



ROOTs NEWSLETTER

“We are running out of Trees”



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THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA



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ROOTs

Running Out Of Trees

“We are running out of Trees”



0782432048



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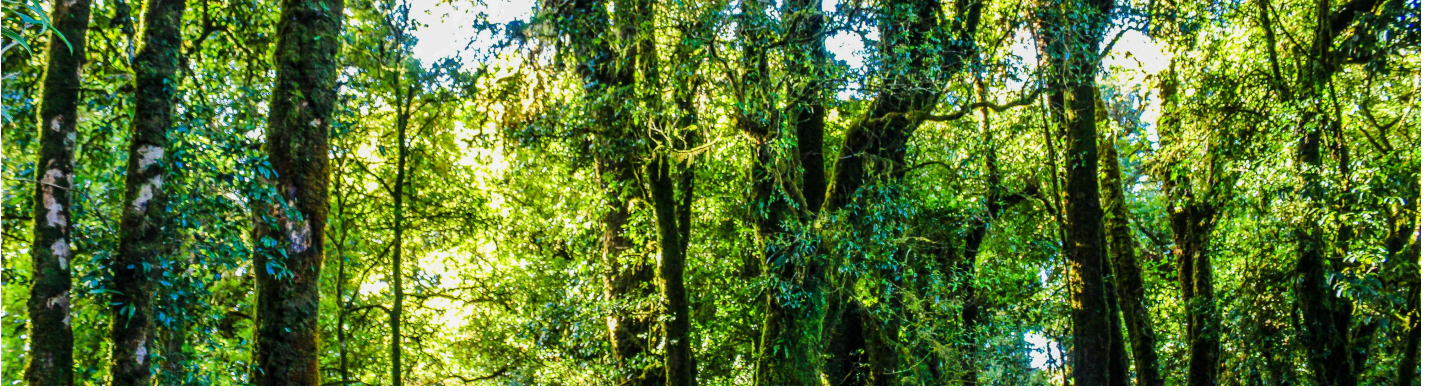
CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Assistant Commissioner Forest Resources in Charge of Regulation and Utilization MWE, Chairman technical committee ROOTS Campaign initiative

On behalf of the Running Out Of Trees campaign (ROOTs) Chairman who is also the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) Dr Alfred Okot Okidi, it gives me great pleasure to share with you this August edition of the **Running Out of Trees (ROOTs) Campaign Newsletter**, which once again demonstrates that the restoration of Uganda's forests is not the responsibility of Government alone, but a collective responsibility requiring the participation of communities, young people, private sector, civil society, development partners, cultural and religious institutions, and every Ugandan.

This edition particularly highlights the growing role of **young people in environmental conservation and forest restoration**.



As Uganda commemorated International Youth Day 2026 under the theme “Different Contexts, Common Aspirations,” we were reminded that our young people must not only be beneficiaries of environmental programmes, but active participants, innovators and leaders in shaping the future of our forests. The various youth engagements highlighted in this newsletter from Budongo Central Forest Reserve to Kawempe and the Young Forest Champions Initiative are encouraging examples of this emerging leadership.

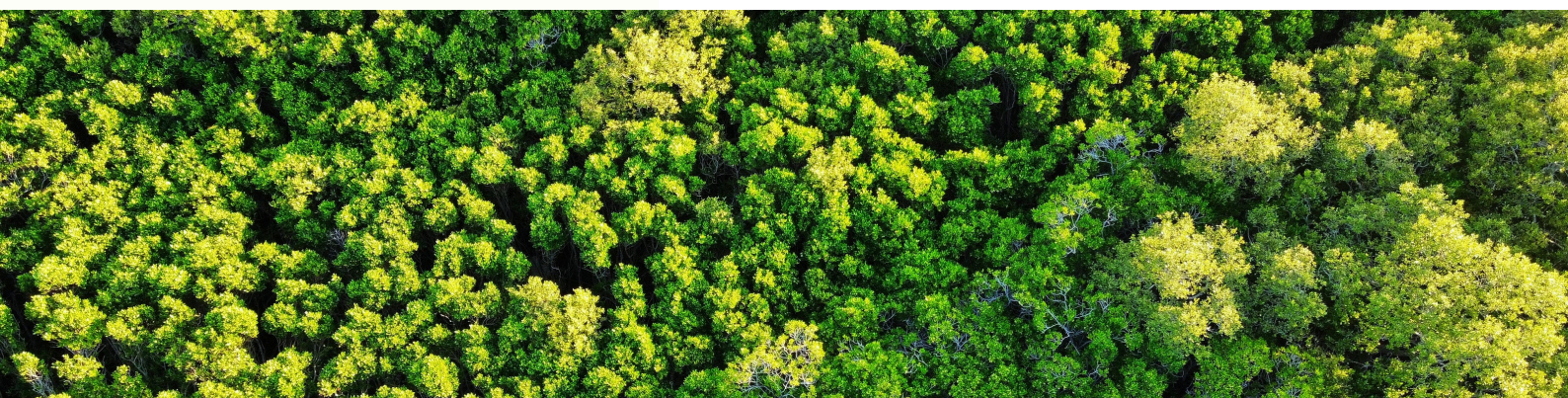
I am equally encouraged by the diversity of partnerships and initiatives featured in this edition. The participation of ROOTs partners in the **Great African Cycling Safari**, tree-growing initiatives by Rotary, the **One Million Avocado Programme**, and community-based forestry initiatives demonstrate that tree growing can simultaneously contribute to environmental restoration, livelihoods, food security, climate resilience and regional cooperation.

These efforts speak directly to what the ROOTs Campaign seeks to achieve: transforming tree planting from an occasional activity into a **national culture of tree growing, nurturing and protection**. Our success should therefore not be measured only by the number of seedlings distributed or planted, but by how many trees survive, grow to maturity and contribute to healthier landscapes and improved livelihoods. This also calls for stronger monitoring and documentation of the trees planted under the Campaign.

As Chairman Technical Committee of the ROOTs Campaign, I extend my appreciation to all our partners and individuals who continue to contribute their time, resources and ideas to this national cause. I particularly call upon Uganda's young people to take their rightful place at the centre of this movement.

Together, let us grow trees, restore our landscapes, create opportunities and secure a greener and more resilient Uganda for generations to come.

**Assistant Commissioner, Forest Resources Regulation and Utilization
Ministry of Water and Environment
Chairman Technical Committee, Running Out of Trees (ROOTs) Campaign**





EDITOR'S NOTE

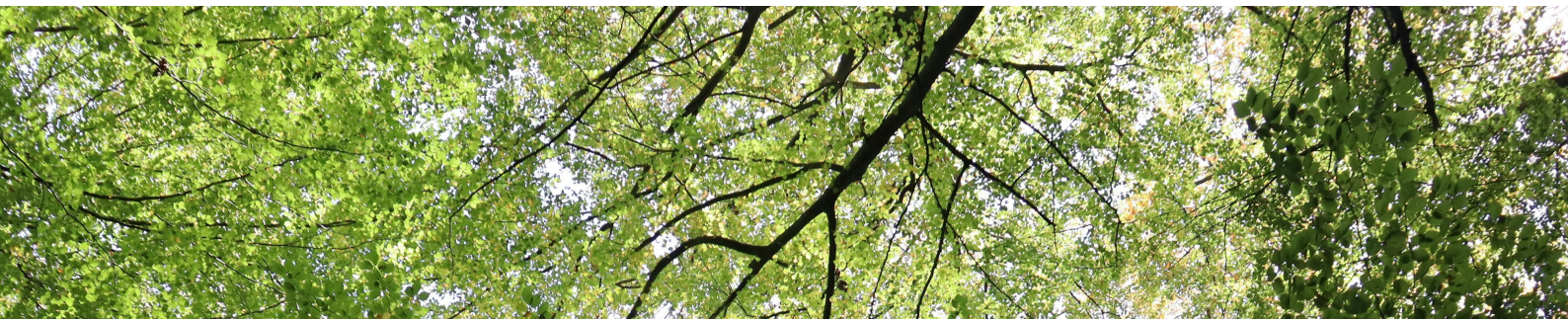
Youth Must Lead Uganda's Forest Restoration

Uganda marked the **International Youth Day 2026**, under the theme “Different Contexts, **Common Aspirations**,” we recognized young people as indispensable partners in restoring and protecting the country's forests.

Uganda is a youthful nation, with young people accounting for **more than 78% of the population**. Their energy, innovation and growing interest in green enterprises make them a powerful force for reversing environmental degradation.

The urgency is undeniable. Uganda's forest cover currently stands at about **12.7% of the country's land area**, according to the Ministry of Water and Environment's FY2026/27 policy statement. This remains far below the country's historical forest cover and demonstrates the scale of restoration required.

NDP IV places sustainable natural-resource management, climate resilience and socio-economic transformation at the heart of Uganda's development agenda. Increasing tree cover is therefore not simply an environmental responsibility; it is an investment in livelihoods, energy security, biodiversity and future economic opportunities.



Youth should be at the centre of tree growing, forest restoration, agroforestry, monitoring, conservation education and green entrepreneurship. Equipping them with forestry and other **green skills** can simultaneously create employment and strengthen environmental stewardship others to do the same.

The message is clear: **Uganda cannot restore its forests without its youth.** This International Youth Day should therefore move beyond celebration to action –giving young people the skills, resources and leadership opportunities to grow the forests Uganda needs for generations to come.

Walukamba Aldon
Editor, ROOTs Newsletter



ARCHBISHOP CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, MARKS 25 YEARS OF SERVICE TO IRCU.

The Archbishop of the Church of Uganda, Rev. Dr. Stephen Kaziimba Mugalu, joined religious leaders, young people, and other stakeholders to mark 25 years of the **Inter Religious Council of Uganda** alongside the commemoration of International Youth Day 2026. the IRCU over the past 25 years while recognizing the critical role of young people in shaping Uganda's future. This year's International Youth Day (IYD), themed “Different Contexts, Common Aspirations,” highlighted the need for young people from different backgrounds and faith communities to work together towards shared aspirations, including peace, sustainable development, and environmental conservation.

As part of the celebrations, ROOTs Campaign partner **Hajjat sebyala Aphwa** alias Mama Green donated over 25 tree seedlings to the IRCU Youth, encouraging young people to translate their commitment to a better future into practical action.

According to Mama Green, she was “Hyper happy” to make such a contribution in celebration of IYD 2026, while also honoring the 25 years of service by the Archbishop through IRCU “How do we get these very important trees mapped onto our ROOTs Radar?” she asked, putting it to the attention of the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee of the **Running Out Of Trees** Campaign, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that every tree planted is documented, tracked, and accounted for.



Archbishop Kaziimba joins religious leaders and youth to celebrate IRCU's 25th anniversary.



Hajjati Sebyala donates trees for planting at the 25th Anniversary of the Inter Religious Council in Uganda

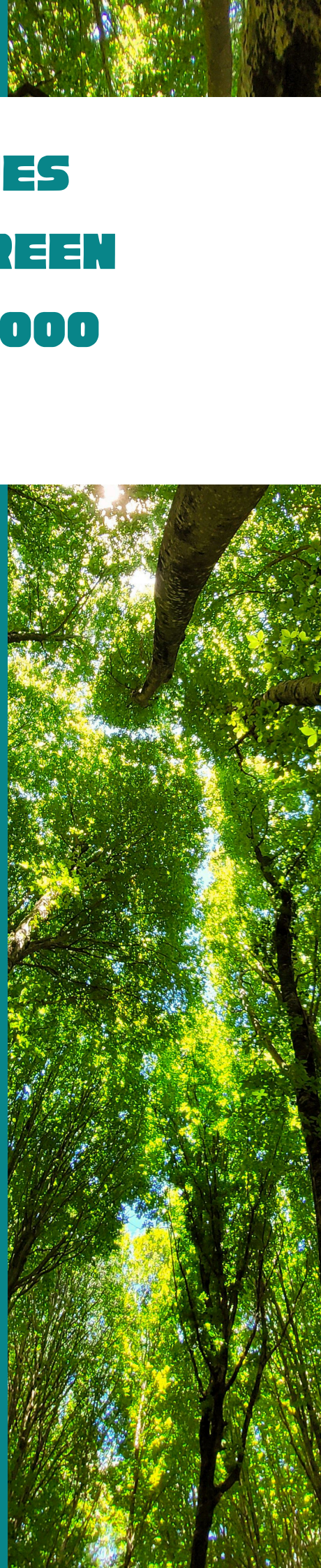


CENTENARY BANK LAUNCHES UGX495 MILLION CENTE GREEN PROGRAMME TO GROW 500,000 TREES ACROSS UGANDA

KAMPALA, Uganda – Centenary Bank, in partnership with the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) and Good Forests Foundation Uganda, has launched the **five-year Cente Green Programme**, a nationwide environmental initiative that will invest **UGX495 million to grow 500,000 trees across 12 Catholic dioceses in Uganda.**

Running over a **five-year period**, the programme seeks to restore degraded landscapes, promote tree growing, strengthen environmental stewardship and improve livelihoods under the theme **“Grow Trees, Transform Lives and Restore Creation.”**

The programme was officially launched by **Rt. Rev. Dr. Antony Zziwa, Chairperson of the Uganda Episcopal Conference**, who challenged Christians and communities to take greater responsibility for protecting the environment.



“We have disrupted the environment to levels never seen before,” Dr. Zziwa said, emphasizing the critical role trees play in rainfall formation, environmental protection and the wellbeing of communities. He also called for greater attention to **environmental justice and the responsible stewardship of Mother Earth.**

He urged Christians across the country to actively participate in afforestation and tree-growing initiatives, noting that restoring the environment requires collective action from individuals, institutions, communities and faith-based organisations.

The **Ministry of Water and Environment**, through the **Department of Forestry Management**, was represented at the launch by **Assistant Commissioner of Forestry Resources in Charge of Utilization and Regulation Issa Katwesige**, who welcomed the partnership as an important contribution to Uganda’s forest restoration and sustainable development agenda.

Speaking during a panel discussion, Katwesige highlighted Government’s efforts to create an enabling environment for sustainable forestry and forest-based investments. He revealed that Government has finalized the legal requirements necessary to facilitate **carbon trading**, opening new opportunities for communities and investors to benefit from forest-related carbon initiatives.

He said Government is also scaling up interventions aimed at improving forest monitoring, strengthening partnerships and promoting the sustainable utilization of forest resources as Uganda works towards achieving **tenfold economic growth.**

“We are taking small steps in the right direction, but we need to scale them up through stronger partnerships, better monitoring and sustainable utilization of our forest resources,” Katwesige said.

He further disclosed that Government is engaging banking institutions to develop a framework that will help financial institutions better understand **forestry as a viable business and investment opportunity**, potentially unlocking more financing for tree growing, restoration and sustainable forest enterprises.

With 500,000 trees, UGX495 million in investment, 12 dioceses and five years of action, the programme marks a significant step towards turning environmental responsibility into practical action at community level.

Speaking at the launch, **Centenary Bank Managing Director Godfrey Byekwaso** reaffirmed the bank’s commitment to the initiative, stating that the bank will provide **UGX495 million** to support the programme.

The investment will facilitate the growing of **500,000 trees across 12 Catholic dioceses throughout Uganda over five years**, bringing together the financial sector, the Church and environmental partners in a shared effort to restore Uganda’s landscapes.

The Cente Green Programme is expected to contribute to Uganda’s broader efforts to increase tree cover, restore degraded ecosystems, combat climate change and create sustainable livelihoods while mobilising faith communities to become active champions of environmental conservation.



A FEEL OF THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY IN BUDONGO CENTRAL FOREST RESERVE.



Youth unite to champion forest conservation, environmental action and a greener Uganda on Youth Day 2026.

In the heart of Masindi, the future of Uganda's forests took a center stage earlier this month during the commemoration of the International Youth Day. Recognizing that the conservation of tomorrow depends on the leaders of today. Environmental Alert (EA) and a coalition of the Environment and Natural Resources Civil Society Organization (ENRCSO) Network partners including the "Training, Education and Empowerment for Neighborhood Sustainability (TEENS Uganda), TOORO Civil Society Organization Network (TOORONET) and the Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda ACCU)" organized and transformed the celebration of the International Youth Day 2026 under the theme, **"Different Context, Common Aspirations."** into a call to action.

With support from the European Union, the Embassy of Denmark, UNODC, Masindi Local Government and the Ministry of Water and Environment, the event wasn't just a celebration, it was a boot camp for a new generation of environmental stewards ready to combat forest crimes in Uganda.



For the young activists from Masindi and Kampala, the forest was never just a collection of trees it was a living classroom, a sanctuary, and a mirror reflecting their own futures. The International Youth Day marked a profound shift; it was the first time their digital activism and city-born campaigns had a physical heartbeat. As they walked beneath the canopy, they didn't just see nature they saw themselves in it. The visit became a pilgrimage of responsibility, putting tangible faces to the forests they had fought to protect from afar.

The commemoration day kicked off with an engagement bringing together Forest Crime Project partners, the Ministry of Water and Environment, Masindi District Local Government technical experts, and the youth. The engagement provided an opportunity for the young people to interact with local leaders and technical experts on the importance of environmental conservation, sustainable forest governance, and meaningful youth participation in protecting natural resources.

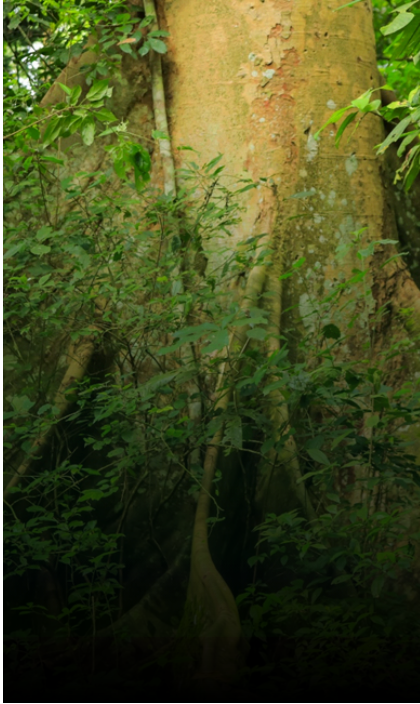




The engagement was followed by a ceremonial tree-planting activity, symbolizing the youth's commitment to restoring and protecting the environment. The team then proceeded to Budongo Central Forest Reserve, and Budongo Conservation Field Station where the young people had an opportunity to experience the forest first-hand and learn about its ecological importance.

Budongo Central Forest Reserve remains as a protected area, renowned for its biodiversity particularly its notable chimpanzee population and its history of indigenous tree species. This forest is the biggest central forest reserve the country has currently, it also has critical site for conservation and taking young people to these spaces to put a name to what they protect make it even much meaningful to the youth that took part in the commemoration of the international youth Day.

GROWING A GREENER FUTURE: ROTARY CHAMPIONS TREES FOR CLIMATE AND COMMUNITY



KAMPALA, Uganda - The Rotary Club of Kampala Central is taking practical steps to promote environmental conservation and climate action through its **Run for the Nile** initiative, with plans to establish a 70,000 seedlings tree nursery at **Nabagereka Primary School, Lubiri**.

The initiative was discussed during a planning meeting that brought together key partners committed to advancing tree growing, environmental education and community action.

The proposed nursery will feature a diverse selection of **indigenous, fruit and medicinal tree species**, providing pupils with hands-on opportunities to learn about trees, biodiversity, climate change and the importance of protecting the environment.



Beyond producing seedlings, the nursery is envisioned as a **living classroom** where young learners can acquire practical conservation skills and develop a lasting appreciation for Uganda's natural resources.

The initiative also demonstrates the power of partnerships in addressing environmental challenges. By bringing together schools, communities, Rotary and other stakeholders, the project seeks to turn environmental awareness into practical action.

The Run for the Nile initiative reflects a broader commitment to restoring Uganda's tree cover while inspiring the next generation to become environmental champions.

Together, we are not simply planting trees - we are cultivating knowledge, nurturing responsibility and growing a greener legacy for generations to come.



Rotary Club of Kampala Central launches 70,000-seedling nursery to advance climate action and conservation.

ONE MILLION AVOCADO TREES TO TRANSFORM UGANDA'S FARMS



NaFORRI Director of Research Dr. John Adriko addresses participants during the launch of the One Million Avocado Program at NaFORRI, Kifu, Mukono

The National Forestry Resources Research Institute (NaFORRI) this week hosted the launch of the One Million Avocado Program, an initiative spearheaded by the Global Sustainable Futures Network CIC (GSFN CIC) under the auspices of Hass Uganda.

The program seeks to support smallholder farmers to plant one million avocado trees across Eastern, Northern and West Nile sub-regions of Uganda, contributing to improved household incomes, food security, environmental restoration and climate resilience.

Speaking at the launch, NaFORRI Director of Research, Dr. John Adriko, pledged the Institute's technical support to the program, particularly in ensuring farmers access genuine and quality Hass avocado planting materials.



"One of the achievements NaFORRI has had in avocado has been to genetically identify the true-to-type Hass avocado. We can use this expertise to provide quality assurance, certification and traceability so that years down the road there will be no surprises for farmers that it was not true-to-type avocado", Said Dr. John Adriko.

NaFORRI Senior research scientist, Dr. Fred M. Kalanzi in his presentation told participants that Uganda is at a defining moment in the development of its avocado sector. The Global demand for Hass avocado continues to rise, Uganda's favourable climate gives the country a strong comparative advantage in production. However, the country currently captures only small share of the international market.



The launch also highlighted opportunities for strengthening climate research and reporting. Prof. Otim Nape, CEO of Africa Innovations Institute (AFRII) and chairman of the One Million Avocado Program, said that the Institute's Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) system and Gas Chromatography Laboratory can support NaFORRI's research work.

"The Laboratory is open. I want to interest scientists at NaFORRI to make use of this laboratory and our teams are there to help. You will be most welcome to do research there, bring your gases and analyze them*", Prof. Otim Nape said.

The partnership brings together researchers, farmers, nursery operators and other stakeholders to promote science-led avocado production, improve planting material quality and position avocado as a driver of rural transformation and Uganda's green economy



Tree planting ceremony of Hass avocado tree seedling on the Institute compound

Kawempe Youths Plant Trees to Protect Pollinators

KAMPALA, Uganda - August 14, 2026: Young people in Kawempe Division joined the countrywide commemoration of **National Youth Day** with a tree-planting activity aimed at promoting environmental conservation, biodiversity and greener communities.

The initiative, held at the **Bugema University Kampala Campus playground**, brought together youth to take practical action for environmental protection and demonstrate the important role young people can play in restoring urban green spaces.

As part of the initiative, Kampala Buzzline donated 200 pollinator-friendly tree seedlings to the youth of Kawempe Division. The trees are expected to provide important habitats and food sources for pollinators, including bees and butterflies, while contributing to improved urban environments.

Speaking as Chief Guest, **Mr. Moses Byaruhanga** urged young people to plant, nurture and protect trees, emphasizing that environmental conservation requires sustained action beyond planting.

He encouraged the youth to develop a lasting connection with nature and protect natural ecosystems for future generations.

The youths actively participated in planting the trees at the university playground, while each participant also received a tree seedling to take home and plant, extending the conservation effort to households and communities across Kawempe Division.

Byaruhanga also called on stakeholders and members of the public to participate in the **Bee Run scheduled for 25 October 2026**, an initiative aimed at raising awareness and supporting efforts to protect pollinators.

The activity demonstrated that when young people are empowered to act, **tree planting can become a powerful pathway to greener, healthier and more pollinator-friendly communities.**



Young Forest Champions Drive Global Conservation Action





The **AIM4Forests Young Forest Champions Initiative** is empowering young leaders to become catalysts for forest conservation, climate action and ecosystem restoration across the world.

The initiative has selected **60 young forest champions** from **Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Peru, Uganda and Zambia**, equipping them with practical skills and knowledge to address pressing environmental challenges in their communities.

Through **mentorship, capacity building and innovative technologies such as remote sensing**, the young leaders are gaining the tools needed to monitor forests, restore degraded ecosystems, protect critical landscapes and strengthen climate resilience.

Building on the initiative's success in Kenya, the programme is expanding its network of young environmental changemakers, creating opportunities for collaboration, knowledge sharing and innovative approaches to forest monitoring and conservation.

In Uganda, 10 young people have been selected to participate in the initiative, including **Juliet Nambaziira, Sharon Odida, Erickson Serwadda, Doreen Ainembabazi and Kayongo Dick**, alongside other emerging youth champions.

Their participation demonstrates the growing role of Uganda's youth in advancing technology-driven forest governance and environmental stewardship.



Lucy Amorut one of the selected Youths



Juliet Nambaziira another selected student



Richard Kaduma a selected student

As these young champions take their knowledge and skills into communities, they are helping shape a future **where technology, youth leadership and conservation work together to protect forests for generations to come.**

The future of forests is young, innovative and ready for action.



YOUNG FOREST CHAMPIONS INITIATIVE



International Youth Day: Empowering Young Farmers to Build a Greener Future with ECOTRUST



Every year on 12th August, International Youth Day celebrates the pivotal role of young people in building a sustainable future. Through its conservation and climate-smart agriculture programmes, ECOTRUST is actively empowering young farmers with the skills, knowledge, and opportunities needed to excel in agroforestry, sustainable land management, and green livelihoods.

By directly involving youth in restoration initiatives, ECOTRUST is nurturing the next generation of environmental stewards, young leaders who are equipped to protect Uganda's landscapes while boosting community prosperity and their own livelihoods.

In many parts of Uganda, young people are often focused on quick wins, prioritizing short-term jobs, sports, and immediate opportunities. However, in Kikuube District, a new generation is beginning to think differently. With the support of the IFPA-CD project, youth like Kato Nelson Mandela are embracing tree planting not just as an environmental activity, but as a long-term investment in their future.

Mandela, the newly elected Youth Councillor for Kiziranfumbi Sub-County, is one of these young leaders. As he took office this year in May 2026, he placed environmental conservation, particularly commercial tree planting at the center of his vision for community development. For Kato, tree planting is not a side activity; it is for climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods.

“Even though I am young, my fellow youth voted for me as a Councilor because they believe in my ability and capacity to serve them and positively contribute to the development of my community,” Kato says.

His leadership was evident during a recent community engagement organized by NIRAS International Consulting Uganda. In a space largely occupied by older farmers, Kato stood out not just for his age, but for his confidence and clarity of thought.

He spoke passionately about the need to balance industrial development with environmental protection.

Kikuube District sits at the heart of Uganda’s emerging oil economy, and with this comes both opportunity and risk. Kato is particularly concerned about the environmental impact of oil extraction and sees tree planting as a practical solution to help mitigate these effects.

“Our district has oil, and when extraction begins, there are fears that emissions could affect air quality. This is why it is important to plant trees to secure our future. Youth participation in this process is crucial,” he explains.

However, despite the opportunities, youth participation in tree planting initiatives remains low. Challenges such as limited access to land and low awareness continue to hinder their involvement. Kato’s own journey into conservation was shaped by the NIRAS International Consulting Uganda and the Environmental Conservation Trust of Uganda (ECOTRUST) community outreach efforts.

Through this platform, he learned about the IFPA-CD Woodlot Programme an initiative that promotes sustainable commercial forestry while supporting farmers with knowledge and resources.

“My desire for tree planting was strengthened by the awareness I got from ECOTRUST. Through their Farmer’s Voice Radio program, I learned more about tree planting and the IFPA-CDA Woodlot Programme, which I wanted to join,” he says.

Kato has already started planting trees on his own land and sees this as a long-term investment.

“I am lucky to have my own land where I have been growing some trees. With the project, I believe I will be able to plant even more. In the long run, these trees will be a source of income and help me live sustainably in the future,” he adds. Community leaders have also taken note of his enthusiasm. Lawrence Azoor, the Farmer Leader of the Kiziranfumbi farmers’ community, believes Kato’s example can inspire wider youth participation.

“It is encouraging to see young people take an interest in initiatives like this. Kato’s involvement will motivate other youth to join and encourage parents to make land available to their children for tree planting,” he says.

District officials emphasize that involving young people is not optional, it is essential for the sustainability of such programs. Wilfred Abitegeka, the Kikuube District Forest Officer, highlights the risks of excluding youth from long-term environmental investments.

“It is very important that youth are involved. If only parents participate, the program will not be sustainable. Without understanding the value of trees, young people may sell land or cut down trees for short-term gain, yet these trees have long-term commercial and environmental benefits,” he explains.

Tree planting is a long-term commitment, often taking over a decade to realize full benefits. This makes it even more important for both parents and young people to work together ensuring; knowledge transfer, shared responsibility, and continuity.

As Kato prepares to step into office, he remains committed to championing youth inclusion in environmental conservation. “When I assume office, I will advocate for more youth to have access to land for tree planting. We are the ones who will inherit this environment, so we must be the ones to protect it,” he says.

Through these continued efforts to empower communities with knowledge, resources, and sustainable financing models, young leaders like Kato are proving that tree planting is more than just growing trees, it is about growing a generation that is ready to protect, invest in, and benefit from Uganda's natural resources.

These initiatives are part of the IFPA-CD Woodlot Programme, a strategic Government of Uganda initiative under the Ministry of Water and Environment, supported by the World Bank, with a core goal is to de-risk commercial forestry by transforming tree planting into a viable, and sustainable investment for rural households across Uganda

Mapping 225,234 Hectares Strengthens Sustainable Forestry Management in Uganda

KAMPALA, Uganda – Uganda has mapped **225,234.1 hectares of planted forests across 61 districts**, generating critical spatial data to strengthen sustainable forestry management and improve traceability of wood products under the **U-TIMBER Project**.

The mapping exercise, conducted between **July and August 2026** by five Ministry of Water and Environment teams, used Geographic Information Systems (GIS), remote sensing and field observations to identify, classify and establish the extent and distribution of woodlots and plantations.

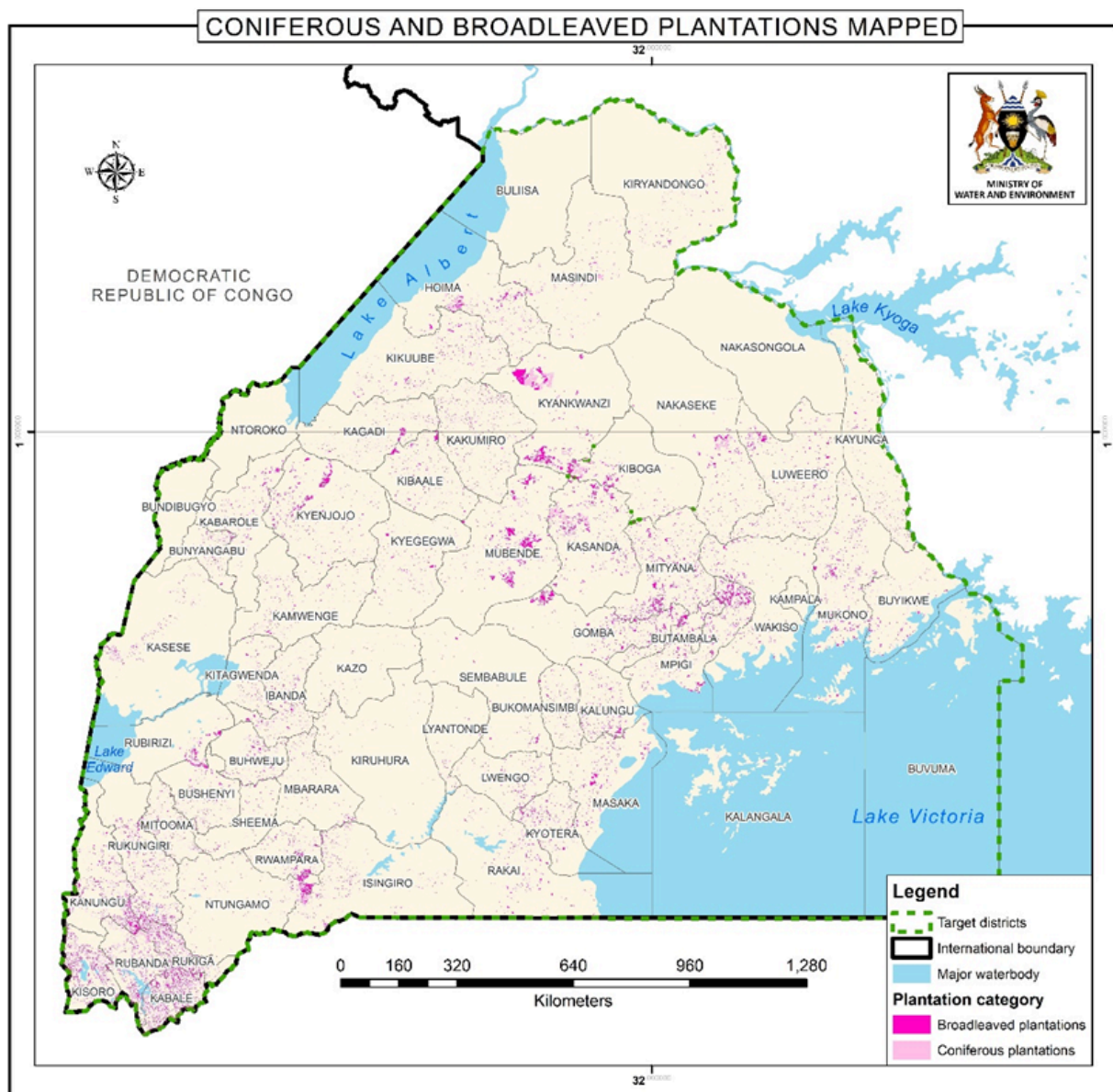
The exercise classified planted forests into two categories: **broadleaved and coniferous plantations**. Preliminary findings show that broadleaved plantations account for **183,704.2 hectares, or 82 percent**, while coniferous plantations cover **41,529.9 hectares, representing 18 percent** of the mapped area.

The data provides Government with a clearer picture of Uganda's planted forest resource, enabling more effective planning, monitoring and sustainable utilization of forest resources.

Importantly, the maps and acreage estimates provide a spatial basis for **linking timber and other wood products to their areas of origin**, strengthening verification and traceability throughout the wood supply chain.

The largest concentrations of plantations were recorded in **Kisoro, Rukiga, Rubanda, Kabale and Kanungu**, while districts including Buliisa, Kazo and Kiruhura recorded relatively smaller plantation areas.

The mapping provides a foundation for evidence-based forestry decisions, helping Uganda balance timber production, forest conservation and sustainable development.



NaFORRI Hosts Launch of One Million Avocado Program to Drive Science-Led Production in Uganda.

The National Forestry Resources Research Institute (NaFORRI) hosted the launch of the One Million Avocado Program, an initiative spearheaded by the Global Sustainable Futures Network CIC under the auspices of Hass Uganda to promote climate resilience, environmental restoration and economic empowerment.



The programme targets the planting of one million avocado trees across parts of Eastern, Northern and West Nile Uganda. It seeks to address food insecurity, poverty and environmental degradation while creating sustainable income opportunities for smallholder farmers.

The launch brought together farmers, researchers, nursery operators and other stakeholders, highlighting Uganda's growing interest in avocado production amid rising international demand for Hass avocado.

Putting science at the centre

For NaFORRI, the programme provides an opportunity to connect research with farmers' needs and strengthen the quality of Uganda's emerging avocado industry.

NaFORRI Director of Research, Dr. John Adriko, said the Institute is ready to provide technical expertise to promote access to genuine and quality planting materials.

“One of the achievements NaFORRI has had in avocado has been to genetically identify the true-to-type Hass avocado. We can use this expertise to provide quality assurance, certification and traceability so that years down the road there will be no surprises for farmers that it was not the true-to-type avocado.”

His remarks followed concerns from farmers about unscrupulous nursery operators selling seedlings labelled as Hass avocado that later produce fruits with different characteristics.

NaFORRI is exploring stronger certification and traceability mechanisms, including the potential use of barcodes to enable farmers and other value-chain actors to trace planting materials.

Dr. Adriko also called for closer collaboration between researchers, farmers and nursery operators.

“Farmers, we are an open Institute. We are open to your questions, to hear your challenges, and we seek to develop solutions together.”

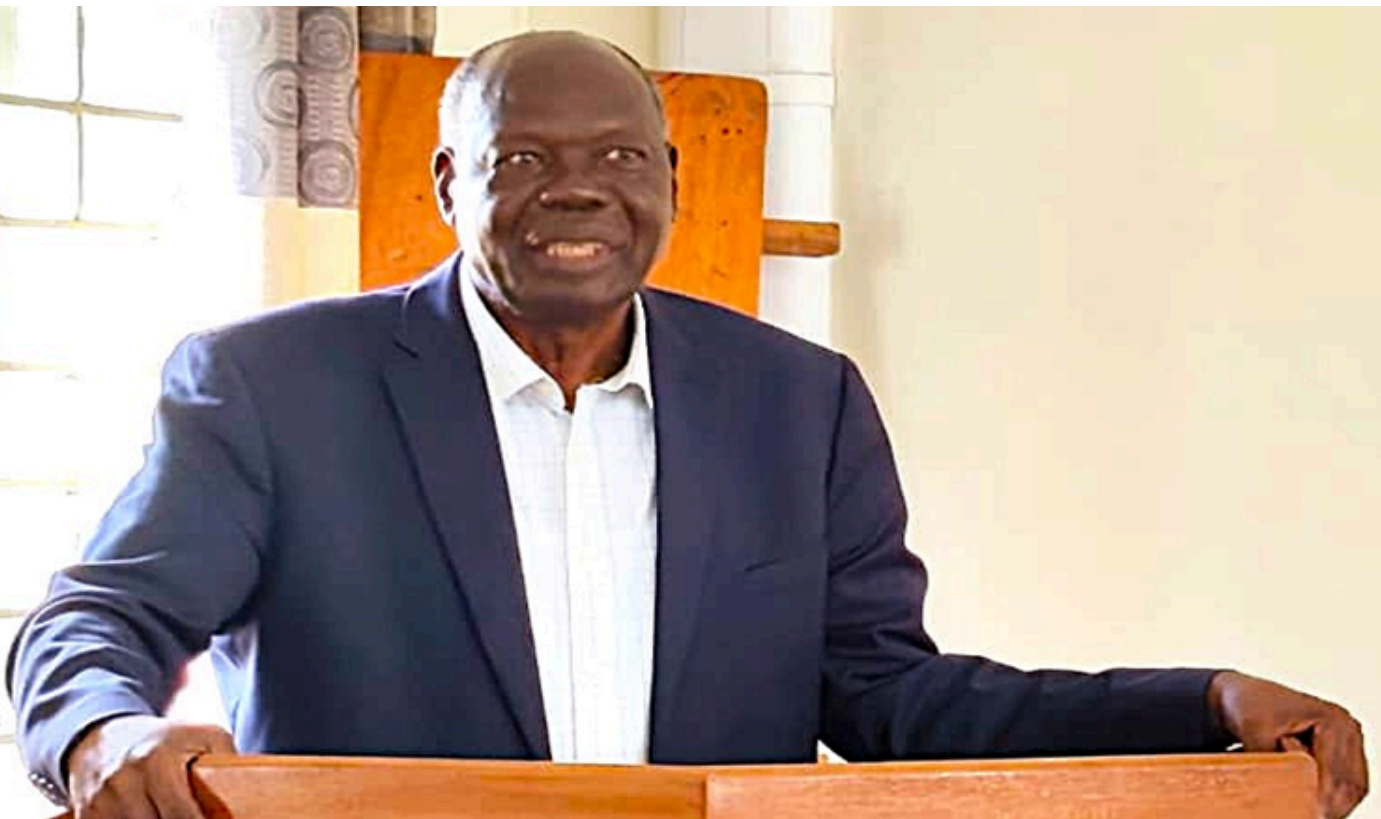
Unlocking Uganda's avocado potential

NaFORRI scientist Dr. Fred Michael Kalanzi said Uganda is at a defining moment in the development of its avocado industry. The country's favourable climate and growing global demand provide a significant opportunity, but several challenges continue to limit its competitiveness.

NaFORRI baseline research found that 74% of farmers use ungrafted planting materials, while 94% cannot identify the avocado variety they grow. Only about 2% have adopted Hass avocado, and just 17% have access to extension services.

Poor orchard management, pests and diseases, weak farmer organisation and inadequate adherence to quality standards also affect the sector.

Dr. Kalanzi emphasised that smallholder farmers must remain at the centre of the avocado revolution and that stronger collaboration among researchers, farmers and other value-chain actors is essential.



Prof. Otim Nape, CEO of Africa Innovations Institute (AFRII) and Chairman of the One Million Avocado Program, speaks during the launch.

Linking avocado research to climate action

The launch also created opportunities for collaboration between NaFORRI and the Africa Innovations Institute in climate research and greenhouse gas measurement.

Prof. Otim Nape, CEO of Africa Innovations Institute and Chairman of the programme, highlighted the Institute's Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system, which supports greenhouse gas data collection and reporting across sectors including agriculture and forestry.

He also invited NaFORRI researchers to use the Institute's Gas Chromatography Laboratory for research and analysis.

The laboratory is open. I want to interest scientists at NaFORRI to make use of this laboratory,” said Dr. Otim Nape.

The partnership could strengthen scientific evidence for climate research and reporting while supporting sustainable avocado production.

The launch reaffirmed that Uganda's avocado opportunity goes beyond planting trees. Quality planting materials, research, farmer knowledge, extension, traceability and climate-smart production will be critical to building a competitive and sustainable avocado industry.

Great African Cycling Safari Rekindles the Spirit of Environmental Conservation within the East African Countries.



ROOTs partners join cyclists promoting conservation, integration, tree planting and improved livelihoods.



The Running Out of Trees Campaign partners were honored to be part of the Great African Cycling Safari 2026 on 12th August at the Semei Kakungulu Museum and Heritage Site, where participants came together to promote environmental conservation through tree planting, strengthen East African integration at both local and national levels, and contribute to improved livelihoods.

The Great African Cycling Safari are the organizers of the leading cycling event in East Africa that brings together cycling enthusiasts to promote cycling, East African Community tourism and to highlight opportunities, issues and challenges faced by the people in the East African Community.

This year's cycling event started way back in May 2026, with several meetings until earlier this month when the day was officiated by Rt. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, former Speaker of the 9th and 10th Parliament of Uganda, and Hon. Ronald Nsubuga Balimwezo who flagged off the cyclists at kingdom Kampala.

Representatives from Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, South Sudan and Burundi joined the tree-planting activity, demonstrating a shared commitment to environmental conservation, regional cooperation and sustainable development. The Great African Cycling Safaris also intends to undertake a major cycling expedition across the Great Lakes Region, with a particular focus on Lake Victoria. The initiative seeks to use cycling as a platform to promote regional integration, environmental stewardship, tourism and sustainable livelihoods across East Africa.

“Climate is the number one issue in the world today. As the cyclists travel through different countries across East Africa, they will use the opportunity to spread the message of environmental conservation and inspire communities to take action. They will return to Uganda in October, during the week of Independence,” said Michael Bageya, one of the Running Out of Trees (ROOTs) Campaign partners and a member of the Old Boys of Busoga College Mwiri.

He added that the cyclists have so far passed through Jinja, where they planted trees at the National Defence College, before proceeding to Mbale, where they also carried out tree-planting activities at the Kakungulu Memorial Museum. As they continued towards the border in Kapchorwa, they planted more trees before crossing into Kenya.

He noted that the cycling expedition is expected to promote greening and environmental conservation in each of the East African countries along the route. From Kenya, the cyclists will proceed to Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Their participation underscored the importance of strong leadership and collective action in advancing environmental conservation, regional integration, and sustainable development. As part of their commitment to a greener East Africa, the cyclists have planted more than 50 tree seedlings at various sites along their journey, demonstrating that meaningful environmental action can be integrated into regional initiatives and they will be returning to Uganda around October.

OUR PARTNERS



