany campaigning for the Loss and Damage Fund establishment

among others. This development opens up opportunities for countries like Uganda to make the necessary preparations for accessing and using these funds.

Many challenges need to be tackled to enable Uganda's access and use of these funds. These include the definition of methodologies and tools to collect concrete evidence, data acquisition and knowledge management, institutional strengthening, policy reforms, policy reforms on the establishment of new funds, building capacity of all the actors in government and the private sector, improving the country's credit rating and managing external debt and strengthening the country's fiduciary capacity.

Failure to address these challenges will imply severe impacts from climate change-induced disasters and losses particularly on smallholder farmers, youths, and elderly persons. It will require concerted effort and high levels of solidarity between Uganda, East African partner states, and the developed world who have the much-needed resources. As a country, we have a lot to do as the clock ticks. Things will not be Business as Usual.

On behalf of the ENR-CSO's Network Secretariat, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to **EMLI-Bwaise Facility** for their generous financial contribution towards the production costs of this Newsletter, **Environmental Alert**, for the dedication and support rendered by its staff members, **Tree Talk Plus** for the time, immense knowledge and expertise provided in the compilation and design of the Newsletter, and **ARCOS** for providing the strategic leadership and guidance that have steered this project right from the start. Appreciation also goes out to the **ENR CSO Network members** for sharing their experiences through well-written articles. We thank you all for taking the time out of your hectic schedules to provide the necessary resources (both financial and in-kind) that have ensured the success of this endeavor dedicated to the celebration of the **World Environment Day, 2024**, with its theme for Uganda: “**Land Restoration for Climate Resilience**”. May this theme continue to guide all our work in our respective organizations during the rest of the year 2024.



Tree Talk Plus
"Empowering Communities"

This issue is an initiative by the Environment and Natural Resources Civil Society Organization Network.

c/o Environment Alert, Plot 475/523, Sonko Road Off Senyonga Road, Kabalagala, Central, Kampala. E-mail: envalert@envalert.org,

Website: <https://enrcso.org/> **Writers:** G Kiyingi, George Muganga (PhD), Rachel Kasaija **Reviewers:** Nyadoi P (PhD), J. Nekesa. **Design:** G Kiyingi