



# THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA



## NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (NEMA)

### SPEECH BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

#### AT THE

#### WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2022, LUWERO, KASANA 2022

**5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2022**



Our Dear Chief Guest

Honorable Members of Parliament

HE Elsie Attafuah, UNDP Resident Representative

Excellences members in Diplomatic Corp

The Permanent Secretary and all technical staff of the MWE

The Chairperson and Members of the NEMA Board of Directors

Resident District Commissioner, Luwero District

District Chairperson and all District Political Technical and Leadership

Development Partners

Owek. The Hon Minister in the Obwakabaka bwa Buganda

Board Members and Executive Directors of Affiliated Institutions

Distinguished members of the private sector

The Representative of the Association of Uganda Impact Assessors

Members of Academia

Conservation Partners from the civil society

Representatives of the media

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Permit me to welcome our Chief Guest, distinguished guests and all our partners and stakeholders to this important event that is a climax of events that we have had to commemorate the World Environment Day 2022

2. The United Nations General Assembly declared the 5th of June as World Environment Day during the United Nations Conference on Human Environment and Development in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972.



3. This year, international celebrations are in Stockholm Sweden under the theme 'Only One Earth'. The theme and Sweden as the global host, is symbolic of the 1972 Stockholm Conference that formed UNEP. In Uganda, WED is being celebrated under the national theme: 'Our Earth, Conserve for Life'.

4. The Day is important for us to reflect on how we have fared as a nation. There have been both gains and losses in terms of environment management. We have achieved gains in the wildlife and forestry segments of the environment. The wetlands, air and water segments still have challenges that need to be addressed.

5. **Wildlife populations** have generally increased and most species continue to move of a positive trajectory. For instance the number of Uganda Kobs increased from 34,461 in 2004 to 175,590 in 2020, African Elephants from 1,900 individuals in 1995 to 8,342 and Rhinos from 0 in 1995 to 35 to date, Buffaloes have increased from 18,000 in 1995 to 38,367 individuals now, The Mountain Gorilla population in Bwindi increased from 292 in 1995 to over 459 in 2019. The Virunga populations has also equally grown. Because this success, mountain gorillas have now moved from IUCN category of critically endangered to endanger. This is worth celebrating. Despite a few declines like predators and some birds, the trend of wildlife populations is generally positive.

6. **Forest cover** reduced from 45% in 1900 to 24 percent (or 4.9 million ha) in 1990 and further to only 9 percent (1.83 million ha) in 2018, a reduction of 57 percent in just 25 years. The years 2019, 2020 and 2021 have registered a positive forest cover trends for the first time since independence.

7. In 1990, forests on private and communal land constituted 3.3 million hectares (70%) of the total forest cover while forests on protected areas constituted 1.6 million hectares (30%).

The main challenge facing the sector is pressure arising from the demand for agricultural land and demand for charcoal, firewood and building materials.



**8. Wetland cover has** experienced a downward trend - reducing from 15.5% in 1994 to 13% in 2020. However of the 13 % wetlands about 8.9% are intact while the rest is degraded.

**9. The air quality situation** deserves urgent attention. Uganda's urban air pollution has higher particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen dioxide levels than the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends for healthy living; PM in Kampala ranges at least 36  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , compared to the WHO's recommended 25  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  (NEMA, 2019).

10. The ambient air quality monitoring indicates that annual averages of PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration fluctuate between 55 to 60 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , over 10 times the recent WHO air quality guidelines of 5  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

11. In Uganda, PM<sub>2.5</sub> is the leading risk factor for death and caused 27,600 premature deaths in 2019 (IHME, 2020). While household air pollution accounted for more than 80% of this estimate, ambient PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution has been a growing health problem in urban areas, particularly in the country's capital.

**12. The Total Renewable Surface Water Resources** declined by 34% from 66.6 cubic kilometres in 1995 to 43.3 cubic kilometres. The available water resources per person per annum have reduced from 2,400 cubic meters in 1995 to about 1,000 cubic meters to date, indicating that the country is moving from a situation of water abundance to a situation of water scarcity.

13. Urban centres around Lake Victoria discharge 14.17 tons of organic pollution each day into the lake. Pollution increases water treatment costs; between 2007 and 2010 the water treatment costs at Gaba water works tripled from an estimate of US\$0.3 per cubic meters of water to about \$0.9 per cubic meters in terms of chemical use.

**14. Regarding climate;** the mean annual temperature is projected to increase in most parts of the country to between 1.5 °C to 2.50C relative to



the 1981-2010 on average by the year 2031-2060. The mean annual rainfall is expected to decrease by 5 to 15% in most parts of central Uganda

15. With regarding energy resources, biomass energy including firewood, charcoal and crop residues contributes up to 88 percent of Uganda's total primary energy consumption, while electricity and fossil fuels account for 2 percent and 10 percent respectively (Draft Energy Policy, 2019). There is however limited access to affordable renewable and other clean energy sources with only 28% of the population having access to electricity, 31 % to solar system, with the rest of the rural and urban households depending on wood energy as the main energy source for many. This has resulted into increased pressure on natural resources and loss of key ecosystems and their associated services.

16. As Government, we have identified mitigation measures for all the outstanding challenges in the ten year restoration plan for Uganda now before Cabinet. The biggest single challenge remains critical under resourcing of the sector. Conservation without financing can only be conversation. We need to address the funding situation for the sector.

17. I wish to extend our appreciation to all of you our partners for working with us in making World Environment Day 2022 events memorable. The The Members of Private sector, we appreciate your efforts and support to Government. We pledge our continued partnership.

18. I wish to specifically recognize and thank UNDP, Cocacola, CNOC, TotalEnergies, AUIA and Luwero District Local Government for the support towards World Environment Day events.

8. To the Luwero District Local Government, our host, we thank you for the cooperation and warm hospitality.

9. To the National and Local Organizing Committee members, you have made us proud. Thank you for delivering World Environment day, 2022 despite glaring challenges and obstacles.



10. I wish to once again welcome you all this national event and thank you all for honoring our invitation. To our dear Chief Guest, we are grateful that you found time given your busy schedule to come and celebrate with us.

**FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY**