



# NEMA NEWSLETTER

National Environment Management Authority



## Another win for NEMA as WED 2021 is celebrated in Masindi

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By William Lubuulwa

Despite the challenges brought about by Covid-19 the world over, and the subsequent restrictions posed by the scourge in Uganda, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) treated the country to a successful commemoration of the World Environment Day (WED) 2021.

This was the second time WED was commemorated in a 'scientific' style. The first happened in 2020. A 'scientific function' refers to an occasion attended by only a few necessary guests, and in Uganda's case, not more than 200 people.





**William Lubuulwa**  
Senior Information,  
Education and  
Communications  
Officer

## Editor's Note

**D**ear NEMA staff and other readers,

Welcome to the September edition of the NEMA quarterly newsletter. At the end of the last quarter, we commemorated the World Environment Day (WED) 2021. Our newsletter then announced that Dr. Tom O. Okurut would be retiring from service as Executive Director (ED) of the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). And indeed this happened.

As we publish this edition today, NEMA is under the leadership of the new ED of the Authority Dr. Barirega Akankwasah, who took office on September 1, 2021.

Speaking at the welcome ceremony held in the NEMA boardroom in Kampala, Dr. Akankwasah said: "Not all hope is lost because we have better technology and good political will towards responding to the environment and we must take advantage of this."

The team at NEMA welcomes him, and wishes him success in his new role.

Our lead story captures the 2021 World Environment Day (WED) commemorations. This year's semi-scientific WED celebrations were hosted by Masindi District local government in their environmentally friendly Nyabyeya Forestry College – just 32 kilometres away from the mix-

up of Masindi Town.

Although this edition is heavily reflective of how WED 2021 was commemorated, especially through the camera, the newsletter also looks at a few other successes for NEMA. For instance, together with the National Enterprise Corporation, the Authority launched the first National E-waste Management Centre for Uganda. The Centre is now running. Launched in June 2021, in Industrial Area Kampala, the Centre shall be the main and pivotal e-waste management facility in the country.

In other developments, State minister for Water, Hon. Aisha Sekindi visited NEMA, and called for firm enforcement of all environmental laws. She was on her maiden visit to NEMA head office to get firsthand information on the functionality of the institution and the environment sector in general.

On project approvals, the total number of Environment Impact Assessment-related documents submitted to NEMA in Quarter 4 dropped compared to the previous two Quarters.

According to the April - June, 2021 provisional Progress Report released recently the number of scoping reports submitted by prospective developers during Quarter 4 stood at 229 compared to 313 submitted during the January–March, 2021 Quarter. The good news is that by the time the country ran into the second covid-19 lock-down in June 2021, a total of 383 certificates of approval had already been issued.

We also bring you much more. Nice reading.

## Dr. Akankwasah enters NEMA as new Executive Director

By Tony Achidria



**T**he National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) welcomed the new Executive Director (ED) Dr. Barirega Akankwasah on September 1, 2021.

Upon the recommendation from the NEMA Board of Directors, the minister of Water and Environment Hon. Sam Cheptoris appointed Dr. Akankwasah in the position following the completion of a recruitment process that commenced in October 2020.

Dr. Akankwasah replaces Dr. Tom Okurut who had served for 10 years as the NEMA ED since 2011. Section 22 of the National Environment Act states that the Executive Director shall serve for a period of five years and is eligible for appointment for only one more term – and indeed this was the case for Dr. Okurut.

Dr. Akankwasah has a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) in Environment and Natural Resource Management, a Master of Science,



Left - right: Dr. Barirega Akankwasah (new NEMA ED), minister Sam Cheptoris and Dr Tom Okurut during the hand over ceremony. (NEMA Photo)

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# Minister Sekindi visits NEMA, calls for firm enforcement of the law

By Tony Achidria



The State minister for Water, Hon. Aisha Sekindi has called on the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) to strictly enforce all environmental laws in Uganda.

Hon. Sekindi said this on her maiden visit to NEMA head office on August 11, 2021. The minister was at NEMA to get firsthand information on the functionality of the institution and the environment sector in general.

In the company of the NEMA board chairperson, Prof. James Okot-Okumu, the minister was guided by the acting executive director Mr. Arnold Waiswa Ayazika on a tour of some of the key facilities of the Authority.

The minister visited the NEMA library where she was informed by Senior Librarian Ms. Eva Wamala of the plans to turn the facility into a national and digitized resource centre for environment information.

Hon. Sekindi also visited the institution's laboratory where



Minister Aisha Sekindi (in floral dress) with members of NEMA management during her visit. (NEMA Photo)

inspectors Isaac Mugabi and Patience Nsereko demonstrated the use of air quality monitors, noise meters and other equipment that NEMA uses to measure different environment parameters.

The minister also visited the GIS section that is responsible for mapping out areas of interest using spatial data and was shown a variety of maps and satellite images. Mr. Julius Muyizi, the section head, informed the minister that NEMA has been able to map out and demarcate buffer zones of protected and critical ecosystems using the GIS technology.

## Interaction with top management

After interacting with a cross-section of staff who she asked to work aggressively towards the protection of the environment, Hon. Sekindi met NEMA's top brass.

During the interaction, Mr. Ayazika

stressed the need for increased funding, staffing, skilling and equipping of local governments by increasing conditional grants or provision of special grants for environment and natural resources management in lead agencies.

The minister was informed about the need for policy and institutional reforms to harmonize, synergize and mainstream strategies and actions for environment and natural resources management across the sectors.

Hon. Sekindi was given a brief on NEMA's achievements and the challenges the institution is facing.

In a presentation made by the Senior Internal Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Ms. Monique Akullo, the minister was informed of the following achievements: Enactment of the National Environment Act; A number of New Regulations developed including those on ESIA, Audit, Ozone, waste management, oil spills prevention, management of landfills, and standards on effluent. Other achievements included improvement in compliance among inspected/audited facilities from 40-56% in FY2008/9 to 70-80% in FY2020/21. Examples of the industries that have improved on compliance over the years include cement industries, sugar industries, breweries and tanneries.



Minister Aisha Sekindi (left) listens NEMA's Isaac Mugabi (centre) in the presence of Mr. Ayazika Waiswa (Ag ED), and Ms. Patience Nsereko. (NEMA Photo)

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"Over the years NEMA supported restoration of critical ecosystems. Over 4,000ha of 10 fragile ecosystems have been effectively restored and have regained their ecological values, functions and attributes such as presence and supply of water, fish, birds and other related species," Ms. Akullo said.

Mr. Callist Tindimugaya who represented the permanent secretary of the ministry of Water and Environment informed the meeting that the government has developed a 10- year environment restoration plan that needs to be supported by all sectors because the environment is under pressure.

Prof. Okot-Okumu called for more funding to support the environment sector and highlighted the pressure that refugees are exerting on the environment. He informed the minister of the process to form an environmental protection force specifically to police environmental crimes. "We need to have a common understanding of what environment is if we are to thrive in this country," he stated.

In her remarks Hon. Sekindi urged NEMA to strengthen enforcement and prevention of environmental crimes because the country has good laws that are not being implemented effectively. "Why should Uganda be a basket of good laws that are being copied and effectively implemented by neighbouring countries?" Hon Sekindi asked.

She urged management to work openly and improve communication and coordination of environmental information and activities.

**Mr. Achidria is the Senior Public Relations Officer, NEMA.**

and a Bachelor's degree in Environment and Natural Resource Management. He also holds a Diploma in Law. He brings to NEMA a wealth of experience specifically in biodiversity conservation and corporate governance.

### **Who Dr. Akankwasah is**

Prior to his appointment, Dr. Akankwasah served in the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities in several positions since 2008; including as Director for Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Commissioner Wildlife Conservation, Assistant Commissioner for Conservation Planning and Partnerships; Principal Wildlife Officer, and Senior Wildlife Officer.

He has served as Member of Board of Trustees and Chairperson Human Resource Committee for Uganda Wildlife Authority and has also been a governing council member at Uganda Wildlife Research and Training Institute for more than six years. He has contributed significantly to several reforms in both institutions and the Ministry.

Dr. Akankwasah has represented Uganda at International conservation fora in many aspects including being the Global Vice President for the UN Convention on Migratory Species, President UN Gorilla Agreement, Chairperson Standing Committee of African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement and National Focal Point for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of flora and fauna.

Speaking at the handover



Minister Cheptoris (centre) flanked by Dr. Akankwasah on the left with other NEMA officials at the hand over ceremony. (NEMA Photo)

ceremony held in the NEMA boardroom, Dr. Akankwasah said: "If we do not respond to the increasing loss of wetlands as habitats for the national bird the Crested Crane, we are likely not to have a national symbol. But not all hope is lost because we have better technology and good political will towards responding to the environment and we must take advantage of this political will." He added that we have an opportunity to shape our economy on a green growth trajectory, and this can only be achieved through talking to the drivers of environmental degradation.

### **Dr. Okurut speaks**

On his part the outgoing ED Dr. Okurut said management of the environment is not a mechanical undertaking but more of negotiation. "It is both sweet and sour; sweet when the gains in environment are realized; sour when losses of environment are realized and you cannot do anything. The sourness arises from entrenched misinformation or lack of information," Dr. Okurut said, adding that while he was in office environment awareness had been enhanced.

### **Minister Cheptoris**

The minister who presided over the handover ceremony urged the new ED to pursue encroachers within the city and in urban areas and not only go for the 'small fish' upcountry.

### **Dr. Akankwasah's agenda**

Key on the new ED's agenda is to oversee the halting of environmental degradation through enhanced citizen engagement, strengthened environmental justice system (enforcement and prosecution) and automation of NEMA service processes to enhance service delivery.

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As the accounting officer, he will be responsible for the Authority's day-to-day administration and operations, resource mobilization, and strategic planning.

He will ensure regional and international cooperation through coordination and implementation of bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements. Dr. Akankwasah will also support the NEMA Board in its operations as well as the Policy Committee on Environment to ensure that NEMA performs its mandate as the principal agency in Uganda responsible for the management of the environment.

**Mr. Achidria is the Senior Public Relations Officer, NEMA.**

## Climate change: Why we must protect our forests

By Jeninah Nabukeera



Uganda's forest cover is on its knees following the continued destruction by selfish individuals. The forest cover which used to stand at 20 percent in 1999 now stands at 12 percent. This vice is a serious injustice to Mother Nature and if the rate at which forests are being destroyed does not stop, Uganda is heading for serious disaster.

### Value of forests

Besides providing food, medicine, firewood, forests are home to a number of wild animals. This means that their destruction creates a big impact to the environment, animals and human beings.

Moses Dhabasadha from Uganda Wild Life Authority says the destruction of forests that used to act as migratory corridors has increased conflict between chimps and humans. According to Dhabasadha chimps are getting into contact with human

population.

People have cut away trees as they seek for more land for economic activities such as agriculture and charcoal burning, among others. As they carry out these activities a number of trees have been replaced with farm lands.

There have been increased cases where human beings have been attacked by wild animals. Some of these animals have been killed because of eating and destroying people's gardens.

### Hope not lost

Despite the existing problems in the forestry sector, all hope is not lost. There are still individuals who believe that something has to be done to protect the forest cover from declining.

At Nyatonzi Village in Masindi District alongside Budongo Forest Reserve is one Fred Mbaisi. The 47-year old man is putting up a spirited fight to plant trees in the name of protecting and saving the environment.

On his garden, he has planted fruit trees as well as other trees including hardwood trees to let nature flourish. He says chimpanzees from the neighbouring Budongo Forest used to come to his village but have been stopped by the expansive farmland that is eating deeply into Nyantozzi. Since he started this garden, a number of birds have found home here and he is hopeful that one day his effort will pay off.

Despite all his efforts, Mbaisi is still worried about the environment at his door step which he says is taking a different turn. He says the rivers are becoming more seasonal and then the flooding of the area during rainy season is becoming a great concern.

### Voice from NEMA

As the country commemorated the World Environment Day recently under the theme 'Restore Uganda's Ecosystems for Sustainable Development', we sounded

out the National Environment Management Authority's Internal Monitoring and Evaluation Manager Fred Onyai who said the theme was central to the survival of human beings and other forms of life.

He added that the changing climate is causing rising water levels which result into floods and displacement of communities. Onyai expressed fear that this problem was likely to persist with the way people cut down trees indiscriminately.

**Ms. Nabuukeera is a volunteer at NEMA.**

## Uganda launches National E-waste Management Centre

By Tony Achidria



The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) together with the National Enterprise Corporation (NEC) have launched the first National E-waste Management Centre for Uganda.

The facility was launched on June 10, 2021 in the presence of representatives from the Uganda National Bureau of Statistics, Uganda Communications Commission, the National Information Technology Authority - Uganda, Ministry of Information & Communication Technology and other stakeholders.

### Background

The problem associated with end-of-life and waste from electric and electronic equipment (EEE) is broadly recognized as a serious environment and social concern world over and Uganda in particular. The increasing penetration and generation rate of EEE and their short replacement cycles is the major reason for the current exponential growth of the amount

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of electronic waste (e-waste) in the country. Improper disposal of e-waste poses environment, health, safety and security risks.

The Government of Uganda recognized the challenges posed by e-waste and put in place an enabling environment in an attempt to facilitate its adequate and sustainable management. This is demonstrated by the existence of the National Environment Act, 2019, the National Environment (waste management) Regulations 2020, the E-Waste Management Policy 2012, the E-Waste Management Strategic Plan, and the E-Waste Guidelines 2016.

A National Steering Committee on E-waste Management comprising of the relevant key stakeholders in the e-waste management value chain has been in place since 2016. And government has gone a step further to establish the National E-waste Management Facility.

Speaking at the launch, NEMA executive Director Dr. Tom Okurut said: "Today most e-waste is being discarded together with other waste streams such as domestic waste. However, there are environmental concerns associated with the end-of-life and waste from electric and electronic equipment (EEE). It is a fact that e-waste contains hazardous components, including beryllium, cadmium, mercury, and lead and therefore must be handled and treated cautiously. Improper disposal of E-waste poses environment, health, safety and security risks; and can lead to pollution of our soil, air and water with undesirable chemicals."

Maj. Gen. Innocent Oula, the Deputy Managing Director NEC, disclosed that the e-waste management centre shall be the main and pivotal e-waste management facility in the country. In the short and medium term, the facility shall collect, sort, dismantle and dispose at Luweero Industries

Limited waste disposal/treatment facility, which already has the relevant expertise. The Centre shall eventually progress towards refurbishment and recycling. To ensure efficiency and working with the other stakeholders, regional collection centres shall be established to supplement the national e-waste management centre.

According to the Global E-waste Monitor Report 2020 by the United Nations, the e-waste generated in Uganda was estimated at 17,000 tonnes in 2018, and a projection of 4,500 tonnes per annum of e-waste from end user ICT devices per year from 2018 to 2022 (UCC, 2020).

The facility has been established to ensure safe and sustainable management of e-waste with the following objectives:

- ❑ Proper management of EEE at its end of life so as to mitigate the health and environmental impacts, to facilitate material recovery for reuse, refurbishment and recycling of EEE
- ❑ To ensure safe disposal of electronic waste

The facility is being managed by NEC with oversight, regulation and coordination by NEMA.

For sustainable management, running and maintenance of the Facility, provision of recycling and refurbishment activities as well as establishment of a mandatory extended producer responsibility (EPR) scheme is critical. EPR entails producers and dealers of EEE being part and parcel of the end of life management activities.

**Mr. Achidria is the Senior Public Relations Officer, NEMA.**

## Fewer developers seek NEMA approval in April - June Quarter

By William Lubuulwa



**T**he total number of Environment Impact Assessment-related documents submitted to the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) for approval in the April - June, 2021 Quarter has dropped compared to the previous two Quarters.

According to the April - June, 2021 provisional Progress Report released recently by the NEMA Environment Assessment Manager, Ms. Margaret Aanyu, the number of scoping reports submitted by prospective developers during the Quarter 4 stood at 229 compared to 313 submitted during the January–March, 2021 Quarter. Ms. Aanyu attributed the drop to the biting pangs of the Covid-19 lockdown.

This provisional report focuses on only documents submitted to this Authority for consideration and the total number of EIA Certificates issued to developers. It, however, excludes information on baseline verifications and post-EIA inspections undertaken, and projects rejected during the Quarter.

Ms. Aanyu said that the total number of Project Briefs (PBs)/ Environment Impact Statements (EISs) submitted to NEMA by developers during the April–June, 2021 Quarter was at **515** compared to **530** submitted during the January–March, 2021 Quarter.

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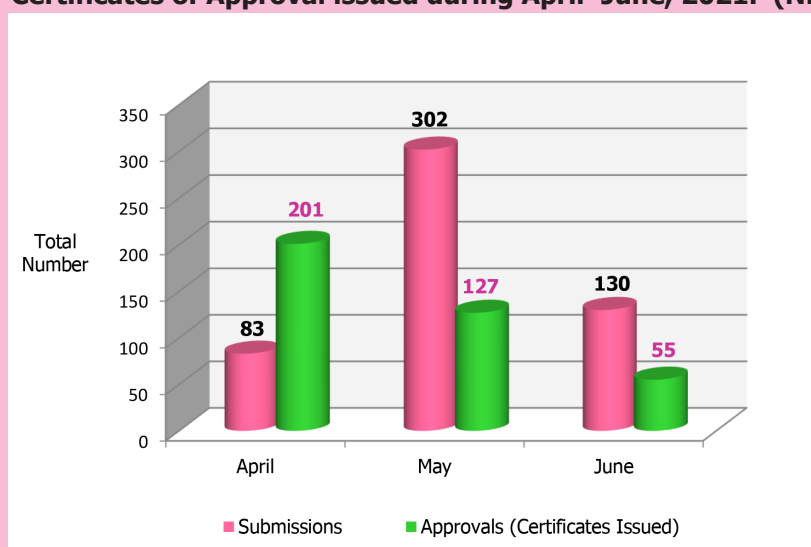
Month	Scoping Reports/TOR	PBs	EISs	Total PBs and EISs Submissions
April	81	25	58	83
May	78	46	256	302
June	70	46	84	130
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>515</b>

The table above shows the total number of scoping reports/TOR, PBs and EISs submitted to NEMA during the April–June, 2021 Quarter. (NEMA table)

### Approvals/certificates issued

By the time the second Covid-19 lock-down was instituted in June 2021, a total of 383 certificates of approval had been issued. In comparison, during January–March, 2021 Quarter 366 certificates were issued to developers, and 404 during October–December, 2020 period.

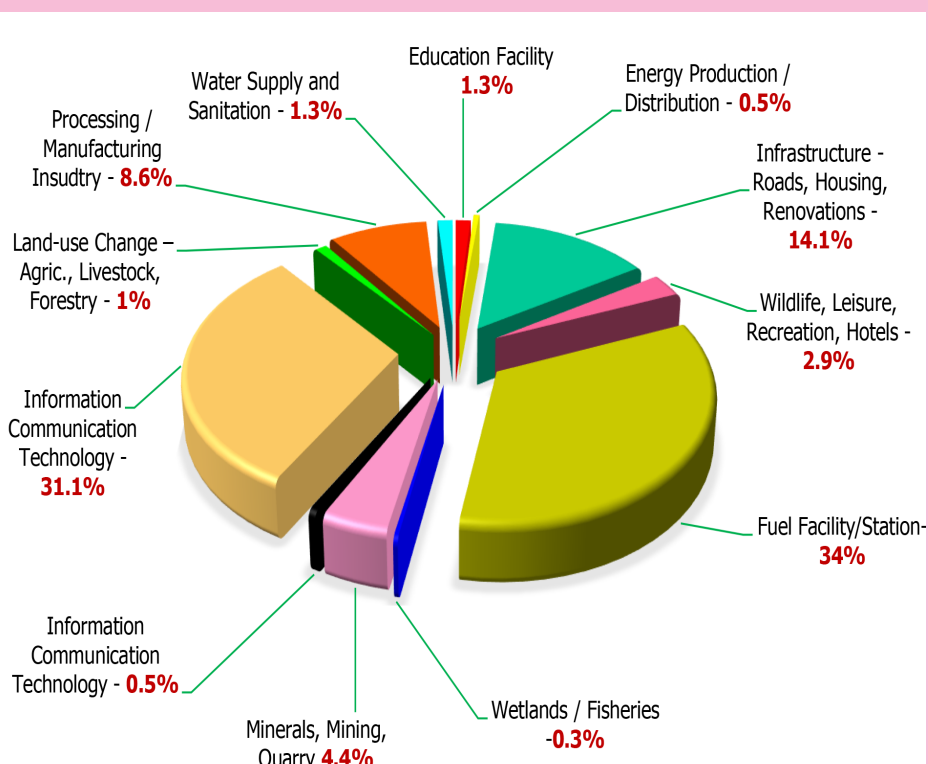
The Figure below shows comparison between the total of ESIA reports (PBS+EISs) submitted and the Certificates of Approval issued during April–June, 2021. (NEMA data)



### Categories of approved projects

The four leading categories of projects approved during January–March, 2021, are: Fuel facilities/stations totalling **130**; Information Communication Technology totalling **119**; Infrastructure totalling **54**; Processing Industry/Manufacturing totalling **33**. These four categories constitute **87%** of the total projects approved, compared to **86%** in the January–March, 2021 quarter. These same four categories have been the leading categories during the previous Quarters.

The pie-chart shows the categories of projects approved by percentage during the April – June Quarter. (NEMA data)



**Mr. Lubuulwa is the Senior Information, Education and Communications Officer, NEMA.**

Running on the global theme: **'Ecosystems Restoration'**; and the national theme: **'Restore Uganda's Ecosystems for Sustainable Development'** WED 2021 was hosted in Masindi with a number of media and clean-up activities, in the build-up to the final day at Nyabyeya Forestry College.

Unlike the tradition that had been around for decades when a multitude of environmentalists, politicians, journalists, other stakeholders and the general public gathered, WED 2021 was attended by slightly above the guided numbers of attendees in the beautiful campus of Nyabyeya Forestry College – around 32 kilometres from Masindi on Masindi-Butiaba Road. Nyabyeya is found on the fringes of Budongo Tropical Forest.

In the words of NEMA's director, District Support Coordination and Public Education, Dr. Daniel Babikwa, "We are not at liberty to gather and celebrate as it has always been, but this year is a little relaxed compared to 2020 when we commemorated WED under total lockdown."

Despite the restrictions, Greater Bunyoro welcomed the event so much that it was attended with a lot of colour, vigour and calculated splendour as the subsequent pictures show. During WED 2021 there was a slight warm-up in the pomp and fanfare; tree planting, and other restoration activities in Masindi District.

Assisted by NEMA executive director Dr. Tom Okurut, the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Water and Environment, Mr Alfred Okot Okidi officiated at the function. He urged all Ugandans to use and restore the environment sustainably.

The Principal of the college Mr. Richard Kisakye welcomed the celebrants and he also saluted NEMA for taking WED 2021 to Masindi, and finally to the college.

### The fanfare

Controlled celebrations were steered by traditional dance troupes, music and drama as well as environmental poems by select schools.

The day was also graced by other activities including exhibitions by different entities, environment groups and individuals from in and around the Bunyoro region.

Speaker after speaker expressed fear at how the environment was being degraded with some individuals not minding about what happens to the future generations.

### Bunyoro experience

The local leaders in Bunyoro said their region no longer receives rain as it was the case in the past. They say the changing seasons have confused farmers who are no longer sure when to plant their crops.

They fear that if environmental degradation is not handled now the country will continue to grapple with environmental challenges such as soil erosion, drought, lowering of the water table, among others. More details in the accompanying pictures.

**Mr. Lubulwa is the Senior Information, Education & Communications Officer, NEMA. (Additional reporting by Jenina Nabukeera – NEMA)**

## Cleaning exercise at Kabango Town council





## Photos of the construction of the exhibition stalls at Nyabyeya Forest College Grounds





## Photos of the match pass and inspection of the exhibitions at Nyabyeya





**Photos of the restoration  
activity at Nyabyeya Botanical Garden**





## Photos of some of the exhibitors at Nyabyeya Forest College grounds







**Photos of dignitaries speaking to WED celebrants at Nyabyeya Forest College Grounds**





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## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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