

THE GREEN DEBATE AND SIMPLIFICATION OF ENVIRONMENT LAWS

CONCEPT NOTE:

Today Uganda and many parts of the world face environmental hazards due to climate change and destruction of the ecosystems for instance pollution, droughts/long dry spells, landslides, natural resource depletion. Land and natural resource degradation account for **80% of the annual costs of environmental degradation**. There is increasing encroachment on wetlands and other ecosystems for farming and construction of housing among others. There is rapid depletion of water resources due to encroachment of water catchment areas. Despite the existence of laws and policies that prohibit the destruction of the ecosystems there is increasing destruction and encroachment of the ecosystems. There is a gap in the enforcement of the environmental laws, regulations and policies. According to the World Health Organization more than **7 million people** in the world die every year because of pollution and of the **7 million, 700,000** of them are children. We need to enact and enforce vehicle emission standards to reduce pollution.

Uganda is a signatory to a number of international frameworks on environmental for instance the Paris Agreement, the UN framework convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 1992), the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as waterfowl habitat (Ramsar convention,1971). Uganda has enacted a number of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Few people know about these laws, they should be simplified and disseminated to the wider public in order to encourage their enforcement.

We **Greenpeace & Advocacy** Uganda are organizing 2 Green debates on the theme, "**Environmental protection and conservation for sustainable development**". The first debate will be inter-University **involving 8 universities both public and private universities**. The 2nd debate will be between secondary schools within and out of Kampala.

The purpose of the debate is to mobilize youth for environmental governance and protection and create a critical mass of young people committed to environmental conservation. Youth must also be encouraged to take up research on environmental conservation and protection. The youth must be empowered with information, debate skills in order to **strengthen their resilience and ensure they are included in natural resource governance**.

We will simplify international and national environmental laws so that it can be disseminated to the youths, students, private sector and the public because few people know these laws and yet if they knew it would empower them to enforce it as citizens and also deter them from breaking the law.

The debate and simplification of laws is important for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), because when communities, youths and members of civil society are empowered with knowledge of environmental laws they can better protect and conserve the environment hence reducing disaster risks. These laws can be simplified and disseminated to communities, Women groups, youth groups, private sector and civil society organizations to ensure resilient communities and citizens.

Debate theme and topic.

The debate questions are, "This house believes that development without considering environmental issues is not sustainable".

Theme of the debate: Environmental protection and conservation for sustainable development.

Objectives of the debate and simplification of environmental laws.

1. To mobilize the youth for environmental governance and protection and create a critical mass of youths/young people committed to environmental conservation and advocate for conservation of Murchison falls.
2. To encourage enforcement both administratively and civilly of different environmental laws.
3. To disseminate information on laws on environmental conservation and build resilience of youth in natural resource governance.

Judges of the debate

The judges of the debate will be drawn from across the spectrum, civil society organizations, Academia, Private sector, government and political leaders. We are engaging Ms Annet kandole of care international, Dr Kagaba of Makerere University Climate change institute, Dr kiwanuka Keefa chairperson of the natural resource committee and another panellist from government.

Participants in the debate.

The participants in the debate will be students (youths) from more than 7 Universities in Uganda, communities will participate, Young environmental activists for instance friends of zoka, our trees need answers, Makerere University climate change Association and others, CSOs, the media, political leaders, the private sector and all members of the public. The debate will be at Makerere University senate hall because it has the largest student population.

Partners in the debate:

We are engaging the ministry of water and environment, NEMA, Uganda Wildlife Authority, the Tourism Board, Parliament of Uganda care international, Wetlands international, WWF, Environmental Alert, ECO-TRUST, ACODE, Red Cross climate centre, and other potential partners so that we can successfully hold the debate.

The Debate Winners

At the end of the debate all participants will be requested to sign a commitment to protect and conserve the environment and to ensure enforcement of environmental laws. The debate winners will be given tree to plant, a trophy for winning the debate and a cash prize of 1000,000 UGX. It will be a one day event.