

Uganda Water and Environment Week



Ministry of Water and Environment

The Water Front

ISSUE 05 Friday 22nd March, 2019



Youth shine and inspire at UWEWK



Youth Stars Keza Matsiko, Leila Kagere and Bonita Murungi inspired UWEWK participants

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

THURSDAY 21st March was a special day for the youth attending the Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK2019). Throughout the day, the youth were given space and opportunities to lead the discussions, participate in field excursions, make resolutions and commitment to improve water and environment.

Speaking on behalf of the youth, the CEO of Youth Go Green Edwin Muhumuza expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Water and Environment for giving special consideration to the youth. "I am glad to report that we had an amazing day at Songai Model and at Kyansozi Central Forest Reserve where we planted over 5000 trees," he said, adding that the youth, whose day had started as early as 5.00am,

had demonstrated that they knew what they wanted and went for it.

Apart from planting trees and visiting sites, the youth went further to share key messages through poem, speech and song. Participants were deeply moved by seven-year old songstress, Leila Kagere, who composed and presented a song on going green. Her angelic performance was welcomed with thunderous applause and a standing ovation. Eleven-year old poet Keza Matsiko had just the same impact when she recited a poem in praise of River Nile. The MWE Permanent Secretary, Alfred Okot Okidi promised to meet costs of recording and distributing Kagere's hit and Matsiko's poem.

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Youth shine and inspire many at UWEWK

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More impactful messages were delivered when a select panel of youth advocates and entrepreneurs shared their experiences of interacting with the environment and ecosystems. All five youth on the panel shared the conviction that everyone can indeed contribute to

environmental management in whichever way they can. They said that the youth need to change their mindsets and start seeing the business and employment opportunities presented by water and environment, as they expressed themselves below



Rose Kobusingye a graduate of environmental science has dedicated her time to advocate for environmental protection. Through her social media platforms, she sends daily messages sensitizing her followers about the environment and challenging them to take action. She said

that when youth are told to protect the environment they see no immediate justification and often ask: "What does the environment give back to me?" Kobusingye said that before spreading the message of change to others, youth should start with their own homes and households. "Start by changing the people you stay with at home through small things like saving energy and planting trees," Kobusingye challenged the youth. "If you don't have land where you can plant a tree then speak to the people who have land and ask them to plant a tree," she said.

Mercy Melody Kayodi a permaculturalist called for the adoption of self-sustained and regenerative agriculture. She said that through permaculture they are teaching people to be keen on sustainable solutions. This even goes to the species of trees they grow. "It is not enough to plant trees, you need to plant the right trees," she urged. Kayodi further urged participants to adopt the principles of catching and storing water and energy; recycle and reuse water; and produce no waste. "The youth need to become climate smart," she said.



Busingye Noordin is salesman with Goodman Tech Systems. He has developed a computer application where people can buy and sell merchandise and reduce the number of trips they have to make to and from markets.



"When fewer people travel into cities, environmental pollution is reduced and energy is saved," Busingye said, adding that his intervention contributes to the attainment of SDG 13.



Moses Mukiibi has discovered the hidden treasure in trash. He collects plastic bags and bottles and makes pavers out of them. He says that the pavers are much more economical than cement pavers. Apart from generating savings, the pavers also control soil erosion. That way, Mukiibi

is contributing to waste management and creating employment for fellow youth.

Tugumisirize Simon makes crafts out of banana fibres and earns a decent living. "While many farmers think that banana tree stems and fibres are waste and leave them to rot in the garden, I use a simple technology to extract the raw material for my crafts and leave



the unused parts to generate manure in the farmer's garden," he said. He makes table mats, doormats, ropes...among other decorative items.

Youth pledge to plant 10 million trees in five years

COMMEMORATION of the 2019 World Forest Day in Uganda was on 21st March, part of the events in the Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK). One of the key activities for the day was a field visit to Kyansozi Central Forest Reserve.

The walk through the forest was both disturbing and refreshing. It was disturbing because the forest has been severely depleted by locals who have cut all the trees and replaced them with marijuana fields. It was refreshing because NFA, working with Youth Go Green is investing a lot of time and resources in replanting and regenerating the trees.

In Mubuta Parish in Kamengo, for example, truckloads of timber, manned by youthful locals were a common sight. A 30-year old man who preferred anonymity said that illegal logging is the only way they can make a living as many youths in the area are unemployed.

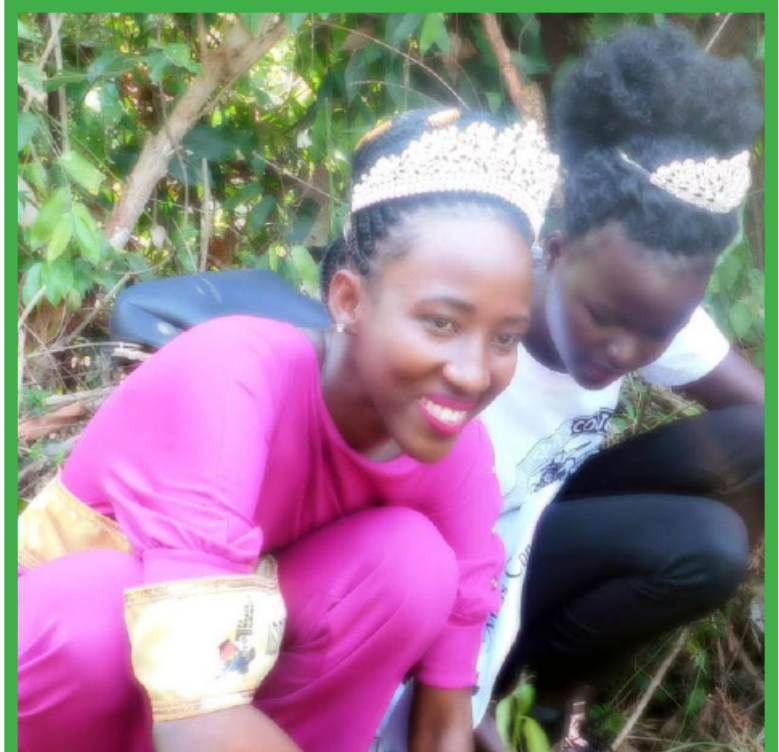
“We are many who do this kind of business, other do charcoal burning, brick making while others plant Marijuana,” he confessed. This he says is for survival, since they claim government has not paid attention to them.

But all hope is not lost as National Forest Authority (NFA) together with Mpigi District Farmers Association and Youth Go Green embarked on an initiative to plant 5,000 trees to restore the nature forest which was destroyed by the communities.

On March 21st alone, the youth who had visited the forest planted over 5000 trees. In partnership with the National Forest Authority they restored one of the forests which was cut down by the community.

Edwin Muhumuza, the Executive Director Youth Go Green, explained that they intend to plant over 10 million trees in a space of five years around the country. He said that across the region they have so far planted 3 million trees.

Muhumuza said that as youth they have taken on the initiative to plant trees where government will avail them the space.



On Thursday 21st March, over 150 youth took part in a tree-planting exercise at Kyansozi Central Forest Reserve. Over 5000 trees were planted. Miss Tourism 2019 (in pink) was among the youth that participated in the exercise.

According to the Commissioner, Forestry Sector Support, Margaret Adata the communities in Kyansozi cut down a forest of about five acres for commercial activities like growing marijuana which they believed would give them quick income.

UWEWK2019 PICTORIAL

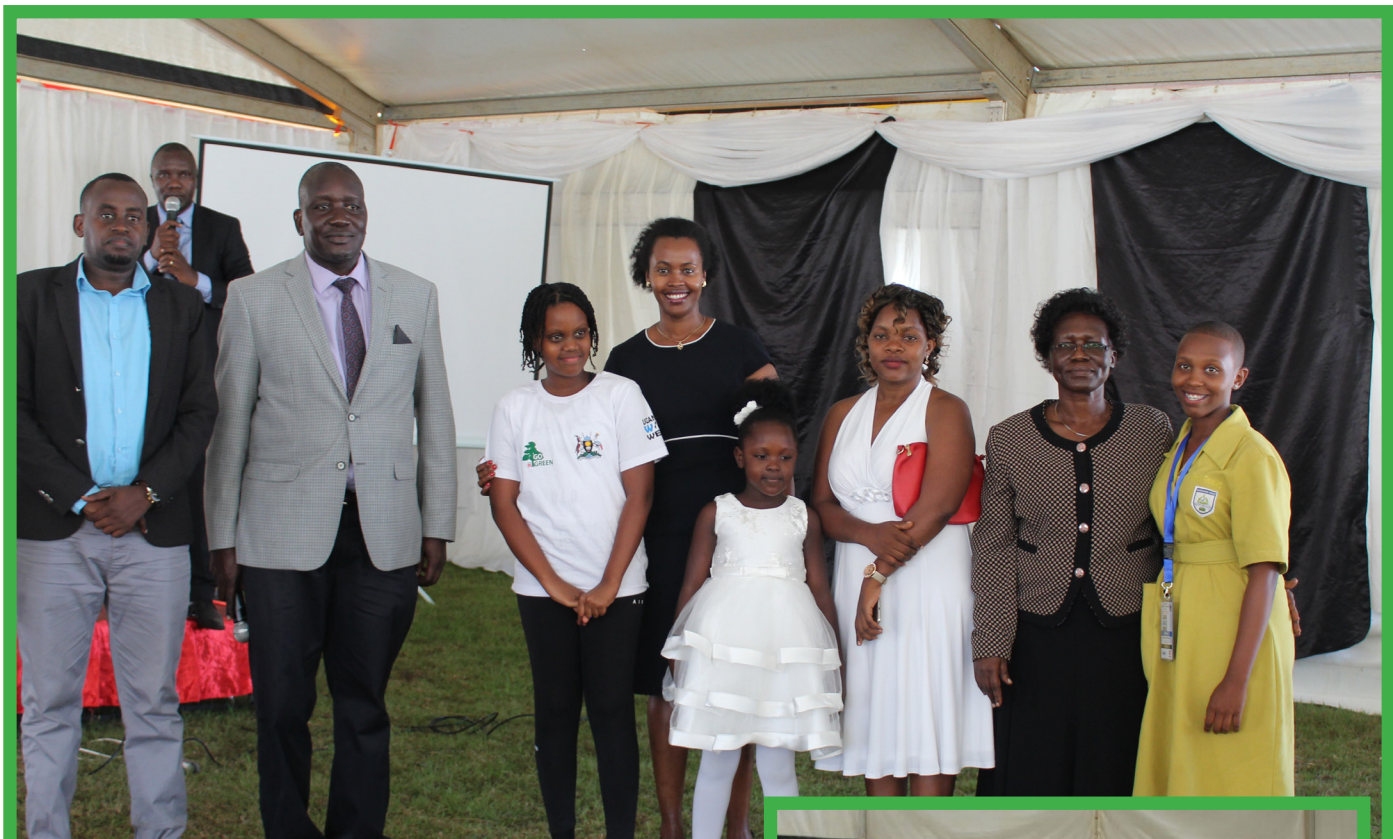


“You are our Ambassadors by creating awareness about environmental protection out there, be our voices and shout it out loudly”. State Minister for Environment Dr Kitutu tells the Youth as she addressed them during UWEWK19

RIGHT: Ministry officials touring the exhibitions
BELOW: UNDP Representative Onesmus Muhwezi chaired the youth session



Some of the Ministry officials who manned the UWEWK Secretariat and ensured everything went as planned



Three girls inspired the UWEWK participants with speech, poem and song. 7-year old Leila Kagere composed and sang a song about the environment; 11-year old Keza Matsiko recited a poem about River Nile and 14-year old Bonita Murungi has authored a book about forests



Solar powered water project changing lives in Masulita

FATUMAH Nalugo is a resident of Mmanze village, Masulita Sub County in Wakiso district, she recalls the time when water was scarce as the most tormenting in her life. Now with a new piped water supply project in her area, Nalugo can afford a smile. The project was constructed with support from the African Development Bank.

“Sometimes I used to spend the night at the borehole waiting for water; this did not please my husband and it resulted in domestic violence,” she recalls.

As part of the Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK2019) participants were taken on a field tour to the Masulita solar powered Mini-piped water project, where they met Nalugo and other happy residents.

The Principal Engineer James Seguya while coordinating the team from the water week advised the residents of Masulita to contact the District Water Office to be guided on how to expand the project. The project uses renewable energy to pump water to the locals.

“The capital investment of this project could be slightly high but the fact the project is automated there is minimum human interference which leads to sustainability,” he said.

Phillip Walusimbi from Davis and Shirtliff who were the contractors of the project said the project was constructed in such a way that it can easily be expanded if need arises.

“Everything installed is very durable and at the moment we are test running the project where the locals are able to access free water for some time before a fee is introduced to enhance proper sustainability and management of the project including expansion,” Walusimbi said.



Solar panels powering Masulita piped water project



ABOVE: A demonstration of how the system works



LEFT and ABOVE: Residents of Masulita enjoy a reliable water supply service.

Project to transform juveniles' livelihoods

THERE is hope for the juvenile delinquents hosted at the Kampiringisa government facility. As part of their rehabilitation, the youth have now been exposed to modern methods that enable them to benefit from recycled animal waste.

The Uganda Green Incubation Centre (Songhai Model) is a youth project set up by the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development, with funding from UNDP, with the aim of demonstrating to the youth that they can recycle waste from plants and animals. The model involves irrigation methods, recycling of animal dung to make manure, using animal waste to feed the chicken growing organic vegetables, fruits and medicinal plants for both animal and human consumption.

Former Commissioner in the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) Fred Makuli explained that the model was adopted from Benin and a number of Ugandan youth were sent for training, who in turn set up the Uganda Green Incubation Centre (Songhai Model)

Peter Mafabi who monitors the project explains that several developments have come as a result of the model farm which has pigs, goats, sheep, cattle and local chicken. “We reuse the dung urine from all the animals to make manure, pesticide and medicine for the animals,” he explained. Mafabi encouraged the youth that with capital of UGX300,000 they can start a small farm with animals and crops.

Youth delegates were especially pleased to learn lessons from the visit to the centre. Edwin Muhumuza the founder of Youth Go Green said that government needs to support youth with funding in order for them to get involved in programs that protect the environment and benefit them financially.

Nicholas Mujuki Go Green activist said he had learnt a lot from this centre and expected to implement the lessons.

Brenda Kiconco said that university students had learnt what they can do with little capital.



Brenda Kiconco



Nicholas Mujuki

Meteorological authority all set for a new radar

DELEGATES attending the Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK2019) were on Thursday 21st March treated to a rare tour of the new radar under construction near Entebbe Airport. The new radar will enable Uganda to scan with high degree of capture, particles that are in the atmosphere and get to know the direction of the wind with precision.

Siraji Wafula, Senior Meteorologist at Uganda National Meteorological

Authority (UNMA) said, “We have weather hazards that cannot be visualized with naked eyes, the radar is to capture the significant weather phenomena especially during flight turbulence which are to be told to pilots while in air. This will enable them to find ways to overcome such turbulence such as icy clouds in the air.”

The project will be commissioned in June or early July, the equipment to be

used is already in transit to Uganda. Offices for the staff managing the project are set to be constructed too. Land for the project was already secured from Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)

UWEWK delegates also visited the observatory and weather forecast sites which hold the instruments that are used to measure wind, humidity and temperature and forecast the weather accurately.

Investment in wastewater treatment saves millions

SKY Fat Leather Tannery in Jinja Central Division was renowned for environmental pollution. The tannery emitted a stench that disturbed residents and attracted the attention of National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)

Isingoma Chris, the Process Manager at the company recalls: “The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and the village locals were complaining about the smell coming from the waste water due to their poor disposal methods.”

He added that the situation triggered them to come up with a solution to rescue their factory from angry locals. “For starters, we had to work on reducing the smell, but there was no waste water treatment facility in Jinja which prompted us to design ours,” he stated.

Isingoma explained that they constructed a waste water treatment facility and restored part of a wetland and grew plants which would withstand chemicals

“The facility not only preserved the environment and improved sanitation, it also created job opportunities for the locals,” he said.

Isingoma also recalls that the company had a problem of mismanaging chemicals and water; they were using a lot of chemicals to clean a small amount of hides and skins.

As a way of managing the problem, Isingoma says that they embarked on house cleaning after finding out that they were throwing away more than 50 tons of salt every month.

“We started collecting and reusing the chemicals which helped us reduce on the amount of water used daily,” he said. He added that before the intervention, the company was using 500 litres of water on a kilogram of hides and skins yet it should be cleaned with only 80 litres.

The company also took steps to change the employees mind set on wasting water and using it more efficiently.

Isingoma said now the waste from the tannery is used as raw materials in the Pianran bio-tech to form gelatin, a product used for several purposes such as food and medicine preservation, food supplements, coating medicine and used in photography.

Perhaps most importantly, the company is now an example of an enterprise living in harmony with the locals and the environment. They proudly share their experiences without fearing that NEMA will come clamping down on them. They happily hosted a group of UWEWK participants who visited the factory to learn of their good practices in waste water management.



ABOVE and BELOW: UWEWK delegates are taken on a guided tour around the wastewater treatment facility at Sky Fat Leather factory



Chris Insingoma, Process Manager at Sky Fat Leather Factory, speaks to the delegates from Entebbe