



ROOTs NEWSLETTER

“We are running out of Trees”



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Restoring Landscapes | Empowering Communities | Securing Our Future



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA



Secretariat Offices



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ROOTs operates under the Ministry of Water
and Environment department of Forestry Management



Website: <https://mwe.go.ug/>



ROOTs
Running Out Of Trees

“We are running out of Trees”



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or @ROOTSUganda



RESTORE. PROTECT. SUSTAIN.
For Our Future.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Assistant Commissioner Forest Resources in Charge of Regulation and Utilization MWE, Chairman ROOTS Campaign initiative

On behalf of our overall Chairman, the Permanent Secretary, Dr. Alfred Okot Okidi and on my own behalf as Chairman of the technical coordination of the Running Out of Trees (ROOTs) Committee, I bring you greetings from the Ministry of Water and Environment and ROOTs Partners. The Running Out of Trees (ROOTs) Campaign was born in 2019 from a shared vision between the Ministry of Water and Environment, the private sector, civil society, development partners and local communities, to restore Uganda's landscapes by inspiring every Ugandan to plant and nurture trees following Uganda's Restoration Opportunities Assessment and pledge to the Bonn Challenge to restore 2.5 million hectares of degraded forest landscapes by 2030. What began as a bold ambition has grown into one of the country's most successful environmental movements focused on mainly indigenous and fruit trees.



We are running out of trees!

Over the past five years, two of them during a pandemic, the ROOTs Campaign has united schools, cultural and religious institutions, local governments, businesses and citizens around a common purpose. Together, we have planted more than 82 million tree seedlings in over 130 different species, proving that when Ugandans work together, remarkable transformation is possible, embracing one tree at a time.

Our journey has been defined by inspiring milestones, from the symbolic Kampala - Gulu ROOTs Relay in 2020, to annual National Tree Planting Day celebrations that have mobilised thousands of people across the country. These events have strengthened our resolve to move beyond planting trees to ensuring they survive, grow and restore Uganda's forests and landscapes.

However, our mission is far from complete. The Campaign has not been without challenges, especially in the declaration, monitoring, mapping and reporting of the planted trees. Every surviving tree improves biodiversity, protects water sources, strengthens climate resilience, supports livelihoods and safeguards our natural heritage for future generations. The true measure of our success is not the number of seedlings planted, but the healthy forests and ecosystems we leave behind. We therefore continue to call upon entities and individuals to continuously report to this Ministry or our ROOTs Secretariat at Environment Alert such that the trees they plant are integrated in the national reporting framework. The journey to the 24% forest cover mark by 2040 is possible as long as we stay united and glued to the cause.

As Uganda advances towards its national forest restoration targets, I invite every citizen, institution and partner to renew their commitment. Plant a tree every year, nurture it to maturity, protect existing forests and inspire others to do the same. Together, we can transform degraded landscapes into thriving ecosystems and build a greener, healthier and more prosperous Uganda. I also cannot sign out with expressing our immense gratitude to the partners that have believed and stayed committed to the Campaign since inception. We do not take your support for granted. Because of you, the ROOTs Campaign was recognized as the Climate Action Innovation Award winner at the 3rd Edition of the National Environment Sustainability Awards, 2026.

Finally, I warmly invite you to join us for the **National Tree Planting Day on 2nd October 2026 at the National Forestry Resources Research Institute (NaFORRI), at Kifu**, Mukono District. Let us plant not just trees, but hope, resilience and a lasting legacy for generations to come.

Issa Katwesige,
Assistant Commissioner for Forestry, Ministry of Water and Environment

Chairman
ROOTs Campaign Technical Coordination Committee





EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to this inaugural edition of the **ROOTs Newsletter**, a publication that celebrates the remarkable journey of Ugandans working together to restore our nation's forests and secure a greener future. Every story in these pages demonstrates that environmental conservation is no longer the responsibility of government alone, it is a shared national duty embraced by communities, schools, businesses, cultural institutions, faith-based organisations and development partners.

The Running Out of Trees (ROOTs) Campaign continues to unite the country behind a common vision of increasing Uganda's forest cover and contributing to the objectives of the **Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV)**. As we work towards achieving **15 percent forest cover by 2030**, every tree planted brings us closer to a healthier environment, a stronger economy and greater resilience against the effects of climate change.

The steady increase in the number of trees planted under the ROOTs Campaign is a testament to the patriotism of Ugandans. Across the country, citizens are volunteering their time, investing resources and nurturing trees because they recognise that forests sustain life. They provide clean air, protect water catchments, conserve biodiversity, support agriculture, create livelihoods and safeguard our natural heritage for generations yet unborn.

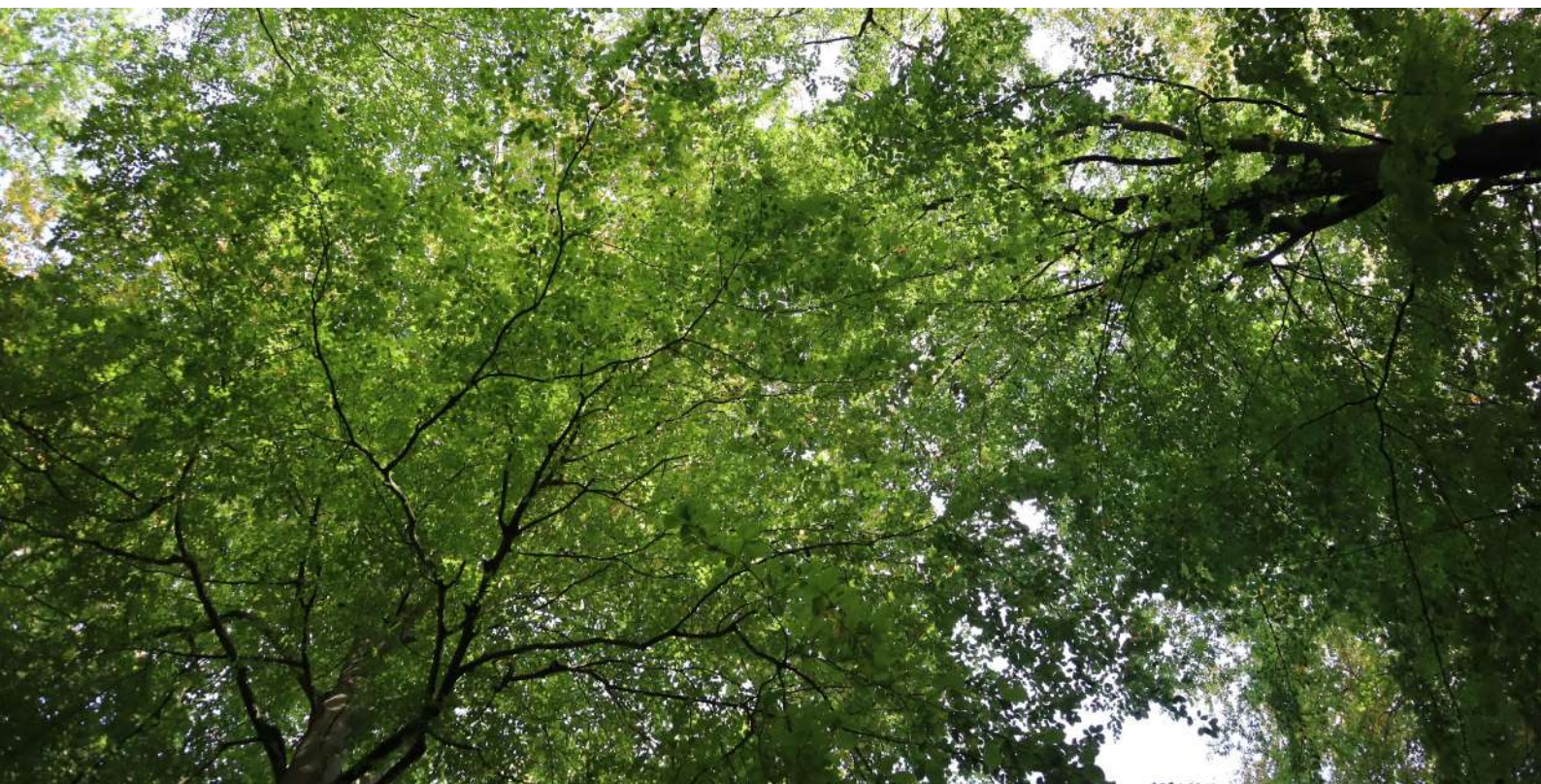
This edition highlights the partnerships, innovations and community-led initiatives that continue to transform degraded landscapes into thriving ecosystems. These achievements remind us that lasting environmental restoration is only possible when every Ugandan becomes a custodian of nature.

I encourage each reader to move beyond admiration and take action. Plant a tree, nurture it to maturity and inspire others to do the same.

Together, we can build a legacy of environmental stewardship that will benefit both present and future generations.

On behalf of the ROOTs Campaign contributors, I extend my sincere appreciation to all our partners and every Ugandan who continues to make this national movement a success. Let us remain united in growing Uganda's forests, protecting biodiversity and creating a greener, healthier and more prosperous nation.

Walukamba Aldon
Editor, ROOTs Newsletter



**ROOTS CAMPAIGN:
GROWING UGANDA'S FOREST FUTURE
THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND
MILLIONS OF TREES**



Uganda's forest restoration efforts have gained remarkable momentum through the **Running Out of Trees (ROOTs) Campaign**, a national initiative that has transformed tree planting into a shared responsibility among government institutions, private sector companies, civil society organisations, cultural institutions, development partners, schools and local communities.

Launched on **30 October 2019** by the **Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE)** in partnership with **Uganda Breweries Limited (UBL)**, ROOTs was established as a five-year campaign to promote tree planting, environmental stewardship and sustainable forest restoration. The initiative mobilises individuals and institutions to plant, protect and nurture trees as a practical response to forest degradation and climate change.

The campaign was introduced at a time when Uganda was experiencing rapid forest loss. According to the ROOTs Information Pack, the country lost approximately **2.4 million hectares of forest cover between 1990 and 2015**, mainly due to agricultural expansion, demand for timber and fuelwood, infrastructure development and other human activities.

Since its launch, ROOTs has continued to register impressive growth. By 2021, the campaign had mobilised **13,478,929** trees through contributions from government agencies, private sector companies, civil society organisations and communities across Uganda.

In **2022**, the number of trees planted increased to **20.9 million**, while 2023 recorded 20,920,612 trees, reflecting sustained partner commitment to restoring Uganda's degraded landscapes.

The campaign expanded even further during **2024 - 2025**, when partners planted an additional 15,095,493 trees, bringing the **total number of trees planted since 2020 to 70,395,034**. These restoration efforts have contributed to increasing tree cover, conserving biodiversity, improving climate resilience, protecting water catchments and supporting sustainable livelihoods.



One of the campaign's earliest highlights was the **ROOTs Relay** in 2020, a two-day awareness drive from Kampala to Gulu involving **33 runners** from different sectors. Seedlings supplied by the Ministry of Water and Environment and the National Forestry Authority were planted at Parliament, along the Kampala-Gulu Highway and in Gulu District, symbolising the country's collective commitment to restoring forests.

ROOTs has flourished through strong partnerships involving Uganda Breweries Limited, Stanbic Bank Uganda, Total Uganda, Uganda Electricity Generation Company Limited (UEGCL), Kampala Capital City Authority, Parliament of Uganda, Uganda Police, National Water and Sewerage Corporation, Buganda Kingdom, Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom, UNRA, WWF, UNHCR and numerous community organisations. In 2021 alone, Uganda Breweries Limited contributed **UGX 330 million** towards seedling acquisition, while ATC Uganda provided **UGX 45 million**. MOGAS also partnered with UBL and MWE to plant more than **5,000 seedlings** in Nakaseke District.



Every Ugandan and institution is encouraged to plant, nurture and protect trees for a greener, healthier and more sustainable Uganda.

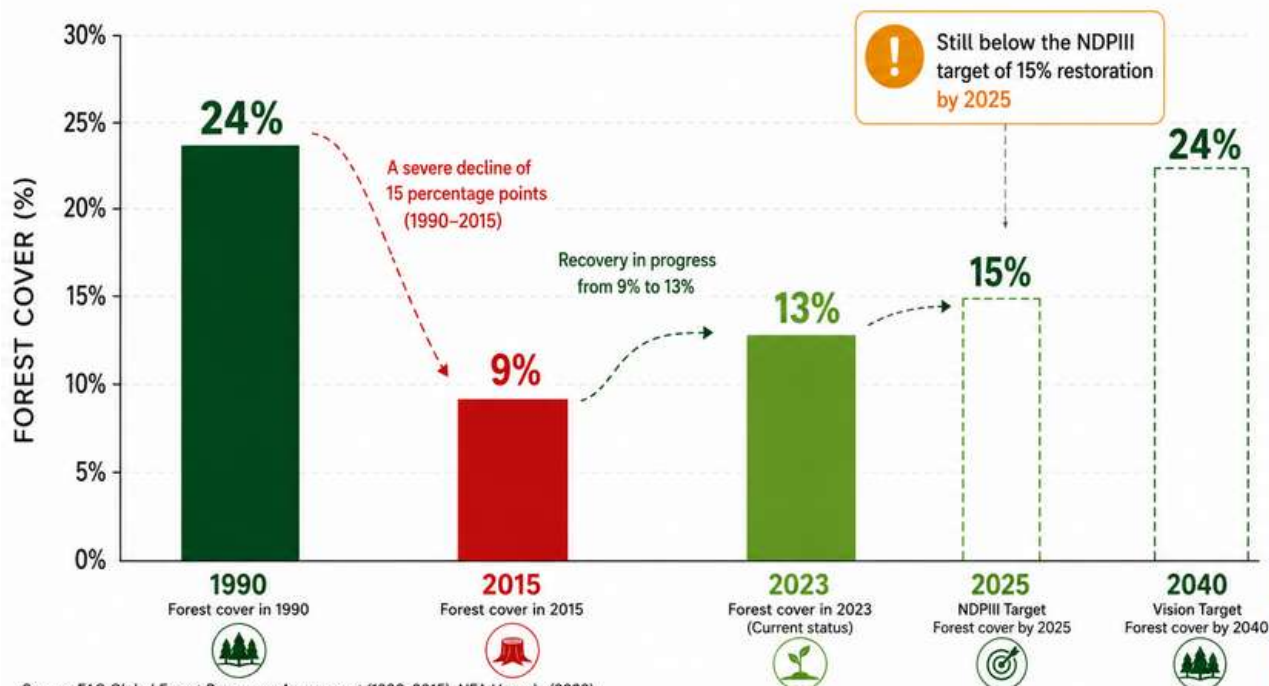


ROOTS CAMPAIGN: FACTS AT A GLANCE

- Launched in 2019 by MWE and Uganda Breweries Limited.
- Restoring forests through partnerships, tree planting, and sustainability initiatives.
- Mobilised 70 + millions of trees through nationwide stakeholder collaboration.
- Supports Uganda's 200 million tree planting national target.
- Recognised for restoration impact, climate resilience, and biodiversity conservation.



UGANDA'S FOREST COVER: BEFORE, AFTER AND THE ROAD AHEAD



 **THE COUNTINUES:**
OUR TARGET TO ACHIEVE

24%
FOREST COVER
RESTORATION
BY 2040

Uganda is committed to restoring and sustainably managing its forests to build a greener, resilient and prosperous future.



To strengthen coordination, ROOTs established a multi-stakeholder governance structure in **2022**, providing strategic leadership for implementation, monitoring, communication and partnerships. The campaign's outstanding contribution to environmental restoration was recognised when it won the **3rd National Environment Sustainability Awards 2026**.

Today, ROOTs stands as one of Uganda's most successful public-private environmental initiatives, demonstrating that partnerships, community action and sustained commitment can restore forests, safeguard biodiversity and build a greener, healthier and more climate-resilient future for generations to come.



Award winners Dr. Jibril Semakula Owomugisha (left), Pamela Turyatunga, and Issa Katwesige celebrate the ROOTs Campaign accolade.

ROOTED IN COMMUNITIES: REVIVING MANWA LOCAL FOREST RESERVE

Manwa Forest Reserve (LFR) is one of the key ecosystems in the region although the reserve's ecological integrity is steadily deteriorating, with boundary encroachment, cultivation, invasive species such as Lantana camara, grazing, brick laying, and unlimited illegal logging and charcoal burning all are faintly depleting her Lifespan.

There is no doubt that Uganda has experienced a significant decline in forest cover, dropping from **24% in 1990 to just 9% in 2015**. This alarming loss has placed immense pressure on biodiversity, water resources, local livelihoods, and the country's resilience to climate change. It has also diminished Uganda's natural heritage, threatening indigenous tree species that have long sustained ecosystems, cultural traditions, and communities for generations.



In response to this challenge, the Ministry of Water and Environment came up with the **Running Out Of Trees Campaign** to mitigate the impacts with support from the private sector. It is through this collaboration and need to reaffirm Stanbic Bank Uganda's commitment to environmental sustainability and climate resilience that Stanbic Bank, committed **UGX 140 million** towards restoration of 15 hectares out of the 30 hectares of degraded landscapes



The Ministry of Water and Environment entrusted Environmental Alert, the Secretariat of the Running Out of Trees Campaign, with implementing the restoration project, which will run until 2027.

The restoration journey of **Manwa Local Forest Reserve** (LFR) begins not with tree planting, but with the people who live alongside the local forest to discuss the importance of restoring the reserve, understand their role in protecting it for the future generations.

Recognizing that successful restoration depends on local ownership, community awareness, and engagement, activities were organized to equip residents with knowledge about the restoration process, the ecological significance of Manwa LFR, and the long-term benefits of protecting indigenous forests. These dialogues also provided an opportunity for community members to share their concerns, strengthen collaboration with district leaders, and reaffirm their commitment to conserving the reserve.

The restoration of Manwa Local Forest Reserve is therefore more than an environmental intervention; it is a **community driven effort** that brings together government, the private sector, conservation partners, and local communities to restore degraded landscapes and build a more climate-resilient Uganda.



Community members around Manwa CFR gather to discuss way forward on protection



This collective restoration effort of **Manwa LFR** speaks directly to the **National Tree Planting Day 2026 theme, “Indigenous Trees: Reclaiming Our Heritage, Powering Green Economies,”** and at the same time create opportunities for sustainable livelihoods through ecotourism, beekeeping, sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products, climate finance, and improved ecosystem services that support agriculture and water security thereby building green economies that will sustain both people and the environment for generations to come.

Story link: <https://envalert.org/http-envalert-org-wp-content-uploads-manwa-2-jpeg/>

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KIJANI FORESTRY'S CARBON MODEL TRANSFORMS FARMERS' LIVES



GULU – Kijani Forestry is transforming livelihoods in Northern Uganda by combining agroforestry, sustainable woodfuel production, and carbon financing to help farmers adapt to climate change. Since launching its carbon initiative in 2020, the Gulu-based social enterprise has integrated indigenous timber and woodfuel trees into traditional farming systems, creating new income opportunities while restoring tree cover.

In 2025, Kijani introduced the **Annual Tree Survival Incentive Payment (ATSIP)**, rewarding farmers for nurturing planted trees before carbon credit revenues are realized. By May 2026, the company had paid over **UGX 198 million to 6,534 farmers**



According to **Michael Tebere**, Director for Government and Partner Relations, the initiative supports Uganda's National Agroforestry Strategy by strengthening tree-based value chains. Beyond financial incentives, Kijani equips farmers with seeds, nursery materials, technical training, and tools, making tree growing a profitable and climate-smart investment for rural communities. [Click here for more](#)



ROOTS AND EACOP GROW FOREST RESTORATION ACROSS BUGANDA AND BUNYORO



The **Running Out of Trees (ROOTS) Campaign**, in partnership with the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), is expanding forest restoration efforts across the Buganda and Bunyoro regions through community-led tree growing and landscape restoration initiatives.



In **Bunyoro**, routine monitoring shows planted indigenous trees are thriving following post-planting management, including slashing, survival assessments and geo-referencing. The project has also strengthened partnerships through technical assessments at Muhangaizima Cultural Site in collaboration with the Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom, where plans are underway to restore 200 hectares using an estimated 267,000 indigenous trees.





Joint monitoring with landowners and EACOP, alongside support from the Hoima Catholic Diocese, continues to promote local ownership of the restoration programme.



In **Buganda**, EACOP and ROOTS are supporting similar restoration activities that combine indigenous tree planting with community engagement to rehabilitate degraded landscapes. Together, these initiatives are enhancing biodiversity, strengthening climate resilience, creating local employment, and contributing to Uganda's national forest restoration agenda through collaborative partnerships.

[Click here for more](#)



From Floodwaters to Forests: Nechabest Inspires a Restoration Movement in Rwenzori



Raising and hardening seedlings in the nursery before they are planted out along the rivers.

What began as a desperate response to devastating floods in a small border village has grown into a remarkable community-led movement restoring landscapes and inspiring hope across Uganda's Rwenzori region.

In **Mirami village**, located along the Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo border, residents endured years of destructive flooding as more than four rivers burst their banks, washing away gardens, homes and livelihoods. Rather than accept the destruction as inevitable, local leaders united in **2019** with a vision to restore the land by planting trees along degraded riverbanks



Restoration reaches the next generation, seedlings and learning come together in schools

The initiative steadily gained momentum through the commitment of local communities. By **2023**, Nechabest Sustainable Initiative had planted 2,500 trees where the journey began, transforming degraded riverbanks into emerging green corridors. Each tree represented a practical solution to flooding and a promise of a safer future for generations to come.

The organisation's philosophy is simple yet powerful: communities can reverse environmental degradation through collective action. Residents mobilised neighbours, raised seedlings in local nurseries and planted indigenous trees to stabilise soils, protect riverbanks and restore biodiversity. Schools also became active partners, combining environmental education with hands-on restoration activities that inspired young people to become custodians of nature.

From its humble beginnings in Mirami, the initiative has grown into **Nechabest Sustainable Initiative**, a social enterprise headquartered in **Kasese** with two additional offices in Uganda's Central Region. The organisation now implements tree restoration projects with local partners while expanding its conservation work beyond the Rwenzori region.

Nechabest has also embraced sustainable tourism as a tool for conservation. The organisation welcomes more than **50 travellers** who participate in tree planting and environmental restoration, helping create a forested destination where communities and nature thrive together. Visitors experience the spectacular Rwenzori landscape while directly contributing to its restoration.

The work comes at a critical time for Kasese, home to the iconic Rwenzori Mountains, renowned biodiversity and internationally recognised tourism attractions. Yet the region remains highly vulnerable to climate change as glaciers continue to shrink and flooding becomes more frequent. Restoring forests and river systems is therefore essential for protecting water sources, wildlife, tourism and local livelihoods.

Today, Nechabest stands as proof that environmental restoration begins with ordinary people determined to protect the places, they call home. From the floodwaters of Mirami to the slopes of the Rwenzori Mountains, the initiative demonstrates that one community, one seedling and one shared vision can grow into a movement that restores landscapes, strengthens climate resilience and secures a greener future for Uganda.

Sheraton Kampala Hotel Joins ROOTs Campaign to Advance Uganda's Forest Restoration Agenda

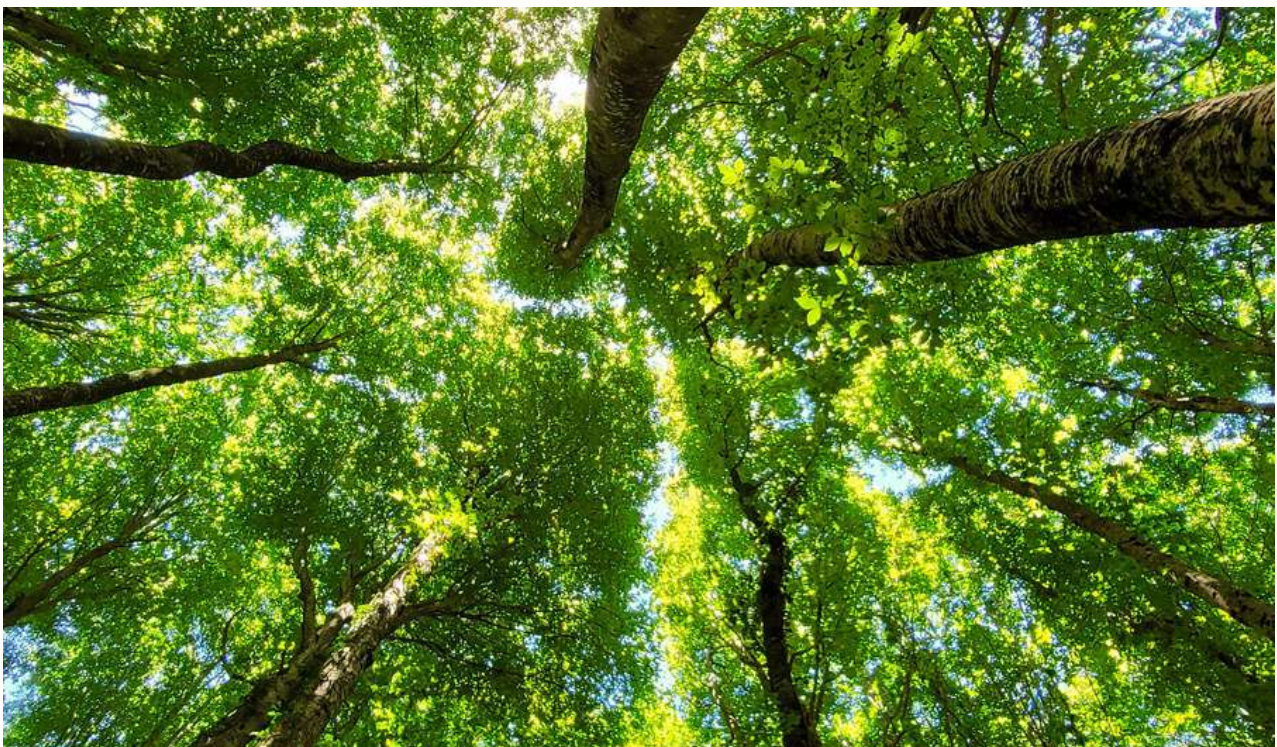


Hajjat Alpha Sebyala Mama Green and Sheraton staff prepare to plant trees during Sustainability Week 2026.

The **Running Out of Trees (ROOT's) Campaign** partnered with **Sheraton Kampala Hotel** during the hotel's **Sustainability Week 2026**, held on 13 July 2026, reaffirming the growing commitment of the private sector to environmental conservation and sustainable development.

A key highlight of the event was a symbolic tree-planting exercise led by renowned environmental champion **Hajjat Alpha Sebyala**, popularly known as "**Mama Green**", a ROOT's Campaign partner and member of the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) Board. oined by Sheraton Kampala Hotel staff, including two female team members, Mama Green planted a tree as a lasting symbol of the hotel's commitment to restoring Uganda's forest landscapes and promoting climate action.

The Sustainability Week brought together stakeholders committed to advancing environmental stewardship through practical initiatives that encourage responsible business practices, biodiversity conservation and community engagement.





The participation of Sheraton Kampala Hotel demonstrates the vital role the hospitality industry can play in supporting Uganda's national forest restoration efforts. Through the ROOTs Campaign, partnerships between government, the private sector, civil society and local communities continue to mobilise tree planting and inspire collective action against deforestation and climate change.

Speaking through her actions, Mama Green reaffirmed the importance of every institution and individual contributing to a greener Uganda by planting, nurturing and protecting trees.

As the country accelerates efforts to restore degraded landscapes, collaborations such as this continue to strengthen the ROOTs Campaign's mission of building resilient ecosystems, conserving biodiversity and improving livelihoods. Every tree planted represents hope for future generations and a shared commitment to creating a healthier, greener and more sustainable Uganda.

OUR PARTNERS



