

The

WATERFRONT

Newsletter

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WATERFRONT WEEK (UWEWK)

Water and Environment Week (UWEWK) for Enhancing
Efficiency and Improving Livelihoods





A participant gives information about water resource management in Karamoja sub-region during a panel discussion.

KEYNOTE: Water and Environment for A Peaceful and Sustainable Future.



Dr. Joakim Harlin the Keynote Speaker

A crucial foundation for a peaceful and sustainable future lies in water and environmental management, yet significant challenges persist. On the second day of the Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK) 2025, a keynote presentation shed light on several pressing issues, including water scarcity driven by heightened competition among various user groups such as farmers, pastoralists, urban water supply, and industries. Other concerns included land degradation due to overgrazing, deforestation, and unsustainable farming practices; unequal access to resources; weak governance and institutional frameworks; limited human resources; poorly enforced water permits; climate change; social and political factors; poverty and inequality; and rapid population growth.

Dr. Joakim Harlin, the Director of the UNEP-DHI Centre

on Water & Environment while making his presentation via zoom based in Copenhagen-Denmark, as keynote speaker, underscored the critical role of integrated water resources management (IWRM) in addressing Uganda's water-related challenges. He discussed the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) initiatives to support countries like Uganda in reaching their water and environmental objectives. He emphasized that effectively tackling water issues necessitates a coordinated strategy that encompasses monitoring, reporting, and the formulation of actionable plans, areas where UNEP has been actively aiding Uganda.

He also pointed out the significance of cross-border collaboration and robust governance in managing shared water resources. Dr. Harlin noted that Uganda has made remarkable progress in enhancing water quality, with around 84% of the nation's water bodies now meeting good quality standards, positioning the country to achieve its SDG 6.3.2 targets.

Additionally, Uganda has made substantial advancements in implementing IWRM, achieving a medium-high score of 57 in 2023. The country's participation in all three monitoring rounds of IWRM and its preparations for the next phase of the IWRM Support Programme were among the key accomplishments highlighted.

He stressed that Uganda has made notable strides in safeguarding its water-related ecosystems, particularly through thorough wetland assessments. Harlin emphasized the vital function of wetlands in combating climate change and bolstering resilience against environmental pressures.

Wetlands act as natural shields against flooding, droughts, and severe weather conditions. In Uganda, these ecosystems spanning from temporary marshes to river networks are crucial for preserving biodiversity and ensuring high water quality. Dr. Harlin highlighted UNEP's role in assisting Uganda with the monitoring and management of these essential ecosystems, especially in grasping the intricate relationships between water resources and climate change.

He stressed the necessity of a coordinated strategy for managing water, energy, food, and ecosystems. While challenges such as climate change, biodiversity decline, and pollution persist, they also offer opportunities for cross-sector collaboration.

Dr. Harlin reiterated that enhancing policy alignment and planning across water, energy, and food production is vital, asserting that effective ecosystem management could propel Uganda toward a sustainable future.

He also pointed out the UNEP-DHI Centre's ongoing dedication to supporting Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and transboundary water governance, which are crucial for promoting regional collaboration and shared management of water resources.

He said it is evident that collaboration is essential; stressing that although Uganda has achieved significant progress, there is still much work to be done to secure a sustainable and equitable future for everyone. Dr. Harlin wrapped up his keynote speech, urging all stakeholders to maintain their collaboration and involvement in addressing Uganda's water and environmental issues.

He stressed that with the sustained backing of UNEP and other international partners, Uganda has the potential to achieve significant advancements in preserving its water resources and ensuring environmental protection for generations to come.



Richard Musota, Assitant Commissioner Ministry of water and Environment moderating a session.

PANEL DISCUSSION:

Water scarcity and environmental degradation have been linked to conflicts at local, national, and regional levels. In what ways can sustainable water and environmental management contribute to peace, security, and cooperation in Uganda and the broader East African region?



L-R Dr. Florence Adong, the Executive Director of the Nile Basin Initiative, Francis Ogwal, a representative from NEMA, Gareth O'hagan, Partner and CEO Instiglio and Sarah Rosengaetner, Deputy Managing Director, Global Center for Climate Mobility,

In a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Fred Muhumuza, a senior lecturer at Makerere University Business School and Ms Privah Atuhaire, a Communication Officer at the Ministry of Water and Environment, challenged the panelists to elaborate in what ways can sustainable water and environmental management contribute to peace, security, and cooperation in Uganda and the broader East African region? In her submission, Sarah Rosengaetner, Deputy Managing Director, Global Center for Climate Mobility, stressed that where there is limited water, security questions arise. She elaborated that Uganda is facing a concerning situation with water shortages in areas like the Karamoja region and parts of the north, noting that despite this, many people continue to live in these water-scarce areas due to

population movements. She noted that while migration does not necessarily lead to conflict, changes in water availability can contribute to tensions, particularly among pastoralist and farming communities.

She stressed that the limited water availability, particularly near the dams in Karamoja, raises security issues, as neighboring groups like the Turkana from Kenya often cross the border to access water for their livestock, leading to conflicts with the Karamojong in Uganda. Rosengaetner pointed out that climate change is a key factor contributing to these conflicts. She recommended that the government needs to implement actions with clear direction, keeping in mind the patterns of water distribution based on availability. Gareth O'hagan, Partner and Chief Operating Officer Instiglio,

noted that financing towards the realization of equitable water resources across all regions for positive impact in security.

He emphasized that unequal access to resources is a key factor behind security issues, which is why it's crucial to boost efforts in resource mobilization. He noted that conflicts over water in refugee camps highlight the need for targeted interventions and cross-sector collaboration. "This will help towards availing water resources for equitable distribution of reliable water resources," he noted. Francis Ogwal, a representative from the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), spoke on behalf of the Executive Director, Dr. Akankwansa Barirega.

He highlighted that conflicts often occur because pastoralists relocate

in search of water for their livestock, which is why it's important to enhance cooperation between districts.

"Some conflicts arise due to pastoralists who move in search of survival for water, this means that there is need for strengthening inter-district co-operation to streamline operations so that services are rolled across board with similar enforcement," he said. He pointed out that there's also a challenge of uneven enforcement, where some districts take their by-laws seriously and have strict regulations, while others are pretty relaxed, making it tough to create consistent laws across the board. Ogwal also highlighted the problem of cross-border cooperation, emphasizing the need for improved environmental management. Dr. Florence Adong, the Executive Director of the Nile Basin Initiative,

emphasized the importance of holding regular meetings with all stakeholders.

She said this approach is crucial for tackling the security issues related to water resources in the Nile Basin and fostering regional collaboration. "It is important for Uganda to promote regional cooperation with the entire Nile Basin geographical matrix to promote regional cooperation. This should be followed by continuous stakeholder engagement for better management of the water resources without any conflicts," she added. Adong mentioned that to improve environmental management, it's important to oversee cycles and ensure that planning is well-coordinated. She said this is crucial for achieving a peaceful and efficient use of water resources. "There is also a need to ratify

agreements that have been agreed upon as a means of encouraging consensus in terms of cross border scenarios. For example, for the Nile Basin, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Burundi between 2013 and 2023, have ratified the Nile Basin agreement with South Sudan ratifying the CFA on 8 July 2024," she added. Joseph Eritu, Commissioner of the Liaison Department at MWE, expressed appreciation for the keynote speakers and specifically requested Ms. Sarah Rosengaetner to share insights on any global practices that address the challenges of both internal and external mobility issues within Uganda.

SIDE SESSION : Outcome From COP 29 And Road to COP 30.



State Minister for Water and Environment Hon. Beatrice Atim Anywar (centre) with other officials during a panel discussion.

Uganda's participation at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, was a significant milestone in our ongoing climate action journey. The National Post-COP29 side session held as part of Water and Environment Week 2025, served as a platform to reflect on our country's achievements at COP29, discuss the outcomes of the conference, and assess their implications for Uganda's climate strategies. The forum also provided an opportunity to plan for the future, especially as we look ahead to COP30 in Brazil.

The forum was opened by Engineer Joseph Oryono Eyatu, the Commissioner of Rural Water and Sanitation. In his remarks, he highlighted Uganda's key outcomes from COP29, notably the \$300 billion boost in climate finance. While welcoming the pledge, he expressed skepticism about the aspirational goal of raising \$1.3

trillion by 2035, calling it "a joke" due to the doubts surrounding its feasibility. Despite the challenges, he pointed out that carbon markets, especially with developments on Article 6, and the recognition of trade in climate negotiations were key successes. He also noted the importance of adaptation, loss, and damage, and the country's emphasis on rural water and climate resilience.

The Commissioner further stressed the importance of capacity building, technology, and compliance, particularly in rural areas, which are most vulnerable to climate change. He emphasized that these issues touch the hearts of Ugandans and called for continued efforts in building resilience and improving climate strategies for rural communities.

Following Commissioner Eyatu, Mrs. Margaret Atheno Mwebesa, the

Commissioner for Climate Change and Uganda's UNFCCC National Focal Point, gave an in-depth presentation on the outcomes of COP29 and Uganda's climate commitments. She discussed the country's participation in key negotiation areas, including adaptation, mitigation, and carbon markets, as well as Uganda's efforts to align its climate goals with international agreements such as the Paris Agreement and the Global Stock Take. Mrs. Margaret also outlined the process for Uganda's third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), highlighting the national stock take and modeling that will take place in 2025. She expressed gratitude to Uganda's development partners for their continued support and financial contributions toward the country's climate initiatives.

Ole Dahl Rasmussen, the Chair of the Environment and Climate

Change Donor Partner Group and Ambassador from Denmark, also spoke at the forum. He commended Uganda's effective organization and active participation at COP29, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between development partners and the Ugandan government. Ambassador Rasmussen shared the importance of addressing the impacts of climate change on local communities, particularly in areas like Kasese district, which is severely affected by climate change-induced flooding and landslides. He reaffirmed Denmark's commitment to supporting Uganda's climate goals and strengthening the country's climate resilience through continued collaboration.

Honorable Beatrice Anywar, the Minister of State for Environment, was another key speaker at the forum. She acknowledged the contributions of the development partners, Uganda's parliamentarians, and the various stakeholders who supported the country's participation in COP29. Honorable Anywar also discussed Uganda's position on global climate finance, adaptation, and the need for climate justice, particularly for vulnerable communities in rural Uganda.

Honorable Songa Lawrence Biyika, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Climate Change, also spoke, emphasizing the importance of the forum in evaluating Uganda's outcomes from COP29. He thanked the Ministry of Water and Environment and the development partners for their support. Honourable Songa highlighted the role of Uganda's Parliament in shaping climate policy and ensuring that the country's climate actions are fully integrated into national development plans.

One of the key achievements from COP29 for Uganda was the signing of the work plan for the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between Uganda's Ministry of Water and Environment and the Italian Ministry of Energy. This agreement aims to foster collaboration in the fields of renewable energy and energy efficiency. Additionally, Uganda's delegation at COP29 successfully participated in high-level discussions, strategic collaborations, and knowledge-sharing sessions, which facilitated new partnerships, funding opportunities, and technical support for climate action in the country.

The forum also focused on the upcoming NDC3 process. Mrs. Althea Nombebesa explained that Uganda is committed to enhancing adaptation action, scaling up mitigation efforts, and mobilizing more climate finance. As part of the preparation for the third NDC, a national stocktake will be conducted from January to May 2025, followed by assessments and modeling from March to September 2025. The NDC3 is expected to be submitted to the UNFCCC before COP30.

In closing, the forum emphasized the importance of

continued collaboration among Uganda's government, development partners, the private sector, and civil society. The key message from all the speakers was clear: Uganda is committed to achieving its climate goals, and the country's efforts will be bolstered by the support of international partners and stakeholders.

As Uganda looks forward to COP30, the country remains focused on building a resilient and sustainable future, ensuring that climate action remains a priority at all levels of governance and across all sectors of society.

Summary of Discussions on Key Decisions from COP29 and Implications for Uganda

The former discussion was orchestrated by a panel discussion from the different thematic leads including Technology, mitigation, compliance...

The session opened with an introduction from the chair, highlighting the need to discuss key decisions made at COP29, focusing on their implications for Uganda and how these will shape the country's stance at future negotiations, particularly at SB62 and COP30.

Juvenile, the Commissioner for Development Assistance at Uganda's Ministry of Finance, began by reflecting on the country's efforts at COP29 to secure financing for climate adaptation and mitigation. He pointed out that while there were discussions on a new collective quantified goal for climate finance, the developed countries did not meet expectations. Developing



Commissioner Margaret Athieno - Climate Change Department MWE, giving highlights of COP 29

countries had requested up to \$1.3 trillion, but the outcome was a much lower commitment of \$300 billion. Juvenile noted this falls short compared to the previous promise of \$100 billion annually under the Paris Agreement.

He emphasized the urgency for Uganda to push for more resources at COP30, particularly for climate-smart agriculture, resilient infrastructure, and technology development. However, he expressed disappointment over the lack of clarity in financial commitments and underscored the importance of defining climate technology support for future implementation.

Eunice Asenguza Mvanjizi from NEMA shared insights into her work with the compliance committee under the Paris Agreement. She explained the committee's role in ensuring countries fulfill their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), with a particular focus on guiding improved compliance. She also mentioned the importance of capacity building and the training of young negotiators, recognizing the challenges that countries, especially least developed and small island states, face in meeting their climate commitments.

Isaac Rwaiza, speaking on behalf of the head of Uganda's mitigation thematic group, outlined key developments in the realm of carbon markets. He highlighted the completion of rules, modalities, and guidelines related to Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which deals with carbon trading mechanisms.

Although Uganda is poised to implement carbon market projects, he noted that there is still much to be done, particularly in relation to the global stock take. Unfortunately, no agreement was reached on how the stock take should influence NDCs or whether finance should be a priority in the discussions; he noted! He called for continued focus on ensuring financial support

for mitigation actions.

Next, a representative of Uganda's capacity-building efforts, Mr. Joseph Epitu discussed the country's priorities for climate-related capacity-building. Uganda has aligned its contributions to three key negotiation blocks: the LDC group, the African group, and G77. She mentioned the positive developments in establishing the BCCB's second five-year work plan and emphasized that capacity building is essential for effective climate action. Gender mainstreaming in climate negotiations was also highlighted as a key issue. Gender-responsive climate actions were stressed as crucial for ensuring that the impacts of climate change are addressed equitably.

Finally, the session touched on Uganda's progress toward graduation from the Least Developed Countries (LDC) group to a lower-middle-income status. This milestone signifies the country's growing capacity to manage climate change impacts and secure financial support. However, discussions on adaptation and loss and damage remain critical. Uganda's priorities in these areas include the establishment of indicators to track progress towards sector-specific targets, particularly in health, agriculture, and infrastructure. The work on developing these indicators is ongoing, and there is a clear push for more work to be done to refine them by the end of the year.

Professor Fred Onduri emphasized the need for better preparation of negotiators, clearer financial commitments, and increased collaboration with development partners to ensure that Uganda's climate priorities are met at future COP meetings. As the country moves towards COP30, there is a consensus that technology and financial support must be at the forefront of discussions to ensure that Uganda and other developing nations can achieve their climate goals.



Climate Change negotiators giving the out comes of COP 29 negotiations during the 8th UWEWK 2025

Practical Solutions for Water Challenges in Uganda

As the world grapples with increasing water security challenges, the need for immediate and coordinated action has become more urgent than ever. At a key session during the Uganda Water and Environment Week, Miss Lucy Iyango, Commissioner for Wetlands Management at the Ministry of Water and Environment, emphasized the critical importance of addressing these pressing issues. The session, held at the Rwizi Boardroom, brought together government officials, civil society organizations, and experts to discuss how global water security challenges can be tackled in a way that ensures sustainability for all.

During the session, Mr. Amare Hailelassie from the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) painted a stark picture of the current water crisis. "We are using too much water, polluting it, and climate change is making everything worse," he remarked. "This has serious implications for food, energy, and health systems." Mr. Hailelassie pointed out that many communities, particularly in Africa and Asia, are struggling to access clean water; a problem that is only worsening with the impacts of climate change. He stressed the need for swift, decisive action, stating,

"IWMI is committed to ensuring that everyone has access to clean water, and we are working on innovative ways to manage water more efficiently."

Mr. Hailelassie explained that their approach involves reducing water waste, ensuring equal access for both women and men and empowering local communities to take part in water management. "We believe that working closely with local governments, communities, and other stakeholders is key to creating solutions that will last," he said. The organization's focus on collaboration is intended to support long-term strategies that will benefit both human populations and the planet.

The session concluded with the identification of several key areas that demand urgent attention. These include ensuring universal access to clean water, promoting the sustainable management of water resources, and supporting communities in adapting to the ongoing challenges posed by climate change.

There was also a strong consensus on the need to reduce water waste, enhance water infrastructure, and ensure gender equality in access to water.



Some of the participants during the 8th UWEWK

management and expanding international collaboration were also highlighted as essential steps in addressing the crisis.

There was unanimous agreement that the global water security challenge cannot be ignored any longer. As the discussion drew to a close, it became evident that overcoming this crisis will require the collective efforts of governments, the private sector, and civil society. IWMI's commitment to helping communities manage their water resources more effectively offers a hopeful path forward. "By working together, we can create a more sustainable future and ensure that no one is left behind," Mr. Hailelassie concluded, stressing that now is the time for action.

The future of global water security depends on collaboration and innovation. Together, we can build a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable water system

for generations to come.

Miss Meron Taye of IWMI also presented a digital twin for the Limpopo River Basin, a cutting-edge tool offering a virtual representation of the basin. This digital twin integrates vast amounts of data, enabling users to assess current conditions, predict future events, and simulate potential outcomes. It provides a 3D model to visualize the impact of decisions on water resources management.

According to Miss Taye, the digital twin is cloud-based, allowing users to interact with a constantly updated digital replica of the basin through maps, 3D models, or an intelligent chatbot. She emphasized that this digital twin has the potential to become the foundational model for water management in the Limpopo River Basin.



Dr. Florence Adongo - Director Nile Basin Initiative in attendance of the 8th UWEWK

Digital Transformation in Planning, Monitoring and Reporting for Rural Water and Sanitation through WEMIS, WASMIS, RUWAS:



Ongoing session

The session on "Digital Transformation in Planning, Monitoring, and Reporting for Rural Water and Sanitation" was chaired by Ms. Loy Asimwe, with Mr. Wilfred moderating. Consultants, including Ms. Sarah Amongi, Mr. Kusiima Paul, Ms. Nimusima Deborah, and Mr. Ssekanyo Ahmed, provided a detailed overview of the Water and Environment Management Information System (WEMIS), a system designed to improve water supply and environmental management. About WEMIS:

WEMIS is an integrated online system designed to enable real-time data collection and updates across various levels of government.

The system aims to enhance data management through features like database integration, mobile app tools, and permit licensing modules. It includes key portals such as the Water Supply Management Information System (WASMIS), Sanitation Management Information System (SANMIS), and Water for Production Management Information System (WFP-MIS), among others, to manage water, sanitation, and environmental data. The system also provides ongoing support for 36 months, with the goal of integrating and harmonizing data across various departments.

During the Q&A, participants inquired about data entry capabilities, system updates after

consultancy, and integration with external data sources. The consultants assured that partners could submit data for verification and entry, and that the Ministry's team was well-trained to manage the system post-consultancy. WEMIS also includes audit trails to track system changes, and the integration with Google Earth is under consideration. Overall, the session underscored WEMIS' potential to transform rural water and sanitation management, with its real-time data capabilities and integration across various stakeholders playing a crucial role in improving planning, monitoring, and reporting.

Parallel Sessions Presentations

Parallel Session:

Implementation of The National Framework for Operations and Maintenance (O&M) of Rural Water Supply Infrastructure.

To ensure a seamless and equitable distribution of water resources throughout Uganda, it is essential to enhance commitment towards the operations and maintenance (O&M) of rural water supply systems. In his keynote address, Dr. Ahmed Sentumbwe, Principal Engineer at the Development Directorate of the Ministry of Environment and Water, highlighted that approximately 80% of Uganda's population resides in rural areas, supported by around 1,000 rural water systems, including shallow wells and boreholes.

He emphasized that past efforts to manage these water structures lacked a robust Monitoring and Evaluation framework, along with necessary follow-up actions. "The new O&M framework now is formed to ensure sustainable management of rural water systems to address monitoring and evaluation. This framework has a clear road map with plans supported by sector partners and civil society organizations," Sentumbwe explained.

He said they are currently taking stock on what has been carried out to assess progress and the challenges that affect the operations.

"We are also grateful to our partners and all stakeholders for the continuous collaborations to ensure that the operations and maintenance of rural water becomes a reality," he noted.

PANEL DISCUSSION

After the keynote presentation, a discussion took place where various panelists addressed a range of questions. Eng. Lamu Olweny, the Principal Engineer at the Ministry of Water and Environment, was asked about the government's stance on the regulations governing the operation and maintenance of rural water supply systems.

He replied that, in line with legal obligations, the government is responsible for executing all legal components necessary for programs designed to positively impact the environment.

He emphasized the crucial role of local government as a vital partner in the implementation of the operations and maintenance framework for water regulations.



The session panelists during the discussion of The National Framework for Operations and Maintenance (O&M) of Rural Water Supply Infrastructure.

"We will ensure that districts are gazetted after being appointed by the Ministry of Water and environment. There will be a board that will be appointed to procure services from the area Supervisors. There will be a need for performance management between the districts and the ministry with business plans to facilitate proper water resource management," he added. Francisco Garcia Jordan, a representative from Instiglio, emphasized the importance of enhancing governance in rural water services to better communicate performance to stakeholders.

He highlighted that National Development Plans, which outline specific objectives, play a crucial role in tracking project progress and generating innovative solutions to establish effective systems for improving water services. He advocated for a more robust approach to the operation and maintenance of rural water supply infrastructure, supported by resource-based financing. "We need to work towards creating key performance indicators that look at governance systems with all stakeholders. We already rolled out a five-year roadmap to support O&M framework and performance management to track progress," he added.

Ronald Nyakana, the Monitoring Officer for the Ministry of Water and Environment, was inquired about the timeline for the availability of water tariffs in rural areas. "Firstly, we need to know the thresholds we have because the issues of tariffs are key and there is a need to review the existing tariff policy. For the rural areas, there are four principles to deal with and these are; tariffs cover service provision, consideration for the poor, must be simple, and subsidies towards the vulnerable people or the poor," he explained.

He revealed that discussions are already ongoing with the Ministry of Water and Environment, saying the policy will provide a framework on which the tariffs will be set. Nyakana pointed out that evaluations indicate that individuals in rural regions spend an average of shs2500 each month. However, a significant challenge remains: their willingness to make payments.

Regarding the government's stance on managing rural water infrastructure, Frank Kweronda, the Assistant Commissioner at the Ministry of Water and Environment, stated that they are currently reviewing the Water Act, following their efforts to establish tariffs that are affordable for rural communities.

"We need data to inform decision making," he added. Meri Jino LC5, the Chairperson of Kaabong district, highlighted that the primary obstacle for local governments in supporting the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) of Rural Water Supply infrastructure is the lack of coordination among service providers. "O&M will help address these challenges of water resources management as this will clearly specify the responsible providers within the given catchment area. There is a need for a framework to streamline operations and ensure fast response from the technical committee," he noted.

Parallel Session: Strengthen Human Capacity for Urban Sanitation



(Right) Water for People - Uganda Country Director Ms. Brenda Achiro having an interaction with one of the experts after the session.

Strengthen Human Capacity for Urban Sanitation
During this session, stakeholders gathered to discuss strategies for improving urban sanitation, particularly in areas where poor sanitation remains a challenge. The session focused on enhancing human capacity to streamline urban sanitation and ensure cleaner, healthier urban spaces. Dr. Felix Twinomujuni, Assistant Commissioner of the Urban Water and Sewerage Services Department, emphasized the need to address the legal framework surrounding sanitation. "There is a need to begin by amending the relevant sanitation-related laws within the legal framework," he stated, underscoring the importance of policy reform.

He further called for strengthening policies and guidelines to ensure urban sanitation goals are met. He proposed regulating the private sector participation and implementing the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model as key strategies for developing sanitation infrastructure. "This is important in achieving the delivery of sanitation infrastructure which is the driver of ensuring a cleaner urban center that passes the sanitation test," he added. Addressing an often-overlooked issue, Dr. Twinomujuni highlighted the need to scale investments to improve Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in urban areas.

"Some urban areas are characterized by poor disposal of sanitary pads, which also affects the environment," he explained. To tackle this, he emphasized the importance of promoting environmentally friendly pads and incentivizing proper disposal.

Dr. Twinomujuni, also noted that there is a need for clarity to help address the responsibilities of the ministry, saying that all the gaps in the legal framework will be handled to facilitate clearer roles of each stakeholder in the implementation of water resource management.

Christopher Ayebare, a session participant, echoed the need for more resilient sanitation infrastructure. He called on the government to promote climate-resilient sanitation solutions, including onsite sanitation facilities. "With all in place, all Ugandans can get onto the sewerage network, which will provide better sewerage management," he noted, underlining the importance of comprehensive infrastructure solutions for urban sanitation.

Panelists

Brenda Aciiro, the Country Director for Water for People, emphasized the vital role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in testing and aligning strategies through innovative methods that enhance collaboration among stakeholders. She noted that this approach effectively narrows the divide between grassroots communities and policymakers, as CSOs are embedded within these communities. Fed Nuwagaba, a technical advisor at GTZ, highlighted a significant challenge in partnerships that lack a cohesive direction in the planning and investment of water resource management.

He stated that there is a pressing need to strengthen partnerships and engage regularly to ensure that all stakeholders work towards a shared objective. Dr. John Bosco Isunju from Makerere University and Lead Consultant for Sanitation and Hygiene Policy Development pointed out the necessity of improving sanitation and fostering accountability by adopting monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices, along with a solid legal and regulatory framework. He stressed that M&E is crucial as it provides insights into progress based on data collected at various levels.



4th Cohort of the WRI Graduate Trainees pose with their certificates

4th Cohort of The WRI Graduate Trainees Programme

The Water Resources Institute (WRI) and UNHCR launched a mentorship programme aimed at fresh graduates and early-career professionals in Uganda. This initiative, in collaboration with various organizations working in refugee camps, provides capacity-building opportunities for graduate trainees in water resources management, environmental protection, and public health. During this graduation; Mr. Simon Peter Odong- UNHCR mentioned that each trainee is paired with a mentor who offers guidance, helps set objectives, and provides hands-on training and field experience.

He informed the participants that to date, three cohorts have successfully completed the mentorship programme, with a fourth cohort graduating at the 8th UWEWK 2025. A total of 58 graduates have benefited from this initiative.

Relatedly, he added that the programme targets fresh graduates from various universities, with a focus on female engineers and male public health practitioners. The trainees gain practical experience in water system operations, maintenance, and repairs, which include fixing leaks, rehabilitating tap stands, and monitoring water quality.

For example, one of the trainees shared that they had gained valuable skills in wetland restoration, tree planting, and community engagement. Through this programme, they were able to take on leadership roles, such as working with masons to plan and execute construction tasks. They emphasized the importance of

embracing climate-resilient infrastructure and adapting to challenges such as rain and heat, which often lead to leaks and water flow disruptions.

The programme has proven successful in providing graduates with real-world skills. In fact, over 95% of graduates have found employment after completing their training. Some have even surpassed expectations, taking on complex roles within months of finishing their mentorship. The mentorship initiative has also helped reduce staffing costs for the Water Resources Institute and its partners, as the trainees can fill roles such as assistant engineers shortly after completing the programme. This practical approach ensures that fresh graduates not only gain experience but also contribute meaningfully to the organizations they work with.

The Water Resources Institute, in partnership with various organizations, is committed to developing a skilled workforce capable of addressing Uganda's water and environmental challenges. Through mentorship, hands-on training, and collaborative efforts, the programme is helping build a more sustainable future for the country's water resources and communities.

Furthermore, the programme is expanding, with new cohorts being introduced and an increasing number of graduates securing employment. This expansion not only strengthens the workforce but also ensures the sustainability of water and environmental management in Uganda.

Breaking Barriers;

Advancing Gender-Responsive WASH for Inclusive Access

In a session on “Breaking Barriers: Advancing Gender-Responsive WASH for Inclusive Access” chaired by Mr. Hamimu Masudi; Policy and Advocacy Director from WaterAid Uganda, the focus was on how gender-inclusive Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) policies can address systemic barriers and improve access, particularly for women and girls.

Dr. Joyce Mpalanyi Magala, Country Director of WaterAid Uganda, highlighted the link between WASH access and gender equality, stressing that facilities must meet gender-specific needs to ensure safety, dignity, and equal opportunities.

Jackie Binen, Coordinator of UPF WASH in Parliament, emphasized the lack of adequate facilities in schools and healthcare centers, affecting girls’ privacy and dignity. Panelists, including experts from the Ministry of Water and Environment and the Ministry of Gender, discussed the importance of involving women in decisions about water access, infrastructure design, and the challenges posed by rural-urban disparities in WASH.

Innovative solutions like water tanks in schools and health centers were also shared as effective ways to reduce the water collection burden on women and girls. Closing remarks by Hamimu Masudi called for a more inclusive, intersectional approach to WASH, incorporating factors like disability and income. Recommendations included strengthening women’s leadership in WASH, investing in sustainable infrastructure, and ensuring gender-responsive WASH policies. The session ended with a commitment to data-driven advocacy and greater policy collaboration for equitable access to water and sanitation.



Participants engage in the open discussions .



Panel discussion and stake holders feedback

Joining Forces to Anticipate and Address Climate Mobility in Uganda; A Blueprint for Action

Global Centre for Climate Mobility

The session titled “Joining Forces to Anticipate and Address Climate Mobility in Uganda: A Blueprint for Action” focused on the growing issue of climate-induced migration in Uganda. The event, held on 18th March 2025, featured key speakers such as Ms. Margret Athieno Mbewesa, Commissioner for Climate Change at UNFCCC, who emphasized the need for proactive planning to manage climate mobility, particularly as floods, droughts, and extreme weather increasingly force farmers and communities to relocate. She called for stronger policies and sustainable infrastructure to support organized, voluntary migration while protecting livelihoods.

Ms. Sarah Rosengaertner from the Global Centre for Climate Mobility (GCCM) discussed the importance of clear policies and international partnerships, particularly in drought-prone regions, to ensure safe relocation. Mr. Fred Onduri Machulu introduced the Climate Mobility Blueprint, stressing the need for local knowledge, inclusive planning, and localized financing to address mobility challenges effectively.

Panelists, including Ms. Barbra Kiwanuka (Kampala Capital City Authority) and Mr. Crispus Mwemaho (Abayuuti Climate Action Network), highlighted the role of urban planning, civil society, and youth in addressing climate mobility. They emphasized the need for awareness campaigns, community-driven solutions, and the empowerment of young people to drive innovation in climate action.

The session concluded with a call for coordinated efforts between governments, businesses, and communities to ensure that Uganda’s climate mobility strategies are inclusive, sustainable, and resilient.

Better Evidence; Better Policies organized by Makerere University and Eawag/Sandec/IRC:



Ms. Linda Strande presenting in session 2.



Discussion between the researcher and practitioner.

The Better Evidence; Better Policies side session, hosted by Makerere University in collaboration with Eawag, Sandec, and IRC, brought together experts to share insights and evidence-driven solutions for improving water and sanitation access in Uganda. The session highlighted the critical role of research and evidence in shaping more effective policies and practical interventions for sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services.

1. Urban Affordable Clean Toilets (U-ACT) in Kampala

Presenter: Prof. Niwagaba Charles Buregeya
The study focused on urban sanitation challenges in Kampala’s slum settlements, highlighting the gap between the demand for improved sanitation and people’s willingness to pay for it. Despite over 90% of residents reporting access to sanitation, the poor condition and shared nature of facilities pose significant health risks. The U-ACT initiative awarded the Best Practice Award in 2013, has led to significant policy changes, including the 2019 Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) Faecal Sludge Management Ordinance.

2. Integrated Baseline Assessment: Wobulenzi & Kakooge

Presenter: Eng. Ronald Kayaga
This paper explored water supply and sanitation conditions in Wobulenzi and Kakooge. It found that over 80% of residents in both towns consume contaminated water, with most boiling it for safety. Sanitation is predominantly managed through pit latrines, with

a significant percentage being private. The study highlighted the urgent need for integrated, sustainable water and sanitation systems, as waste management practices remain inadequate.

3. Planning for Improved Urban Sanitation: Kijura Town Council Case Study

Presenter: Mr. Watsis Martin, Regional WASH Advisor, IRC Uganda
The paper examined Kijura Town Council in Kabarole District and its approach to long-term sanitation planning. While many local governments focus on short-term solutions due to resource constraints, Kijura’s strategy involves data-driven, sustainable planning for sanitation services. The town has made significant progress, including increased staffing and budget allocation for WASH services, as well as successful campaigns to eliminate open defecation.

4. Gravity-Driven Membrane Filtration Kiosks: A Solution for Eastern Uganda

Presenter: Keneth Wadama, Busia (Get Water)
Keneth Wadama presented a breakthrough solution for improving water supply in eastern Uganda: Gravity-Driven Membrane (GDM) filtration kiosks. These solar-powered systems provide clean, safe drinking water to communities, with each kiosk serving approximately 1,925 people. The project has led to improved health outcomes, increased school attendance, and economic empowerment, particularly for women who manage the kiosks. The initiative has received strong support from local governments and communities.



Mr. Okanya introducing the session

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Indicator Monitoring Guide Launched:

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Indicator Monitoring Guide for Uganda was officially launched in a session organized by IRC, Water for People, and the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE). The event, held at the Nile Boardroom, brought together 38 physical and 27 virtual participants to discuss the importance of standardizing WASH data to enhance service delivery and inform policy decisions. This session highlighted the crucial need for consistency in data collection and reporting across various sectors, ensuring that progress in WASH can be effectively tracked and interventions can be tailored to meet the needs of the population.

The event was chaired by Water for People and IRC, with Mr. Martin Mukasa acting as the moderator. Several key presentations were made, each focusing on different aspects of WASH indicators. Mr. Birungi Musa, representing the Ministry of Education and Sports, addressed WASH in learning institutions, stressing the need for schools to have access to safe and sufficient drinking water, as well as proper sanitation facilities. Mr. Kayanja Stephen from the Ministry of Health spoke about the importance of advanced water and sanitation services in healthcare facilities, with a particular focus on infection prevention and control. Mr. Akonya Martin from the Ministry of Water and Environment provided insights into household water and sanitation indicators,

underscoring the importance of monitoring water access and sanitation facilities at the household level. Eng. Diana Keesiga from Water for People concluded the presentations by offering policy recommendations, notably the establishment of a National WASH Monitoring Coordination Committee to oversee data collection, reporting, and coordination among agencies. Discussions following the presentations raised several questions. One participant inquired about the availability of the new data collection tool, while another questioned whether shallow wells are still considered safe water sources. Additionally, the topic of Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in schools was brought up, with the need for adequate water facilities to support girls' hygiene practices. Responses clarified that shallow wells are no longer considered safe due to concerns about water quality and that water tanks in schools are cleaned quarterly to maintain water quality.

The session concluded with a commitment to disseminate the WASH Monitoring Guide to regional and district centers, ensuring widespread access and consistency in data reporting. Plans were also made for ongoing capacity-building initiatives to support local governments in data collection and management. Additionally, a sanitation manual, which complements the guide, is set to be launched on March 21, 2025, to further strengthen WASH efforts across Uganda.

Water and environment for a Peaceful and Sustainable Future

Policy, Practice and Scientific Papers Presentation



Ms. Alwango Grace representing on research on Quality of water from Lake Kyoga and its remediations.

During a session chaired by Dr. Rosemirta Birungi and Eng. Diana Keesiga Diana, several scientific papers were presented, including one on "Suitability analysis for landfill site selection: A case study on Kamuli district," which focused on identifying potential landfill sites with low environmental risk and operational efficiency.

Other papers covered topics such as disaster risks at Kiteezi landfill, groundwater quality in refugee camps, ecosystem services for food security around Lake Bunyonyi, anaerobic co-digestion of waste in Kampala, handwashing behavior in Kyangwali refugee settlement, water resources management in the Albert Water

Management Zone, and water accounting in Lake Tana Sub-Basin, Ethiopia. Other paper presentations included; research about quality of water from Lake Kyoga and its remediation using nymphae ALB LEAVES in Budongo Subcounty, Serere District Uganda; onward scaling up and commercializing bio-based fertilizer and bio fuels with high value addition; scientific investigation in fecal sludge management in Kampala Uganda; poster presentation on walking as a science for raising awareness in conservation of water and environment resources.

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