



The Nile Environment

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF NTEAP



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Editorial

The April-June newsletter is a special edition. It focuses on the World Environment Day (WED) and the Nile Environment Week activities. It flags the threat of global warming, raises awareness while showcasing the participation of stakeholders in the respective Nile basin countries during the Nile Environment Week and WED. The Nile Week is a new initiative of the Nile Transboundary Environmental Project (NTEAP) for annual environmental awareness campaigns and to mobilize the general public, NGOs, CBOs and responsible government institutions to raise awareness and engage stakeholders in practical activities that can contribute to minimizing the impacts of the looming environmental threats in the basin. The environment week received an overwhelming support in the entire basin as signified by the level and diversity of activities and the participation of all hierarchies of stakeholders including the head of state of Rwanda, Ministers, NTEAP steering committee members, students and the general public.

We at NTEAP are very grateful to all who made the event a success. We thank you for buttressing basin wide action in environmental management and making stakeholder involvement a reality.

During the quarter NTEAP also participated in a number of activities including the 15th Nile COM/Nile TAC meeting in Entebbe and prepared resubmission documents for the UNDP GEF phase 2 funds. The project experienced a number of challenges at the beginning of the quarter as a result of interruptions in the flow of UNDP GEF funds. Nevertheless, considerable achievements were made by all components during the reporting period and we hope to be in full gear in the coming quarter.

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Partnerships, the Solution to Tackling Environmental Degradation in Africa- says Rwandan President.



H.E Paul KAGAME addressing participants at the meeting of Environmental Journalists, Kigali, Rwanda.

The president of the republic of Rwanda, H.E Paul KAGAME, has urged stakeholders to forge meaningful partnerships with key national, regional and continental stakeholders, including governments, business, civil society and development partners to realize real progress towards environmental protection.

This was at the Regional Meeting of Environmental Journalists of East and Central Africa, held during the occasion of the World Environmental Day, in Kigali, Rwanda. The meeting was attended by African Network of Environmental Journalists from Eastern and Central Africa, Rwandan Policymakers and key development partners from the European Union and the United Nations agencies associated with the environment, whom he referred to as leaders in the fight against environmental degradation. "You are the core leaders and professionals at the forefront of reversing the degradation of the environment in this part of the world", the Rwandan president said.

He challenged African governments to reflect on a number of issues to address environmental degradation. "First, are we African governments individually and collectively paying enough attention to the environmental challenges that our continent faces – as part of the broader global effort? Are we currently building adequate infrastructure, systems and human capacities to manage and anticipate Africa's **PTO**

Partnerships, the Solution to Tackling Environmental Degradation.

.....*from page 1*

environmental challenges in a manner that allows for ownership and relevant action, based on sound knowledge and information?; Second, are our business communities joining this fight, by among other actions investing in innovative technologies that are less harmful to the environment?; Third, do our media establishments at present constitute viable channels for analysing and disseminating data and information on the environment for timely public consumption?”, were the questions of the president.

He said there is a looming environmental threat as a result of the anticipated increase in temperature in Africa by at least 2.5 percent by the year 2030, according to the latest UN state of the environment report. “This will hurt people by the millions, and significantly destroy animal habitats and biodiversity, which already exist in precarious circumstances”, said the president.

The president wondered why the developing world, especially Africa, should suffer from the continued excesses of the most developed countries, Africa’s own failings in terms of poor policy and practices that also contribute to the degradation of our environment notwithstanding.

The Nile countries recognize that future development of the basin must be environmentally sustainable and the effective partnerships alluded to by the president is badly needed by the riparian countries if the Nile basin’s environment is to be conserved in ways that will help to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants.

The basin is seriously threatened by adverse environmental trends, including land degradation and deforestation, and thereby undermining attempts by the riparian nations to make a transition towards sustainable economic development.

He urged Africans to rise to the occasion, and confront environmental challenges locally and continentally.

Among the dignitaries at the regional meeting was Dr. Rose Mukankomeje, the Director of the Rwanda Environmental Authority, who is also a member of the steering committee of the Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project (NTEAP).

NTEAP is one of the projects of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) and it supports the development of a basin wide framework for actions to address high priority transboundary environmental issues. NTEAP annually supports the basin countries in marking the World Environment Day (WED).

This year a whole week, Nile Environment week, was dedicated to carrying out various awareness and environmental mitigation activities in the basin.

Source: Presidents written speech

Extra reporting :Joel Arumadri- KMS

NTEAP Designates “Nile Environment Week”

The Nile Transboundary Environment Action Project (NTEAP) of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) has designated a “Nile Environment Week” to be marked annually in tandem with the World Environmental Day (WED). The objective is to provide an opportunity for the Nile basin countries to reflect on the environmental threats of the Nile basin, raise awareness and mobilize the people to contribute to restoration efforts by participating in tangible activities.

The maiden Nile Week of 2007 was received with overwhelming enthusiasm all over the basin. Countries planned and executed week long awareness raising and restoration activities. The event was organized and coordinated by the Environmental Education and Awareness Lead Specialist Mr. Maushe

Kidundo, in collaboration with the NPCs and the Local Microgrants Co-

Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project of the Nile Basin Initiative designates “Nile Environment Week”.

ordinators.

Several transboundary environmental issues have been identified in the Nile basin ranging from deforestation, soil erosion, biodiversity loss, water pollution to desertification.

The Nile countries recognize that the future development of the basin must be environmentally sustainable.

The NTEAP supports the development of a basin wide framework for actions to address high priority transboundary environmental issues and is implementing environmental education and awareness activities as well as piloting local level approaches to land and water conservation, including mitigation actions for soil erosion, desertification and invasive water weeds.

The theme will vary annually, depending on the environmental issues requiring attention and action and enhanced stake holder participation will be a major focus of the events.

The inaugural Nile Environment Week focused on land degradation as a worrying environmental threat in the basin and activities (featured in the next pages) centered on awareness and restoration activities on degradation.

Maushe Kidundo- EE & A LS

WED/Nile Week in Burundi- Theme:- “United To Combat Global Warming”.



First Vice-President of the National Assembly, Mrs Alice NZOMUKUNDA.

The Minister for Land Planning, Tourism and Environment of Burundi has attributed soil impoverishment, fall of agricultural production, loss of biodiversity and famine in Burundi to climate change. This was contained in her speech on the occasion of the world environmental day celebrations in Burundi. She invited the population to become aware of this reality and increase their efforts to plant more trees and take care of the health of the environment.

The one-week event which ended with the official celebration of the World Environmental Day (WED) was marked with a variety of activities including public campaigns; speech by the Minister for Land Planning, Tourism and Environment; hygiene and sanitation activities in the town

of GITEGA; woodlot maintenance activities in the commune of GITEGA; public address on the environmental challenges in the Burundian part of the Nile Basin by Albert MBONERANE, National Coordinator of the Burundi Nile Basin Civil Society Forum and Professor Jean Marie SABUSHIMIKE of the University of Burundi, followed by the launching of the 2007-2008 forestry campaign in the commune of MAKEBUKO, province of GITEGA.

Sowing of seeds and filling of polythene tubes for direct sowing were the ceremonial activities to mark the official launching of the forestry campaign. Agricultural tools and seeds, provided by the Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project were issued to ten associations of nursery gardeners of the province of GITEGA, who have a plan of producing 628,000 seedlings during this 2007-2008 forestry campaign.

NTEAP provided for distribution 25 kg of polythene tubes, 20 wheelbarrows, 20 watering-cans, 40 hoes, 40 shovels as well as seeds of forestry and agro-forestry trees (*Leuceana, Callitris, Calliandra and Cedrella*).

Deforestation is one of the most important environmental problems in Burundi. Insecurity since 1993 has displaced people to protected areas where trees are cut to create room for agriculture and fulfil energy requirements and building poles.



Minster & communities sowing seeds

The forest cover which accounted for approximately 8% of the surface of Burundi, is currently estimated at 6%.

Fuel wood constitutes the main source of energy for the greater part of the Burundian population. In Burundi, wood, charcoal and solid waste from crops account for 97 % of the overall consumption in energy; the petroleum products: 2.5% and electricity: 0.3%.

Increasing pressure is being exerted on tree plantations and natural forests resulting into degraded forests and infertile soils due to excessive erosion. Polluted waters, degraded wetlands, reduced food production, scarcity of energy and drinking water are also being experienced.

Salvator RUZIMA- NPC Burundi

40 Basin Technocrats Trained in Strategic Environment Assessment and EIA



Participants and resource persons from the World Bank and CSIR at the Addis Ababa Strategic Environment Assessment and EIA training, June 25-29 2007

A training in Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has taken place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from June 25-29 2007.

SEA aims to ensure that environmental issues are addressed from an early stage in the process of formulating policies, plans and programs. Eastern Nile Subsidiary Action Program (ENSAP), being an investment program, requires the capacity to ensure that environmental issues are anticipated and integrated into investment plans.

Forty participants from Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan and 2 participants from NELSAP Coordination Unit took part in the training. Resource persons were senior Bank staff and senior staff of CSIR. The NTEAP Project Steering Committee Chair and

RPM of NTEAP participated in the training.

The training was successfully conducted and participants requested for a repeat of the training. The Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program Coordination Unit participants particularly requested for the conduct of the training for the NEL-SAP region.

NTEAP, the environmental project of NBI, is working with Strategic Action Program (SAP) projects to build their capacity to green SAP projects.

Gedion Asfaw- RPM

WED/Nile Week in Rwanda - Theme:- "Promote appropriate technology as we combat climate change"



**Hon. Minister of Environment (centre)
Planting Grass at the shores of lake
Kivu**

In Rwanda the Nile week and WED focussed on effects of climate change, with an objective of raising awareness on energy conserving practices, lakeshore protection, and combating land degradation. The Ministers of Environment and Infrastructure, and the Director General of REMA were hosted to a Live TV and radio show on 27th May to kick start the Nile week activities. Issues addressed ranged from environmental management to infrastructure development. Other activities included, drama on environmental threats, planting of trees and grass on the shores of lake Kivu, rehabilitation of terraces, inauguration of the bio gas production unit in Stella Matutina secondary school and brick laying. The Minister laid the foundation for houses to be constructed for the local population relocated from 50m from the shores of L. Kivu as a measure to reverse lake shore degradation.

The environment week was officially launched by the Hon. Minister of Land, Environment, Forestry, Water and Mines (MINITERE) Mr Christophe Bazivamu on the 31st May 2007 in Rutsiro district. Present were the NTEAP Project Steering Committee member Dr. Rose Mukankomeje, the Director General of the Rwanda Envi-

ronment Management Authority (REMA), ministry employees, local communities, and district and province officials. On 4th June members of the African Network of Environmental Journalists (ANEJ) participated in activities to construct soil erosion infrastructure in Ruhango district. The climax of activities was on 5th June 2007 coinciding with the official opening of the African Journalists' Conference by H.E the president of the republic of Rwanda.

More than 80% of the Rwandan population depends on subsistence agriculture and fuel wood for their domestic energy needs, exerting tremendous pressure on the existing land, water and forest resources. Rising demand for fuel and construction material, in both the rural and urban areas, has led to heightened deforestation, and the poor farming practices contribute to reduced soil fertility, soil erosion and subsequent siltation of the water resources.

Demand for fertile land and water by the local communities has led to increased agricultural activities around the lake shores. This has led to the deterioration of the water resource through siltation and nutrient deposition.

Prolonged draughts and unpredictable rains as a result of changing weather patterns has also severely impacted on agricultural production.

In the search of arable land several wetlands have been encroached, although this has been put under check by government



**Students and Local community planting
grass**

and efforts are being made to rehabilitate the wetlands.

Severe soil erosion in most rural parts of the country has caused siltation in rivers and lakes.

The natural resources and livelihoods in Rwanda have been affected in many ways by the environmental threats. The cost of electricity has doubled due to the reduced hydro electricity power production resulting from the lowered water levels in Ruhondo and Burela lakes that supply the Ntaruka hydro electricity dam; water treatment costs have increased resulting to increased unit cost of water in urban areas; seasonal disappearance of some of the lakes e.g. L.Chyohoha that appears during the rain season and reduces significantly during the dry season and some communities take longer distances to get portable water for domestic purposes.

Initiatives to address the environmental concerns include rehabilitation of the shores to protect all the Lakes in Rwanda, initiated during the Nile week in Lake Kivu, initiatives to use energy conserving technologies in schools, universities, hospitals and prisons and intensifying awareness campaigns.

Emmanuel Muligirwa- NPC

WED/Nile Week in Ethiopia - Theme:- "Land Degradation"



Students & the public planting trees

The Nile week in Ethiopia registered planting of 2,750 trees in the five basin regions. This was a remarkable contribution from NTEAP towards the occasion of the Millennium (2007-2008) celebration during which a total of 60,000,000 trees (two trees per person) are expected to be planted. The tree planting is in response to the serious land degradation in Ethiopia.

Among other activities a panel discussion was organized by the NPC and NTEAP national environmental education & awareness working group members, attended by Professor Zerihune Woldu from Addis Ababa University

Department of Biology and Mr. Feke Ahmed Negash, Team Leader for Abay Basin and Tana - Beles, Integrated Watershed Project Coordinator from the Ministry of Water Resource. They discussed the roles of NBI/NTEAP and issues related to land degradation and mitigation measures, aired by the Ethiopian Television. The NTEAP project steering committee member and Deputy Director General of Environmental Protection Authority of Ethiopia were also interviewed by the Ethiopian Radio.

Regional celebrations were characterised by tree planting, poems, drama, radio interviews, distribution of awareness materials, songs etc. Trees were planted on the bank of the Blue Nile, close to Lake Tana, Abay river bank, around Churches, hospitals & schools among other places.

Land Degradation in Ethiopia is the main environmental threat affecting the natural resources and biodiversity, resulting in reduced crop production, food shortage and poverty. Different studies indicate that about 28% of the



PSC member planting a tree

highlands (14.5 million ha.) are severely degraded while another 24% of it (13 million ha.) is moderately degraded. This is mainly due to deforestation. The deforestation rate of the country varies from 150,000 to 200,000 hectares per year.

The world environmental day and the Nile week marked from 14-21st June 2007, were fully attended by representatives of government institutions, development partners, NGOs, CBOs, the media, students, religious leaders and the general public

Wubua Mekonen- NPC Ethiopia

WED/Nile Week in Kenya- Theme:- "Plant a tree, to protect the Nile Environment"



A tree being planted

A total of 2,500 tree seedlings were provided by NTEAP and planted during the Nile week, while a further 4,000 seedlings were provided by the Forest Department in Vihiga town for planting by the schools and communities in the same area. Two open days were held in Kaimosi Girls and Bishop Atundo Primary Schools, where exhibitions, songs and poems were presented to highlight the theme of the week.

Cleaning was organized by the TransNzoia District Environmental Education Teachers network in various areas within the district and tree planting by the Environment Club in Ngeta mixed and Kibabii boys schools. Several schools sent teachers and students to participate in the various activities organized by NTEAP.

The events were organised in collaboration with the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), the Ministry of Education, Nile basin schools and provincial and district level government officers. In attendance were dignitaries from government institutions including the Education Secretary, the Provincial Commissioner western province, the District Commissioners of Busia, Kitale East and Kitale west, the NTEAP project steering committee member, representative of the TAC,

Deputy Director Environmental Education & Public Participation NEMA and EE Working group Members.

The Nile Environmental Awareness week in Kenya was celebrated from the 1st to the 5th June 2007 and culminated in the celebration of the World Environment Day. Based on the premise that Land degradation is the main threat to the Nile Environment, this year's theme focussed on tree planting as a way to reverse severe deforestation, which leads to soil erosion. Soil erosion harms productivity resulting in increased deficits in food production, declining food security and greater human poverty. The slogan 'Plant a tree, to protect the Nile Environment' was used to highlight the theme.

Lily Kisaka- NPC Kenya

WED/Nile Week in Sudan- Theme: "Planting trees as a mitigation measure for climate change "



Tree planting

Planting trees as a mitigation measure for climate change was the theme for World Environment Day in Sudan. The occasion was marked with tree planting, press conference addressed by H.E Minister of Environment on 5th of June, (WED), attended

by the Secretary General of Higher Council of Environment and Natural Resources (Chairman of the NTEAP steering committee). A campaign for greening Khartoum was organized by Forestry National Corporation officiated by H.E Minister of Environment, H.E Minister for Agriculture and the under secretary of Environment.

In South Sudan activities were organized in Juba town and Nimule (bordering Uganda). There was a talk show on Mirroria FM radio station about the waste management and health issues in the market in Juba and tree planting in Juba teaching hospital organized jointly by the office of UN volunteers and Nile Basin Initiative. The Commissioner of

Nimule, represented the Ministry of Environment Wild life & Tourism, and a member of Agro forestry for Environmental Development Association (AFEDA) gave a talk on Transboundary cooperation of communities to conserve the Nile Environment, which provides the livelihood to communities in Uganda and Sudan.

Reduction of tree cover is a major factor contributing to climate change in Sudan. The demand for wood and wood fuels, as well as clearing of the natural vegetation cover for the expanding mechanized farming are the major driving forces of deforestation in Sudan.

The situation is aggravated by the growing urbanization and the high influx of refugees and internal displacement of population due to insecurity. The continuous dependency on natural resources for the livelihood of communities exerts pressure on the forest resources. Forest resources in Sudan are said to be declining at rate of approximately 500,000 ha per annum (forest resources assessment re-



Students planting trees

port) and decline in vegetation cover is a major contributing factor to climate change, land degradation and increased siltation of river beds.

The government of Sudan has responded to the environmental threat by enacting regulatory acts of 1908 and 1917 and national forest policy of 1932, amended in 2005.

The NTEAP is contributing to the response through the micro grants projects in North and South Sudan.

Abdelslaam - NPC Sudan

Alex Jumbek- LMG S.Sudan

WED/Nile Week in Egypt

In Egypt this years WED celebration will address land degradation as major threat in Egypt. The activities have been postponed to the 7th of July 2007.

The driving forces of land degradation in Egypt are urbanization and the rising population. This has exerted pressure on land as a result of the competing uses and application of unsustainable agricultural technologies. Water logging, salinization, pollution, depletion of soil fertility and physical degradation are characteristic of the soils in Egypt.

The impacts of this include an increasing reduction in food productivity and household income particularly among poor farmers and the production of

chemically polluted crops with the associated health risks.

Egypt has taken a number of steps to address land degradation including enacting regulations to prohibit constructions on agricultural lands which has reduced cultivable land from 30,000 acres/year in 1990 to 5,000 acres/year in 2005, implementation of programs to replace chemical pesticides with biological pest control resulting in a reduction in pesticide use by 80% and implementing programs that use agricultural drainage water in plantation of new forests rather than in agricultural lands in the Delta.

The target is to plant 400,000 acres of forests. Subsidies on chemical

fertilizers has also been removed to indirectly reduce their usage; covered drainage is to be introduced to 5.75 million acres by the end of 2007; implementation of the National Program for Improving the Physical Characteristics of Agricultural lands which introduced interventions such as laser leveling of land, subsoiling and reduction of land alkalinity and increasing the area of cultivated land from 5% to 25% of the country by constructing new communities and cultivation in the desert. Other initiatives are grazing land improvement, protection of coasts, increasing the efficiency of irrigation, reduction of pollution and reduction of soil erosion.

Ithar Khalil- NPC Egypt.

WED/Nile Week in Uganda: Global Warming is Real. Green your Environment, Plant more Trees



A school boy pockets seedlings for planting at home

Over 2,000 tree seedlings of various species were planted during the environment week in Uganda. The National Environment Management Authority organized the national World Environment Day celebrations held in Kasese district and the Minister of Water and Environment, Honourable Maria Mutagamba, was the guest of honour. Nile Transboundary Environment Action Project (NTEAP) co-sponsored the clean up of a school and a market, and tree planting campaigns in Kasese and Moyo, a publicity on ecosystem restoration at

community level in Moyo district and a newspaper article. Students from 2 schools and community members from Moyo district participated in a clean up of Nimule landing site in South Sudan.

The main objective of the celebrations was to reaffirm Uganda's commitment to sustainable environment management and to symbolize Uganda's contribution towards the reduction of global warming through planting trees to regulate atmospheric gases.

Uganda has suffered severe deforestation from 1971 to 1987. Majority of the population uses wood for cooking. Uganda lost 50 percent of its forests, including virtually all of its primary forests. The annual deforestation rate has climbed 21 percent since the end of the 1990s. The country lost an average of 86,400 hectares of forest—or 2.1 percent of its forest covers—per year between 2000 and 2005 (<http://forests.org/articles>). Land-clearing in Uganda results mostly from subsistence farming

and cutting of trees for fuelwood and timber. The increasing population, with a growth rate of 3.4 percent per year, is exerting high pressure on forest resources. In some parts of the country the scarcity of wood is already beginning to have impacts on the quality of food prepared. Households are opting for easy to cook but often less nutritious foods.

Government has introduced programs like the Energy for Rural Transformation to promote clean energy production. There are some efforts to diversify clean energy sources through the promotion of new renewable energy such as solar and biogas. Unfortunately, the investments required are still at levels which the rural poor cannot afford.

To increase forest cover and ensure increased supply of timber, the Saw Log Production Grant Scheme and other licensing measures including charging economic rents for timber are in place. Other schemes like collaborative forest management, are being promoted to enable rural communities living adjacent to forest reserves receive equitable benefits. Agroforestry systems are also being promoted as integral aspects of farming practices (www.nfa.org.ug).

Jane Kiskye- MGC -Uganda

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN KURIA DISTRICT-KENYA, ALONG THE RIVER NILE

Clean and conducive environment is one of the major factors that contribute to social and economic development in any society.

Kuria in Kenya is one of the districts with high agricultural potential; but poor and careless farming and industrial activities have made this southern Nyanza district, that is along the sources of River Nile to lose its potential through environmental degradation. Nevertheless, better late than never; still there is a possibility to turn some of the poor socio-economic activities here into environmentally friendly practices to sustain the society.

Farming as one of the major activities has contributed to various hazards in the whole District. Tobacco as one of traditional cash crops in this region has caused deforestation. Before the introduction of tobacco farming in Kuria and

the neighboring Districts of Migori, Homa-bay, Trans-mara and Tarime in Tanzania, this region had the pride of conserving the indigenous tree species, less air pollution, fertile soils and relatively clean river water. Later Kuria experienced loss of trees as a result tree cutting to cure tobacco.

The companies involved in this business have been advocating for and providing *Eucalyptus* and *Grevillea sp* seedlings to farmers to plant as replacement, but later these planted trees are cut down leaving no permanent solution or replacement.

Trees serve as a catchment for rain but now if environmental friendly species are not in existence we risk lacking rain and this may lead to desertification and even the drying up of river streams.

Still on tobacco farming as our main farming activity, there is another environmental hazard along the river banks; tobacco nurseries

are prepared along river streams for easy availability of water during the dry season for watering the nursery-beds. However, the distance between the nurseries and the streams is so close that the run-off from these beds, containing harmful chemicals, finds its way back to the rivers and the same water is consumed by people without treatment.

Therefore to ensure that River Nile is well conserved, the above dangerous farming activity must be checked through the introduction of alternative socio-economic activities in this region. The advocacy for proper use of the available resources, tree planting and the introduction of alternative crops to replace tobacco can be the means to reverse the adverse impacts of tobacco growing and alleviate poverty.

Waikena Nyangaria- KNDF-Kuria Representative

WED/Nile Week in Tanzania- Theme: "Conserve Environment: Plant and care for trees".



Students planting trees during the Nile Week.

Over 1000 seedlings of various species were planted in Mwanza city in Tanzania, with support from NTEAP, during the Nile week and on the World Environment Day. The loss of forests and the need to plant trees to replenish them, was the theme for WED in Tanzania. The theme was adapted to reflect on the destruction and degradation of forest resources in the country and the role of forests in curbing global warming. Depletion of forest cover was given high priority at both national and local level celebrations in Tanzania during the World environment day.

Trees were planted at Igoma Primary school and Tampere friendship garden. Students from various schools, government and NGO officials as well as surrounding communities participated in the event. The City Director and District Commissioner of Ilemela Districts graced the event. A one day forum, attended by government offi-

cials and students, discussed various environmental issues of national and international significance.

The students as well as local NGOs and CBOs participated in a clean up in Mwanza city to demonstrate the extra effort needed to keep the city, voted the cleanest in Tanzania for a second year in a row, clean. The climax of the event was on world environmental day, marked with a series of activities.

There was a presentation of awards to various achievers, speeches by various regional and city leaders and entertainment to the public. NTEAP used this event to present the awards to schools and students who won prizes in the NTEAP School award Scheme. The Schools that were presented Awards are Bukoba Secondary, St Pius Seminary, Loreto Girls High School, and Rugambwa Secondary Schools. Present at the function were Acting Regional (Provincial) Commissioner Mr. Samuel Kamote, who was the guest of honour, and Eng. Emanuel Kalobelo the Acting City Director. The Public was also entertained with music and gymnastic from a local art group. The occasion was also used to award a certificate of recognition to NTEAP for supporting the

Mwanza city council in her efforts to clean the environment and for successfully organising the environment week.

Poverty, population growth, poor agriculture technologies, are examples of driving forces leading to loss of tree cover and soil degradation in Tanzania. Most of the forest resource in Tanzania is degraded or threatened with degradation. It is estimated that Tanzania loses more than 90,000 ha of forests per year but the rate of tree planting per year is only 20% of the amount cleared.

The impacts of deforestation include increased prices of the forest products, scarcity of energy sources; in some areas people have opted for inferior type of energy sources such as cow dung. The time spent in search of firewood has increased and in turn affecting amount of efforts invested in livelihood activities such as a food production and family maintenance. Water sources have also been destroyed and land eroded.

Government and Civil society organization are working together through several policy initiatives and actions to deal with forest degradation and depletion in Tanzania. The review of the 1998 national forest policy and forest act, establishment of Tanzania forest conservation and management project and creation of Tanzania community forest conservation Network, are examples.

Abdallah Shah-NPC Tanzania

Civil Society, Legislators, Lead Agencies Unite to Save a Natural High Forest in Uganda.



Endangered? Journalists in Mabira Forest

The civil society, members of parliament, lead agencies and the general public in Uganda have saved Mabira, one of the remaining natural high forests in Uganda from being converted to a sugar cane plantation.

Daily Monitor, a privately owned media house, in August last year broke news of the government's decision to allocate 7,100 hectares of Mabira forest, (approximately 25 per cent of the forest) to Sugar Corporation of Uganda Ltd for sugarcane growing to boost the

group's Kakira Sugar Works.

According to the government owned media house, the New Vision, the cabinet had earlier issued a paper supporting the degazetting of one of Uganda's biggest natural forests (Mabira).

But in March this year, the Prime Minister Apollo Nsibambi while referring to the conclusions of the inter-ministerial report ordered the environment minister, Maria Mutagamba to start the process of degazetting Mabira.....cont'd to page 9

Civil Society, Legislators, Lead Agencies Unite to Save a Natural High Forest, In Uganda.

"Owing to the conclusions and recommendations from the report, I now direct you to bring a cabinet paper seeking permission to degazette part of Mabira for sugarcane growing", Nsi-bambi wrote to Mutagamba in a letter dated March 1", the Daily Monitor went on.

It is reported that earlier the Mehta group had approached the president of Uganda arguing that part of the forest had been degraded and that it had inferior trees which could not produce valuable timber. They promised they would employ more people, address the prevailing sugar scarcity and contribute more revenue to the country's coffers if given part of the forest.

The New Vision of March 27, 2007 reported, "The damage of cutting away part of Mabira Forest in terms of carbon credit is estimated at \$316m. The value of the land is estimated at about \$5m and the value of the wood at another \$568m. That means the Ugandan public stands to lose almost \$890m (about 1.5 trillion Uganda shillings) as a result of the Government's plan to degazette part of the forest."

The government of Uganda owns 51% of Scoul and therefore is the major beneficiary of the deal and at the same time the victim of the 1.5 trillion shilling loss. Scientists inform us that the average temperature in Uganda has gone up by 2% in the last 15 years. Thus, the long term losses far out weigh any short-term gains in a business sense, reported the New vision.

The public opinion was that the forest should not be given away and the professionals equally advised the government the same way. The National For-

estry Authority (NFA) also advised against degazetting Mabira. Members of Parliament (MPs) insisted that the government should first consult them before giving out land or forests. The MPs said there is a lot of redundant land, which the government can utilise without necessarily encroaching on the forest reserves.

The proposed give away sparked off a bloody demonstration that left at least three people dead. Thousands of people responded to calls by civil society organizations to take part in the erstwhile peaceful demonstration that finally took a nasty twist. The call was to defend the forest. The Executive Director of the National Forestry Authority (NFA) and some senior staff resigned, citing disagreement with the government over the allocation of more forestland to private companies.

Godber Tumushabe, who heads the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE), a civil society organization, attributed the forest give away to governance failure in which institutions are undermined and arm twisted to take illegal decisions.

He said gazetted forests are protected by the doctrine of public trust, which is embedded in Uganda's constitution and other laws on environment. He said as a trustee, Government does not have the right to change the land use of protected areas. ACODE teamed up with like minded NGOs and took Government to Court saying degazettement was becoming a trend despite the fact that it is illegal.

The government is reported to have listened to the public anger. "The public has expressed anger over the give-away of Mabira forest to the Mehta Group and it appears the cabinet has

listened', the Daily Monitor reported.

The government daily also carried a similar story. "The government-owned media yesterday reported that the cabinet had drafted a new paper highlighting the disadvantages of degazetting parts of Mabira forest to give way to sugarcane growing. According to the new paper prepared by Minister of Water and Environment Maria Mutagamba, reasons for government's change of attitude on Mabira include: Mabira forest reserve has unique bird, plant, primate, butterfly and tree species, has high tourism potential, particularly in view of its close proximity to the Kampala-Mukono-Jinja metropolis. The reserve is an important water catchment forest. Source of two main rivers-Musamya and Sezibwa - which flow into Lake Kyoga. Mabira is a critical component of the local and regional hydrological cycle. Large population around the place and considerable demand for various forest products. Carbon sequestration values", the paper reported.

The Mabira case is a case where sufficient awareness of the civil society and the general public on the impacts of the damage to the environment and the willingness on the side of the politicians to respect the views of the public and scientists have saved a very important resource. The fatalities notwithstanding, the cooperative action of the civil society, the members of parliament and the responsible lead agencies to save one of Uganda's remaining natural high forests from conversion into a sugar cane estate is commendable. Other riparian countries have a leaf to pick from this unique collaboration.

Gerald Tenywa & Joel Arumadri

WED/Nile Week in Pictures: Basin Wide Action, Stakeholder Involvement.



Action: 1st Vice-President of the National Assembly of Burundi (right) & Minister for Land Planning, Tourism and Environment of Burundi (Left) Planting trees during WED



Participation: H.E Paul KAGAME (5th right), with participants at the Regional Meeting of environmental Journalists, Kigali



Action: Minister of Environment of Rwanda (centre) Planting Grass at the shores of lake Kivu.



Reward: PSC member of Rwanda, giving out presents to students



Action: Tree Nursery



Awareness: PSC Member of Ethiopia addressing audience



Action: Tree Planting



Action: Tree Planting



Awareness: Poem by students



Entertainment: Cultural Groups

WED/Nile Week in Pictures: Basin Wide Action, Stakeholder Involvement.



Action: Tree Planting



Awareness: Poem by students



Action: Tree Nursery



Awareness: Public education



Action: Tree Planting



Awareness: Public lecture



Reward: Award of presents



Action: Tree Planting



Awareness: Public lecture



Capacity Building: Nursery Implements



Action: Tree Planting

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River Nile Pact in Offing, Reports Gerald Tenywa & Patrick Jaramogi in the New Vision of Uganda – 26/6/07



Nile-COM & Technical Advisory Committee Members.

Countries sharing the River Nile are formulating a treaty to replace the contentious 1929 agreement that gave Egypt lopsided access to the Nile. This was announced at Council of Ministers meeting at Imperial resort Beach in Entebbe, Uganda.

The water Ministers from Burundi, Egypt, Ethiopia, DR Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Sudan and Uganda reiterated their commitment towards solving the hurdle that is delaying the formation of the treaty.

The meeting which was presided over by the Information and national Guidance Minister of Uganda, Hon Kiruna Kivejinja, who represented the Vice President of Uganda Prof. Gilbert Bukenya. Kivejinja also called on the Ministers to resolve the debate about the source of the Nile that has caused a stir with three different countries claiming that the longest river starts in their territory.

The Egyptian Minister for water Resources, Mahmoud Abu-Zied, noted that :”We need to work together to solve these controversial issues. The main issue is to define the meaning of the source of the Nile. We are not there to discuss which country the Nile originates from, but as Egypt we shall agree with the outcome of the meeting and adopt the treaty.

Kenyan Minister for Water, John Mutua Kituku, said:

”We are keen to conclude this issue because as politicians, we are not permanent, we come and

go. The issue is not the source, but we need proper management of the Nile resource.

In a speech read by Kivejinja, Bukenya urged the riparian states to greatly value the Nile saying:”It is the source of livelihood to about 300 million people in the Nile Basin.

Consequently, during a press conference at the same Hotel, the water ministers noted that the Nile basin commission would be formed to replace the Nile Basin Initiative

”We are almost signing and adopting the treaty forming the Nile Basin Commission. What is left are a few contentious issues like the definition of some words, “ said water and environment minister Maria Mutagamba. She declined to name the contentious saying, ” I do not want to pre-empt what we shall discuss later”.

Mutagamba is the incoming Nile- COM Chair person. Nile-COM is the highest organ of the Nile basin Initiative, which is a transitional intergovernmental arrangement. The Chair rotates annually among Nile basin countries.

The Nile-COM was preceded by Technical Advisory Committee meeting.

School awards winners of the environmental competition, from the NBI countries, organized by the National Environmental Action Project (NTEAP) were also given awards during the same occasion.



EE&A school awards winners from the NBI countries with the Nile COM and TAC during Nile COM/TAC meeting in Entebbe, June 21-26 2007

Extra reporting by Joel Arumadri.

Upcoming events

16-31st 2007, SVP Projects mid term Review

12-13th July 2007, CBSI Steering Committee Meeting, Entebbe, Uganda.

14-16th August 2007, NTEAP Regional Workshop on Best Practices, Kigali, Rwanda