



Environment and Natural Resources Civil Society Organizations (ENR-CSO) Network Statement in respect to the Annual Performance Review (FY 2020/2021) for the Natural Resources, Environment, Climate Change, Land and Water Management Program, 21st October 2021.

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On behalf of the ENR-CSO Network Secretariat, hosted at Environmental Alert.

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Minister of Water and Environment;

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Water and Environment;

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development; Office of the Prime Minister; Executive Directors of Government Authorities i.e. Executive Directors - National Forestry Authority; National Environment Management Authority; Uganda National Metrological Authority; National Planning Authority;

Director, Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners and all technical staff of the Ministry of Water and Environment and the Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development;

Development Partners - European Union and the World Bank;

Fellow CSOs and Networks, Member of the General public; All protocol observed.

I greet you all in your respective capacities and as well welcome you to the 1st Annual Program review for the (FY 2020/2021) for the Natural Resources, Environment, Climate Change, Land and Water Management (NRECCLWM) Programme. Thank you for your demonstrated active participation during this annual Programme review.

Great appreciation for the good leadership by the 2 Ministries for successfully organizing this event. In the same vein, **many thanks for consideration of the CSOs to make this CSO statement** as this is a great opportunity for our active participation and contribution to this initiative. The Development Partners are equally appreciated for the financial and technical support towards the implementation of the program aspirations.

Fellow CSOs, thanks for the continuous structured engagements with the Government through the respective line Ministries, Authorities and Departments by providing alternative evidence-based policy recommendations for consideration.

The ENR-CSOs invested USD 1,223,325 as a contribution towards the Programme targets during the Financial Year 2020/21. This investment enabled the implementation of structured and targeted engagements that enhanced awareness, capacity building, action research & technology transfer, policy dialogues, community livelihood improvement and adaptation to climate change impacts across the various Programme thematic areas of forestry, environment, weather, climate and climate change, governance, wetlands, water resources management and land management & administration. Further details in this respect are available in the 1st Natural Resources, Environment, Climate Change, Land and Water Management (NRECCLWM) Programme Annual Performance report for the FY 2020/21 – in Chapter 8, pages 177-185.



We congratulate the Government through the respective Ministries, Authorities, Departments and Partners for the achievements made towards implementation of the Programme targets and targets for the Financial Year (2020/2021), despite the meagre resources and restrictions imposed by the Corona Virus Disease-19 (COVID-19) Pandemic and the associated total lock down.

Some of the outstanding achievements in this respect are:

- a) Preparation and publishing of the 1st Natural Resources, Environment, Climate Change, Land and Water Management (NRECCLWM) Programme Annual Performance report for the FY 2020/21.
- b) Approval of the National Climate Change Act (2020) by the President of Uganda. This is a timely legal framework to support implementation of climate change response measures in line with resolutions from international conventions.
- c) Completion of the demarcation of 531 km of wetland boundaries, and restoration of 10,038.8 hectares of critical wetlands across the country.
- d) Resolving 2,400 land related conflicts; carrying out 8,607 sub division surveys for Lawful and bonafide occupants; acquiring 11,195.611 Ha of Land from payments made to absentee landlords for lawful and bonafide occupants; preparing 16,538 Certificates of Customary Ownership and 200 Certificates of Occupancy; and issuance of 3,958 Certificates of Customary Ownership and 3,281 Certificates of Title to women across the country to promote tenure security.
- e) Development of 5 catchment management plans for rivers: *Mitano, Nyamwamba, Nkusi, Muzizi and Semliki*. These provide a long-term strategy for sustainable development and utilization of water and related resource within the catchment.
- f) Acquisition of 8,820.2 Hectares of Land cumulatively from payments made to Absentee Landlords representing 62% male, 17 Female, 13% Jointly-owned and 8% Companies), dissemination of 2 Land Fund sensitization and awareness campaigns for Lawful and bonafide occupants in Karuguuza, Kibaale District and in Kitumba, Bunyagabu District, Surveyed and subdivided 2,939 Parcels of Land in Karuguuza, Kibaale and Bunyangabu for Lawful and Bonafide and Processed 2,975 certificates of Title for Lawful and bonafide occupants as per MPS FY 2021/22
- g) Prioritization of the land fund capitalization and setting action plans/budgets to ensure its operationalization in the Programme Implementation Action Plan.

Despite these registered achievements and others as described in the 1st Programme annual performance report, **we note that the NRECCLWM Programme still faces various challenges/limitations which will limit effective performance and program delivery against the set commitments, targets, and outputs going forward.**

The following are some of the key challenges/limitations the Programme:

- a) Insufficient financial resources allocation caused by budget cuts and reallocations to finance the public health issues presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. The associated lockdown also caused delays in implementation and weakened extension service delivery, supervision, monitoring, and enforcement since the Programme was not considered an essential service during the period of total lockdown.
- b) Low funding towards capacitation of land management structures. For instance, the NBFP for FY 2021/22 reports that out of the UGX 9bn planned for training District Land Boards and Area Land Committees in land management, only UGX 4.36bn (48.4%) is available. Also, there is a need to support districts to build the capacity of land administration structures at the lower local Government levels.



- c) Inadequate funding allocation to the land fund to ensure its full operationalization and functionality. Thus, for the past two financial years the allocations to the land fund have stagnated at 39.3bn Uganda Shillings.
- d) Delays in re-alignment of the National Environment Management Policy (2017) with the National Environment Act (2019) and associated operationalization of the National Environment Management Policy by the responsible institutions. This delays delivery/implementation of the progressive policy commitments and strategies in the new environmental management policy and law, which would advance sustainable environment and natural resources management.
- e) There are currently no climate change regulations, guidelines and standards to further support and guide effective implementation of the climate change policy and act. Thus, its compounded by the lack of a statutory instrument to enable implementation of the Climate Change Act (2020).
- f) Delays in completion of legal instruments (*i.e. the draft National Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy, the Land valuation bill and the amendment of the Land Acquisition Act 1965*) yet as per the earlier targets in the National Land Policy Implementation Action Plan, these were expected to be completed by FY 2017/2018. Besides, even the National Land Policy Implementation Action Plan 2018/2019 which lays down the implementation plan for the National Land Policy expired.
- g) Weak inter-agency coordination; this has led to weak enforcement and regulation of policies and regulatory frameworks that have escalated illegalities such as encroachment on natural resources.

Suggested recommendations going forward

- a) With support from ENR CSOs, Ministry of Water and Environment and Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development should continue to lobby the Government of Uganda and the Development Partners to increase budget allocations to the Programme, but more importantly explore various financing mechanisms presented through climate change funds such as the Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund among others. Thus, MDAs within the Programme should step up efforts in resource mobilization through proposal developments. This however requires strengthening the fundraising capacity of both MDAs and CSOs in mobilizing resources for the sector.
- b) The Government through the Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development should strengthen the Area Land committees and District Land boards as well to reinforce their role in the chain of the land registration process to ensure the realization of tenure security as envisaged in the sector investment plan. Ministry Zone Offices indeed bring services closer to the population, however, they are at the tail end of the process and Area land committees and District Land boards set the foundation for effective land registration and thus should also be prioritized in the investment plans.
- c) The Ministry of Water and Environment and National Environment Management Authority should fast-track the re-alignment of the National Environment Management Policy (2017) with the National Environment Act, 2019 and associated full operationalization of the National Environment Act, 2019 and the National Environment Management Policy (2017) to guide sustainable management of the environment and natural resources across the country.
- d) The Government through the Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development during the FY 2022/2023 should fast-track to completion the draft bills/policies *i.e. National Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy, the Land valuation bill and the amendment of the Land Acquisition Act 1965*. These are practical instruments for Government to expeditiously respond to the concerns of land acquisition and development and include the review of the National Land Policy Implementation Action Plan in its medium terms plans and allocate a budget for a review process. Equally the Ministry of Water and Environment should fast-track the development of the climate change regulations, guidelines and standards to further support and guide effective implementation of the



climate change policy. Thus, the statutory instrument for commencement of the Climate Change Act (2020) should be developed. Besides, the Act should be gazetted to pave way for its enforcement. All this will further contribute towards community adaptation and resilience to climate change impacts.

e) Update the current gender strategies earlier based on sectors to integrate the requirements and aspirations in the Programme in respect to gender and gender-based violence as linked to the delivery of the Programme targets, including proactive participation of the various gender categories including: women, men, youth – boys & girls and people with special needs.

f) Develop and implement the COVID-19 green recovery action plan to enable effective implementation of the Programme.

g) Strengthening the existing institutional and coordination mechanisms for effective implementation of the programme activities in the forest landscapes, water catchments, district and community levels.

Lastly, as the CSOs we commit to align our interventions to contribute towards achievement of the Natural Resources, Environment, Climate Change, Land and Water Management Programme targets. Besides, we will continuously pursue structured evidence-based engagements with the Government at all levels to provide alternative policy recommendations targeted at contributing to improved community livelihood, economic development and resilience to climate change while sustainably managing the environment and natural resources

Thank you for listening.

A) Some key References for further reading:

Ministry of Water and Environment, (2021). The 1st Natural Resources, Environment, Climate Change, Land and Water Management (NRECCCLWM) Programme Annual Performance report for the FY 2020/21. Kampala.

B) About the ENR-CSO network

Founded in 2009, the ENR-CSO Network is a semi-formal network whose Vision is, 'Uganda's environment and natural resources sustainably managed for (socio-economic) transformation.'

Mission: 'Promoting and advocating for good governance of Uganda's environment and natural resources.'

Key Result areas for the ENR-CSO Network:

1) Enhanced joint advocacy and strategic engagement; 2) Capacity strengthening of ENR CSO Network members; 3) Improved information management and sharing; 4) Enhanced ENR CSO Network membership and partnerships management; 5) ENR CSO Network financial and institutional sustainability.

The ENR-CSO Network Secretariat is hosted at Environmental Alert.

C) About Environmental Alert

Environmental Alert was founded in 1988 and is officially registered **Non-Government Organization** with board. Thus, in 2018 – EA made **30 years** of contribution to **food security and sustainable environment and natural resources management in Uganda**. Environmental Alert is a **1st prize winner of the Energy globe award for environmental sustainability- 2005 under the category, earth**. Environmental Alert is a member of the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** and a **Member of The IUCN National Committee for Uganda**. Environmental Alert envisions, '**Resilient and dignified communities, managing their environment and natural resources sustainably.**' Further information about Environmental Alert is available at: <http://envalert.org/>

Environmental Alert as a **Secretariat** mobilizes and coordinates **250 CSOs/CBOs** for joint action engagement at national and local levels through the various **CSO Networks**