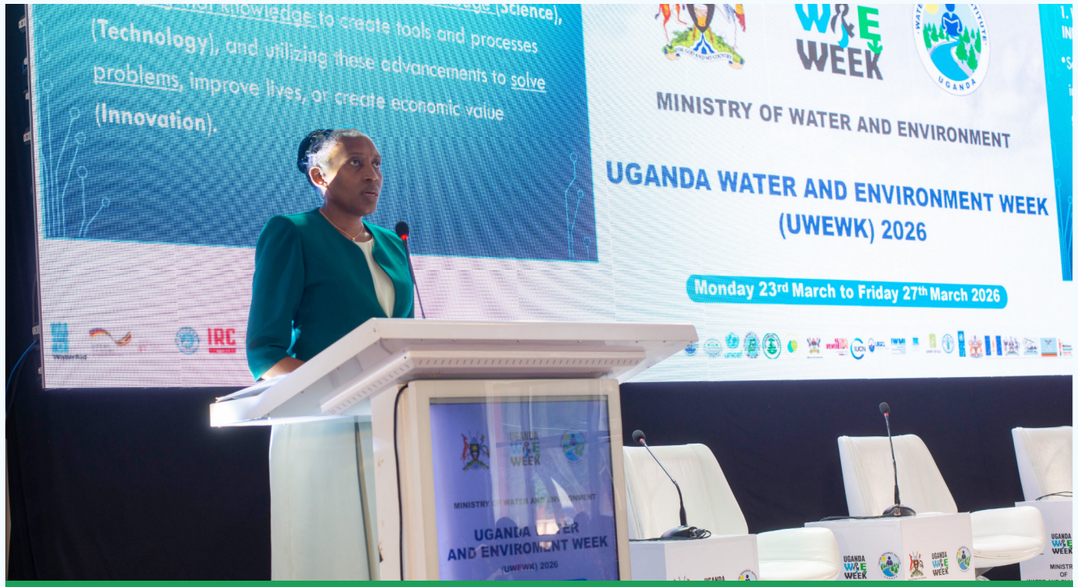
THE WATERFRONT NEWSLETTER

Wednesday, 25th,2026 | Issue IV

R-L Eng Daniel Opwonya, Regional Climate Resilient WASH Advisor, WaterAid; Dr. Abdulkarim Seid – Regional Manager (IWMI), Mr Epitu Joseph – Technical Advosr to the LIFE-AR program and Ms Modester Lokeris,General manager of West Peak Uganda co. Ltd

Leveraging Investment in science, Technology, Innovation and Capacity Building: Enhancing Progress in Water, Environment Management and Development.



Dr. Cathy Ikiror Mbidde making a keynote presentation

Delivering the keynote, Dr. Cathy Ikiror Mbidde, Director of Makerere University Innovations Hub, emphasized that financial investment alone is not enough.

Addressing increasingly complex environmental challenges, she said it requires deliberate efforts to build human capacity and strengthen innovation ecosystems that can adapt to evolving realities.

Throughout her presentation, Dr. Mbidde highlighted the importance of connecting the entire ecosystem, from research institutions and policymakers to communities and private sector actors. She underscored that meaningful progress in water and environment management depends on collaboration across these groups, ensuring that innovation is not developed in isolation but applied where it is needed most.

A key focus of the discussion was the transformative role of digital technologies. Dr. Mbidde pointed to the growing importance of spatial data, early warning systems, and digital tools in improving water resource management and strengthening climate resilience.

These technologies enable more accurate forecasting, enhance risk management, and support faster responses to environmental threats such as floods and droughts.

She stressed that scientific research must translate into practical, community-level solutions. , she argued that Innovation must move beyond theory to deliver tangible improvements in water access, quality, and sustainability.

Linking science and innovation directly to national priorities, Dr. Mbidde emphasized that investment in science, technology, and innovation is critical to achieving Uganda's long-term development ambitions, including Vision 2040.

Without adequate funding and strategic focus, efforts to manage water resources will struggle to keep pace with population growth and mounting environment pressures, Dr. Mbidde noted She called for forward-looking planning that anticipates future risks and prepares systems to remain resilient under uncertainty.

The session also reflected a broader shift toward data-driven and automated systems. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning are increasingly being used to analyze large datasets, improving water quality monitoring, wetlands management, and wastewater treatment.

These innovations are transforming traditional approaches into more efficient, predictive systems capable of delivering better outcomes at scale.

Equally important was the recognition that investment gaps persist across infrastructure, financing, and human resources. Expanding support for technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), smart sensors, and data analytics was identified as critical for improving efficiency in water treatment, enabling leak detection, and supporting precision agriculture, particularly in climate-vulnerable regions like Northern Uganda.

Strengthening meteorological and water monitoring systems was also highlighted as essential for enabling timely, data-driven decision-making.

The keynote concluded by stressing the importance of diversified financing approaches. Blended finance models, including mechanisms such as carbon trading and exchange-traded funds, were presented as viable pathways to mobilize resources for water infrastructure.

Public investment, complemented by private sector participation, was also highlighted as central to driving long-term progress.

Panel discussions

a Panel Session on Investment in Science and Technology, Innovation and Capacity Building

The discussion transitioned into a dynamic panel moderated by Eng Gilbert Kimanzi Commissioner, Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), bringing together experts from across sectors to explore practical pathways for implementation.

Engineer Daniel Opwonya, Regional Climate Resilient WASH Advisor, WaterAid, emphasized that technology adoption must go beyond hardware. He stressed that for innovation to succeed, it must be affordable, climate-adapted, and embedded in people-centered systems. He highlighted the growing role of citizen science, IoT, and AI in democratizing data collection and decision-making, making these tools accessible even to non-experts.

He reaffirmed WaterAid's commitment to advancing affordable technologies and linking water, sanitation, and hygiene initiatives to broader poverty reduction efforts.

From a financing perspective, Mr. Stephen Asiimwe, Executive Director, Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU), noted that viable models already exist but require scaling.

Mechanisms such as subsidies, results-based financing, and public-private partnerships have proven effective in other sectors and can be adapted to water and environmental management. He pointed to ongoing government efforts and policy frameworks as evidence of commitment, while stressing the need for stronger collaboration to translate policy into practice.

He added that PSFU, will continue to advocate for enabling policies and facilitate partnerships among stakeholders.

Development partners were encouraged to scale demand-driven financing models and support the integration of emerging technologies in water management.

The role of the private sector and financial institutions also featured prominently, with calls to develop tailored "green financing" solutions and invest in scalable innovations. Utilities and service providers were also urged to adopt advanced technologies, improve operational efficiency, and actively involve communities in data collection and system ownership.

Adding a regional perspective, Dr. Abdulkarim Seid, the Principal Researcher, Regional Representative for East Africa at International Water Management Institute (IWMI) highlighted ongoing efforts to deploy AI, IoT, and citizen science across water management projects in East Africa, reinforcing the importance of innovation in addressing shared environment challenges

Investment in Science & Technology Innovation & Capacity Building to Enhance Progress in Water & Environment

The presentation of STI driving smarter water & environmental governance was among the key sessions with a focus on both innovation and capacity building to enhance progress in water & environmental management across the country. The session emphasized the importance of proposing pathways to integrate STI into governance systems, evaluating STI's impact on risk anticipation & data-driven decision making, identifying policy and regulatory gaps affecting STI adoption in Uganda, and providing evidence-based recommendations for digital infrastructure investment. Several presenters shared findings that highlighted the need for integrated solutions.

Mr. Jacob Musinguzi makes a presentation on the Digitization of the Water Service Connection Assessment Process

Mr Rakesh presents Rwizi Feedback Application.

Harnessing Science & Innovation for Climate-Resilient Water Management in Uganda

Presenter: Mr. Stephen Akankwasa, Program Director, Strides for Green Initiative.

Mr. Akankwasa explored the relationship between harnessing science & innovation for climate-resilient water management, identifying the key gaps & challenges like conventional monitoring, dual water threats, and limited inter-agency data notwithstanding positives like enabling public institutions to significantly improve risk anticipation, data-driven planning & interagency coordination. The session highlighted the need for increasing public investment in digital infrastructure including data centres & developing regulatory frameworks & standards for drone use & AI development.

The Effectiveness of Contour Reversed Bench Terraces (CRBTs) in Enhancing the Resilience of Highland Farming Landscapes to Climate Change in Rubanda

Presenter: Mr. Mutayomba Amos Justus Matunguru, Research Scientist, National Agricultural Research Organization.

Mr. Matunguru's presentation focused on identifying hotspots, showing the communities how CRBTs can restore & enhance the resilience of the farming landscape to climate change effects in Rubanda (Bunyangabo, Kiriba and Nyarugongo). He demonstrated how land use changes (terracing) have exacerbated soil erosion, floods, landslides & increased yields of crops. He advocated for technology of CRBT because of its appropriateness, inclusion for leaders at all levels in promoting technology.

From Waste to Prosperity at Mbarara

Presenter: Ms. Nahabwe Ophelia, Atmo-save Uganda.

Ms. Nahabwe presented the Black Soldier Fly initiative at Kalerwe , decomposing site transferring the same experiences to Kenkombe landfill, significantly reducing garbage tonnage whilst benefiting a 100 plus individuals by generating earnings through compost, larvae and vegetable sales. She advocated for integration of BSF and circular economy models into urban environment policies to enhance sustainability and resource efficiency in Mbarara City as well as promoting cross sector partnerships.

Effective stakeholder engagement: a prerequisite for creating buy-in for operationalising the rural O&M framework

Presenter: Mrs. Grace Waako Katuramu, Private Consultant:

Mrs. Katuramu presented the strategies that have been developed by the Ministry of Water & Environment (MWE) and its stakeholders following a bid to improve operation and maintenance (O&M) of water facilities. These include the Rural Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Framework (2019) and the professionalization of O&M through the Area Service Provider Manual (2020).

Ms. Grace Katuramu makes a presentation on Effective Stakeholder Engagement.

The objective of the study was to develop a simplified tool to facilitate prioritization of critical steps and structures for ensuring effective stakeholder engagement in the operationalization of the O&M framework.

She added that an evaluative methodology involving 20 District Local Governments (DLGs), 5 pilot Area Service Providers, and 5 supporting NGOs/DPs is anticipated. She further recommended openness of findings to inform and support improvements.

Rwizi Feedback Application; Empowering local communities and representatives to report, verify, and act on environmental incidents at Rwizi

Presenters: Mr. Jha Rakesh& Mr. Okwera Robert

Mr. Okwera presented strategies on empowering local communities to report incidents through a structured verification and action pipeline. The system incorporates data-driven analytics for decision-making and anonymous reporting for safety.

The Rwizi Feedback Application uses a mobile-first architecture where various stakeholders collaborate within the platform. This has increased community participation and enabled faster incident response times, while also serving as a scalable model for other natural resources.

He advocated for transformative grassroots conservation through technology and community integration for Rwizi and beyond.

Advancing environmental conservation through biogas systems at St. Andrew's Primary School, Mukono

Presenter: Zeus Misagga (UWASNET & JEEP)

Mr. Misagga's presentation focused on promoting the adoption of biogas systems in institutions as a sustainable alternative or supplement to firewood.

Results showed a reduction in average fuel consumption with the acquisition of improved cookstoves (ICS) and biogas digesters.

He advocated for increased sensitization on the environmental and economic benefits of biogas, as well as incorporating biogas systems into the design of new and existing institutions.

More presentations were made including; Assessment of the Poldaw Riser System as a Technology for Enhancing Boreholes Performance in Uganda, Institutionalizing Rural Water Governance And Tariff Reforms: Piloting A Delegated Management Model In Kamwenge, Uganda, On-air dialogues as impactful tools for capturing community perspectives on climate-induced migration ,Uganda, An experiential model for training the next generation of water quality professionals in sub-Saharan Africa.

Uganda Unveils the WASH National Adaptation Plan at 9th UWEWK 2026:

At the dissemination of Uganda's WASH National Adaptation Plan (NAP), different speakers highlighted both the urgency of climate action and the shared responsibility for implementation.

The Commissioner from the Climate Change Department, Mr. Bob Notif framed climate change as an existential threat, pointing to ongoing floods, landslides, and droughts as clear evidence. He linked these impacts to public health, citing approximately 47.1 million annual cases of water-related diseases, and called on all stakeholders to take personal responsibility in implementing the NAP.

Representing UNICEF, Engneer Wilberforce Kimezere, WASH specialist explained the development process of the WASH NAP, highlighting that climate risk assessments focusing on hazards, exposure, and vulnerability guided the plan. He noted that climate change is already affecting WASH systems through water contamination, infrastructure damage, and reduced access, especially in Karamoja and Eastern Uganda.

Eng. Annet Nantongo presents the WASH NAP during its dissemination

Engineer Annette Nantongo from the Ministry of Water and Environment presented the technical and implementation framework of the plan. She highlighted high levels of climate risk exposure, with some districts experiencing over 60% vulnerability. She outlined the NAP's vision for equitable, climate-resilient WASH services.

On financing and implementation, the presentation underscored that the NAP will draw on diverse funding sources, including development Partners, Civil Society, the Private sector, and innovative mechanisms such as climate bonds and microfinance. It also detailed implementation entry points across national, catchment, district, and local levels, while emphasizing the need for integrated approaches linking WASH with health and agriculture to reduce disease and support productivity

Monitoring and Evaluating the Role of Water towards an Inclusive and Prosperous Uganda:

view of the participants engaged in the Training

Mr. Alex B. Muhweezi, a retired professional emphasized the critical role of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in strengthening Uganda's water sector. He explained that monitoring involves the continuous collection and analysis of data to track progress, while evaluation systematically assesses project design, implementation, and outcomes to measure impact and generate lessons for improvement. M&E is essential not only for accountability and transparency but also for demonstrating the sector's contributions to the National Development Plan (NDP4). By understanding the effectiveness of interventions, water sector actors can identify gaps and enhance strategies.

Mr. Muhweezi highlighted the importance of evaluating the relevance of policies by examining their real-world impact on water resources. He explained the distinction between formative evaluations, which are ongoing assessments such as annual reviews, and summative evaluations, conducted at the end of projects to capture comprehensive lessons learned. He also emphasized the use of Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) in project design to define measurable inputs, outputs, and outcomes, clarifying the pathway to achieving desired results. Key M&E concepts such as relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact were discussed to ensure a clear understanding of how water initiatives deliver tangible improvements in communities.

He recommended establishing comprehensive baseline data before project initiation and focusing on a limited set of indicators that measure outcomes and impact. Participatory monitoring should be applied to engage stakeholders, and continuous data collection using both quantitative and qualitative methods ensures adaptive management. Both formative and summative evaluations are necessary to track progress and generate lessons learned. Mr. Muhweezi concluded that strong M&E practices are vital for credible reporting, informed decision making, and demonstrating the water sector's real contribution to national development, emphasizing outcomes such as improved health, increased access to water, and community well-being rather than just infrastructure outputs.

Experience Sharing in Dam Safety Management

Participants attending the side event on experience sharing in dam safety management in Uganda, highlighting operators' and developers' perspectives

A high-level technical session on dam safety management was held during the 9th UWEWK 206, bringing together engineers, policymakers, and energy Stakeholders. Moderated by Eng. Dan Marlone, the session reflected strong interest in safeguarding Uganda's hydropower infrastructure.

Dr. Callist Tindimugaya, Commissioner for Water Resources Planning and Regulation, MWE opened the session by emphasizing that proper dam design and construction are critical to safety and long-term national development.

Eng. Fredrick Wasike (UEGCL) highlighted the importance of hydropower as Uganda's most affordable energy source and stressed the need to protect these assets. He identified key risks such as aging infrastructure, sedimentation, and population pressures, underscoring the importance of routine inspections and proactive maintenance.

Building onto the discussion, Eng. David Cheptoek, Senior Water Officer for Dam Safety, MWE, focused on the need for skilled personnel and strong monitoring systems. Drawing lessons from dam failures in Kenya (2018) and Sudan (2020), he emphasized robust risk management frameworks and noted a new MoU with the Electricity Regulatory Authority to strengthen collaboration. He also highlighted the importance of comprehensive planning, integrated databases, and managing inflows and flood regimes.

Eng. Dominic Mucunguzi, Ass. Commissioner, compliance and enforcement, MWE called for greater specialization and clearer role definition among dam management professionals. Mr. Alaister McDougall (Bujagali Energy Ltd) shared progress in dam safety governance, including board-endorsed policies and the establishment of an emergency preparedness team.

Participants emphasized the need to engage expert consultants and hydrogeologists to strengthen monitoring. Key challenges identified included the lack of specific dam safety regulations, limited technical expertise, climate change impacts, and sedimentation, all of which must be addressed to ensure the reliability and longevity of dam infrastructure.

Harnessing Science, Technology, and Innovation to Transform Water Management

A view of Participants in a sharing session

Other stakeholders gathered at for a two-hour session exploring how science, technology, and innovation (STI), alongside targeted capacity development, can reshape water management systems.

The session which brought together about 60 participants, was chaired and moderated by Lorna Kobusingye of 2ML Consulting Limited Uganda.

The session featured three presenters who offered complementary perspectives on institutional transformation, digital systems, and infrastructure design for resilient water supply.

In his presentation, George Akol, Vice President Programs at 2ML Consulting Limited Uganda, emphasized that technology on its own is insufficient to resolve performance challenges in utilities.

"You cannot fix performance by software alone," he noted, stressing that meaningful improvement requires deliberate process engineering, stronger governance structures, and clearly defined performance metrics.

He further highlighted that sustainable transformation must be holistic, combining organizational reforms with data-supported performance management systems Capacity Requirements Planning (CRP) and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platforms.

Building on the theme of digital systems, Diane Kaganzi, Chief Product Officer at TraceCorp Solutions, underscored the central role of ERP systems in enabling effective digital transformation. She explained that improved data visibility and system integration are foundational to better decision-making, customer service, and operational efficiency.

"ERP and digital transformation are not just about automation; they are about creating a reliable backbone for data-driven decisions," she observed.

However, she cautioned against overreliance on emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence without the necessary groundwork. "AI is not a shortcut," she remarked, noting that without clean, integrated data and well-structured systems, AI tools may underperform or even produce misleading outputs.

She stressed that successful transformation depends on aligning people, processes, and technology, supported by continuous change management rather than one-off system deployments.

The third presentation, delivered by Eng. Peter Magambo, Managing Director of Kagga & Partners, focused on practical infrastructure solutions for water-scarce and flood-prone environments.

He shared insights from a project designed to serve a town along the Nile that faces both flooding and water scarcity challenges.

The system, he explained, leverages elevation, gravity, and solar power to deliver a reliable and cost-effective water supply. "By designing around natural forces such as gravity and integrating renewable energy, we were able to create a system that is both resilient and affordable," he said.

The project is designed to support a population of over 200,000 people through 2042, demonstrating how context-specific engineering solutions can address environmental risks while ensuring long-term service delivery.

Throughout the session, a consistent message emerged: transforming water management requires more than isolated technological interventions.

It calls for integrated approaches that bring together governance reform, strengthened institutional capacity, reliable data systems, and context-appropriate engineering solutions. Participants emphasized that utilities and service providers that invest in these interconnected elements will be better positioned to improve performance, enhance sustainability, and meet the growing demands of urban populations.

Advancing multi-stake holder coordination for effective IWRM implementation in Uganda:

Participants during a stakeholder coordination session

Eng. Albert Orijabo, Assistant Commissioner, Water Management Zones of the Ministry of Water and Environment highlighted nine years of successful Water Week engagements and emphasized UWEWK 2026 as a platform for resource mobilization, bridging sector gaps, and constructive stakeholder feedback. Mr. Joseph Ogaya shared WHH's success in the Lokele Catchment Project, noting improvements in clean water access, livelihoods, and agricultural productivity.

Eng. Albert outlined Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) as a global framework aligned with SDG targets, while emphasizing challenges such as climate change, pollution, and weak coordination. Ms. Yuniya Yiga Musaazi, Executive Director, UWASNET stressed administrative and financing gaps, advocating for stronger accountability, better data use, and increased political support.

Ms. Teddy Nabakooza Galiwango (Buganda Kingdom) highlighted the need for cultural and religious inclusion, community awareness, and leading by example. Mr. Ceaser Kimbugwe, Projects Manager; Centenary Foundation proposed ESG-based planning, blended financial models, and initiatives supporting youth and women's financial access. Mr. Robert (WHH) described two-phased projects engaging communities in catchment management, climate awareness, and sustainable farming.

Hon. Augon S, Chair of the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on WASH, called for evidence-based decision-making, adequate funding, and collaborative action to ensure sustainable solutions. Participants also shared practical interventions, such as proper waste disposal and fund management strategies.

Hon. Sylus Augon R joins Madam Yunia Musaazi, Teddy Nabakooza and Ceaser Kimbugwe on a panel discussion

Building Uganda's Next Generation of WASH Leaders: 45 Granduands graduate during the 5th Cohort Mentorship Programme Graduation:

Some of the graduants during a panel discussion(Mentorship Graduation Ceremony)

At the graduation of the fifth cohort of the Water and Environment Mentorship, Internship and Placement Programme, partners and government officials highlighted the programme's growing impact in strengthening Uganda's humanitarian and WASH workforce.

Ms. Gwendolyn Kyoburungi, The Water Resources Institute Coordinator, explained that the mentorship programme was established to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical experience. The Ministry noted that the programme evolved from a pilot (2019–2021) into a multi-partner initiative involving organizations such as UNHCR, UNICEF, WaterAid, and Water for People. It reported that 175 graduates have been trained to date, with 45 completing the current cohort. The Ministry emphasized that the programme responds to increasing demand for skilled professionals amid climate change and growing pressure on natural resources.

Mr. Simon Odong, Associate WASH Officer, UNHCR Representation in Uganda at UNHCR, speaking on behalf of the Country Representative, underscored Uganda's significant refugee burden, noting that the country hosts nearly two million refugees across more than 12 settlements. He explained that UNHCR works closely with the Ministry of Water and Environment and the Office of the Prime Minister to receive and support refugees. He emphasized that investing in mentorship and professional development is a sustainable response to the humanitarian crisis, as it builds a pipeline of skilled professionals. He added that since 2021, UNHCR has supported the programme, contributing to the training and deployment of 175 graduates, and reaffirmed continued support despite funding challenges.

Eng. Wilborce Kimezere, WASH Manager at UNICEF emphasized the importance of investing in human capital to sustain WASH gains, particularly in vulnerable and refugee-hosting communities. She noted that building a skilled workforce is essential for improving service delivery, resilience, and inclusive access to water and sanitation. She commended the programme for equipping young professionals with practical competencies and reaffirmed UNICEF's commitment to supporting initiatives that strengthen systems and service delivery.

Mr. Martin Ameu, the Assistant FAO Representative in of Programs highlighted the importance of water in achieving food security, nutrition, environmental

Mr. Julius Victor Nkeramihigo making remarks during the graduation ceremony

sustainability, and improved livelihoods. Referencing FAO's "four betters" (better production, nutrition, environment, and life), he stressed that water is central across all these areas. He noted that while many trainees gained experience in refugee contexts, their skills are transferable to broader sectors such as agriculture and water resource management. He commended the graduates for gaining practical experience and described the programme as a rare and valuable opportunity in a context where internship placements are limited.

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Water and Environment, Dr. Alfred Okot Okidi, underscored the Ministry's commitment to developing a competent workforce to support the water and environment sector. He emphasized that the mentorship programme complements long-standing government efforts to train young professionals and is critical in building the technical and leadership capacity required to address emerging sector challenges. He commended partners for their collaboration and encouraged graduates to uphold professionalism, innovation, and integrity in their careers.

Graduants cutting ceremonial cake during the graduation

Mr. Julius Victor Nkeramihigo from the Office of the Prime Minister, representing the Deputy Head of Public Service, emphasized the strategic importance of water and environmental resources for national development. He warned that these resources are under threat from population growth, climate change, industrialization, and what he described as both irresponsible and sometimes criminal environmental practices. He highlighted the mentorship programme as a critical step in building a new generation of professionals to address these challenges and support Uganda's National Development Plan IV. He also stressed the need for improved performance and accountability in public service, noting that national performance across past development plans has remained below

Executive systems disruption Lab- Why infrastructure fails, and how to de-risk it before scaling

Dr. Ashabrick Nantege Making a Presentation

Another engaging and thought-provoking dialogue tackled systems disruption and infrastructure resilience focused on a critical examination of why infrastructure systems fail and how such risks can be mitigated before scaling solutions.

It was chaired by Dr. Ashabrick Natenge, the Manager of the Appropriate Technology Centre (ATC), Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE).

Participants actively contributed, identifying several recurring challenges, including inadequate maintenance skills and the lack of follow-up after project completion.

These gaps, they noted, often lead to system inefficiencies and eventual breakdown.

The conversation deepened as Dr. Natenge raised concerns about projects that fail shortly after commissioning, sometimes within as little as six months.

Participants attributed such failures to a combination of factors, including poor resource management, inappropriate use of systems such as dosatrons, unsuitable technology choices, low user acceptance, and technical breakdowns.

These insights highlighted systemic weaknesses in both planning and implementation phases.

Drawing from institutional experience, Dr. Natenge emphasized that the Ministry has established a design review committee tasked with ensuring that infrastructure designs meet required standards before approval.

However, he pointed out that compliance checks are often overlooked in practice, leading to the implementation of suboptimal systems.

This gap between policy and execution emerged as a key concern during the session.

Participants further stressed the importance of robust stakeholder engagement throughout project lifecycles, as well as the need to strengthen governance structures.

They also advocated for allowing room for independent assessments to enhance accountability and improve project outcomes.

In concluding discussions, Dr. Natenge underscored the need for regulating flow rates and designing systems with scalability in mind, particularly to accommodate future population growth. Contributors also emphasized the importance of applying multidimensional assessment models when evaluating technologies, adopting modern equipment and mechanisms to ensure quality control of materials, and recognizing that validation processes are essential rather than bureaucratic obstacles.

The session closed with a strong call to reinforce technical committees in the water supply sector and to prioritize continuous capacity building and skills development.

The discussions highlighted the urgent need for a more integrated, forward-looking approach to infrastructure design, implementation, and management to ensure long-term sustainability and resilience.

Dr. Joyce Magala Addressing Young People

Youth Career Talk:

Dr. Joyce Magala Mpalanyi, Country Director for WaterAid, led a keynote session emphasizing the vital role of youth in promoting water, sanitation, and environmental sustainability. Drawing on over 20 years of experience in international development, she encouraged young people to focus on self-discovery, personal principles, and proactive engagement rather than solely on formal qualifications. She highlighted mentorship, practical guidance, and staying informed on current trends as essential for youth development. Dr. Magala also addressed environmental challenges, including climate change and degradation, urging collective action and encouraging youth to volunteer, join community clubs, and participate in internships and graduate programs.

The panel discussion featured Jonah Kirabo of Opportunity Tracker, lawyer Howard Mwesigwa, and Namirembe Sandra, the 2025 Climate Queen. Jonah shared how a digital platform was created to help recent graduates access global opportunities, especially in climate change and energy transition. The panel underscored that young people do not need to wait to become environmental professionals to take action and encouraged active participation in policy-making and stakeholder engagement. Miss Sandra emphasized etiquette, self-improvement, and seizing opportunities to make a meaningful difference. The discussion highlighted the complexity of environmental issues and their significance for socio-economic transformation and diversity

Experience Sharing in Catchment Management for the Mt. Elgon Ecosystem and Capacity Building for Enhanced Transparency

Ms. Felly Tusiime presenting progress of the SACRiAC project

This session was chaired by Dr. Callist Tindimugaya, Commissioner for Water Resources Planning and Regulation at the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE).

He explained that the session aimed to critically review three ongoing projects supported by development partners, Uganda Breweries Limited, and the Climate Change Department.

He emphasized the importance of stakeholder engagement, constructive feedback, and aligning interventions with national priorities, particularly under the Refugee Response Program.

Speaker presentations

Ms. Felly Tusiime the SACRiAC Project Coordinator MWE, presented the progress of the SACRiAC initiative, which is transitioning from planning to implementation in the Awajo catchment.

The project involves a multi-stakeholder approach, bringing together government, private sector actors, civil society, and local communities.

She highlighted key achievements, including: demarcation of 149 km of catchment areas, planting of 1,800 seedlings, development of 10 community climate resilience action plans, and preparation of three wetland management plans.

Tusiime stressed that community ownership is essential for sustainability, though challenges such as land degradation and heavy dependence on natural resources remain.

She also noted that private sector involvement, media engagement, and cooperative structures are strengthening awareness and long-term impact.

Ms. Evelyn Busigye (AidEnvironment) and Ms. Pamela Bayina (Uganda Breweries Limited) presented on the Elgon Pamoja Partnership, a three-year initiative focused on soil conservation and livelihood improvement, backed by a UGX 1 billion investment.

They outlined interventions such as tree planting, soil and water conservation, and promotion of alternative energy sources to reduce reliance on wood fuel, and emphasized the role of partnerships, noting that over 30,000 seedlings had been prepared and demonstration farms were being established to showcase best practices.

They also underscored the importance of collaboration, innovation, and farmer empowerment in achieving sustainable outcomes.

Climate Change Department Representative (CBIT Phase II Initiative)

The presentation focused on strengthening transparency systems and greenhouse gas (GHG) reporting. Uganda has committed to reducing emissions by 24.7% by 2030 under its Nationally Determined Contribution.

The speaker explained that the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) initiative supports institutional capacity building in data collection, reporting, and verification across sectors including agriculture, forestry, wetlands, waste, and industry.

Progress includes establishing inter-ministerial data-sharing frameworks and technical guidelines to enhance coordination and compliance with UNFCCC transparency requirements.

The session concluded with a panel discussion featuring various representatives from different institutions.

Hajjati Aphwa Ssebyala (NEMA Board Member), stressed the importance of maintenance, monitoring, and integrated approaches that consider energy use and land management practices.

Mr. Rogers Magoda (Youth Go Green Eastern Uganda), emphasized strategic tree planting, improved land-use practices, and a better understanding of human impacts on water systems. Ms. Caroline Nakalyango (Principal Water Officer, MWE), highlighted the need for baseline data, continuous monitoring, and documentation of lessons to sustain project outcomes beyond their lifecycle.

She advocated for establishing monitoring stations, particularly in urban areas, integrating learning systems to inform future interventions, and early education in fostering sustainable environmental behavior.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Alfred Okidi Okot, Permanent Secretary at MWE, reaffirmed the importance of integrated approaches that combine policy, community action, and public private partnerships.

He acknowledged progress in resilience planning and wetland management and called for scaling up successful models through broader partnerships.

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Wednesday, March 25th,2026 Issue IV

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