

of central, local and community forest reserves; Private forest owners and smallholder farmers).

- (vi) Promoting forest certification as a market based tool to contribute towards responsible forest management in Uganda.
- (vii) Promoting cost effective energy technologies such as improved cook stoves, investment in appropriate solar energy and increasing the proportion of Ugandans that can access affordable electricity through rural electrification.
- (viii) Investment in forestry development research to generate relevant information and appropriate technologies and practices for decision making during policy implementation for sustainable management of forest resources.
- (ix) Promotion of green charcoal production technologies and appropriate technologies for

brick making, which don't require curing with firewood such as using Interlocking Stabilized Soil Blocks machine.

- (x) Support private and community forest owners to register their forests and provide them with forest extension services to manage these forests sustainably as commercial enterprises.
- (xi) Promote livelihood diversification as a mechanism of contributing to food security and also reducing pressure to convert forest land into other land uses.
- (xii) Operationalization of the Food Agricultural Organisation (FAO) voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of National Food Security that were officially endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2012.
- (xiii) Promote catchment approach for

natural resources management through multi-sectoral coordination to deliver several community benefits.

Forests and the environment and natural resources in general play a vital role and are at the center stage to spur development and transformation of Uganda into a middle income economy and first world country in years to come.

It is therefore, important that Political Parties and Independent Individuals in Uganda present to Uganda electorate with manifestos that have clear and practical interventions for balancing economic development and environmental management. Through this, Uganda will follow the path to a green economy and transformation into a middle income country. The electorate should elect the next leaders at different levels based on whether their political manifestos integrated clear strategies on sustainable management of forests and environment in general.



# CIVIL SOCIETY'S FOREST MANIFESTO FOR 2016 GENERAL ELECTIONS

## Introduction

This is a Civil Society Forest Manifesto on the key issues and recommendations in the Forestry sub-sector that different political manifestos should consider. Furthermore, this manifesto is a guide for the electorate in interrogating what politicians promise in their manifestos and during their campaign speeches. The views which informed this manifesto were collected through various national consultative meetings that involved members of the Environment and Natural Resources Civil Society (ENR-CSO) Network. These are held annually (since 2010) with a focus of identification of key thematic advocacy issues that need attention in the Environment and Natural Resources sub-sector.



Figure 1. Section of Kalinzu Central Forest Reserve that is still intact.  
Photo by Gladys Nagawa.

Between February and March 2016, Ugandans will make an important and strategic decision of electing new political leaders to take up leadership positions at different levels. According to the Electoral Commission, the following elections will be conducted: Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Council elections. The electoral laws provide for candidates aspiring for the respective political offices to stand and campaign through their Political Parties.

Political parties or independent individuals develop manifestos which present proposals and commitments they intend to implement and achieve when elected into office. The

manifestos highlight several issues in relation to the economic, cultural, social and political developments that the leaders wish to address when elected into office. Forests and environment in general are one of the key areas that are not given utmost attention in these manifestos and yet they are very critical in realizing the country economic development.

## Importance of forests to livelihood and economic development

The contribution of the forestry sub-sector to the livelihood and economic development in Uganda is felt directly and indirectly through the various products and services they provide. According to Bush et al. (2014), the

estimated total economic value of Uganda's forests is estimated at 593 billion Uganda shillings i.e. about 300 million USD. The contribution of the forests to the Gross Domestic Product based on the current prices was estimated at 1038 billion Uganda shillings by UBOS, (2009).

By proportion, this was about 3.5% of the total GDP in 2009. However, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) estimated the contribution of Forestry to Uganda's GDP at 8.7% in 2011. Both estimates excluded the value of forest ecosystem services (such as watershed protection, biodiversity conservation, sequestration of greenhouse gases, and control of soil erosion).

## About the Environment and Natural Resources Civil Society Organization (ENR-CSO) Network

The ENR-CSO Network in Uganda was founded in 2009 as a loose network with a diverse membership of CSOs in environment and natural resources operating at national, sub-national and international levels.

### Vision:

The Vision of ENR-CSO Network is, 'Uganda's natural environment providing goods and services, on sustainable basis, for national socio-economic development.'

### Mission:

The Mission of ENR-CSO Network is to, 'Mobilize CSOs to effectively promote good governance, effective management and sustainable utilization of Uganda's natural resources.' The ENR-CSO Network advocates for conducive environment and natural resources policies for sustainable livelihoods, environment and natural resources management.

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The Civil Society's Forest Manifesto was produced by the ENR-CSO Network in partnership with the Forest Resources Sector Transparency Program coordinated by Care International in Uganda.





The future use for Uganda's biodiversity is valued at 222 billion Uganda shillings annually (Glenn Bush, op cit). The current turnover of business in forestry is estimated at 400 billion Uganda shillings, with an annual value of 112 Billion Uganda shillings attributed to environmental services.

Forests provide a variety of products and services that are vital for the flourishing of other sectors. Such sectors include the one on tourism (bio diversity), agriculture (which is rain fed), health (through medicinal herbs and oxygen), education (benches and stationery), energy (fuel wood and hydro electric power), construction (poles, timber and furniture), water and climate change. Besides this, forests provide other eco-systems services such as regulation of the local micro-climate, rain formation and stabilization of climate change through carbon sequestration and storage. Thus, over 90% of the Ugandan population depends directly or indirectly on the forest products and services.

Forestry contributes to the informal sector through management of small medium enterprises that focus on the sale of forest based products such as charcoal, poles, timber, furniture, crafts, firewood, fruits and seedlings. Furthermore, a large proportion of Ugandans (i.e. on average about 75%) depend on herbal medicine and recipes administered by traditional healers to meet their primary health needs.

### Implications of electoral process on forest management

There are possibilities that during the pre-election and election period, forest policy implementation and law enforcement will be relaxed leading to increased forest illegal activities such as encroachment and trade in illegal timber and charcoal. This is likely to be attributed to the conflicting political pronouncements brought about by politicians giving away the forest as well as bending to community pressures in relation to promoting illegal forest activities in favor of votes at the expense of the

overall national benefits from forests.

Thus, in Uganda over 80% of forest encroachments in the reserves are backed by politicians trading forest



Figure 2. Dissemination of improved house hold cook stoves in Kikyusa Sub County, Luweero District. Photo by EMLI

reserve land for votes (Jao and Kiyingi, 2005). Therefore, the aspiring politicians (councilors, local council chairmen, members of parliament and presidents) and the electorate should be aware of this so that we avoid losing our forests during this election period.

If forest and environmental management in general are not integrated in the manifestos of Political Parties and Independent Individuals, there are direct implications that these sub-sector challenges will not be addressed or will be addressed in an adhoc manner during the implementation of Government policies/programs and political manifestos of the elected Political Party. This will result in further degradation and loss of forest resources country-wide.

Subsequently, the forestry products and services, which we enjoy as Ugandans will be reduced? This directly affects the quality of the standard of living for majority of Ugandans that depend on environment and natural resources

for livelihood and survival. Furthermore, it will have negative impacts on economic development and transformation of the country.

### Key issues to address in the forestry sub-sector.

Uganda has adequate forestry (i.e. the National Forestry Policy, 2001) and other supportive environment policies, laws (e.g. the National Tree Planting Act, 2003) and programs (e.g. the National Forestry Plan, 2013). They fall short of effective implementation at different levels to deliver the desired outputs and outcomes. As a result, there are several issues in the forestry sub-sector, which must be addressed. The following are some of the key challenges faced by the forestry sector that the different political parties should focus on and develop positions on how to address them in their manifestos:

- **Limited financing for investment in forestry**  
This is a major challenge which compromises service delivery in the sub-sector. Furthermore, it results in weak forestry policy implementation and law enforcement. The poor

services delivery in the forestry is clearly exhibited by the district forest services. These are non-functional in majority of the 112 districts of Uganda. This is because they have inadequate financial resources and logistical support to facilitate their work in providing extension services to private and communal forest owners, and sustainable management and investment in Local forest reserves by Local Governments. Additionally, the limited funding to the forestry sub-sector is associated with non-implementation of some forestry legislative provisions such as the National Tree Fund, which if implemented would support several tree planting and afforestation initiatives at the community level.

- **Escalating forest loss and degradation**

Uganda's forestry cover reduces by 90,000 Ha annually. A large proportion of the forest loss and degradation occurs on forest on private land, which constitutes about 64% of Uganda's forest cover. Some of the key causes of forest loss include: conversion to agriculture, charcoal burning, urbanization. At this rate of deforestation, without interventions with ambitious targets Uganda's current forest cover of 3,594,462 Ha will be no more in about 40 years (i.e. by 2055). The current population of 35 million people in Uganda presents high pressure on the environment and natural resources including forests through demand for food, water, fiber, fuel, timber and living spaces. The projected population of 130 million people by 2050, will certainly increase the rate of forest loss because it presents high pressure and demand on forest products and services.

- **Over dependence of the population on biomass energy to meet their energy requirements**  
More than 93% of Ugandans depend on biomass energy derived from forestry. Besides, the household energy needs,

institutions like schools, hospitals, bakeries, prisons and brick making kilns are known to use large amounts of fire wood. This exerts additional pressure on forest resources that, if alternative appropriate and improved energy technologies are not developed and promoted, the forests may be no more.

- **Poor forest governance**

This is largely due to weak institutional capacity for forests management; lack of transparency and accountability on the part of duty bearers during execution of their roles/responsibilities; weak mechanisms for effective monitoring of individual and institutional performance; and limited support for effective participation of various key actors in the management of the forest resources in Uganda. Subsequently, this results in inefficiencies in delivery of forestry products and services; illegal forest activities; high corruption tendencies; low revenue generation and increased forest loss and degradation.

- **Weak investment in research and development**

Research in forestry should be demand driven with the intent to address several research gaps to generate the required information for decision making during policy and program implementation. Besides this, research should generate appropriate technologies and practices that are greatly required for sustainable management along the value chains under the current and future climate variability and change.

### Practical recommendations for consideration in Political Manifestos

As aspiring political leaders you are tasked with representing the concerns of your constituency, making laws, providing oversight and monitoring government programmes, the ENR-CSO Network recommends the following for consideration by the different Political Parties and

Independent Individuals as part of their manifestos and propaganda in the fourth coming elections of February to March 2016:

- (i) Increase financial investment in the forestry sub-sector. The increased funding should be prioritized for supporting district forest services by establishment of a Forest District Conditional grant, for effective delivery of forestry extension services; finalization of the forest boundary opening; and operationalizing of the National Tree Fund, to guaranty support for tree planting and afforestation at community level. In addition, other sectors which depend on some of the forestry services and products, should integrate clear budgets in their plans to support tree planting.
- (ii) Political leaders should take a firm stand on encroachment in forest reserves and promote deliberate efforts in monitoring compliance to the law as one of the mechanisms of promoting effective implementation of forest policies & programs for improved service delivery and good governance.
- (iii) Promoting urban forestry through establishment of green belts in Cities and planting trees along road reserves; agroforestry through supporting planting of trees on farm and boundary tree planting. This will augment efforts towards enhancement of the forest cover country-wide.
- (iv) Supporting collaborative forest management arrangements around forest reserves to ensure that forest adjacent and direct dependent communities are productively involved in the co-management of the reserves.
- (v) Advance the implementation of the National Reducing Emissions for Deforestation and forest Degradation plus (REDD+) strategy and program to curb the current high rates of deforestation and forest degradation country-wide and deliver incentives for responsible forest management by stakeholders (e.g. custodians