



World Environment Day Celebrations, 2020!!!

1.0 Introduction

World Environment Day (WED) was formally designated by the United Nations Environment Programme on 5th June 1972, the opening day of the first World Environment Conference in Stockholm, and the first World Environment Day was held in 1974. Since then, nearly 150 countries have been involved every year, with activities that range from **raising awareness for environmental protection to encouraging action for recycling, sustainable development and consumption, fighting global warming, cleaning up pollution and many other issues**. UN Environment has aided in the formulation of guidelines and treaties on issues such as the international trade in potentially harmful chemicals, trans-boundary air pollution, and contamination of international waterways. The WED 2020 international theme is, *'Time for Nature,'* and the national theme in Uganda is, *'Nature is Speaking, Listen.'* This year's global and national celebrations are unique because they will follow the new normal presented by the impact of Corona Virus Disease -19 (COVID-19) total lockdown. Thus, the engagements will be conducted online via social media platforms – as opposed to the usual ones over the years held through face to face interactions. The celebrations will be commemorated on 5th June 2020 in Columbia as the global host in partnership with Germany. In Uganda the national celebrations are coordinated by the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). In this respect therefore, NEMA and partners have organized various engagements in the WED 2020 celebrations. These fall in the categories of public education; production of information education and communication materials; and media engagement described as follows:

(i) Public education:

- a. TV Talk shows-these will be on selected national TV stations;
- b. Radio Talk shows in both National and regional radios;
- c. Environment messages/Infomercials will be aired on local radios based in the regions;
- d. Newspaper supplements published, in the New Vision and Monitor on 5th June 2020;
- e. Billboards with WED messages erected in the major entrance/exit routes of Kampala City;
- f. E-conference on 5th June 2020, starting at 2:30 Pm.

(ii) Production of Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials including the newsletter, posters, fact sheets and banners.

(iii) A press briefing will be held in NEMA offices on 5th June 2020 to increase the awareness of the public about the day.

Notable, the ENR-CSOs and networks will participate in these and own online engagements as part of the WED 2020 celebrations.

Both the global and national themes are timely because surely Mother Nature is speaking to us. This is visible with several indicators such as: Climate variability, change and associated impacts such as increasing water levels in lakes (i.e. Victoria, Kyoga, and Wamala) – that have resulted in flooding and landslides in various parts of the country affecting over 1000 people; Escalated rate of environment and natural resources. For instance, according to the Water and Environment sector performance report, (2019), the national forest cover has reduced from 24% in 1990 through 9% in 2015 and now with a little gain to 12.4% by 2019 - with an estimated annual loss of natural forest cover standing at 2%. Likewise, the national wetland coverage reduced from 15.6% in 1994 to 8.9% by 2019; Reported soil degradation and associated increasing soil fertility depletion and low crop productivity, thus about 46% of Uganda's soils are degraded, were as 10% are very degraded (MAAIF, 2019); increased water and air pollution, thus about 11% of the population was at risk of suffering from waterborne diseases as compared to about 29% among the population in rural area (NEMA, 2016).



All this is largely due to human activities (such as agricultural production, urbanization, infrastructure development) and associated limitations in terms of inadequate planning, implementation of policies & programs, poor environment, natural resources and agriculture management practices; over dependency on biomass as a source of cooking energy; poor waste management & disposal; weak governance in various sectors (*i.e. agriculture, environment, natural resources, energy, infrastructure*) at international national and local levels. The deterioration of the environment and natural resources (ENR) at all scales has serious negative implications for livelihood and economic development. The Government of Uganda through her line Ministries, Departments and Authorities has continuously developed and implemented various response actions through environment policies, laws and programs. Besides, there even ongoing policy and legislative reviews in the forestry, wetlands and energy sectors – thus providing opportunities for addressing various emerging issues across the different sectors.

Over the years, the Civil Society Organizations and networks have supported and augmented Government efforts targeted at environment conservation and sustainable management. This by large through their roles of service delivery, evidence based lobbying & advocacy and independent monitoring of Government programs. For instance, the **Environment and Natural Resources Civil Society (ENR-CSO) Network** (see Box 1); **Uganda Forestry Working Group** (see Box 1); the **Standards Development Group** (see Box 2); **Renewable Energy Civil Society Organizations Network** (see Box 2); and the **Prolinnova–Uganda Country Platform**¹ have delivered and contributed towards this role over the years². Thus, every year the **ENR-CSO network** prepares, publishes and submits the annual consolidated ENR-CSOs performance report to the Government through the Ministry of Water and Environment. Furthermore, a CSO position paper with issues and alternative recommendations is presented for consideration during the annual water and environment sector review. These and other CSOs reports and position papers discuss several issues and present alternative recommendations, which are in line with the WED 2020 global and national themes. These are available online for further reading.

STREPO project objectives:

- a. *Strong community-based organizations empower citizens and allow women and youth to build assets and take leadership roles in strengthening community resilience;*
- b. *Civil society organizations and networks have increased capacity and expand spaces for negotiation between empowered citizens and refugees and accountable duty bearers through multi-stakeholder platforms focused on resilience;*
- c. *Government and other duty-bearers, at district and national levels are inclusive and accountable in delivering a well-coordinated response to key drivers of risks and thereby responding to the demands and needs of citizens and refugees.*

The CSOs and networks issue based policy recommendations are informed by several CSOs engagements and interventions targeted at generation of information and facts through various studies and action research. Besides, there also program targeted at building the CSOs and networks institutional and technical capacities for value adding engagements in the ENR policy formulation and implementation. One such project is the,

¹**PROLINNOVA Uganda Coutry Platform** is an NGO-led multistakeholder initiative to build a national learning network on promoting local innovation in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resource management (NRM). PROLINNOVA–Uganda envisions, ‘a world in which women and men farmers play decisive roles in agriculture and NRM innovation processes for sustainable livelihoods. Further information about Prolinnova Uganda Country Platform is available at: <https://www.prolinnova.net/uganda>

²The secretariats for these CSO networks are host at Environmental Alert (see **Box 3**).



'Strengthening Resilience and promoting inclusive governance program (STRENPO) for women and youth in vulnerable communities (STRENPO),' project – which is implemented by Care International in Uganda in partnership with Environmental Alert (EA), Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE), Rural Initiative for Community Empowerment (RICE West Nile), and Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE). STRENPO³ is a 4 years project implemented in Arua, Kyenjojo and Kyegegwa districts since 2018. It focuses on addressing root causes of environmental degradation, asset base of the communities and refugees to cop up with climate variability and change, conflict and displacement, youth exclusion and limited engagement with private sector-led innovations. Additionally, it has national level engagements targeted at influencing decisions on ENR and associated key policy formulation and implementation. The achievements of the project to date are described in the project's mid-term review report available online.

The WED 2020 celebrations therefore, presents a great opportunity for all Ugandans to reflect by finding practical solutions, actions, technologies and innovations for advancing community climate change adaptation and reversing the escalating environment and natural resources degradation trends - thereby making mother nature more resilient to sustainably provide products and ecosystem services at different scales. This requires all stakeholders including the duty bearers and rights holders to take responsive and innovative actions in light of their roles and responsibilities as stipulated in the environment and natural resources policies and laws. Besides, the Government through the responsible Ministries, Authorities, Parliament and legislature should reverse and stop certain illegal actions (such as logging & encroachment on forest reserves (e.g. Bugoma), wetlands and fragile ecosystems (e.g. mountainous areas & river banks) that are very common and some have been escalated during the ongoing COVID-19 total lockdown.

2.0 Key documents for further reading

- a) *Water and Environment Sector performance report, 2019. Ministry of Water and Environment. Available at: <https://www.mwe.go.ug/sites/default/files/library/SPR%20FINAL%20BOOK%202019.pdf>*
- b) *ENR-CSO annual consolidated performance report for the FY 2018/19. Available at: <http://envalert.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ENR-CSO-Annual-Report201811March2019.pdf>*
- c) *ENR-CSO network position paper on Water and Environment sector performance for the FY, 2018/19. Available at: <http://enr-cso.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/CSO-Handout-mail-1.pdf>*
- d) *Environment and Natural Resources Civil Society (ENR-CSO) Network Memorandum on the draft wetlands policy, (2019) and the draft wetlands bill, 2019 for consideration by the Wetlands Management Department, Ministry of Water and Environment. Available at: <http://enr-cso.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ENR-CSO-Network-Memo-on-the-Draft-Wetlands-Policy-and-Draft-Wetlands-bill-10Sept2019.pdf>*
- e) *A Renewable Energy Civil Society Organization (RECSO) Network Memorandum/Position Paper on the Draft National Energy Policy (October 2019) with suggested Gaps and Recommendations for consideration by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development. Available at: <http://envalert.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/RECSO-Memo-Position-paper-on-the-Energy-Policy-vFWD-5Nov2019.pdf>*
- f) *Understanding the current status, emerging issues (challenges & opportunities) for advancing Private Sector Investment in sustainable Biomass Energy Production within Central Forest Reserves and Forest Landscapes in Uganda. Environmental Alert Study report, 2019. Available at: <http://envalert.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/EA-Study-Report-Invest-PS-Biomass-Energy-Nov2019-FWD1.pdf>*
- g) *STREPO project mid-term evaluation report, 2019. Available at: <http://careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/STRENPO-CARE-Uganda-MTR-report-FINAL-20-12-19.pdf>*

³ Further information about STREPO is available at: <http://envalert.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/STRENGTHENING-RESILIENCE-AND-PROMOTING-INCLUSIVE-GOVERNANCE-PROGRAM.pdf>



h) Innovations and Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in Uganda; Policy and Practice Recommendations. Available at: https://www.prolinnova.net/sites/default/files/documents/Uganda/2016/prolinnova_5--approved-print-based-on-signed-lpo---10may2017.pdf

Box 1. About ENR-CSO network, Uganda Forest Working Group (UFWG) and SDG-Uganda About the 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 and sub-national levels. Since then the **Secretariat of the ENR-CSO Network** is hosted at **Environmental Alert**.

Vision: The Vision of ENR-CSO Network is, *'Uganda's environment and natural resources sustainably managed for (socio-economic) transformation.'*

Mission The Mission of ENR-CSO Network is to, *'Promoting and advocating for good governance of Uganda's environment and natural resources.'*

Goal: All ENR-CSO Network members effectively contributing to good governance of Uganda's environment and natural resources by 2029.'

The **ENR-CSO Network** advocates for a conducive environment and natural resources (ENR) policies/programmes for sustainable livelihoods, environment, and natural resources management. The network engages at the local, national, regional, and international levels.

About the Uganda Forestry Working Group (UFWG)

UFWG was formed in **2001** to provide a platform where the various stakeholders in forestry sector met and deliberated on and influenced developments in the sector as well as independently monitor implementation of the National Forestry Policy and National Forest Plan. The **UFWG Secretariat** is hosted by **Environmental Alert**.

Vision: The Vision of UFWG is, *'sustainably managed forestry sector contributing to improved livelihoods, national economy and ecological integrity.'*

Mission: The Mission of UFWG is, *'to promote the development of the forestry sector and stimulate all forestry stakeholders to respond appropriately to changes and challenges within the sector.'*

For More Information contact: The Secretariat of the ENR-CSO Network, C/O Environmental Alert,

About the Forestry Standards Development Group Uganda (SDG-Uganda)

The **SDG-Uganda** comprises of key forestry stakeholders including: *research and academia, civil society, private sector and government ministries, departments and authorities*. These were selected during the national consultative forum, which informed the development of the NFSS for Uganda. The stakeholders are categorized into the social, economic and environment chambers to meet the FSC requirements for stakeholder engagement. The SDG Uganda has 26 members and is certified by FSC International. Its major role was to develop the Uganda NFSS based on the FSC guidelines and principles. This is a role which was delegated to them by the UFWG during the national consultative forum on the Uganda NFSS. The SDG Uganda has a Secretariat, which is currently hosted at Environmental Alert. The role of the secretariat is to mobilize and coordinate stakeholder's participation in the formulation and implementation of the Uganda NFSS.



Box 2. About the National Renewable Energy Civil Society Organizations (RECSOs) Network.

1.0 Introduction

This is a **loose semi-formal Network that brings together civil society organizations, academic institutions, individuals and Networks** engaged in the promotion and development of activities and practices in the Renewable energy sub sector at all levels (*i.e. national, local, sub-regional and community*). These CSOs and Networks are currently being mobilized and coordinated by Environmental Alert for structured engagements with Government through the relevant Ministries, Authorities and Departments. This process started September 2017 with the identification, mapping and profiling of the CSOs and Networks in renewable energy for purposes of potential partnerships and effective coordination. However, in September, 2018, the Network was formalized where members agreed to have it as a **loose semi-formal Network. Further information on this is available at: <http://envalert.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/popular-version-of-the-reprot-on-strengtheneing-coordination-for-RECSOs.pdf>**

Currently, the Network has an interim committee responsible for its governance issues. The Network is **currently hosted by Environmental Alert.**

2.0 Objectives of the network

- i) *To advocate for promotion, compliance and accountability of government with respect to its policy commitments and private sector activities in respect to renewable energy;*
- ii) *To ensure that individuals, institutions, CSOs and Networks engaged in Renewable energy progressively develop capacity in policy analysis, advocacy and independent monitoring;*
- iii) *To engage in policy lobbying for conducive policy environment for renewable energy access and sustainable utilization.*

3.0 Scale of Network outreach

Currently, the Network has a total of **36 profiled CSOs and Networks** at national level and **90 NGOs and CBOs** are engaging at the sub-regional level across 20 districts in the Albertine Rift including: *Kasese, Bushenyi, Rubirizi, Mitooma, Rukungiri, Kabarole, Kisoro, Bundibugyo, Masindi, Hoima, Buliisa, Kagadi, Kyenjojo, Ntoroko, Arua, Nebbi, Koboko, Moyo, Adjumani and Maracha district.*

4.0 Some of the key outputs of the Network since its inception

The CSOs at national and sub regional level under their umbrella- **The National Renewable Energy CSO Network** in partnership with WWF-UCO with financial support from NORAD are currently implementing the *2nd phase of the Clean Energy Project* with a goal of, *“Communities living in the Albertine Graben adopting to sustainable and renewable energy alternatives to reduce dependency on biomass for their energy needs.”* With the above support, the Network achieved following outputs:

- a. CSOs and Networks Position paper on the Renewable Energy Policy for Uganda;
- b. A CSO and Networks advocacy strategy which is being implemented;
- c. A Study report and position paper on the current financing and investment in the energy sector in Uganda;
- d. A Consolidated Renewable Energy CSOs and Networks Annual Performance Report, FY 2017/18 and Position Paper, FY 2017/18 were finalized and are due for publication moving forward;
- e. A CSOs capacity building plan;
- f. Establishment of a 5 member Task Committee to oversee the network’s transition towards full establishment and operationalization of its governance structures.

For more information contact: The **Secretariat RECSOs**, C/O **Environmental Alert**, Kabalagala off Ggaba Road, P.O. Box 11259, Kampala; Tel: +256414510547, Email: ed@envalert.org, envalert@envalert.org,



Box 3. About Environmental Alert

Environmental Alert (EA) was founded in **1988** and has developed and transitioned into a National Non-Governmental organization contributing to an enabling policy environment for sustainable agriculture and sound environment and natural resources management at community, local, national and international levels. EA is officially registered with the NGO Board as a Ugandan non-governmental organization (NGO), incorporated as a company limited by guarantee. EA is governed by an Independent Board that is responsible for providing strategic oversight of the organization including ensuring its integrity as a voluntary service organization.

EA is a **1st prize winner of the Energy globe award for environmental sustainability-2005 under the category, earth.**

EA is a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and a Member of The IUCN National Committee for Uganda.

EA **envisions**, *'Resilient and dignified communities, managing their environment and natural resources sustainably.'*

EA's **mission is to**, *'Contribute to improved livelihoods of vulnerable communities by enhancing agricultural productivity and sustainable natural resources management'*

Program and institutional Components:

- a. Environment and Natural resources management;
- b. Food security and Nutrition;
- c. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene;
- d. Finance and Administration;
- e. Resource mobilization and Investment.

Scale of Implementation:

EA operates in selected districts for generation of evidence to inform policy engagements on agriculture, environment and natural resources at National and International levels. Currently EA's operations are in 40 districts across the country. EA undertakes area wide targeted awareness on selected issues in agriculture, environment and natural resources engagements

EA is a Secretariat for following networks:

- a. The Network for Civil Society Organizations in Environment & Natural Resources Sector (ENR-CSO Network) - <http://enr-cso.org/>;
- b. Uganda Forestry Working Group - <http://ufwg.entalert.org/>;
- c. The Standards Development Group (for promotion of Sustainable Forest Management in Uganda); and
- d. Promoting Local Innovation in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resources management (PROLINNOVA-Uganda Network) - [http://www.prolinnova.net/uganda](http://www.prolinnova.net/uganda;);
- e. The Renewable Energy CSO Network.

