

Uganda Water and Environment Week



Ministry of Water and Environment

The Water Front

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THEME:

Water and Environment, catalyst for achieving Middle Income Status 2020

UWEWK LINKED TO NDP II

The Uganda Water and Environment Week is linked to the National Development Plan II (NDP II), which focuses on achieving structural transformation through increased industrial activity, with emphasis on manufacturing and value addition in agro-processing.

Articles and photographs by Lydia Mirembe, Juliet Waiswa, Agnes Nantambi and Noah Jaggwe



The climax of the Uganda Water and Environment Week was marked with a procession through Entebbe Municipality

PS Okidi: Be weather-ready, climate-smart, water-wise

The inaugural Uganda Water and Environment Week on 22nd March climaxed with the three-in-one celebration of the World Water Day, World Forest Day and World Meteorological Day, highlighting the inseparable link between forests, water and weather. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Water and Environment, Alfred Okot Okidi, closed the event on behalf of the Minister Sam Cheptoris.

To mark World Forest Day, PS Okidi enumerated the benefits of planting trees around urban areas and cities. He said that forests and trees store carbon, mitigate impacts of climate change and help save energy used for heating by 20 to 50 percent. Trees also filter the air and reduce noise pollution, not to forget the beautification of cities. The theme for the World Forest Day was: *Forest and Sustainable Cities*. "Let us give priority to greening our cities in order to enjoy the many benefits of urban forests," Okidi said.

On World Water Day, Okidi noted that

the demand for water is ever rising to serve different sectors like agriculture, industrialization among others. 33% of Ugandans lack access to safe drinking water, yet it is envisaged that the population will more than double by 2050. He urged Ugandans to use nature based solutions to rebalance the water cycle, mitigate the effects of climate change and improve human health and livelihoods. The theme was: *Nature for Water*.

Under the theme "*Weather-ready, climate-smart*", the World Meteorological Day was marked, with a call to the public to seize opportunities related to weather, climate and water. "The world faces a wide range of hazards. Climate change is increasing the intensity and frequency of extreme weather and climate events," Okidi said. Such calamities include heavy rains, heat waves, droughts, floods, landslides and many more. "More than ever, we need to be weather-ready, climate-smart and water-wise," he urged.



Water Week PICTORIAL



ABOVE: Crane Performers entertained participants with traditional dances
 RIGHT, ABOVE: Charles Kizito receives award for best young male presenter
 RIGHT BELOW: PS Alfred Okidi awarded for his role in establishing the WR Institute

The inaugural Uganda Water and Environment Week ended on a high note with outstanding performers being awarded certificates and gifts. Below is a full list of award winners

CATEGORY	WINNER
1. Best young female presenter	Linda Lilian
2. Best Young Male presenter	Charles Kizito
3. Best Exhibitor	Monitoring and Assessment Department
4. Main contributor and supporter for the Uganda Water and Environment Week	- FAO - Water Aid
5. Best Media Partner	The New Vision
6. Best Moderator	Samson Kasumba
7. Best organizer and facilitator of applied training	Water for People
8. For Organising the first ever Uganda Water and Environment Week	Florence Grace Adongo Director, Directorate of Water Resources
9. For Organising the launch of the Water Resources Institute	Dr. Callist Tindimugaya
10. For the role played in organizing the launch of the Water Resources Institute	•Spera Atuhairwe •Solomon Kyeyune •Grace Waako Katuramu
11. For the role played in establishing the Water Resources Institute and the inaugural Uganda Water and Environment Week	Alfred Okot Okidi PS Ministry of Water and Environment



Middle income status requires maintaining wetlands, forests

The Director of Water Resources Management, Florence Adongo has said achieving middle income status will require maintaining nature to sustain water supply for development.

She was speaking at the closure of the Uganda Water and Environment Week which also marked the celebration of World Water Day, World Forest Day and World Meteorology Day.

Reflecting on the themes of the respective days, Adongo said they all dovetail with the theme of the Water and Environment Week: Water and Environment catalyst for achieving middle income status by 2020. The theme for World Water Day was Nature for Water. The theme for World Forest Day was Forests and Sustainable Cities, while that for Meteorological Day was: Weather Ready, Climate Smart.

Adongo also said that achieving middle income status requires readily available information and early warning systems which would ensure better planning. She urged Ugandans to “green” their cities by restoring wetlands and forests. “It’s clear to us that without greening the cities and towns Uganda will not attain the middle income status. We need nature,” Adongo said.

She urged all participants to reflect on how water, weather and climate interlink to improve citizens’ livelihoods and incomes. She also appealed to them to utilize the knowledge acquired during the water and environment week to move the sector forward and to contribute to the achievement of national development goals.



TOP: Directors Aaron Kabirizi (DWD), Florence Adongo (DWR) and Paul Mafabi (DEA)

MIDDLE LEFT: A child from Chadwick Namate School delivers a message about environmental management

MIDDLE RIGHT: A school girl tries out an irrigation pump at the exhibition

BOTTOM: Taking part in the procession through Entebbe Municipality

Govt should target UN financial mechanism on climate



Uganda National Council for Science Executive Secretary Maxwell Onapa has asked the government to apply for the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to support projects on climate adaptation.

GCF is part of the financial mechanism under the United Nations to provide money to fund climate change which is accessible by countries.

He said the government of Uganda needs to develop what he termed as a “bankable proposal” in order to access the funds. Uganda has the opportunity to obtain these funds through generating proposals on particular areas of need.

“The money is accessible by the parties, the only thing you need is to identify areas for investment,” Onapa explained.

Uganda argued that there are a number of opportunities in agriculture such as water harvesting and floods, the only thing required is to sit and agree on what takes precedence.

How to sustain the new Water Resources Institute

The Water Resources Institute was commissioned on March 21st, with a promise to make the Water and Environment sector interactive, making information available and accessible to all stakeholders. The institute is located at the Directorate of Water Resources, under the Ministry of Water and Environment.

Different speakers at the commissioning described it as an important milestone in the transformation of Uganda.

As he officially commissioned the institute, Prime Minister, Dr Ruhakana Rugunda said that the water resources institute would revolutionise the water and environment sector. He said it was a great contribution to the country, the region and humanity.

State Minister for Water Hon. Ronald Kibuule said that the institute would make it possible for knowledgeable retired sector professionals to share their knowledge and experience. The institute will also make it possible for practitioners to share research findings which will inform policy and practice.

The keynote speaker Professor Kirumira noted that the institute would contribute to national development goals. It will address issues relating to water and environment such as pollution, climate variability and reduction in water supply.

Having started off on a note of great promise, the institute initiators are already pondering the sustainability of the institute. A panel that discussed the importance and relevance of the institute made some key observations and recommendations on how the institute would be sustained for the future.

Minister Kibuule said that the institute had financial resources to operate for the first two years, but it required 50 billion to run for ten years. “We expect to get more money from government, partners, academic institutions, fees and levies, donor support as well as a research fund to be set up.

Berina Owembabazi a Water Resources Specialist at the World Bank said that the World Bank recognized the need to sustain the sector capacity and the need to take the theory out of classrooms and conference halls into practice, which is why they will continue supporting the institute.

Professor Kirumira advised that to work sustainably, the Water Resources Institute should collaborate rather than compete with similar institutions.

Re-echoing Kirumira’s view, Dr Silver Mugisa, MD of National Water and Sewerage Cooperation said that NWSC’s IREC would co-exist and collaborate with the Institute. “We shall collaborate meaningfully. If we can pick their knowledge products and use them we can motivate innovation, and also be able to accelerate movement towards vision 2040,” Mugisa said.

Media expert George Lugalambi said that for the institute to be relevant and sustainable they need to address the questions that concern the public and work with the media to develop reporting projects about those issues.

WaterAid Country Director, Francis Musinguzi also advised that the institute partner with Civil Society Organisations, Development Partners and the private sector. He also said that the institute should consider inter-sectoral integration with other sectors like health, agriculture, oil and energy, tourism.

NWSC’s Silver Mugisha and World Bank’s Berina Owembabazi said that sustainability of the Water Resources Institute will also depend on a clear business and institutional model. “Government spends lots of money sending public servants abroad for training. How do we first build local strategic partnerships?”

To wrap it up, Maxwell Onapa, Executive Secretary of Uganda National Council for Science said that sustainability will come down to building and sustaining partnerships and collaboration, as well as setting the right agenda.