



**UGANDA  
W&E  
WEEK**

# THE WATERFRONT NEWSLETTER

Monday, March 23rd, 2026

Issue II



Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Robina Nabbanja Launching WASHNAP 2026-2030

# The Right Honorable Prime Minister graces the ninth Water and Environment Week.



Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja blesses the 9th UWEWK2026

Officiating at the Ninth Uganda Water and Environment Week 2026, the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister, Robinah Nabbanja reaffirmed Government's commitment to sustainable water and environmental management as a cornerstone for Uganda's socio-economic transformation. She acknowledged the presence of the Minister of State for Water, Members of Parliament, Development Partners including UNICEF, representatives from the private sector and Civil Society, as well as Ugandans following the proceedings online, and conveyed warm greetings from the President-elect of the Republic of Uganda, His Excellence General Yoweri Kaguta Museveni.

While delivering her remarks, she noted that the annual event, consistently convened by the Ministry of Water and Environment since 2018, continues to serve as a vital platform for bringing together stakeholders to deliberate on critical issues affecting the sector and the country at large. She commended the Ministry and its partners for sustaining this important dialogue, emphasizing its role in shaping responsive and inclusive policies.

Speaking to the theme, **“Water and Environment for an Inclusive and Prosperous Uganda,”** she underscored its timeliness, noting that the sustainable management of water and environmental resources is central to improving livelihoods and advancing Uganda's aspiration of attaining upper-middle-income status by 2040. She highlighted Government's ambitious tenfold growth strategy, aimed at expanding the economy from US\$61.3 billion in 2025 to US\$500 billion by 2040, anchored on key sectors including agro-industrialisation, tourism, mineral-based development, and science, technology and innovation. In this regard, she emphasized that water and environment resources are critical enablers of this growth trajectory.

Cognizant of the need for inclusive development, she acknowledged the deliberate efforts by Government to involve women and youth in leadership and decision-making processes. She noted that women play a central role in managing household water and food systems, while youth bring innovation and energy, and local communities contribute valuable

indigenous knowledge. She stressed that meaningful participation of these groups strengthens the effectiveness, sustainability, and resilience of programmes and policies.

She further outlined Government's commitments under the 2026–2031 National Resistance Movement Manifesto, highlighting priority interventions in the water and environment sector. These include accelerating the construction of irrigation infrastructure such as valley tanks and dams, expanding piped water networks to achieve universal access, rehabilitating existing systems, and protecting water catchment areas. She also emphasised ongoing efforts to restore degraded ecosystems including wetlands, forests, and

riverbanks, alongside initiatives to increase forest cover through tree planting and agroforestry.

Nabbanja further noted that Government is intensifying solid waste management efforts in urban areas to address pollution, while promoting climate-resilient agricultural practices and investing in early warning systems to better manage climate-related risks. She specifically pointed to high-risk areas such as the Mount Elgon region, where relocation efforts are underway to safeguard communities from disasters.

In addition, she highlighted the importance of promoting sustainable energy alternatives to reduce reliance on charcoal and firewood, thereby mitigating deforestation. She reiterated that

achieving these commitments will require strengthened coordination, equitable access to services, and enhanced accountability across all levels.

In a significant highlight of the ceremony, the Prime Minister launched the Service Delivery Standards, Strategic Development Plan, Client Charter, National Adaptation Plan for WASH NAP: Water and Environment Management Information System and the Annual Programme Performance Report 2025/2026 for the Ministry of Water and Environment, noting that these tools will enhance planning, improve service delivery, and strengthen accountability in the sector, ultimately contributing to better outcomes for all Ugandans.

## UWEWK Recognized as a Premier Platform for Innovation and Dialogue



Permanent Secretary - MWE welcomes participants to the 9th UWEWK2026

PS – welcoming Stakeholders at the ninth Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK), The Permanent Secretary; Ministry of Water and Environment, Dr. Alfred Okot Okidi noted with pride that the Uganda Water and Environment Week has steadily evolved into a premier national platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and shared learning, significantly contributing to the improvement

of Uganda's water and environmental resources.

Reflecting on the theme, he emphasized that it is not merely a slogan but a clear mandate aligned with national and continental development frameworks, including the National Development Plan, Uganda Vision 2040, and Africa Water Vision 2063. Cognizant of the broader continental momentum, he highlighted that

the year 2026 has been designated by the Heads of State of the African Union as the Year of Water and Sanitation, further noting that the Africa Water Vision 2063 and its policy framework were formally launched in February 2026. He explained that this vision will inform Africa's unified position at the forthcoming 2026 UN Water Conference scheduled for December in the United Arab Emirates.

While situating Uganda within this global and continental context, he observed that several high-level engagements on water, environment, and climate change will take place throughout the year. In this regard, he described the Uganda Water and Environment Week as a national laboratory, an opportunity to test, refine, and scale innovations necessary to secure a water, environment, and climate-resilient future.

Providing direction for the week's engagements, he outlined that deliberations will be guided by four critical sub-themes. These include examining the role of water and environment in achieving Uganda's tenfold growth strategy, advancing investment in science, technology, and innovation to accelerate progress in the sector, promoting environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient economies and communities, and leveraging the capacity of women, youth, and children in the delivery of water and environment services. He urged participants to ensure that these discussions move beyond dialogue to actionable outcomes that will shape a resilient future for generations to come.

He acknowledged, with appreciation, the unwavering commitment of partners and stakeholders who have worked alongside the Ministry over the past nine years to sustain and grow the Uganda Water and Environment Week. He noted that the platform has expanded remarkably from fewer than ten partners in 2018 to over one hundred partners currently supporting and participating in the event, reflecting growing confidence and shared ownership within the sector.

He further reported that, in the lead-up to the 2026 edition, the Ministry signed Memoranda of Understanding with four partner organizations aimed at strengthening collaboration in the management and development of water and environmental resources. Among these, he highlighted a landmark partnership with Water For People Uganda, designed to advance innovative Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) financing models for water, sanitation, and hygiene. He explained that this approach is intended to bridge the gap between public policy and private investment, noting that Environmental, social and Governance (ESG) frameworks are increasingly recognized as critical tools for aligning public service delivery with sustainable financing mechanisms.

In closing, he reiterated the importance of collective commitment, emphasizing that the success of the Uganda Water and Environment Week lies in translating shared ambition into measurable impact that will drive inclusive growth and environmental sustainability across the country.

## Climate Change Framed as a Water Crisis



Dr. Robin Nandy addressing the participants during UWEWK2026

At the opening ceremony of the Uganda Water and Environment Week 2026 held on 23rd March 2026, Dr. Robin Nandy, UNICEF Representative to Uganda, made his speech on behalf of the United Nations system and Development Partners, setting the tone for the week by framing climate change as fundamentally a water crisis. Drawing from Uganda's lived realities, he pointed to prolonged droughts in the cattle corridor, landslides in the Mount Elgon and Bududa regions, and floods in West Nile that continue to destroy infrastructure and contaminate vital water sources. He emphasized that beyond physical damage, these climate events have far-reaching social consequences, including increased school dropout rates among girls tasked with water collection, the spread of waterborne diseases such as cholera and typhoid during floods, and heightened vulnerability among children and marginalized communities.

He commended the Government of Uganda, particularly the Ministry of Water and Environment, for the completion and forthcoming launch of the National Adaptation Plan, describing it as a landmark framework that integrates water, sanitation, and hygiene with climate action as a multi-sectoral priority. He noted that the plan aligns

with Uganda's National Development Plan IV and the Paris Agreement, while embedding climate-resilient water systems within the country's broader development agenda. He further highlighted that the implementation of the plan is expected to deliver wide-ranging benefits, including strengthening infection prevention and control in healthcare facilities, improving school attendance and retention, addressing social challenges such as early marriage and teenage pregnancy, and enhancing food security, nutrition, and ecosystem protection.

Reaffirming the commitment of the United Nations, Dr. Nandy underscored continued support toward advancing climate-resilient WASH systems in Uganda, particularly as the country moves into the final stretch toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. He emphasized that this support will remain aligned with national priorities, including the National Development Plan IV, the Paris Agreement, and other strategic frameworks guiding Uganda's development trajectory.

In his call to action, he urged stakeholders to prioritize the most vulnerable populations, noting that targeted investments in these groups yield the

greatest social and economic returns. He emphasized the importance of inclusion, particularly the need to meaningfully engage women, children, and youth, who are both disproportionately affected by climate impacts and critical drivers of change. He also stressed the importance of sustained investment in behavior change, reminding participants that infrastructure alone is not sufficient to deliver lasting impact. He noted that practices such as handwashing require continuous reinforcement and commitment, highlighting that long-term behavior change is

essential to fully realize the benefits of WASH interventions.

He concluded by expressing optimism about Uganda's path forward, reaffirming the United Nations' commitment to supporting the country's climate adaptation and WASH agenda, and emphasizing that through integration, inclusion, and sustained investment, Uganda is well-positioned to achieve its development goals and build a more resilient future for all.

## State Minister for Water and Environment Calls for Decisive Action Linking Science, Policy, and Communities



State Minister for Water and Environment addressing participants during UWEWK2026

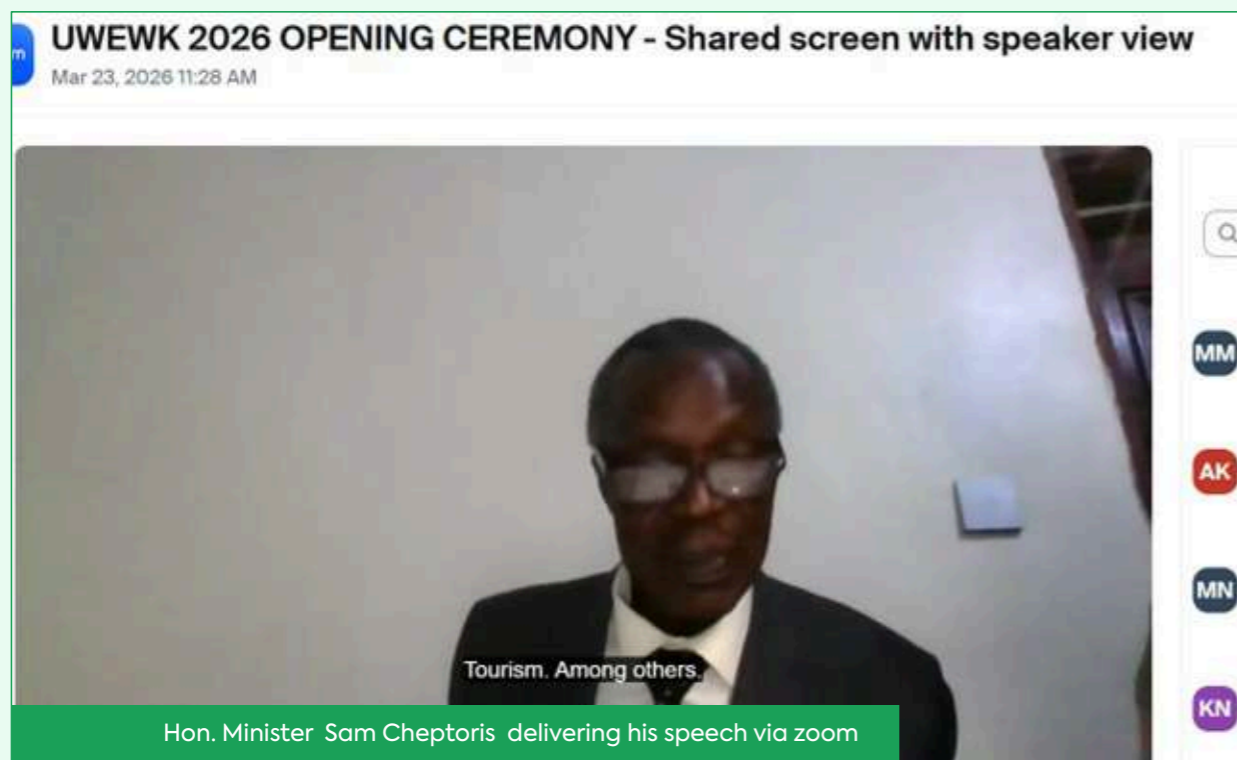
Remarking at the 9th Water and Environment Week, the State Minister for Water; Honorable Aisha Ssekindi acknowledged the presence of the Right Honorable Prime Minister as Chief Guest, alongside the Minister of Water and Environment who joined virtually, expressing gratitude for his recovery and continued leadership despite recent illness. Appreciation was also extended to religious leaders, Members of Parliament, representatives of the United Nations, cultural institutions, Development Partners, Civil Society, the private sector, and the media, recognizing their collective role in advancing Uganda's water and environmental agenda.

In a heartfelt reflection, the Minister highlighted the dedication of grassroots mobilizers (Walkers' Association of Uganda) who annually traverse long distances across the country to raise awareness on water and environment issues, emphasizing the importance of connecting national leadership with these community champions. She officially welcomed participants to the week, expressing deep appreciation to the Prime Minister for prioritizing the event despite competing national commitments, noting that her presence underscored government's strong commitment to water, environment, and climate action.

The Minister described the Uganda Water and Environment Week as a premier national platform where science, policy, and community action converge to shape solutions and share knowledge. Anchored on the theme "Water and Environment for an Inclusive and Prosperous Uganda," the 2026 edition reflects the country's urgent need to transition from merely managing natural resources to optimizing them for wealth creation and sustainable development. She emphasized that the event is not an isolated engagement, but a key contribution to Africa's Agenda 2063, demonstrating Uganda's commitment to achieving continental aspirations through sustainable resource management.

The Minister underscored that water and environmental resources are critical drivers of energy security and food sovereignty. "Efforts to expand irrigation aim to reduce dependence on rain-fed agriculture, while the sustainability of hydropower generation depends on the protection and restoration of watersheds", She mentioned!. Through an integrated approach, the sector seeks to ensure that water resources support the core pillars of Uganda's economy, including the promotion of small-scale solar irrigation schemes in rural communities.

She concluded by inviting the Honorable Minister of Water and Environment to deliver his remarks, setting the stage for further high-level discussions.



While delivering his remarks at the opening, the Minister of Water and Environment, Honorable Sam Cheptoris expressed appreciation to the State Minister and Ministry staff for steering the institution during his absence, acknowledging their dedication in ensuring continuity of operations. He further acknowledged the presence of the Right Honourable Prime Minister, government officials, Development Partners, Civil Society, and other stakeholders, noting that their participation reflects a shared commitment to advancing Uganda's water and environmental agenda. He also congratulated the Government on its recent electoral victory, observing that it demonstrates the trust Ugandans have placed in their leadership.

The Minister reaffirmed the sector's commitment to contributing to Uganda's transition to upper middle-income status, noting that this will be achieved through enhanced productivity in agriculture and industry, improved public health, and sustainable management of natural resources. He highlighted that effective water resource management remains central to economic transformation, supporting key sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and industry, while also creating opportunities for green jobs and promoting sustainable consumption and production.

Cognizant of the growing pressures on the sector, he noted that environmental degradation, particularly wetland encroachment, continues to pose a significant threat. Drawing from personal observation, he expressed concern over the ongoing conversion of wetlands for agricultural use, stressing the need for stronger enforcement of environmental regulations. He further noted that water pollution, driven by industrial discharge and agricultural chemicals, has emerged as one

of the most pressing environmental challenges facing the country.

He acknowledged the increasing impacts of climate change, including shifting weather patterns and rising temperatures, as well as the effects of rapid urbanisation and population growth on infrastructure and natural resources. He further acknowledged that limited financing, institutional capacity gaps, and weak enforcement mechanisms continue to constrain progress, noting that current funding levels fall significantly short of what is required to meet national and global targets.

In a candid reflection, the Minister acknowledged shortcomings within the sector, particularly in the enforcement of environmental regulations, emphasizing the need for greater accountability and institutional strengthening. He called for enhanced partnerships and increased investment to address these challenges and build resilience against climate risks.

Reaffirming the importance of the Uganda Water and Environment Week, he noted that the platform continues to bring together science, policy, and community action to drive sustainable solutions. He urged all stakeholders to take climate change seriously, emphasizing that it is an immediate reality requiring urgent and collective action. In conclusion, he called for the protection of water resources and ecosystems, stressing the need to adopt more sustainable practices that balance development with environmental conservation to secure the future for generations to come.

Concluding his remarks, he invited Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja to officially open the 9th UWEWK2026.

**Key message: "The Uganda Water and Environment Week continues to serve as a vital platform for dialogue, innovation, and collaboration, demonstrating the country's commitment to achieving an inclusive and prosperous future through sustainable water and environmental management"**



Mr. Lalit Patra WASH Manager Climate, Environment, UNICEF



UGANDA  
**W&E**  
WEEK



MINISTRY OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENT

# UGANDA WATER AND ENVIRONMENT WEEK (UWEWK) 2026

Day 23rd ... to ... March 2026



Pupils from Ntare Primary School reciting a poem

# Water and Environment for an inclusive and prosperous Uganda: Experts give their Insight

The 9th Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK 2026) officially commenced in Kampala under the theme "Water and Environment for an Inclusive and Prosperous Uganda." Organized by the Ministry of Water and Environment through the Water Resources Institute, the event convened policymakers, Development Partners, researchers, and Civil Society actors to reflect on the central role of water and environmental resources in Uganda's development journey.

Delivering the keynote address, Mr. Oswald M. Chanda highlighted the increasing pressure on water and environmental systems driven by climate change, rapid population growth projected to reach 100 million by 2050, and an urbanization rate exceeding five percent annually. He emphasized that these trends are placing significant strain on ecosystems and water resources, calling

for urgent and coordinated action. He further noted that global and national frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals, Africa Agenda 2063, and Uganda Vision 2040 provide a strong foundation for guiding the country's response.

The keynote drew attention to persistent challenges affecting the sector, including weak governance particularly at the local level, limited accountability and coordination, low investment levels, and inadequate institutional capacity. He also pointed out the slow uptake of technology and the need to strengthen the resilience of infrastructure and service systems in the face of growing environmental and climate-related risks.

Emphasizing governance as the cornerstone of sector transformation, Mr. Chanda called for stronger policy, legal, and institutional

Mr Oswald Mulenga Chanda making a keynote presentation

frameworks supported by effective enforcement and inclusive participation of communities. He underscored the importance of coordinated leadership across all levels to ensure that policies translate into tangible outcomes.

On financing, the keynote stressed the need to strengthen strategies for mobilizing resources at scale, highlighting the importance of improving budget efficiency, leveraging blended and multilateral financing, and promoting integrated, multi-sectoral investments. Effective communication and awareness were also noted as key to attracting sustainable financing and ensuring long-term impact.

Capacity development was presented as critical to addressing the complex challenges facing the sector. The keynote emphasized the need for stronger institutions, decentralized approaches to service delivery, data-driven decision-making, and enhanced human resource capacity to ensure efficiency and effectiveness across systems.

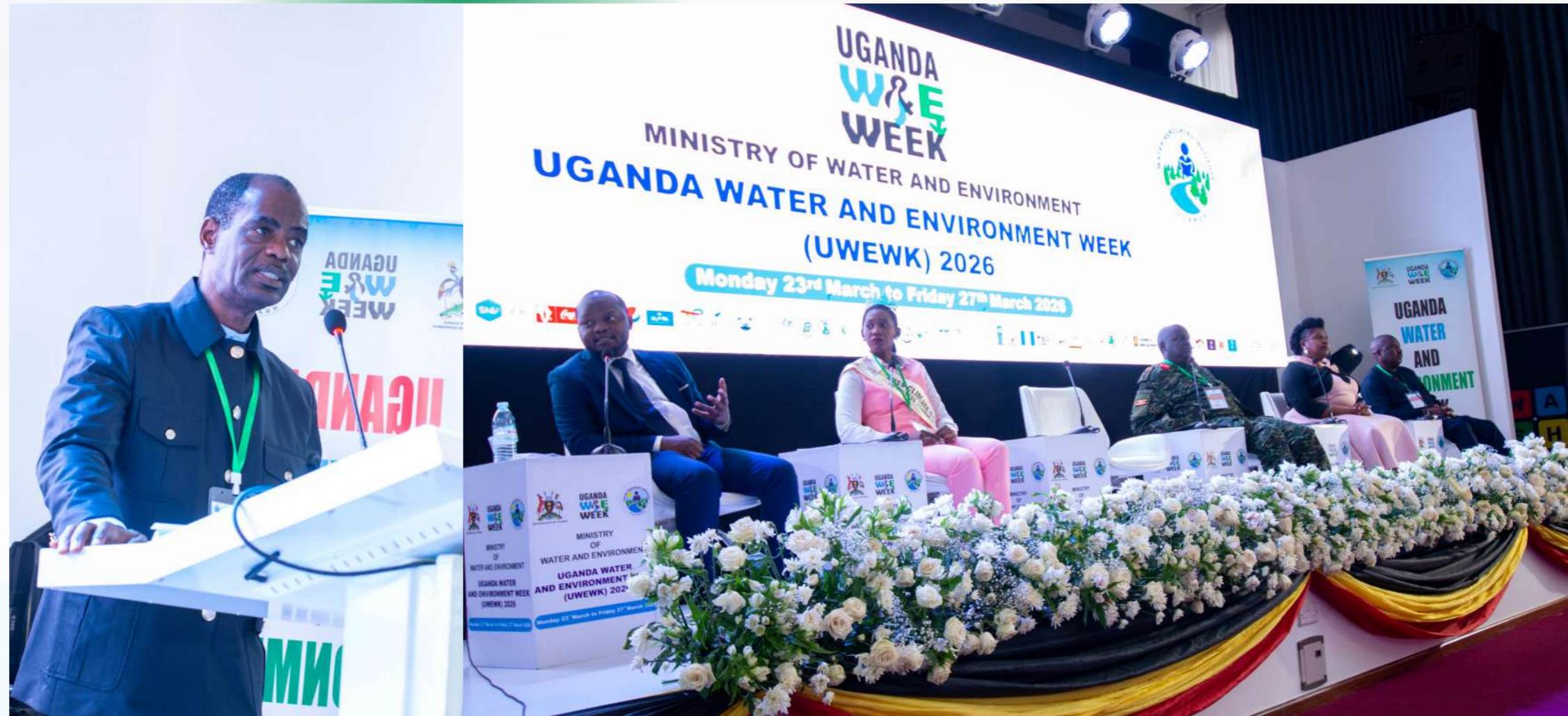
Innovation and technology were identified as essential drivers of improved service delivery, with a call to incentivize the adoption of new technologies that lower costs and improve efficiency. The role of government, research institutions, the private sector, and communities in fostering innovation was highlighted, alongside the importance of digitalization and scalable solutions that can respond to growing demand.

The keynote also placed strong emphasis on inclusiveness, urging stakeholders to put a human face to development by prioritizing vulnerable and marginalized populations. He noted that inclusiveness is not only a moral imperative but also a key driver for mobilizing resources and achieving sustainable outcomes.

In conclusion, Mr. Chanda called for strengthened institutions, enhanced accountability, and effective partnerships to drive impact at scale. He encouraged stakeholders to leverage science, technology, and youth innovation while adopting decentralized approaches that bring services closer to communities. He urged all actors to seize emerging opportunities, strengthen collaboration, and ensure that no one is left behind in the pursuit of a sustainable and prosperous Uganda.

Building onto Mulenga's keynote presentation, Hon. Steven Adyeri, Former Member of Parliament contextualized his remarks within Uganda's National Development Plan IV, noting its ambitious vision of achieving a Tenfold Economic Growth and transitioning the country into a USD 500 billion economy by 2040. He highlighted the strategic focus on Agro-industrialization, Tourism, Mineral beneficiation, and Science, Technology and Innovation as critical drivers of this transformation.

He emphasized that water and environment are central to achieving these national aspirations, particularly through key pillars such as irrigation development, oil pipeline expansion, infrastructure



growth, and investments in human capital development, including health and skills. Cognisant of the country's socio-economic dynamics, he noted the importance of transitioning from subsistence farming, managing rapid urbanization, enhancing climate resilience, and ensuring inclusive economic opportunities for all Ugandans.

Hon. Adyeri further elaborated on the rising cost of water treatment and underscored the need for strengthened policy frameworks, including proposing the development of a comprehensive water policy at the Parliamentary level, with particular attention to urban sanitation challenges such as sewerage systems in Kampala. He acknowledged the role of energy in driving industrialization, citing Uganda's reliance on hydropower from sources such as Bujagali and Karuma dams along the River Nile, while also recognizing the importance of carbon sequestration and environmental conservation.

He also highlighted sustainable tourism as one of Uganda's leading foreign exchange earners, stressing the need to safeguard natural ecosystems that support the sector. While acknowledging progress, he informed participants that Uganda has significantly improved access to clean water through the construction of over 150 water sources and expansion of piped water systems in urban centers.

The session concluded with key reflections emphasizing the need to position water and environment as a core economic strategy requiring deliberate integration across sectors. Participants underscored the importance of protecting and restoring ecosystems such as wetlands and rivers, scaling up sustainable agriculture through irrigation, and promoting nature-based solutions including watershed management. The discussion further called for strengthening institutional governance, particularly agencies such as NEMA, and ensuring alignment with the National Physical Development Plan to guide sustainable growth and development.

## Panel Presentation

While contributing to the panel discussion, Sarah Kagingo, Vice Chairperson of the Board of Directors at the Private Sector Foundation Uganda, emphasized the critical role of the private sector in advancing climate change awareness. She acknowledged the Ministry of Water and Environment for its stewardship in environmental protection, while noting the need to shift from what she described as a largely enforcement-driven approach to a more leadership-oriented model that encourages voluntary compliance and collective responsibility.

Sandra Namirembe, representing the youth, highlighted the importance of inclusive engagement in climate action. She noted that children, youth, women, and persons with disabilities are often consulted only to identify challenges, but are rarely involved in designing solutions. She illustrated this by pointing out that women, who wake up as early as 4:00 a.m. to fetch water, possess valuable insights that should inform decisions such as the placement of boreholes and valley dams. She further underscored the need to

prioritize capacity building through accessible knowledge and information sharing, enabling communities to actively participate in climate solutions.

Major General Moses Rwakitarate informed participants that the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), reaffirming their commitment to enforcing environmental laws and ensuring compliance. His remarks highlighted the growing role of security institutions in supporting environmental governance.

The discussions collectively underscored the importance of strengthening institutional collaboration in addressing climate change, with participants recognizing the need for a more coordinated, multi-sectoral approach that effectively engages the private sector. It was further noted that Uganda's predominantly youthful population, with approximately 50 percent under the age of 17, presents a significant opportunity to drive environmental protection efforts if meaningfully engaged.

Participants also called for better utilization of existing legal frameworks, such as the Environmental Act, to empower youth to advocate, innovate, and address barriers to their participation. In addition, the promotion of nature-based solutions, including eco-tourism and green technologies such as energy-saving stoves, was highlighted as a pathway to creating green jobs while advancing environmental sustainability.

## Uganda Water and Environment Week 2026: Regional Highlights, Achievements, and Feedback:

In the Western Region, the focus was on the Albertine area, where local initiatives are driving national progress in water and environmental management. District-level initiatives in Kabale, Kitagwenda, and Kamwenge included school outreaches, youth debates, and creative engagements like crowning Miss Climate Awareness. Community cleanups, reforestation efforts, and infrastructure milestones such as the launch of the



Panel discussion



Regional feedback session in progress



Butebe water supply system demonstrated the region's integrated approach. Digital campaigns and high-visibility events like the Mpanga Marathon amplified public awareness and participation. The session concluded with a call for enhanced coordination, inclusive engagement, increased research investment.

In Northern Uganda, Ms. Annah Achan highlighted that the Northern Uganda Water and Environment Week was organized by the Water and Sanitation Development Facility. The regional engagement brought together over 500 stakeholders, including government representatives, academia, and Civil Society partners. Activities ranged from Miss Climate Change Northern auditions, radio talk shows, sports gala, tree planting exercises in schools, wetland demarcation in Kole District, community clean-up campaigns. Environmental awareness initiatives actively engaged youth, reinforcing the importance of innovation, community-driven approaches, and structured mentorship through digital hubs and guidance programs. Emphasis was placed on sustaining environmental interventions, such as water scheduling for newly planted trees, and empowering young people to participate actively in climate solutions.

In Karamoja, UWEWK 2026 pre activities highlighted resilience amid persistent water and sanitation challenges, including flash floods and limited sanitation coverage. The regional celebration, launched on 2nd March, focused on environmental restoration and community empowerment. Activities included ceremonial tree planting, monitoring of the Arachek Dam, construction and rehabilitation of sanitation facilities, women's livelihood programs, youth-centered debates and sports events. Campaigns against deforestation and charcoal burning involved collaboration with the National Forest Authority, police, and local leaders. The region's key takeaways emphasized the urgent need for empowering women, integrating environmental education, fostering youth skills development, and building strong partnerships to address systemic water and environmental challenges.

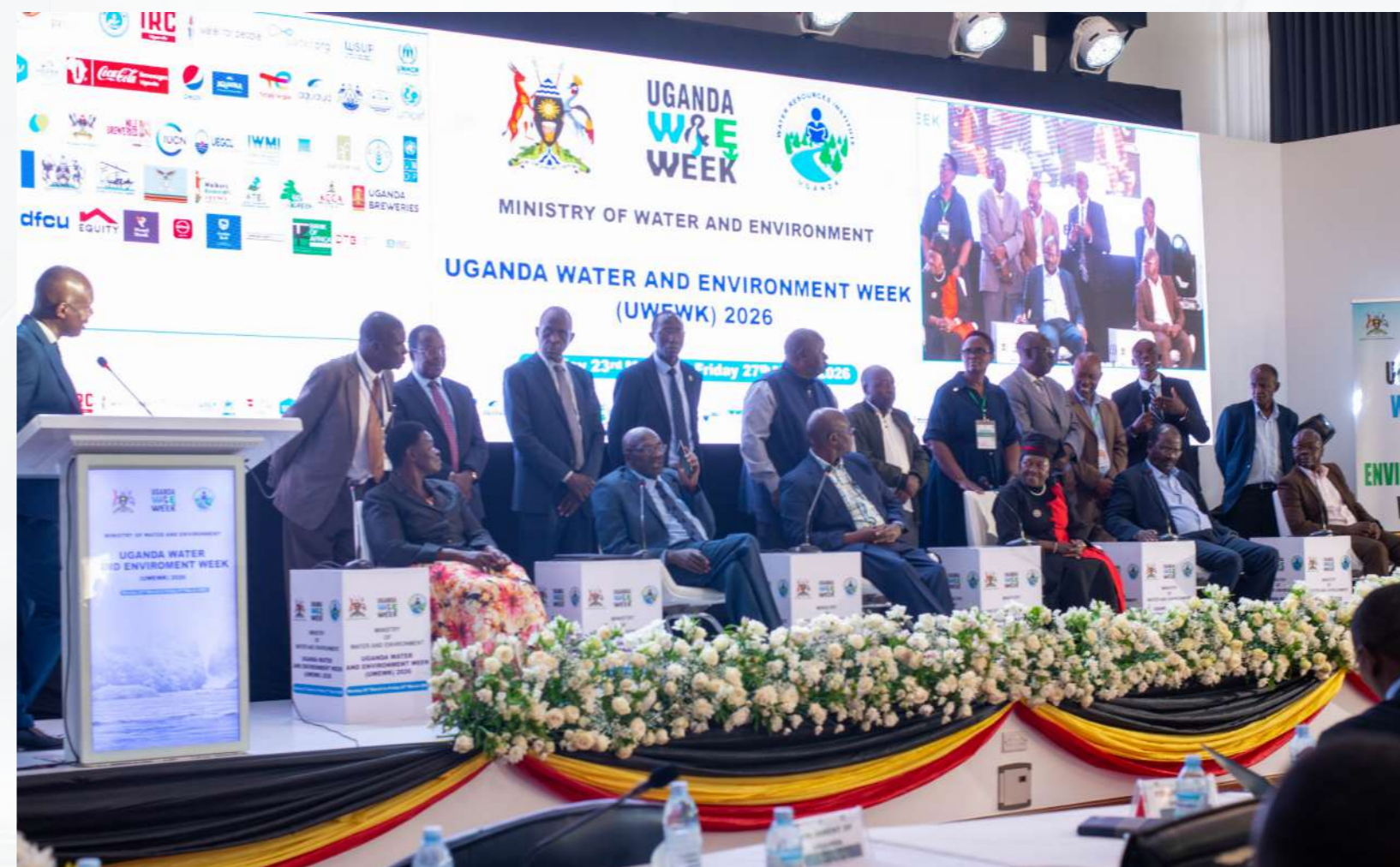
Mbale Region celebrated the power and capacity of women, youth, and children in water and

environmental services. Stakeholder-driven activities engaged partners including Oxfam, Seed Loan Mbali Industrial Park, Mambira Seed Supply, Centenary Park, Champoko University, and community organizations. The week featured tree planting along River Ndomba, clean-up exercises for school children and street children, the Miss Climate Change Awareness pageant, and the Eastern Region Youth Debate Tournament. The events drew strong community participation and highlighted the need for improved water systems, flood mitigation, expanded outreach to schools, and strengthened organizing committee capacity.

In the South-Western Region, Mbarara City hosted celebrations that combined science, technology, and community-led action to accelerate progress in environmental management. Held from 7th to 19th March, the week was officially launched with robust participation from local government, Ministry of Water and Environment officials, and regional managers. Flagship activities included the Miss Climate Change Awareness pageant, public media briefings, the Raising Lever Cup innovation for reporting environmental incidents, women's development initiatives, tree nursery projects at Bishop Stewart University, youth engagement through debates and public speaking, and environmental advocacy campaigns such as river mining conservation. Outcomes underscored the effectiveness of community-led approaches, the power of local innovation, and the crucial role of youth and women as agents of change, with sustained support essential for long-term impact.

Across all regions, UWEWK 2026 regional activities demonstrated that collaborative, inclusive, and innovative approaches are driving Uganda toward a future where water and environmental management are both sustainable and community-centered. The week augmented the partnerships between government, Civil Society, Development Partners, and local communities as key to realizing national water and environmental goals, while also empowering citizens to become active stewards of their environment

## Ministry of Water and Environment taps veteran experts to rebuild the sector



Retired professionals during the Meet and Greet of Water and Environment Elders-

A quiet but significant shift is unfolding within Uganda's water and environment sector, where experience is being reclaimed as a critical resource rather than left to fade into retirement.

In a renewed push to strengthen institutional memory and technical capacity, the Ministry is turning to a pool of seasoned professionals whose decades of service once shaped the sector's foundation.

At the center of this effort is Dr. Callist Tindimugaya, the Commissioner, Water Resources Planning and Regulation, who

recently joined fellow ministry officials in a light-hearted engagement with former senior staff and retirees to explore how their expertise can once again drive progress.

During the interaction in side event dubbed "Meet and Greet, water and environment sector elders" at the Uganda Water and Environment Week 2026 at the Ministry offices, Tindimugaya emphasized that instead of relying heavily on external consultants for policy, technical, and research support, the Ministry has adopted a strategy to directly engage retired

professionals in ongoing sector activities.

He noted that these individuals carry deep institutional memory and extensive experience that could help address the country's current challenges if given the opportunity.

"Okay, so this program is called retired professionals program, the program where we are engaging the people who have retired from government, from academia, from private sector, Civil Society, on the issues of water, environment and climate change. We established this

program because we wanted to retain institutional memory," he noted.

He added that retirees could play a vital role in mentoring young professionals, participating in sector dialogues, mobilizing resources, and strengthening technical capacity to tackle emerging challenges.

"So you can engage, for example, in mentoring young people in the ministry, and also in the dialogues, helping us, for example, to engage, to mobilize resources, but most importantly, to train the people to be able to actually address the challenges we are faced with. So we also felt that when people retire, many times they become redundant, some of them will die very fast, so we decided to keep them together, so that they can continue working with each other," Tindimugaya noted.

Beyond technical contributions, the initiative is also designed to foster social connection and wellbeing among retirees, offering them a platform to share experiences, support one another, and remain active contributors to national development.

Central to the programme's long-term vision is the planned establishment of a water and environment museum, an ambitious project aimed at documenting the sector's evolution over the years to the present.

Retired professionals are expected to lead the effort by collecting historical materials, equipment, and narratives that trace changes in water supply

systems, environmental management, and climate response.

"We already started last year, we have been at it for about six months, it is going to take long, because it is going to cover a whole area, so we are giving ourselves about three to four years, but we don't want to wait for everything to be set up, we set up what is there, people see it, then we continue moving," he added.

Mike Duncan Tumwikirize, Assistant Commissioner for Procurement, underscored the value of the retirees, describing them as a largely untapped resource within the Ministry.

"These fellows are carrying with them, a lot of knowledge, and we are not making good use of it, especially when it comes to these individual consultancies. Individual consultancies, it would be very easy to engage them, because they know how we work, they have worked here before, so they know the kind of quality that is expected. It's not a gamble," he said.

He added that working with retired professionals reduces uncertainty compared to hiring external consultants whose credentials may not always be verifiable.

Under the programme, retirees sign framework contracts typically lasting between one and a half to two years, allowing the Ministry to engage them as needed through specific assignments.

According to Richard Musoka, Assistant Commissioner for Water Resources Planning and

Regulation, 37 professionals have signed onto the framework, though only 27 have been actively engaged so far.

Their contributions span critical areas such as developing financing strategies for the National Water Policy, shaping research agendas, documenting sector progress, and supporting planning frameworks like the WASH Master Plan among others.

Musoka noted that the programme has significantly strengthened capacity within the sector by enabling knowledge transfer to younger professionals through mentoring, coaching, and technical support, while also reinforcing dialogue platforms that inform policy and practice.

Despite its promise, the initiative faces challenges, including limited funding, underutilization by some departments, and persistent misconceptions about older professionals being less adaptable.

These barriers, officials say, have slowed the full uptake of an otherwise cost-effective and high-impact resource.

Participants have also proposed broadening the scope of documentation to include sanitation knowledge, strengthening local government capacity, and improving coordination through designated focal persons.

Engineer Richard Cowa, a retired Commissioner, urged the Ministry to formalize the engagement of retirees as consultants, similar to practices in the Office of the Prime Minister, to ensure their expertise is consistently utilized.

## Uganda Water and Environment Week 2026: Exhibition Showcases Innovation and Collective Action



Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja inspecting some of the exhibitors at the UWEWK2026

The Ministry of Water and Environment, in collaboration with key partners, hosted a dynamic exhibition during the ninth Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK) 2026. The event, themed "Water and Environment for an Inclusive and Prosperous Uganda", provided a platform for sector players to showcase practical approaches, innovations, and solutions addressing water, environment, and climate change challenges across the country.

The exhibition offered participants a unique opportunity to network, exchange knowledge, and engage with cutting-edge solutions in water supply, rainwater harvesting, irrigation, groundwater development, sanitation, environmental management, waste management, renewable energy, and community health initiatives. Delegates explored initiatives that not only address resource management challenges but also integrate climate resilience and community-driven approaches, reflecting the inclusivity focus of UWEWK 2026.

The exhibition was graced by high-profile dignitaries, including Right Honorable Prime Minister Robina Nabbanja, Dr. Robin Nandy; UNICEF Representative to Uganda, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Water and Environment, Ministry of Water and Environment-Dr. Alfred Okot Okidi... Their tour of the exhibition highlighted the government's recognition of innovation and collaboration as key drivers in addressing water and environmental challenges. Each exhibitor demonstrated solutions and services designed to enhance water accessibility, promote environmental stewardship, and build climate-resilient communities. Feedback from participants highlighted the exhibition as a vital forum for knowledge sharing, visibility, and fostering partnerships to accelerate progress toward Uganda's water and environmental goals.

# THE WATERFRONT

# NEWSLETTER

Monday, March 23rd, 2026

Issue II

## sponsors

