

Uganda Water and Environment Week



Ministry of Water and Environment

The Water Front

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THEME:

Water and Environment, catalyst for achieving Middle Income Status 2020

UWEWK LINKED TO NDP II

The Uganda Water and Environment Week is linked to the National Development Plan II (NDP II), which focuses on achieving structural transformation through increased industrial activity, with emphasis on manufacturing and value addition in agro-processing.

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VP Ssekandi opens Uganda Water & Environment Week



Ssekandi (middle) shown water equipment at the Water week in Entebbe

The Vice President of Uganda Edward Kiwanuka Ssekandi on Monday officially opened the first-ever Uganda Water and Environment Week in Entebbe at the Directorate of Water Resources.

In his remarks to the various stakeholders, Ssekandi said that access to water remains a challenge in the rural areas despite Uganda having a lots of rivers, lakes and wetlands.

“Uganda has a lot of rivers, lakes and wetlands that cover 18% of Uganda’s land surface, but only 2% of the water is used for production, with only 1% of potential irrigable area,” he noted.

Ssekandi further noted that although agriculture is the backbone of Uganda’s economy accounting for 25% of Gross Domestic Product and employing 70%, the income generated is still significantly lower than other economic activities.

“Among other factors behind low productivity and profitability of Ugandans agriculture, lack of access to water resources,” he observed.

The Vice President assured participants that government recently adopted a National Irrigation Policy and is committed to investing

in irrigation infrastructure and to boost commercial farming and transform Uganda from peasant to a modern and country. Ssekandi explained that to address the water challenges, it requires a holistic approach that considers economics, the environmental and all-inclusive elements.

He called on all stakeholders to all get actively involved in the management of water resources. “The varying uses of water are interlinked and require sustainable exploitation and management to ensure quality and quantity and availability for both production and domestic use even during the dry season,” he said.

“The financing of water and environmental management cannot be done by government alone but requires the input of all the stakeholders,” he added.

Ssekandi applauded the Ministry of Water and Environment and its partners for having organized the Uganda Water and Environment week event which brought together all key stakeholders to dialogue on issues affecting the sector.

Minister Kibuule: Govt has invested \$24 billion

The Minister State Minister for Water and Environment, Ronald Kibuule has revealed that the Government of Uganda has invested close to USD24bn to mitigate climate change by restoring wetlands and encouraging communities to engage in activities like fish farming.

Kibuule was speaking at the official opening of the inaugural Uganda Water and Environment Week.

He said that Uganda's environment and water resources have been attacked by people who have decided to construct in the wetlands and to destroy water bodies.

"Our water bodies have been attacked by us. Uganda should strive not to reach the Cape Town status where waste water is being reused," he warned.

Kibuule told the participants that throughout the week, they should take it into consideration that water and environmental resources are key strategic resources that are vital for sustaining life, promoting development and maintaining the environment.

"There is no activity that can be undertaken where water is not involved either as primary input or a secondary input," Kibuule added that it is government



priority to ensure that there is access to safe water and improved sanitation by 2040.

Kibuule also said that the Ministry of Water and Environment recently concluded a study on the contribution of water and environment to the economy. He said that the study noted that substantial investments in environmental management and water resources are required in order for the country to meet its 2040 growth target.

The unmet need in water services delivery: short fall or systematic error?

There is still an unmet need in water and supply services for people with disability.

In a presentation on the unmet need in water service delivery in Uganda, Ashabrick Bamutaze, - said that a survey conducted in Tororo district revealed there were gaps in water service provision for the persons with disabilities.

She observed that there are no facilities constructed for PWDs.

Bamutaze noted that out of 268 Water sources visited in Tororo, none had a design for PWDs. PWDS in the survey reported several challenges with the services including:

- The paths to the springs or wells were narrow, rugged and inaccessible even with wheelchairs.
- The water sources are over 500 metres away and the PWDs have to wait for someone to help

them draw water.

- The hand pumps at the boreholes were high and they could not reach them while other boreholes were fenced and they could not access them.

Bamutaze recommended that PWDS should be involved at all stages of planning for WASH service delivery.

Panelists and Moderators for the week



Dr Callist Tindimugaya



Samson Kasumba



Col. Felix Kulayigye



Dr. Tom Okurut

The inaugural Uganda Water and Sanitation Week kicked off yesterday with a keynote address delivered by Dr Fred Muhumuza, in which he emphasized the need to invest in water resources management as it impacts on all aspects of the economy.

Muhumuza noted that while there is a seeming increase in public funding towards the water and environment sector, there has not been a corresponding increment in service delivery mainly because there are ever increasing demands for water from different sectors.

“We need to double or even quadruple budgetary allocation to water and environment in order to trigger and support other sectors like manufacturing, transport, tourism, agriculture,” he said.

Other speakers concurred with Dr Muhumuza, with each one of them emphasizing the economic importance of water and environment.

The Director, Directorate of Water Resources, Ms Florence Adongo noted that while it's been 25 years since Uganda adopted Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach, Uganda's renewable water resources have continued to dwindle and the quality of water to decline. She called upon participants to use this week to reflect on the human activities that have catalyzed such trends.

The UNDP Representative and Lead of the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Development partners Onesmus Muhwezi also said that if Ugandans don't protect wetlands and forests, they will not achieve, the SDGs and NDP II Goals. “We need to account for



Invest in water, environment to achieve development goals

our natural capital. We need to invest in water resources management and increase sector financing by about six times,” he said.

Speaking on behalf of Austrian Development Cooperation and development partner for Water and Sanitation, Mr Guenter Engelits noted that given Uganda's rapid population growth, estimated to reach 80 million by 2040, the environment and natural resources must be preserved and protected.

“By 2040 there will be 80 million people in Uganda. They will need the environment. Currently, the environment is not just under threat, it is being destroyed,” he said. He observed that it had been reported that investing in water and environment can increase GDP per capita by 9%.

All speakers shared the conviction that Uganda has not invested enough financial resources in water and environment sector, given its importance and

linkages to all sectors in the economy.

On his part, Dr Muhumuza recommended that sector actors invest in equality to ensure that even water-stressed areas are served; optimal regional allocation of resources to tap into regions that have a comparative natural resources advantage; and harmonization of approaches.

A panel of experts constituted to reflect on Muhumuza's assertion that it would be wise to invest in the water and environment sector advised government to put people at the centre of all interventions.

“You need to involve people in this debate. People are poor but they will never own water if they don't contribute to discussions and processes. Get the people involved if you want the debate to become truly national,” panelist Onapito Ekomolait proposed.

Julius Mukunda of CSBAG suggested that citizens can start by contributing to

closing the funding gap that has been identified in the Sector Strategic Investment Plan.

“We need to understand that this is not a welfare country. If we need 7.2 trillion there must be deliberate steps to raise the money. More than 80% of water management is by the community. Even if every community member brings one shilling, we shall move forward.”

Muhumuza proposed that government should not be afraid of owning up to its weaknesses.

“Government must stop pretending that it can find all the money it requires. Face reality and agree that Ugandans need to contribute,” he said. He noted that government resources are getting more constrained and it's time to rethink resource mobilization strategies. He said that if civil servants are afraid of rocking the boat, they should share information with civil society actors who will then speak out.

Exhibitors have their say on the significance of UWEWK



Ajok Paska, Engineer Trainee, Directorate of Water Resources Monitoring and Assessment.

What we do is more of teaching the public how to handle water resource. We provide information and how people should use water resources. By attending this event we get to know this business. This event will sensitize the public how to use water now and in the future.”



Ongu Colins Ebong, Water Analyst, Online Oil and Gas Waste Monitoring project

“The number one reason for attending the event is to tell the public about the latest trends of technology the government is using to protect the water resources against any contamination. The event also restores faith to the donor community that there is accountability for the money spent on the project.”



Nalumansi Rebecca, Documentation officer, Water Resources Monitoring and Assessment:

“Our department deals with monitoring and data collection about water levels around the country. It’s worthwhile to attend such an event because it creates awareness society about the existence and role of the Directorate of water resources.”



Makokha Francis Nabongo Agri Enterprise Namayingo District

The event presents an opportunity to learn a lot from each of the partners attending the function. When we meet at such a point like this we discuss a lot of ideas in farming and other enterprises. An exhibition like this one provides us with an opportunity to learn enterprises which can help us generate income when we get back to our respective places.

Monitor water resources to attain development

David Kataratambi, Senior Water officer in charge of Water Resources and Regulation, Directorate of Water Resources and Management has called for constant monitoring of quantity and quality of water resources to be able to assess how much can be allocated for different purposes.

Kataratambi was presenting a paper on Equitable allocation of surface water resources in Nyagak catchment at the Uganda Water and Environment Week on Monday.

“We need information regarding quantity and quality that’s the foundation. If you don’t know the quantity how will you put it for different operations?” Kataratambi wondered.

You’ve had boreholes drying up, it is because we don’t understand the amount of resource we have, he argued.

Kataratambi called for harmonization in the water resource management to wipe out conflicts in management of the resource. He also asked for the strengthening of the water policies and regulation to address population demands.

The worth of investing in WASH in rural primary schools



In a presentation on the worth of investing in Water And Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Solomon Kyeyune presented the case of Pallisa and Bududa district, saying that both districts had recorded a significant improvement in school sanitation.

Kyeyune said that a survey was carried out among 300 households, 300 pupils and 100 teachers in 30 schools. It was observed that availability of latrines at school resulted in improved school attendance; reduction in teacher absenteeism; improved productivity of women; improved dignity; reduction in incidences of diarrhea diseases; improved safety and improved grade completion.