



## Identifying Essential Areas to Maintain Life on Earth

### *UNDP and NEMA make an effort to Map Nature for People and Planet*

- *UNDP and NEMA join forces to improve spatial data use and protect nature*
- *'Maps of hope' will identify areas where actions to protect, restore, and manage nature can ensure life on the planet*
- *Collaboration with global actors will scale up these efforts to influence key international policy processes*

13 May 2020 – This week, key stakeholders including 45 of the world's leading scientists and environmental policy experts, will meet in Uganda with national stakeholders to create 'maps of hope' that identify Uganda's essential life support areas. These maps will identify where actions to protect, manage, and restore nature can enable Uganda to deliver on its strategic priorities for biodiversity, climate, and sustainable development.

Humanity faces an unprecedented planetary challenge to its survival. COVID-19 is only the newest of a diverse range of threats that stem directly from humanity's degradation of nature<sup>1</sup>. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report<sup>2</sup>, we have only a decade to avoid the catastrophic impacts of climate change. Furthermore, the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)<sup>3</sup> confirms that there is an unprecedented decline in nature, with one million species at risk of extinction. In Uganda for example some species such as the Black Rhino was extinct and a number of other animal species are threatened such as the Mountain Gorilla, Chimpanzee, Elephants, Lions, Leopards, African Wild Dog, and Red and White Colobus monkeys

However, we have the solution within our reach. By protecting, restoring, or managing nature sustainably, governments can provide one third of the solution to mitigate climate change<sup>4</sup>, improve water security<sup>5</sup>, and safeguard the livelihoods of millions of people directly dependent on nature for their subsistence<sup>6</sup>.

"It is essential for all countries to rethink approaches to tackling biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development. This project is expected to facilitate nature-based solutions for climate actions and the implementation of SDGs in Uganda through the support of the Government and development partners. Uganda is proud to be involved in creating awareness about conserving fragile ecosystems, building spatial literacy

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<sup>1</sup> UN News, "First Person: COVID-19 is not a silver lining for the climate, says UN Environment chief", *UN News*, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1061082> (accessed 12 May 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), "Summary for Policymakers of IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C approved by governments", *IPCC*, <https://www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments/> (accessed on 12 May 2020).

<sup>3</sup> Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), "Media Release: Nature's Dangerous Decline 'Unprecedented'; Species Extinction Rates 'Accelerating'", *IPBES*, [https://ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment#\\_ftnref1](https://ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment#_ftnref1) (accessed on 12 May 2020).

<sup>4</sup> The Nature Conservancy (TNC), "Natural Climate Solutions", *TNC*, <https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-insights/perspectives/natural-climate-solutions/> (accessed on 12 May 2020).

<sup>5</sup> The Nature Conservancy (TNC), "A Natural Solution to Water Security", *TNC*, <https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-insights/perspectives/a-natural-solution-to-water-security/> (accessed on 12 May 2020).

<sup>6</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), "The future of food and agriculture. Trends and challenges", *FAO*, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6583e.pdf> (accessed on 12 May 2020).



among technical policy makers and providing tools needed to prioritize specific areas that can be conserved or restored to achieve optimal results. The effects of the rising water levels of Nile basin is one of the areas that we are looking at,” said Dr. Tom Okurut the Executive Director of NEMA.

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Uganda, along with Colombia, Costa Rica, Kazakhstan, and Peru, is one of five pilot countries that will create these ‘maps of hope’, developed to expand the use of spatial data in decision-making processes and promote the implementation of nature-based solutions. The outcomes from this initiative will be used by UNDP to scale-up action globally.

“There is political will in Uganda right from His Excellency, President Yoweri Museveni, on restoration of fragile ecosystems such as Wetlands and associated catchments. We can ride on this support us to map the connections across relevant landscapes, commitments and policies. United Nations Development Programme is well placed to support integrated approaches to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, through its Integrator role within the UN system to support this of kind work, by connecting science, policy, and implementation to deliver across the Rio Conventions and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” commented Ms. Elsie Attafuah, UNDP Resident Representative in Uganda.

Over the coming 12 months, 196 countries will agree on a new set of global goals for biodiversity that will guide action for the next 30 years<sup>7</sup>, as well as an associated international policy framework. Also in the next year, the Paris Agreement on climate change will go into effect<sup>8</sup>, with countries expected to take action to dramatically reduce their carbon emissions. The results from this project will be used to influence both of these key international policy processes.

The workshop is supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)<sup>9</sup>, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)<sup>10</sup>, and National Geographic Society (NGS)<sup>11</sup>, with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF)<sup>12</sup> and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), “Preparations for the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework”, *CBD*, <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/post2020> (accessed on 12 May 2020).

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), “All in #climateaction #climate2020”, *UNDP*, <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/events/2018/climate-2020.html> (accessed on 12 May 2020).

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *UNDP*, <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/> (accessed 12 May 2020)

<sup>10</sup> National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), *NEMA*, <https://www.nema.go.ug/> (accessed on 12 May 2020).

<sup>11</sup> National Geographic Society (NGS), *NGS*, <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/> (accessed on 12 May 2020).

<sup>12</sup> Global Environment Facility (GEF), *GEF*, <https://www.thegef.org/> (accessed on 12 May 2020).

<sup>13</sup> Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, *Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation*, <https://www.moore.org/> (accessed on 12 May 2020).