



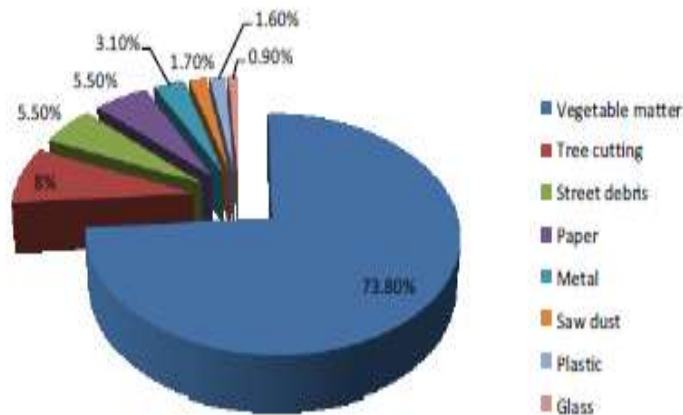
## **World Environment Day Celebrations, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2015: Reflecting on Kampala City's Natural Resources Utilization and Waste Management**

Every year on 5<sup>th</sup> June, the World celebrates the World Environment Day (WED) as a people's day when everybody is challenged to do something positive for the environment and to galvanize individual actions into a collective power that generates an exponential positive impact on the planet. Over the years this day has translated into a global platform for public outreach and is widely celebrated by stakeholders in more than 100 countries. The Global theme for the 2015 WED celebrations is, ***'Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care.'*** This theme aims at highlighting the face and linkages between the degrading environment and the increasing population pressure that is depending on it at the time. The global celebrations will be held in Milano in Italy. For Uganda, the National celebrations are being held in Rakai district under the theme ***'35 million people. Limited resources. Consume with Care'*** that has been adopted by the government. According to National Environment Management Authority, *'the National WED celebrations will focus on activities aiming at re-awakening people's need to advocate for, speak out and take actions to save and improve our environment and natural resources specifically wetlands, water resources, riverbanks, lakeshores, soils and the landscape.'* All over the country, Local Governments and Civil Society Organizations are also marking the day with different types of activities.

Both themes at the Global and National levels emphasize that planetary natural resources are limited and yet the world population is growing at an escalating rate. The world population is projected to reach 9.6 billion people by 2050 from the current 7.2 billion. Uganda, one of the countries with the fastest growth rates is projected to have 130 million people in 2050 from the current 35 million. A large population presents tremendous pressure on the natural resources base for food, water, fiber, fuel and living spaces. This calls for sustainable use and management of the environment and natural resources at all levels of society.

Considering Kampala City as a case, there are several limited resources such as space, the environment and natural resources (such as land, wetlands, green belts, urban forests, landscapes). Other resources such as: food, fuel wood and charcoal are generated from outside and transported into the City. Notable is that Kampala City's night population which, is currently estimated at 1.5 million people and 4.5 million people day population presents great pressure on these limited natural resources. Consumption of resources also results into generation of waste at various such as our homes, markets, industries, schools, hospitals, offices and vehicles.

The current daily per capita waste generation in Kampala is estimated at 1 Kgs. With an estimated day population of 4.5 million people, Kampala generates about 45,000 tons of waste per day! According to Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), about three quarters of the waste generated in the city is organic. The remaining proportion constitutes glass, paper, metals and other construction waste (indicated in Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Composition of solid waste generated in Kampala. (Source: **Kampala Capital City Authority, 2013**)

KCCA estimates that about a third of this waste is properly disposed of with two thirds disposed off by other means such as illegal dumping by refuse collectors and building contractors, burning, and household dumping into storm water channels, sewers or public areas. The consequences of poor waste disposal include: blockage of drainage channels resulting into flooding and contamination of water bodies, creating of breeding grounds for disease causing organisms, and air pollution. These negatively impact the health and economic wellbeing of a significant proportion of the population of Kampala Capital City.



**Figure 2.** KCCA workers cleaning of Nakivbo Drainage Channel. **Photo by Environmental Alert.**

Proper waste disposal in Kampala faces a number of challenges which need to be urgently addressed. KCCA is experiencing difficulties in acquiring land for waste landfills. Neighboring communities complain of the bad stench from the landfills, displacement of communities and threats to their health. In the informal settlements where more than 50% of Kampala Capital City population resides, there is no space for proper bulking and handling of waste by households for safe disposal, moreover access for refuse collection trucks is also limited making house to house collection systems expensive and uneconomical to implement. Sewer lines in Kampala serve about 7% of the population, which is within the central business district and the surrounding areas. The rest of Kampala’s population depends on pit latrines, individual septic tanks, open defecation and use of plastic bags. The result is that most of the sewage ends up in the wetlands and the natural drainage system contaminating surface and underground water sources. The recent typhoid outbreak in Kampala has been directly attributed to contaminated ground water sources.

It is important that more safe and sustainable technological options for waste management are developed by KCCA, the private sector and households. Strategies that enable the recycling, reuse, energy recovery and/or safe disposal of waste.

Therefore, for Kampala City the 2015 WED theme urges all stakeholders and everybody to consume the limited resources with care. This means that the waste we generate should be managed sustainably along the waste generation chain. It requires sorting biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste at the source. In this arrangement, some waste can be re-cycled, re-used and or turned into other beneficial products while reducing the associated environmental and health burden if it is not properly disposed. For instance, bio-degradable waste can be used to make compost; which can be used by urban farmers or commercial tree nursery operators. Other biodegradable waste from households and markets such as crop (banana/cassava) peelings can be repackaged and sold to urban livestock farmers. Thus, a sack of banana peelings costs 5,000-8,000/=. Alternatively, some biodegradable wastes especially agricultural waste can be used for fuel or as part of the raw materials for production of charcoal briquettes that can be sold for income generation. Besides, the non-biodegradable waste such as plastic and metal scrap can be re-cycled and re-used to make other products.

However, the sustainable use and management of wastes along the generation chain requires effective implementation of supportive policy and legislation at all levels. It is good and timely that the process for development of the National Urban Solid Waste Management Policy for Uganda and associated regulations and standards is underway through coordination by the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development. It is important that more consultations are conducted with aim of getting key stakeholders' views and inputs into the draft policy, associated regulations and standards.

Additionally, more targeted awareness for proper waste management should be rolled out extensively to provide the necessary information about implications for poor waste management, practical options for sorting, re-cycling and re-using wastes for other benefits. Community-based initiatives for instance innovations in proper waste management should be supported for development into sustainable business enterprises.

Environmental Alert, KCCA with support from WaterAid Uganda, are working with communities in the slum areas of Kampala Capital City to raise awareness about sanitation and to establish community owned and manage sanitation and safe water facilities.

These initiatives are being implemented in Nakawa, Makindye, Lubaga and Central divisions of Kampala City. Some of the key strategies being promoted are: construction of improved public toilets/latrines, Establishment of drainage channels, setting up Ferro cement tanks to support safe harvesting and clean water storage, as well as improved solid waste management. All these are supported by



**Figure 3.** Assorted products made from recycled straws by Kinawattaka Women's Initiative in Nakawa Division. **Photo by Environmental Alert.**

targeted awareness raising and advocacy campaigns to prompt communities to demand for effective service delivery.

Besides, entrepreneurial skills development is being promoted for income generation among households while living in a clean and healthy environment. The key targeted beneficiaries in this respect are the vulnerable women and youth groups.

*‘Waste is Wealth’ if managed properly!!! ‘Waste is Death’ if improperly managed!!! As we celebrate the World Environment Day on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2015, we call upon all stakeholders and everybody to reflect on our consumption and on how we manage the waste we generate in order to save our environment, generate wealth and safeguard our health.*

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