

1.0 Introduction

International World Water Day is held annually on **22nd March** as a means of focusing attention on the importance of **freshwater** and *advocating for the sustainable management of freshwater resources*. An international day to celebrate freshwater was recommended at the 1992 **United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)** in Rio de Janeiro. The United Nations General Assembly responded by designating 22nd March 1993 as the first World Water Day.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution **A/RES/47/193** of 22nd December 1992 by which 22nd March of each year was declared World Day for Water, to be observed starting in 1993, in conformity with the recommendations of the **United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)** contained in Chapter 18 (Fresh Water Resources) of Agenda 21. States were invited to devote the Day, as appropriate in the national context, to concrete activities such as the promotion of public awareness through the production and dissemination of documentaries and the organization of conferences, round tables, seminars and expositions related to the conservation and development of water resources and the implementation of the recommendations of Agenda 21.

1.1 Key message by Environmental Alert in relation to theme

Environmental Alert commends the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Water and Environment and Partners for the progress made to date in respect to the implementation of the catchment management plans within the 4 water management zones across the country. This process needs to be more inclusive by bringing on board more stakeholders to participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation based on their interests, mandates, capacity and competences.

The Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Water and Environment is again applauded for development of the Water and Sanitation Gender strategy. This is a great opportunity as it provides guidelines and strategies for integrating gender in water and sanitation interventions and investments. The implementation of this strategy should be fast-tracked based on clear targets, indicators and responsive budget and regular monitoring and report to ensure that vulnerable groups are targeted.

2.0 Background

The World Water Day is an international day **to raise awareness and inspire action to tackle water and sanitation issues**. It avails **observance and an opportunity to learn more about water related issues**. Each year, UN-Water - the entity that coordinates the UN's work on **water and sanitation** - sets a theme for World Water Day corresponding to a current or future challenge. The engagement campaign is coordinated by one or several of the UN-Water Members with a related mandate.

The Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) in collaboration with key partners successfully held the first ever Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK) in March 2018. The event attracted high-level political participation including the Vice President of the Republic of Uganda and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda. Stakeholders presented information, exchanged knowledge, built relationships, and deliberated on pertinent sector issues. Based on the success of the first UWEWK, the MWE will hold the second UWEWK at the Water Resource Institute in Entebbe from **Monday 18 – Friday 22, March 2019**. The event will conclude with the annual commemoration of three important International Environmental

Days: *World Forest Day (March 21st), World Water Day (March 22nd) and World Meteorological Day (March 23rd).*

2.1 Theme for International World Water Day - 2019

This year's theme is **"Leaving no one behind"** and will show the need to move together in ensuring accessibility to clean and safe water for all. It will also demonstrate the desire for inclusive and integrated water resource management for sustainable development.

2.3 Role of Water

Water plays many roles and among which we have:

- i. *Used for drinking and cooking.*
- ii. *Washing hands and the body (Hygiene and Sanitation).*
- iii. *Used in agriculture for irrigation.*

According to the United Nations, which is monitoring progress toward the Sustainable Development goals, Access to safe water sources and good sanitation could save the lives of up to 1.5 million children a year. And while the world has made significant progress toward achieving the goal of halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, there's still a lot of work to be done.

Environmental Alert (see **Box 1** for further information) **as a Civil Society Organization (CSO) will participate in the events** celebrating **International World Water Day-2019**, and *will showcase* recent innovations, technologies and developments in the Water and Environment sector for efficient Water and Environment services delivery. Thus, it will participate in exhibitions during which they will interact with key duty bearers to share their concerns and recommendation to advance water resources conservation and sustainable development at the community level.

Table 1: How EA will participate in the event.

#	Event Activities	Participation of EA
A)	Exhibitions and side events staged by public and private sector institutions, academia, development partners, civil society organizations/non-governmental organizations and others;	Environmental Alert and ENR-CSO network will exhibit Information, Education and Communications, and publications showing best practices and lessons in the water and ENR sector.
B)	Parallel sessions on thematic areas and topics held for different categories of participants;	To participate in the parallel sessions of water, and forest thematic working areas, as a way of tracking progress made.
C)	One day field visits to selected sites within and around Entebbe and Kampala to provide practical demonstration to participants in line with the sub-themes of the week	To participate in one day field visits, especially the ones targeting forest and water thematic working areas to track progress made.
D)	Paper and posters presented by different scholars and practitioners;	Environmental Alert will present the following papers during the thematic workshops in the UWEWK, 2019:

	<p>a) <i>The Contribution of Alternative No-Regret Livelihood Enterprises for building Resilient Communities, Ecosystems and Associated Catchment in Uganda; A case of communities within Nyarunzinga, Kandekye—Ruhorobero and Nyamuhizi-Kagogo wetland systems catchments in South Western Uganda;</i></p> <p>b) <i>The Uganda National Forest Stewardship Standard approved and launched; what are the opportunities for advancing responsible Forest Management in Uganda.</i></p> <p>c) <i>The Uganda REDD+ National Strategy was launched in November 2017! So what next moving forward?</i></p> <p>d) <i>Civil Society Organization's Contribution in advancing Uganda's Green Growth Path; a case of the Environment and Natural Resources Civil Society Organizations Network.</i></p> <p>e) <i>Advancing Civil Society Organizations and Networks coordination for contribution to effective Renewable Energy Policy formulation and implementation in Uganda.</i></p>
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According to the Water and Environment Sector Performance Report 2017, "The sector registered some achievements during the FY16/17. The average access to safe water in rural areas was estimated at 70% (which is a 3% increase from 67% as of June 2016). Communities need however to be sensitized on hygienic practices in order to maintain a safe water chain from the source up to storage at the household level. The functionality for rural water supplies has on the other hand reduced to 85%, from the 86% which was reported in June 2016. Access to safe drinking water in the urban water has stagnated, and stands at 71%. It is worth noting that the water and sanitation services managed by the National Water & Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) have now expanded to cover a total of 218 towns. The quality, reliability, and number of connections in these towns have improved significantly."

According to the Water and Environment Sector Performance Report 2017, "urban areas outside Kampala, **85.5%** of the urban population has access to **basic sanitation**, and an estimated **40%** of the urban population **has access to a hand washing facility**, this is not an indication of actual use. Some of the hands washing facilities lack soap and/or water. Furthermore access to hand washing in schools has continued to be low with only **35%** of the schools having access to washing facilities." Ministry of Water and Environment carried out water quality assessments in 15 districts that have



Figure 1: Locals in Makindye Division collecting water from a spring. Photo by Environmental Alert.

been listed as cholera-prone districts by **Ministry of Health**. Out of the 216 sources sampled, only 50% were safe, and out of the 176 households where drinking water was tested, only 32% had safe water (Water and Environment Sector Performance Report, 2017).

Environment and Natural Resources Civil Society Organizations (ENR-CSO) Network through their published **ENR-CSOs Sector Performance Report FY 2016/2017**, shared their contribution to the sector of which a total of 15 water sources (hand pumps and traditional wells) were rehabilitated, and the process also involved electing water source committees for each of the water sources to oversee their management. The network further calls upon the government through various line ministries to work hand in hand with various stakeholders like the civil society organizations to drill and avail more safe water resources for its citizens, further sanitation awareness should be carried out everywhere including in schools (pupils) so that people learn about the role of washing hands with soap. Public toilets and Hand washing facilities should be setup for the public consumption in towns and urban areas.

Box 1. About Environmental Alert

Environmental Alert (EA) was founded in **1988 and this year (2018) marks 30 years** of contribution to improved livelihoods and development in Uganda through several interventions in sustainable agriculture, environment and natural resources management. EA is officially registered with the NGO Board as a Ugandan non-governmental organization, incorporated as a company limited by guarantee. EA is governed by an independent Board that is responsible for providing strategic oversight of the organization including ensuring its integrity as a voluntary service organization.

EA is a **1st prize winner of the Energy globe award for environmental sustainability-2005 under the category, earth.**

EA is a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and a Member of The IUCN National Committee for Uganda.

EA envisions, *'Resilient and dignified communities, managing their environment and natural resources sustainably.'*

EA's mission is to, *'Contribute to improved livelihoods of vulnerable communities by enhancing agricultural productivity and sustainable natural resources management'*

Program and institutional Components:

1. Environment and Natural resources management;
2. Food security and Nutrition;
3. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene;
4. Finance and Administration;
5. Resource mobilization and Investment.

Scale of Implementation:

EA operates in selected districts for generation of evidence to inform policy engagements on agriculture, environment and natural resources at National and International levels. Currently EA's operations are in 20 districts across the country. EA undertakes area wide targeted awareness on selected issues in agriculture, environment and natural resources engagements

EA is a Secretariat for following networks:

- a) The Network for Civil Society Organizations in Environment & Natural Resources Sector (ENR-CSO Network) - <http://enr-cso.org/>;
- b) Uganda Forestry Working Group - <http://ufwg.entalert.org/>;
- c) The Standards Development Group (for promotion of Sustainable Forest Management in Uganda); and
- d) Promoting Local Innovation in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resources management (PROLINNOVA-Uganda Network) - <http://www.prolinnova.net/uganda>.
- e) National CSO Network on Renewable Energy.

Further information about Environmental Alert is available at: <http://entalert.org/>