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**UGANDA  
W&E  
WEEK**

# THE WATER FRONT

Newsletter



(L-R) Elsie G. Attafuah, UNDP Resident Representative, Prof. Alex Ariho, Director General, Excel Hort Consult and Hon. Mariam Nkalubo, Buganda Kingdom Minister for Lands and Environment at the opening ceremony



Dr. Florence Grace Adongo,  
Director DWRM, MWE



Dr. Callist Tindimugaya,  
Commissioner, Water Resources,  
Planning & Regulation, MWE



Rosa Malango, UN Resident  
Coordinator and Designated  
Official for Security

## 4th Uganda Water & Environment Week Opens

The 4th edition of the Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK 2021) commenced today March 21st, 2021 with a dialogue on water and environment security for socio-economic transformation of

Uganda. The dialogue meeting attracted high-level speakers including Ms. Elsie G. Attafuah, the UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Ramathan Ggoobi, a Lecturer at Makerere University

Business School, Ms. Blick Carol Gloria, the National Coordinator of Youth Go Green Clubs, Prof. Alex Ariho, Director, Excel Hort Consult, Hon. Mariam Nkalubo, the Minister

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# 4th Uganda Water and Environment Week Opens



**Dr. Callist recognising the members of Uganda Walker Association who walked from Kampala to Kasese to save River Nyamwamba and creating awareness on environment during the opening ceremony of UWEWK**

## From page 1

of Lands and Environment in the Buganda Kingdom. The Prime Minister of Uganda was represented by Hon. Sam Cheptoris, the Minister of Water and Environment. In his opening remarks, the Prime Minister applauded the sector for organizing the annual UWEWK.

“The annual celebrations are a way of providing an interface between sector actors and other stakeholders for knowledge exchange, dialoguing and learnings on issues related to the sustainable development and management of water and environment resources,” he said. The Prime Minister decried the fact that in spite of the sector’s relevancy to Uganda’s socio-economic development, the environment and natural resources were under increasing

pressure.

“The forest cover has declined from 24% total land area in 1990 to 12.4% currently. This is majorly attributed to biomass fuel cooking/combustion with other auxiliary drivers such as expansion of agricultural land, sporadic urbanization, and income poverty, industrialization and inadequate incentives for private plantation forests,” he said.

Similarly, the national wetlands coverage as a percentage of the total land area declined from 15.6% in 1994 to 8.9% currently and the estimated loss of wetlands Uganda loses is 846 km<sup>2</sup> of its wetlands annually. He called for the need to secure the boundaries, protect and restore water catchments including wetlands, river banks and forests and also gazette and strictly protect those that provide critical functions that

avert climate change impacts and create alternative livelihood options that are economically viable.

He mentioned the different measures Government has put in place to ensure sustainable water and environment resources management and use including the enactment of the environmental laws, the punishment of polluters and instituting conditions that require all plastic manufacturers to put up recycling plants. He stressed the sector’s relevancy to sustainable development including maintaining healthy ecosystems for human survival which are critical towards the achievement of the NDPIII goals and targets.

In his remarks read by Dr. Florence Adongo, the Director of the Directorate of Water Resources Management

(DWRM), the Minister of Water and Environment recognized that plastics dominate waste in the country both on land and in the water bodies.

“More than 600 tons of plastic are disposed of each day. The country has a large number of inland fresh water bodies which are being suffocated by plastic litter. This is in addition to the pollution caused on land, in the drainage systems, in towns, damp sites and parks,” he decried.

H.E. Rosa Malango, the UN Resident Coordinator and Designated Official for Security appreciated the working relationship between the Government, Parliament, United Nations, development partners, civil society and private sector in supporting the climate change and natural resources agenda in Uganda.

She reiterated the UN’s commitment to a healthy world that will support health, peace and prosperity for generations to come. She quoted Nelson Mandela, “We can change the world and make it a better place. It is in your hands to make a difference.” She ended her speech with a call to work together to preserve the planet for the next generation and ensure that no one is left behind.

Prof. Kenneth Strzepek, a Senior Consultant, at IEC, Research Scientist MIT and Professor Emeritus, University of Colorado made the keynote address under the theme, ‘Water and Environment security for socio-economic transformation of Uganda’.

He highlighted that though the key goal of NDP III is to increase the average Ugandan households’ incomes and



**Participants during the opening ceremony of UWEWK**

equally improve the quality of life of the citizens, the catalyst for this is through successful industrialization and diversification of the economy which will trigger the movement of labor from low-paid agriculture to relatively better paid industrial employment.

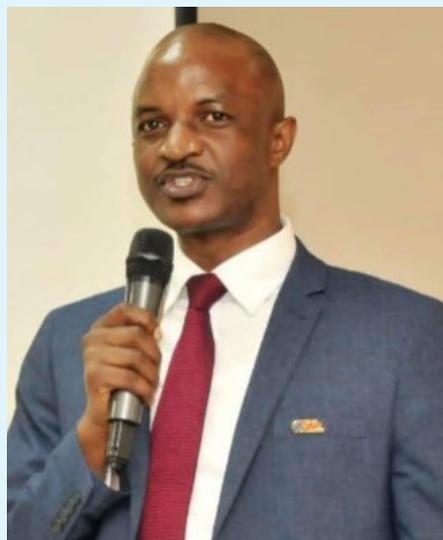
He shared the case study of Vietnam and highlighted that investment in water and environment will enhance Uganda’s growth. “Economics study shows that enhanced environmental and water stewardship boosts growth. Integrated Water and Environmental Investment Plan provides a framework and set of tools for sustainable growth,” he said. Prof. Kenneth highlighted that for sustainable development to be realized, development has to be inclusive and environmental sustainability must be a requirement not an option. He also mentioned that there is need to address problems of Climate Change mitigation and adaptation and shift from

traditional to modern agriculture and from low to higher productivity services. He said that there is need to collect data and communicate research or study findings in the language of decision makers, utilize the available tools to maximize the benefits of the Water and Environment sector investments to economic growth and the overall welfare of Ugandans.

Ramathan Ggoobi, a Lecturer at Makerere University Business School highlighted that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) should not be the only indicator of development but rather sustainable development should be measured by what stock of resources we leave behind. It should be equivalent to what we inherited.

Ms. Elsie G. Attafuah, the UNDP Resident Representative highlighted that the dialogue was timely especially when the country is rolling out NDPIII and the SDG agenda. She said that development is hinged on water and environment. This also applies to other sectors

including agriculture and water, tourism, environment and water. Dr. Florence noted that Government has created an enabling environment for the sustainable water and environment resources through the Ministry of Water and Environment and various agencies that monitor, regulate and promote the usage of water and environment resources. She highlighted that a number of stakeholders are unaware of the importance and relevancy of the sector to the socio-economic development of Uganda. “People take water and environment for granted,” she said. She highlighted that Ministry of Water and Environment has both the technical capacities on transboundary water resources



**Ramathan Ggoobi**

management. Mr. Ggoobi called for the prioritization of the sector in national planning and budgeting and an internal re-organization of the sector alongside institutional and policy frameworks. Ms. Elsie called

for other sectors to mainstream water and environment resources use and management in their value chains apart from the Corporate Social Responsibility related activities. She highlighted that there is need to encourage smart learning and planning that brings all actors together so that they can see the impact of each sector on the other. She called employing incentive mechanism to sustainable water and environment use and management by different stakeholders and optimization of innovations. Hon. Mariam Nkalubo, the Minister of Lands and Environment in the Buganda Kingdom said that the Buganda culture depends, cherishes and wants to conserve the environment.



**Key participants after the opening ceremony of UWEWK**

# PRE-EVENT ACTIVITIES

As part of the national commemoration of the Uganda Water and Environment Week,

a number of pre-event activities were planned and conducted at both national and regional level.

Below are the highlights of the activities.

## The launch of the annual 40 million trees planting campaign

The Ministry of Water and Environment in collaboration with Uganda Breweries Limited organised the 2021 edition of the Running Out of Trees (ROOTs), an annual event which involves a series of activities aimed at restoring Uganda's diminishing tree cover. In a span of one year, 40 million trees will be planted.

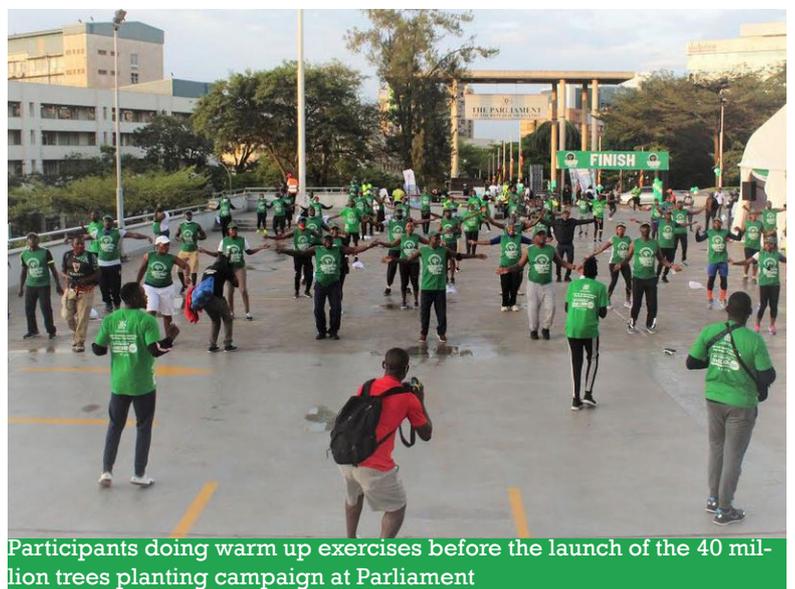
During the launch of the 40 million trees planting campaign, the Speaker of Parliament of Uganda Hon. Rebecca Kadaga implored everyone to walk the talk when it comes to preserving and protecting the environment. She called on leaders to lead by example and ensure that environmental degradation stops. Hon. Kadaga also launched the ROOTs mobile app to raise awareness and mobilize funds needed to procure, plant and maintain the 40 million trees across the country.

Hon. Beatrice Atim Anywar joined the Speaker of Parliament to plant a tree at Parliament. The ROOTs campaign is a 5-year project initiated by the Ministry of Water and Environment with the aim of working together to fast track National Forest Restoration Goals and Commitments which includes a plan to restore 2.5 million hectares of degraded landscapes by 2030.

"Members of the public contribute only Sh1,500 via the mobile phone app. This cost caters for seedling, facilitating the planting exercise, manning the tree until it is at a stage where it can survive on its own and for paying tree adoption, the company that is responsible for continuous monitoring and evaluation of this process," said officials at the launch.



Hon. Rebecca Kadaga together with Hon. Beatrice Anywar planting a tree during the launch at Parliament on Sunday



Participants doing warm up exercises before the launch of the 40 million trees planting campaign at Parliament

# Flipflopi Expedition on L. Victoria

**F**lipflopi, the world's first sailing boat made from 100% recycled plastic, joined forces with the UN Environment Programme's Clean Seas Campaign and embarked on an expedition by sailing around Lake Victoria, Africa's largest freshwater ecosystem. The expedition aimed at sending an urgent message to the East African Community (EAC) to end the unnecessary single-use plastic scourge that is threatening the region. The Flipflopi is an initiative showcasing alternative uses of plastic waste and the possibilities of circular economy approaches. Over a three-week period, the Flipflopi sailed from Kisumu, Kenya to several locations in Uganda and Tanzania, raising awareness and inspiring communities to adopt circular-waste solutions to beat plastic pollution.

"Flipflopi was built to show the world that it is possible to make valuable materials out of waste plastic. By sailing around the lake, we aim to inspire people to create their own waste-plastic innovations and adopt circular solutions that will build greener businesses, whilst also taking plastic out of the environment," said Ali Skanda, cofounder of the Flipflopi project and builder of the world's first recycled plastic dhow.

As part of the campaign, The Ministry of Water and Environment organised a dialogue at Commonwealth Resort Munyonyo.

Speaking at the meeting, Dr. Callist Tindimugaya,



The Nnabagereka Sylvia Nagginda listening to Ali Skanda, cofounder of the Flipflopi project

the Commissioner of Water Resources, Planning and Regulation Department, highlighted the need for partnership and collaboration towards ending environmental degradation.

"We are happy that we have been blessed with so many stakeholders that will be dialoguing and discussing issues affecting water and the environment. We thank the Flipflopi team for joining us in this campaign against environmental degradation," he said. Dr. Callist thanked the Buganda kingdom for being part of organisation of UWEWK 2021.

Hon. Beatrice Atim Anywar, the Minister of State for thanked the Guest of Honour, the Nnabagereka of Buganda for accepting to bless the event. "This is a sign that the kingdom is supportive of the environment activities," she

said. Hon. Anywar thanked United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the French Embassy for supporting the Flipflopi expedition that aims at sensitizing masses on the dangers of plastic pollution. She highlighted that even though traders oppose the ban of polythene bags, the 2009 Finance Act prohibits the use of plastics in Uganda.

She also highlighted that there is need to create awareness in schools and communities to reduce on plastic waste in the environment.

The Queen of Buganda, Sylvia Nagginda was the Guest of Honour and she thanked the FlipFlopi expedition for sensitizing masses about plastics and their danger to the environment. She said that there is need to increase sensitization of the communities on the dangers of plastic pollution. "We need to think about using



the paper bags that are reusable other than using the single use plastic bags. We need to teach our children the sustainable protection of the environment. There is need to raise public awareness on the management of plastics,” she said.

Her Excellency Rosa Malango the UN Resident Coordinator and Designated Official for Security, thanked the Flipflop. She said that plastic pollution is one of the most serious threat to our world, health and community and the ecosystem. “We need partnership between Government and private sector to protect the environment against plastic pollution,” she said.

She concluded her speech with a quote from Nelson Mandela – “We cannot afford to wait for others to stand up for environment – as nobody stands to lose more than we do”

“It is our duty to be proactive in the battle to protect Africa’s natural environment. The right

to a healthy environment is a crucial human right because it directly impacts our quality of life,” she said.

Other notable speakers during the panel discussion included Dr. Noble Banadda, Professor of Engineering, at Makerere University, Ms. Lillian Idrakua, Commissioner - Water Quality Management at Ministry of Water and Environment, Ms. Hilda Flavia Nabakuye - Climate and Environmental Rights Activist, Mr. Morgan Bbonna, Secretary at Uganda Water and Juice Manufacturers Association, Ms. Patience Nsereko, Principal Environmental Inspector-National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Recognition of core partners and Short speeches from French Ambassador, British High Commissioner, UNEPI country representative. The British High Commissioner said the United Kingdom is leading the fight against single-

use plastics.

“We cannot underscore the damaging effects plastic pollution has on our water bodies. We can and must act and save our environment from unnecessary pollution. The solution starts with all of us and we require a behaviour change of no plastic waste,” said Hon. Sam Cheptoris, the Minister of Water and Environment.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the need to address the myriad environmental crises through regional and global consensus single-use plastic, and climate change,” said Joyce Msuya, Deputy Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

The Flipflop campaign is supported by the Governments of Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, UK, UNEP, the French Development Agency (AFD), UN Live, the EU Uganda Office and private sector partners.



The Mayor of Rubaga Division Owekittiibwa Joyce Nabbose Ssebugwawo touring the exhibition stalls

## Buganda Kingdom mini open day exhibition at Bulange, Mengo

As part of UWEWK 2021, Buganda Kingdom organised an open day mini exhibition on the 12th March 2021 at Bulange Garden in Bulange Mengo, Kampala. Buganda Kingdom is one of the key players in the fight against environmental degradation.

Her Royal Highness Sylvia Nagginda, the Nnabagereka of Buganda attended the event.

The key issues highlighted during the event included alternative building, climate smart agriculture, proper waste management, artisan recycling and alternatives, conservation and heritage as well as green energy. The focus was to bring communities and local leaders to one table to discuss and share best practices in reducing plastic waste, keep and conserve water but also promote conservation traditional best practices that make Buganda's identity.



Participants at the exhibition



An official speaking during the exhibition at Bulange

# Conservationists walk 370 km to save River Nyamwamba

A team of conservationists under the Uganda Walkers Association of Uganda set off to walk from Kampala to Kasese in an effort to create awareness about environment conservation and climate change.

While flagging off the over 15 member team comprising of ministry officials and other stakeholders, the Minister for Environment Ms. Beatrice Anywar warned the public against environment pollution done especially on wetlands. “We are back into business of hunting the polluters down. The time of handling them with gloves has ended. I warn all of you to desist from acts that degrade the environment,” Ms. Anywar said.

The President of the association, Geoffrey Walker Ayen said in areas where the team has traversed, they have saved forests and rivers from encroachment by the local communities.

“We will walk 371 km from the Ministry of Water headquarters. We will plant trees and clean towns together with the residents.

This activity is continuous and so far we have saved Zoka forest, River Rwizi and now Nyamwamba,” he explained. He added that the walk is focused on empowering and creating awareness about the importance of saving River Nyamwamba.

In support of the walk and its purpose, the Minister



The Minister of Water and Environment Hon. Sam Cheptoris flagging off the walkers at MWE offices in Luzira

of Water and Environment Sam Cheptoris appealed to Ugandans to conserve water and the environment in a bid to contribute to economic transformation.

“When you focus on improving natural resource utilisation and reduction on environmental degradation, you will realise sustainable economic growth and livelihood security while adding value to key growth opportunities,” Cheptoris said. “This walk is to tell Ugandans to show commitment to conserve the environment and I want to invite all Ugandans to join us because we don’t want this to be a symbolic walk, but we want it to bring an impact on society,” one of the walkers said.

Uganda’s environment is getting completely disorganized and

broken and if we don’t work on, Uganda will be at a very big risk. So I will be part of those people who continue to walk to champion for climate change.” another team member noted.

For some time now, there have been many outcries from the beneficiaries of River Nyamwamba, saying it’s being polluted due to various human activities.

River Nyamwamba is currently facing degradation, the reason for its recent flooding.

River Nyamwamba is located in Kasese district in Western Uganda and is fed by melting glaciers from the mountains of the moon, (Rwenzori Mountain). It emerges from the mountain and flows to Lake George in the Albertine Rift.

## Regional activities

The six de-concentrated regional structures of Ministry of Water and Environment conducted a number of pre-event activities aligned to the 4<sup>th</sup> Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK). The activities included; media campaigns on television and radio aimed at creating awareness on water and environment's centrality to the sustainable development of Uganda. Other activities conducted included clean up exercises and environmental restoration activities.

Below are picture highlights from the regional pre-event activities.



Ministry of Water and Environment staff during the Rwenzori regional pre- UWEWK 2021 activities



Participants after collecting garbage



An official waters the tree after tree planting



A religious leader planting a tree



Richard Musota speaking



Participants looking at an event banner



Participants during a clean up exercise



A Police officer planting a tree



Participants preparing for clean up



Participants cleaning up



Participants during the regional walk



Garbage collected during the clean up



Participants during the regional walk



Beatrice Anywar, the State Minister for Environment (2nd left) listening to Mr. Antonio Querido, FAO Representative to Uganda. Looking on is the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Water and Environment Mr. Alfred Okot Okidi

# Commemoration of the International Day of Forests

In commemoration of the International Day of Forests, the Ministry of Water and Environment together with the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) organised a high level dialogue meeting as part of the Uganda Water and Environment Week to raise awareness about the importance of all types of woodlands and trees and to celebrate how they sustain and protect humanity.

The dialogue meeting was held at Kampala Serena Hotel on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021 under the global theme for the International Day of Forests 2021- 'Forest Restoration: A path to recovery and wellbeing.' The Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Water and Environment, Mr. Alfred Okot Okidi thanked the European Union and the

**“ In Uganda, forests have come under pressure but we hope that through dialogue, we can change people’s minds towards restoring forests and the environment.**

FAO for accepting to partner with Ministry of Water and Environment to facilitate the dialogue.

“In Uganda, forests have come under pressure but we hope that through dialogue, we can change people’s minds towards restoring forests and the environment,” he said. Every year on International Day of Forests, countries are encouraged to undertake local, national, and international efforts to organize activities involving forests and trees. Mr. Antonio Querido, FAO Representative to Uganda highlighted that that national dialogue is aimed at gathering stakeholders with interest in ensuring that forests continue to exist, to thrive and contribute to the betterment of humanity.

“Forests have a significant role in reducing the risk of natural

United Nations represented by

disasters, including floods, droughts, landslides and other extreme events. They mitigate climate change by sucking up carbon from the atmosphere, leaving cleaner air to sustain humankind and biodiversity,” he said.

Mr. Querido highlighted that in collaboration with the Ministry of Water and Environment and the European Union, FAO has championed investment in ecosystem management and forest restoration in Uganda through various initiatives like the Sawlog Production Grant Scheme, the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA), restoration and sustainable management of forests and providing clean, safe and labour saving energy technologies for gender responsive transformation and climate change mitigation in West Nile and Karamoja regions of Uganda by turning agricultural residue and waste into clean energy.

Ms. Caroline Adriaensen, the European Union Delegation to Uganda mentioned that for the past 18 years, the European

Union has been working with Uganda to promote commercial forestry and that a lot has been achieved.

“The European Union is committed to supporting forestry in Europe and Uganda. We are working to protect, restore and value forests. This does not only involve financial support but requires strong political will and active participation from the top of the government to the local communities neighbouring the forests,” she said.

Hon. Beatrice Atim Anywar, the State Minister for the Environment was the Guest of Honor and she decried the continued loss of forest cover. “We have been losing 120,000 trees each year and if we do not reverse this, we are going to lose timber by 2030,” she said. She mentioned that Government committed to restoring 2.5 million ha of the forested area by 2030 and restore 25% of the forest area by 2040 in NDPIII. The government of Uganda has put in place a mechanism to achieve the restoration through growing

forty million trees all over the country.

Other speakers included Ms. Pauline Nantongo, the Executive Director of ECO-Trust, Dr. Fred Babweteera, the Ass. Professor and Dean, School of Forestry, Environmental and Geographical Sciences at Makerere University, Ms. Sophie Kutegeka, the Country Director, IUCN, Immaculate Akello from Generation Engage Network, Ms. Cynthia Mpanga, the Corporate Affairs Manager at Standard Chartered Bank Uganda, The Ambassador of Sweden to Uganda highlighted the need for both national and international partners to engage in discussions on biodiversity. “Sustainably managing forests can contribute to ending poverty, food insecurity and climate change,” he said. He also shared what the programs they are supporting in Uganda including Makerere University and other five public universities in Uganda. Nadia Cannata representing the European Union Delegation to Uganda said that emphasis should be put on conservation of the forests.



**Mr. Antonio Querido, FAO Representative to Uganda and the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Water and Environment Mr. Alfred Okot Okidi during the panel discussion**

# Sponsors and Partners



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