

Uganda Water and Environment Week



Ministry of Water and Environment

The Water Front

ISSUE 02

Tuesday 19th March, 2019



Hon. Sam Cheptoris, Minister of Water and Environment plants a tree in commemoration of Uganda Water and Environment Week 2019

THEME:

Water and Environment a strategic driver in attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030.

KEY THEMES OF UWEWK 2019

- Water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus
- Water, environment and Society
- Green growth
- Blue economy and SDGs
- Financing Sustainable Development

Natural resources crucial for economic development

WATER and environment contribute significantly to national socio-economic development, although most of the time they are taken for granted, the Minister of Water and Environment Samuel Cheptoris has said.

This was at the opening of the second Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK) in Entebbe, 18th March 2019.

Cheptoris said that Uganda requires substantial investments in the management of environmental and water resources to attain the country's goals stated in Vision 2040. He reiterated the message that water resources are essential for many economic and social activi-

ties including agriculture, livestock, fisheries, and industrialization among others.

He observed that perceived limits in water for manufacturing is due to poor management which led to 5% decline in the Gross Domestic Products (GDP) by 2040.

"As Uganda seeks to industrialize and meet its national development goals, water and environment resources management will be critical to ensure steady growth of manufacturing, agricultural and service sectors," he asserted.

In his keynote address, the Director Water and Environment Centre Denmark, Peter Koefoed observed that

TURN TO PAGE 2



Hon. Sam Cheptoris, Minister of Water and Environment tours exhibitors' stalls., Monday 18th March 2019

Natural resources crucial for development

FROM PAGE 1

Uganda had devoted significant effort to provide its population with safe water and sanitation services and strengthened water resources management.

However, Koefoed said, there were still some challenges yet to be resolved. He particularly referred to Lake Victoria, which continues to suffer pollution from various activities, which has changed the lake from its natural state towards hypertrophic state which has affected the fisheries sector.

He said, "800 million people worldwide lack access to safe water while two billion lack access to sanitation. At the same time,



water pollution continues along economic activities which place a high level of stress on water resources," Koefoed said. The lack of access to

clean safe water and to sanitation facilities increases the disease burden among the population.



TWO GENERATIONS, ONE CAUSE: Bonita Murungi poses with Ms Florence Adongo, Director, Directorate of Water Resources Management, Ministry of Water and Environment

Fourteen-year old environmental activist inspires UWEWK2019 participants

BONITA Murungi Arinaitwe a Climate Change Advocate and student at Nabisunsa Girl's Secondary School, has appealed to the Minister of Water and Environment to enact a law which compels people who cut down trees to buy seedlings double the number of trees cut. This way, there will be more trees planted than cut.

She was speaking during the Uganda Water and Environment Week, where she was invited to address the session titled: Children's voice on Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Change

Arinaitwe says she started advocating for climate change when she was in Primary six at Aga Khan Primary School. "My journey started during a class debate when I was chosen to give views about climate change," she recalled.

The 14-year-old, currently in senior two explains that her school would choose delegates to represent it in different schools and luckily, she was among the chosen.

"I was chosen in Primary six and seven. In 2016 I was invited to talk for the first time at the first annual cooperation on youth forum on climate change," she stated.

"With time I have gained interest in environment conservation and I believe that the first step to take is to become environment friendly," she added.

Murungi explained that due to rampant tree cutting and air pollution, the future of children is bleak. Children are currently faced with the sad reality of global warming and rising temperatures.

Quoting environmentalists, she said 600 million children worldwide will face death, disease and malnutrition by 2040. And that one in four children will either die or face stunted growth or suffer from lack of water by 2040.

Way forward

Murungi made several recommendations to sector leaders including:

- Control pollution. Instead of burning plastic materials such as bottles, polythene bags, let us be innovative enough to recycle them into useful items.
- Spread the word amongst the youth and also remind the elders to always protect mother nature.
- A single family should not own more than two cars. This will reduce dangerous fumes in the environment.
- Do away with cooking systems that use too much smoke.
- Plant trees to protect the environment and reverse the effects of climate change.
- Enact a law where people who cut down trees should pay money to buy seedlings hence doubling the number of trees they have cut.

Murungi has authored a book titled: **The Life of A Forest**. The book speaks of the dependence of human life on the forest. It is the third book she has authored so far, the other two being **Friends** and **The Brave Prince Michael**.

UWEWK2019 PICTORIAL



CAPTION:
These are various moments from Monday 18th March 2019, when Minister of Water and Environment, Hon Sam Cheptoris, toured exhibitions at UWEWK



Minister of Water and Environment, Hon Sam Cheptoris, toured all stalls at the UWEWK2019 exhibition. He was flanked by Director of DWRM and Director of DWD, and other officials



THE former chairman of the National Planning Authority Dr. Kisamba Mugerwa has expressed optimism that Uganda will achieve Sustainable Development Goal Six (SDG6) by 2030.

He was making a submission during the panel discussion on “Water and Environment a strategic driver in attainment of SDGs 2030” – the theme of Uganda Water and Environment Week 2019.

Kisamba Mugerwa, also former Minister of Agriculture noted that Uganda developed its longterm development plan long before the SDGs, which is expressed in the country’s well known Vision2040.

“Uganda was among the first top ten countries to come up with a plan aligned with the SDGs so we do not need to go back to start writing other frameworks to meet the SDGs,” he said, adding that Uganda should be more interested in its priorities, rather than SDGs per se – after all the two rhyme.

Dr Kisamba said that going forward Uganda only needs to start monitoring progress in comparison to international provisions to which the country is a signatory.

Specifically on water resources, Dr Kisamba said it is important to balance the need for development and the need for water. “We have to use creation wisely and sustainably,” he said, arguing that it is not enough to protect trees and forests, but also to use them sustainably. He said there is need to reduce wastage of water at household level and to apply innovative water saving technologies at community level.

Also on the panel was Dr Silver Mugisha, Managing Director of National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) who argued that failure to progress towards SDGs could be attributed myriad factors key among them: poor planning, lamenting without action, climate change and lack of knowledge sharing between actors. “We work a lot in silos. We need collective and collaborative action,” Mugisha recommended.

Speaking from the private sector perspective, Onapito Ekomolot, Nile Breweries Corporate Communications Manager said that businesses, and not just breweries, largely depend on water resources. He said that their business thrives on water and plants, which are key parts of the water cycle. Where water quality is compromised, they incur higher costs of treating it. “We should not just worry about water, we should do something about it,” Onapito said.

Uganda on track to achieve SDGs



TOP: A five-member panel discusses the importance of SDGs in development

BELOW: UWEWK Participants listen attentively to the panelists' submissions

Water and food security inseparable

THE Founder of Youth Go Green and Uganda's youth delegate to United Nations has urged government and development partners to put the youth at the forefront of interventions to ensure water and food security.

He was participating in a high-level panel discussion about the water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus, one of the key themes of the 2019 Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK).

Muhumuza expressed concern that while the youth form a big percentage of Uganda's population, they have been left out of key processes. Youth have been equally accused of engaging in activities that destroy natural environmental resources, disregarding the fact that the future belongs to them. Muhumuza however defended the youth saying that they have been put in a desperate situation.

"Young people are faced with many challenges which push them to engage in activities that destroy the environment like cutting trees to burn charcoal, encroaching on wetlands to set up washing bays. They have limited opportunities, so they resort to such dangerous practices," he argued.

Muhumuza assured participants that despite the challenges, the youth were making efforts to participate in activities to contribute towards conservation of natural resources. "We are involved in tree-planting, targeting to plant ten million trees in five years. So far, we have planted three million trees," he said.

He said they were also establishing environment clubs in schools and training youth in how to use solar powered projects. He requested for more support towards youth initiatives, with a call to the media to give them space to engage with the public. He also appealed to government to create alternative economic activities for the youth to dissuade them from degrading natural resources.

Apart from the involvement of youth, panelists discussed other



LEFT TO RIGHT: Patrick Kahangire, Moses Otim and Edwin Muhumuza, members of high level panel, Monday 18th March

issues of concern to the water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus. They shared the conviction that the four aspects in the theme are inextricably interlinked.

Presidential Advisor on Water Issues, Patrick Kahangire said that the government had always seen the nexus and therefore emphasized coordination among the concerned sectors and stakeholders. He gave the example of all the power projects that have been implemented before. "No single power project can be implemented without getting input from all sectors. Government seeks input and perspectives from environmentalists, social scientists, civil society," Kahangire said.

From the Food Rights Alliance, Executive Director Agnes Kirabo also emphasized that people thrive on food and it must therefore be available. She said the discussion should not be so much about food as it is about the number of people that need food and the amount of water required to provide the food. She gave an example of rice and beef production whereby a lot of water is required to produce just a kilo of either of them. With an ever-growing population in Uganda, amidst other activities that compete for water resources, the challenge of

food security is ever-present. Kirabo said that it is therefore important to know the amount of water available and how that can be shared among competing needs.

Moses Otim, representing the CEO of UEGCL also noted that power and energy production heavily relies on water resources, which means that electricity producing companies should be more interested in management of environmental resources. "86% of our power is hydro. We are sure of power only if we have adequate water reserves in the lakes and rivers. Therefore, catchment management is very important for us," he said, reminiscing the years when, a few years ago, UEGCL resorted to load-shedding because the reserves were too low to produce adequate power.

David Obong, Permanent Secretary for Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, encouraged all actors to develop technologies that will ensure sustainable use and management of water resources. He said that his ministry was open to ideas and would support any Ugandan who came up with such research and innovation.

Fun and excitement on Day One, UWEWK 2019

TOP RIGHT: Panelists perform an energiser during the afternoon session

BOTTOM LEFT: UWEWK Participants promoted different themes and messages through photography

BOTTOM RIGHT: Fourteen year old Bonita Murungi planted a soursop tree

