



The Environment Shield

88 Ben Kiwanuka Street, Master Plaza, 1st Floor, Room, F.10, Kampala, Tel:
0774153008, @EnviShield

29th May, 2023

The Chairperson
Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC)
Kampala – Uganda.

Dear Madam,

APPLAUDING THE GREEN CHARACTER OF THE 25TH ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS IN UGANDA IN 2022

We refer to the captioned report.

The Environment Shield is a Ugandan environmental civic organization (nonprofit) for people and planet. We are fired by the vision of green and just society. Protection of nature and advancing the respect, protection and promotion of the right to a clean and healthy environment is our pre-occupation.

We are delighted that matters of environment got significant focus in the captioned report. Chapters 2, 3 and 8 covered environmental matters.

Climate change is the greatest threat to life on earth and part of the triple planetary crisis: The climate hell, biodiversity loss and pollution that undermines the health, dignity and human rights of everyone, everywhere.

Wetlands in particular, and the environment generally, is under serious and continuous threat and destruction in Uganda including in parts of *Butabika*, *Busega*, *Busaabala*, *Lweza* and others we have documented. Find enclosed herewith the four letters on environment/wetlands encroachment and pressures on forests, wetlands, biodiversity and the Environment Parliament.

We will keep UHRC informed of the threats to and violations of our precious environment.

Sincerely,

Kiiza Eron
CEO



The Environment Shield

88 Ben Kiwanuka Street, Master Plaza, 1st Floor, Room, F.10, Kampala, Tel:

0774153008, @EnvShield

ES/GEN/07/2023

The Executive Director
National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)
Kampala, Uganda.



May 18th, 2023



Dear Sir,

WETLAND ATTACKS IN BUGOLOBI - KITINTALE, NAKAWA DIVISION, KAMPALA - UGANDA

We refer to the captioned matter.

The Environment Shield is a Ugandan environmental civic organization (nonprofit) for people and planet/nature. We are fired by the vision of a green and just society.

Articles 17 (2) (j); 20 (2) and 39 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995 and Section 3 of the National Environment Management Act, 2019 obligate us to create, respect, protect and promote the right to a clean and healthy environment.

We report to you, wetland attacks in Bugolobi - Kitintale, Nakawa Division, Kampala - Uganda. *Attached hereto are relevant photos taken yesterday 17th May, 2023.*

The wetlands attack threatens human and ecological health. It is an attack on the environment and a threat to Ugandans' right to a clean and healthy environment guaranteed by **Article 39 of the Constitution** and **Section S.3 of the National Environment Management Act, 2019**. It undermined **climate and biodiversity health**.

The president of Uganda, **His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Tibuhaburwa Museveni** recently noted that: *"Finally, the issues of the environment - the*

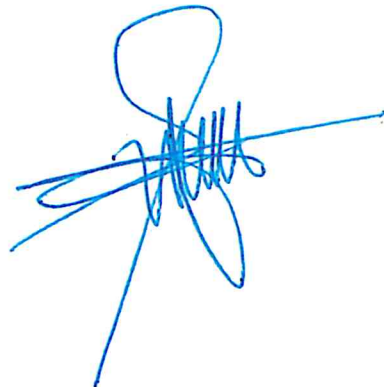
forests, the lake shores, the hilltops, etc., are crucial for our survival. We need water and clean air. Both of them come from the wetlands and forests. You cannot say that you are a patriot of Uganda, but you damage our wetlands, our forests, our river banks, our lake shores, our steep gradients, on which our livelihoods depend. Even food is possible because of air, water, etc.... I will launch a mega effort, to get rid of this parasitism."

We accordingly urge your office and the authorities copied herein to:

- a) Stop the encroachment and deforestation of the wetland in Bugolobi - Kitintale, Nakawa Division, Kampala - Uganda.
- b) Make culprits pay for the environmental degradation to the government of Uganda;
- c) Prosecute the culprits of the wetlands' encroachment/degradation;
- d) Evict the culprits; and
- e) Restore the degraded wetlands.

We shall highly appreciate your swift and decisive action against those encroaching on the wetlands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop at the top, followed by several vertical strokes, and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kiiza Eron
CEO

CC: Minister of water and environment.
Lord Mayor, KCCA.

WETLAND ENCROACHMENT IN BUGOLOOBI-KITINTALE, KAMPALA-UGANDA



Photo1. A section of the wetland used as a dumping site for household refuses. Majority of this is plastic waste in Bugoloobi - Kitintale swamp, Kampala – Uganda. Photo taken on 17th May, 2023.



Photo2. A new heap of soil recently added to a wetland to provide room for expansion for industrialization waste in Bugoloobi - Kitintale swamp, Kampala – Uganda. Photo taken on 17th May, 2023.



Photo3. Informal settlement recently flooded by water in Bugoloobi - Kitintale swamp, Kampala - Uganda. Photo taken on 17th May, 2023.



Photo 4. Fresh debris being added to the wetland banks waste in Bugolobi – Kitintale swamp, Kampala – Uganda. Photo taken on 17th May, 2023.



Photo5. A proposed warehouse belonging to Kulwant Singh Notay in the wetland with alleged KCCA and NEMA approvals in the heart of the wetland further increasing the flooding in this area in Bugoloobi - Kitintale swamp, Kampala – Uganda. Photo taken on 17th May, 2023.



The Environment Shield

88 Ben Kiwanuka Street, Master Plaza, 1st Floor, Room, F.10, Kampala,
Tel: 0774153008, @EnviShield

ES/GEN/06/2023

The Executive Director
National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)
Kampala, Uganda.



12th May, 2023



Dear Sir,

WETLAND ENCROACHMENT IN BUTABIKA-KIROMBE, KAMPALA-UGANDA

We refer to the captioned matter.

The Environment Shield is a Ugandan environment civic organization (nonprofit) for people and planet/nature. We are fired by the vision of a green and just society.

Articles 17 (2) (j); 20 (2) and 39 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995 and Section 3 of the National Environment Management Act, 2019 obligates us to create, respect, protect and promote the right to a clean and healthy environment.

We report to you the ongoing environmental/ wetland attacks in Butabika Kirombe, Kampala - Uganda. *Attached hereto are relevant and recent photos.*

The wetlands attack/ degradation/ encroachment threatens human and ecological health. It is an attack on the environment and a threat to Ugandans' right to a clean and healthy environment guaranteed by **Article 39 of the Constitution** and **Section S.3 of the National Environment Management Act, 2019**. It undermines climate and biodiversity health.

We allude to the words of the president of Uganda, **His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Tibuhaburwa Museveni** that: *"Finally, the issues of the environment - the forests, the lake shores, the hilltops, etc., are crucial for our survival. We need water and clean air. Both of them come from the wetlands and forests. You cannot say that you are a patriot of*

Uganda, but you damage our wetlands, our forests, our river banks, our lake shores, our steep gradients, on which our livelihoods depend. Even food is possible because of air, water, etc.... I will launch a mega effort, to get rid of this parasitism."


On **Tuesday, 9th May, 2023**, our documentation team, comprising Matte Derrick, photographer and Thomas Lesaffre, PHD fellow/researcher, visited Butabika in Kampala, Uganda, to document and investigate Kirombe wetland encroachment. They found that:

- a) Plastic pollution is endemic, carried by water flow from the top of the hill and no – or too few- waste collection is organized;
- b) Flooding. Water levels were at least two feet higher than a few weeks ago, according to the locals;
- c) There is evident strong human impact on this fragile ecosystem. Poor sanitation is an issue, where human waste mixes with the wetland.
- d) Kirombe community is expecting land expropriation soon and was initially unnerved by our documentation team's presence. They were initially anxious about the team's presence on the assumption that they were working for land investors or speculators;
- e) The community is growing: newcomers - often the poorest of the community - settle deeper and deeper in the wetland. Higher up the hill the rich elite buy and speculate on land away from potential water level raises; and
- f) The community's issue is beyond flooding. The community is bothered by imminent evictions from state - supported private investors keen on rental real estate.

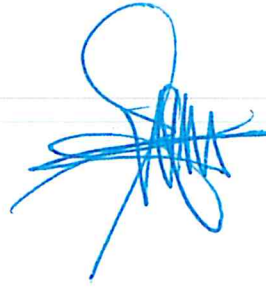
We accordingly urge your office and the authorities copied herein to:

- a) Stop the attack on the wetland in Butabika-Kirombe, Kampala-Uganda
- b) Make culprits pay for the environmental degradation to the government of Uganda; and
- c) Prosecute the culprits of the wetlands encroachment/degradation;
- d) Evict the culprits; and
- e) Restore the degraded wetlands.

We shall highly appreciate your swift and decisive action against those encroaching on the wetlands.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large loop at the top and several horizontal and vertical strokes below it, crossing each other.

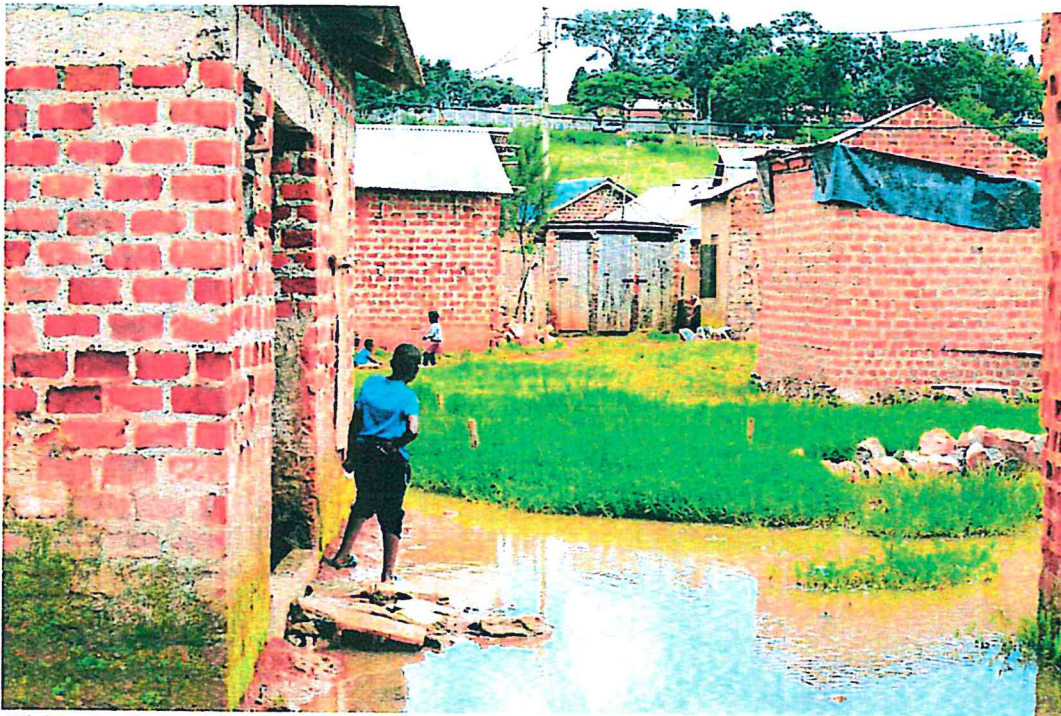
Kiiza Eron
CEO

CC: Minister of water and environment.
Lord Mayor, KCCA.

**WETLAND ENCROACHMENT IN BUTABIKA – KIROMBE, KAMPALA –
UGANDA**



A Young boy playing around a newly made foundation in a wetland at Kirombe - Butabika – Kampala, Uganda on 9th May, 2023.



Kids stuck inside and around a flooded homestead, one looking at fellows playing in Kirombe - Butabika – Kampala, Uganda on Tuesday, 9th May, 2023.



Plastic pollution and informal settlement in the wetland in Kirombe - Butabika - Kampala, Uganda photographed on Tuesday, 9th May, 2023.



A young girl walking around open trench, leading water to the wetland in Kirombe - Butabika - Kampala, Uganda; on Tuesday, 9th May, 2023.



Gentrification of Kirombe, by Kampala connected Elite. The land is sold, people get evicted and resettle deeper in the wetland in Kirombe - Butabika - Kampala, Uganda; on Tuesday, 9th May, 2023.



Sanitation in informal settlement in a wetland, human waste mixes with water of the wetland in Kirombe - Butabika - Kampala, Uganda. Documentation done on Tuesday, 9th May, 2023.



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ES/GEN/05/2023

The Executive Director
National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)
Kampala, Uganda.



May 8th, 2023

Dear Sir,

WETLAND ENCROACHMENT IN BUSABALA, WAKISO DISTRICT, MULUNGU BEACH IN MUNYONYO, KAMPALA AND KITEZI, KAWEMPE DIVISION, KAMPALA

We refer to the captioned matter.

The Environment Shield is a Ugandan environmental civic organization (nonprofit) for people and planet/nature. We are fired by the vision of green and just society.

Articles 17 (2) (j); 20 (2) and 39 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995 and Section 3 of the National Environment Management Act, 2019 obligates us to create, respect, protect and promote the right to a clean and healthy environment.

We report to you ongoing environmental/ wetland attacks in Busabala- Wakiso District, Mulungu beach in Munyonyo, Kampala and Kitezi, Kawempe Division, Kampala. *Attached hereto are relevant and recent photos.*

The wetlands attack/ degradation/ encroachment threatens human and ecological health. It is an attack on the environment and a threat to Ugandans' right to a clean and healthy environment guaranteed by **Article 39 of the Constitution** and **Section S.3 of the National Environment Management Act, 2019**. **It undermined climate and biodiversity health.**

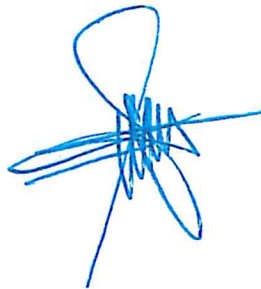
This attack on wetlands has persisted for years with impunity but for the sake of our environment, it must stop. The president of Uganda, **His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Tibuhaburwa Museveni** recently noted that: *“Finally, the issues of the environment - the forests, the lake shores, the hilltops, etc., are crucial for our survival. We need water and clean air. Both of them come from the wetlands and forests. You cannot say that you are a patriot of Uganda, but you damage our wetlands, our forests, our river banks, our lake shores, our steep gradients, on which our livelihoods depend. Even food is possible because of air, water, etc.... I will launch a mega effort, to get rid of this parasitism.”*

We accordingly urge your office and the authorities copied herein to:

- a) Stop the encroachment and deforestation of the wetland in Busabala, Wakiso District, Mulungu beach in Munyonyo, Kampala and Kitezi, Kawempe Division, Kampala;
- b) Make culprits pay for the environmental degradation to the government of Uganda; and
- c) Prosecute the culprits of the wetlands encroachment/degradation;
- d) Evict the culprits; and
- e) Restore the degraded wetlands.

We shall highly appreciate your swift and decisive action against those encroaching on the wetlands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop at the top, followed by a series of horizontal and vertical strokes that form a dense, scribbled area, and then a few trailing lines at the bottom.

Kiiza Eron
CEO

CC: Minister of water and environment.
Lord Mayor, KCCA.

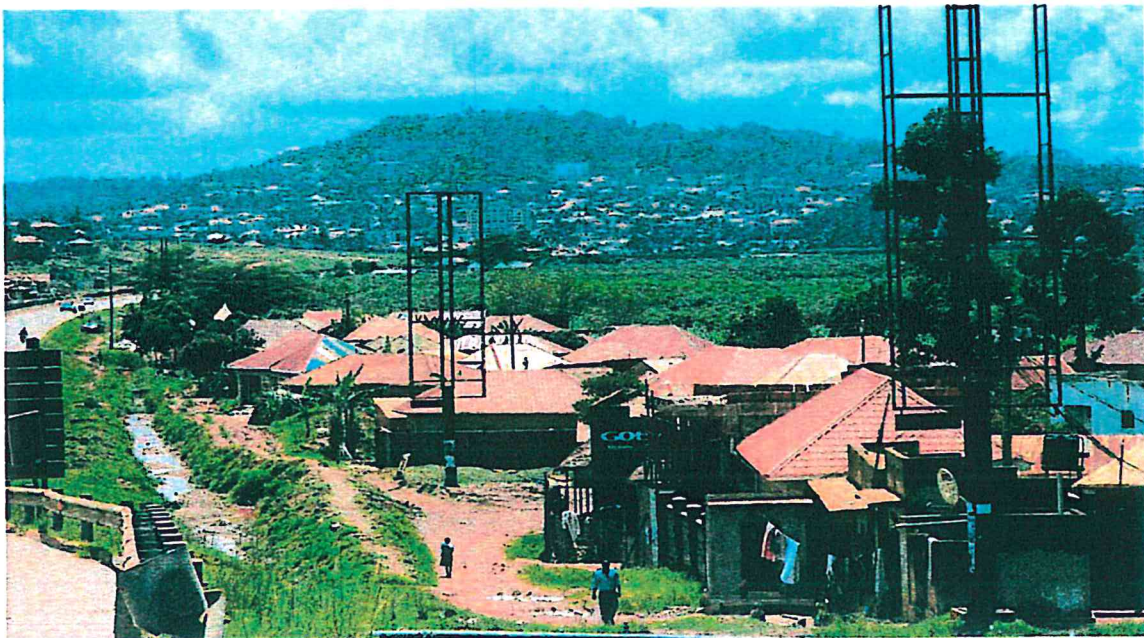


A stretch of hard stones and soil into lake Victoria in Busabala, Wakiso District designed to create more beach space at a resort. The stretch goes as long as 50meters into the lake.Photo taken by Matte on 02/05/2023 for The Environment Shield. Below is an image of remains of a house washed away by water at Mulungu Beach in Munyonyo, kampala.





A plastic recycling structure set up in a wetland in Kiteezi, Kawempe Division, Kampala next to the sewage treatment plant. Photo taken by Matte on 26/04/2023 for The Environment Shield.



A community at Busaabala, Wakiso District Traffic lights junction encroaching on a wetland whose remains appear in the background. Many of these houses are submerged when it rains. Photo taken by Matte for The Environment Shield on 02/05/2023.



A construction materials structure steadily encroaching on the wetland along Kaggwa bridge before Joining the Entebbe Express way in Busaabala, Wakiso District. Photo taken by Matte on 2/05/2023 for The Environment Shield.



The Environment Shield

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ES/GEN/04/2023

The Executive Director
National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)
Kampala, Uganda.



April 27, 2023

Dear Sir,



WETLAND ENCROACHMENT IN BUSEGA - KAMPALA

We refer to the captioned matter.

The Environment Shield is a Ugandan environmental civic organization (nonprofit) working for people and planet using the law, media/advocacy, and strategic litigation among others to battle the climate emergency, biodiversity loss and pollution while centering social justice, rule of law, human rights, and ecological justice, SDGs and climate justice.

Articles 17 (2) (j); 20 (2) and 39 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995 and Section 3 of the National Environment Management Act, 2019 obligate us to create, respect, protect and promote the right to a clean and healthy environment.

In pursuit of the above constitutional, legal and environmental obligation, we report to you ongoing environmental/ wetland attacks in Busega - Kampala. *Attached hereto are relevant and recent photos.*

This attack on wetlands has persisted for years with impunity but for the sake of our environment, it must stop. The President of Uganda, His Excellency **Yoweri Kaguta Tibuhaburwa Museveni**, agrees with this request and recently noted that: *"Finally, the issues of the environment - the forests, the lake shores, the hilltops, etc., are crucial for our survival. We need water and clean air. Both of them come from the wetlands and forests. You cannot say that you are a patriot of Uganda, but you damage our wetlands, our forests, our river banks, our lake shores, our steep gradients,*

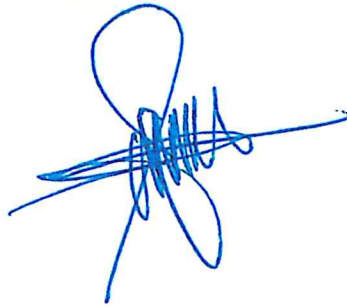
on which our livelihoods depend. Even food is possible because of air, water, etc....I will launch a mega effort, to get rid of this parasitism.”

We accordingly urge your office and the authorities copied herein to:

- a) Stop the encroachment of the wetland in Busega;
- b) Make *Mandela Millers* and *Busega Taxi Office* proprietors pay for the environmental degradation to the government of Uganda; and
- c) Prosecute the culprits of the wetlands encroachment.

We shall highly appreciate your swift and decisive action against those encroaching on the wetlands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large loop at the top, followed by several horizontal strokes, and ending in a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kiiza Eron
CEO

CC: Minister of water and environment.
Lord Mayor, KCCA.

BUSEGA WETLAND ENCROACHMENT PHOTOS

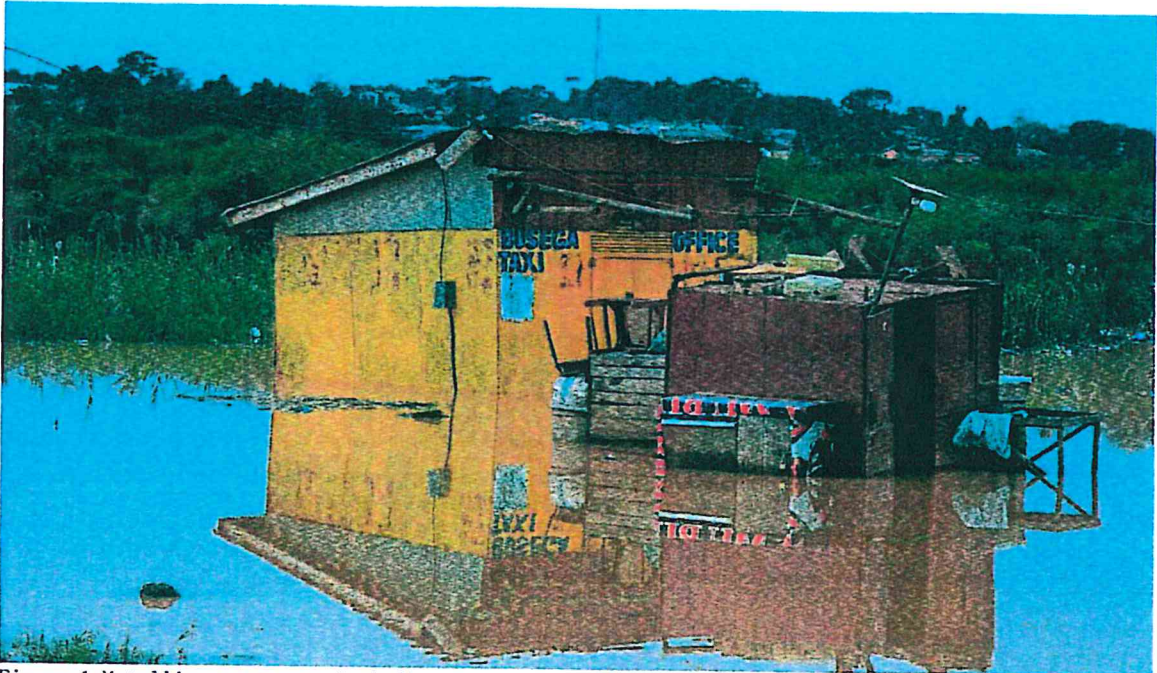


Figure 1 Metallic structures including *Busega Taxi Office* swimming in a polluted and encroached upon wetland in Busega, Kampala. Photographed by Matte on Tuesday, 25th April, 2023 for The Environment Shield.

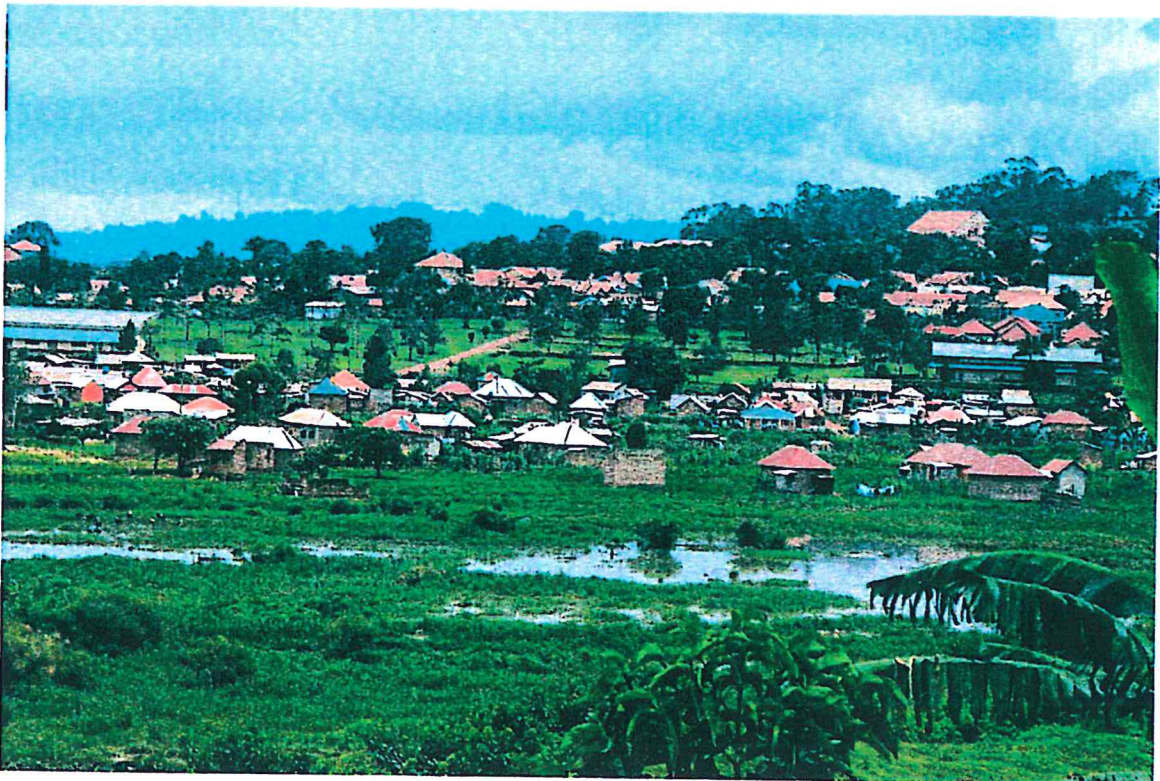


Figure 2 A neighbourhood eating up a wetland steadily in Busega, Kampala. Photographed by Matte on Tuesday, 25th April, 2023 for The Environment Shield.



Figure 3 A "developer's" heap of soil confronts a wetland in Busega, Kampala. Photographed by Matte on Tuesday, 25th April, 2023 for The Environment Shield.

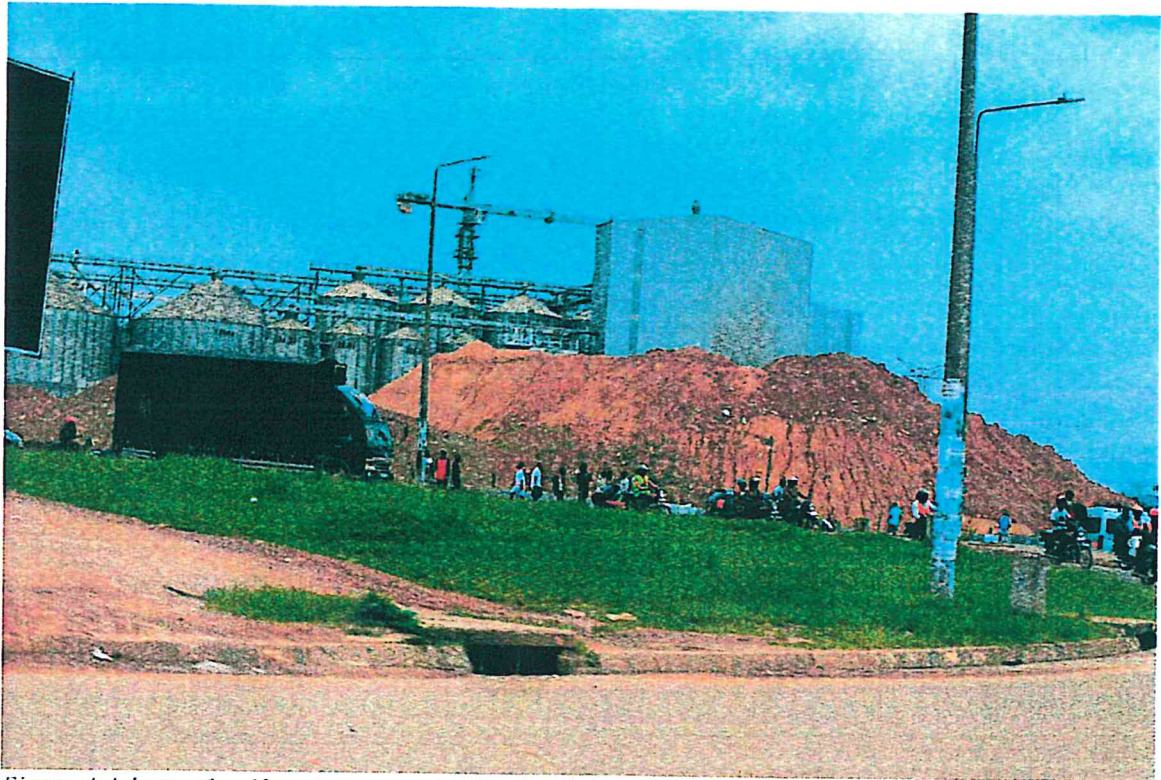


Figure 4 A heap of soil next to a wetland and a factory of Mandela Millers, also in wetland, at the roundabout in Busega, Kampala. Photographed by Matte on Tuesday, 25th April, 2023 for The Environment Shield.



ENVIRONMENT PARLIAMENT

On **26th May, 2023**, the Parliament of Uganda hosted the inaugural Environment Parliament, a special afternoon session presided over by our Deputy Executive Director, **Mr. Robert J. Turyakira** a leading environment & climate activist. As the Rt. Hon. Speaker, he conducted the House business with dignity, impartiality, fairness and excellence.

The Environment Parliament gathered several voices and experts on matters green, climate finance, waste management, disaster risk reduction, renewable energy transition, environmental and climate justice to discuss several environmental issues guided by the theme: *To enhance national conversations on climate change, climate justice, and citizen led climate actions by mainstreaming Uganda's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).*

Uganda has some elaborate environment legal and policy framework including the **1995 Uganda Constitution, National Environment Act, 2019**, and the **National Climate Change Act, 2021** and the **National Climate Change Policy of 2015**, but more climate action is needed to hit the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), green growth Strategy, climate adaption and reversing biodiversity loss. The Updated Uganda's NDCs set an ambitious target of reducing the Country's Green House Gas Emissions (GHGEs) up from 22% to 24.7%.

Placing people and planet above profit to confront the fossil fuels fired triple planetary crisis of the climate hell, biodiversity loss and pollution is the greatest challenge of our generation. Embracing and democratizing clean energy, massive environmental education and strong political will for nature are some of the prerequisites for a habitable future. That is why platforms like the Environment Parliament that center ordinary people in the climate and green growth discourses are paramount and timely. It is very good to engage all stakeholders including CSOs, Government MDAs, Private Sector/business community and all citizens (young and old) to find solutions towards a Comprehensive Climate related Disaster Risk Management Strategy.

Some of our talented associates responded to the proceedings of the Environment Parliament thus:

Thomas Lesaffre our *green fellow* and a researcher said there was "great enthusiasm in the room, and a large presence of women and young people." He also appreciated the fact that most MPs that addressed the floor were well aware of how climate change is impacting their constituencies. Thomas regretted that big corporations that directly impact our national environment such as Coca-Cola Company and Total Energy were not be present to discuss and exchange with the room on their challenges and green policy. "In order to improve this promising event," he said, "I would recommend that they get invited to initiate a

productive dialogue on how to get everyone on board to protect our collective environment.”

Aturihihi Brendah our *Projects Officer* noted that “the major problems in the world result from conflict between how nature works and the way people think. We are living on this planet as if we have another one to go to. To damage the earth is to damage your children. I speak for nature, trees, biodiversity and climate because they have no human tongues.”

Kiiza Eron, *CEO*, said: “Events like the Environment Parliament should remind us that fossil fuels are the primary drivers of climate crisis and continued investments in fossil fuel projects like EACOP is disastrous to our climate, biodiversity, health, human rights and nature. We must speedily embrace and invest more in renewables.”

Robert J. Turyakira said; “This savage attack on nature is simply not sustainable, we can’t win this reckless war against nature. We either symbiotically live with nature or nature will fight back in even a more aggressive way. There is no time, we must take action now. The Environment Parliament is timely and a resourceful platform for all of us”.

Below are some memorable images from the inaugural Environment Parliament.





 **Parliament of Uganda**
@Parliament Ug

The afternoon plenary session of the Environment Parliament is underway. The Speaker is [@RobertJTurykira](#). Next on the Order Paper is debate on addressing issues of climate disasters and waste management in the country. [#epug23](#) [@EnviShield](#) [@epuganda](#)



End.

Published: 29th May, 2023.



22nd May, 2023

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

22nd May is the International Day for Biological Diversity, aimed at increasing understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. Biodiversity is the variety of all life on earth. It is the complex web on which human existence depends. It falls into three primary categories: genetic biodiversity, species biodiversity and ecosystems biodiversity.

Without biodiversity, planet earth would be deprived of the healthy ecosystems we depend on for the air we breathe, the beauty of nature that we enjoy, the water we drink and the food we eat. Biodiversity is the foundation of life on earth. Clean air, food security, water security, quality soils, a stable climate, economic progress and human health all spring from healthy biodiversity. Yet, biodiversity loss, alongside the climate emergence and pollution confront humanity in a lethal, triple planetary crisis that we must solve or perish as a civilization, in what scientists have christened the “*sixth extinction*.”

The International Day for Biological Diversity falls within the scope of the UN Post - 2015 Development Agenda’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and provides a reminder of the urgent need for action across food systems, finance, ecosystem protection and restoration to address the nature crisis.

The theme for **2023** is, “**From agreement to action: Build back diversity**” and it follows the historic adoption of the **Kunming- Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework** by 196 nations, during the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15), in **December, 2022**. The Framework is a landmark agreement that contains global targets to be achieved by 2030 and beyond, to safeguard and sustainably use biodiversity - while protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. The Framework is to be implemented within 7 years, by 2030, and the plan is to repair the web and sustain all life on earth.

Nature, both on land and at sea is declining faster than at any other time in history, with an estimated 1 million animal and plant species threatened with extinction, soils are turning infertile and water sources are drying up. To prevent large-scale biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse, the framework calls for the effective conservation and management of at least 30 percent of the world’s lands, inland waters, coastal areas and ocean, as well as the restoration of 30 percent of degraded ecosystems by 2030.

On this **International Biological Diversity Day: Monday, 22nd May, 2023**, we join Ugandans and the international community in an urgent call to reverse biodiversity loss through nature conservation initiatives and stopping drivers of biodiversity loss like pollution, deforestation, wetlands encroachment and other forms of environmental degradation.

End.



EARTH IS OUR ONLY HOME

Humanity's only habitable home/planet is Earth. To mark this year's Earth Day which fell on **22nd April, 2023**, we highlight, according to UNFCCC, the average temperatures of the planets in our solar system as follows: Mercury 167°C; Venus 464°C; Earth 15°C; Mars -65°C; Jupiter -110°C; Saturn -140°C; Uranus -195°C; and Neptune -200°C. Earth is like no other planet, hence the need for us to guard it jealously from the triple planetary crisis (*the climate emergency, biodiversity loss and pollution*) that is bleeding it. It is about time we protected our only home.

According to UNEP, the first Earth Day took place in 1970. Outraged by oil spills, smog and polluted rivers, 20 million people took to the streets, protesting what they recognized as an environmental crisis. It was the planet's largest civic event at the time and compelled governments to take concrete actions, including passing environmental laws and establishing environmental agencies. In addition to these practical outcomes, the event demonstrated just how much can be achieved when people come together and demand action.

In 2009, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution formally recognizing the day as International Mother Earth Day. On Earth Day 2016, the United Nations formally adopted the Paris Agreement, articulating the commitment of nations to limit global temperature rise to less than 2°C over pre-industrial levels; and to strengthen the ability of countries to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.

Climate change is the greatest threat to life on earth. The science is clear: the window to fix it is rapidly closing so much so that humanity is about to rob itself of the possibility of keeping global heating below 1.5°C over pre-industrial levels as required by the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

António Guterres, the UN Chief, urging humanity to halt its relentless and senseless wars on nature that are laying waste to forests, jungles, farmland, wetlands, oceans, coral reefs, rivers, seas, and lakes; emphasised on Earth Day that – “from the air we breathe to the water we drink to the soil that grows our food – humanity's health depends on the health of Mother Earth.”

There is urgent need for accelerated climate action entailing deeper and faster emissions cuts, in order to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degree Celsius. Equally urgent is the need to massively scale-up investments in

adaptation and resilience, particularly for the most vulnerable countries and communities who have done the least to cause the crisis such as African states like Uganda and low lying Small Island states. We need climate justice now!

Addressing the climate crisis requires political will. Familiarize yourself with issues related to the climate crisis and where political candidates in your area stand. Use your vote to support those committed to reducing emissions, and call on others to take climate action more seriously.

By writing letters, organizing meetings and arranging debates, you can encourage leaders to commit to the goals of the Paris Agreement, increase the transparency around climate policies and devote resources to adapting to existing climate-related challenges. Call on leaders to get behind the shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy and energy efficiency, commit to ecosystem restoration projects, and use public funds to finance green technology and innovation.

Businesses must promote sustainability – not only to safeguard the planet, but also to ensure their own long-term stability.

Let us do everything in our power to protect mother earth for our sake, future generations and for the sake of all biodiversity.

End.
Monday, April 24th, 2023

About us:

The Environment Shield is a civic organization (nonprofit) working for people and planet/nature. We use the law, media/advocacy, strategic litigation, community engagement, research, collaborations, monitoring and documentation to battle the climate emergency, biodiversity loss and pollution while centering social justice, rule of law, human rights, and ecological justice. SDGs, sustainable development, climate justice and the right to a clean and health environment are key pillars of our work. Our vision is a green and just society.

@EnviShield

<https://www.environmentshield.org>.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FORESTS

A forest is a large area chiefly covered with trees and undergrowth. It is ideally mixed-species and wild. Not every collection of trees is a forest. Some are mere tree plantations; and poor for diversity or other traditional forest purposes.

Uganda was naturally blessed with many forests which are now under intense pressure from land use change to agriculture, firewood use, charcoal burning and commercial lumbering among others.

Government agencies like NFA, UWA, NEMA and the Ministry of Water and Environment have played a crucial role in protecting forests in Uganda and documenting their depletion due to a myriad of factors. In many cases though, bad politics and selfish commercial interests frustrate the efforts of individuals and institutions in government, keen on protection of forests for humans and nature.

According to FAO, Uganda's forestry cover shrunk from 45% in 1890 to the present 20.3%. Between 1990 and 2005, natural forest estate outside protected areas reduced by 35%. This is problematic.

Why care about forests?

Some 70 million people worldwide - including many indigenous communities such as the Batwa, call forests home. Others enjoy medicinal and healing benefits from forests in what is called forest therapy or forest bathing. They are guarantors of food security, human shelter, watersheds, culture, religious practices climate health, biodiversity, wildlife habitats, research, education, tourism, and help in fighting soil erosion and poverty.

Over 1.6 billion people depend on forests for food or fuel. Forests supply humans with oxygen, shelter, jobs, water, nourishment and fuel. Without forests, humans would perish. According to World Wide fund for Nature (WWF), Forests cover around one-third of all land on Earth. Forests are crucial in tackling the pollution, biodiversity and climate crises.

Forests help in rain making and not only regulating climate but also buffering communities from adverse consequences of climate like floods, landslides.

Article 39 of the Uganda Constitution and **Section 3 of the National Environment Act, 2019** guarantee the right to a clean and healthy environment besides clothing us with the responsibility to protect the environment including forests that are a crucial part of it. On this ***International Day of Forests, Tuesday, 21 March 2023***, we join Ugandans, government and the international community in celebrating the beauty and importance of forests, condemning deforestation and deforesters like Hoima Sugar Limited. We reiterate our devotion to speaking up for people and nature.



FLOODS

On **Tuesday, March 14th 2023**, Kampala and her environs flooded. The ugly floods delayed and stopped work. They slowed traffic, blocked roads and damaged property.

Uganda Police stated that water levels along Jinja Road specifically at Namanve and Banda were increasing and affecting traffic flow. Social media is awash with images capturing the flood mayhem.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), floods which occur “when an overflow of water submerges land that is usually dry,” are the most frequent type of natural disaster. Floods in Uganda are often caused by heavy rainfall.

WHO categorizes floods into three types: flash floods; river floods and coastal floods. What we witnessed on **Tuesday, March 14th 2023** were flash floods common in Uganda. Flash floods are sudden rushes of water over dry land that result from and occur shortly after heavy rain.

Floods can cause widespread devastation, resulting in loss of life by drowning, damage to personal property and critical public health infrastructure. Floods spread diseases, chemical hazards, and disrupt normal life.

Flooding has a number of environmental effects, including the degradation of animal habitats. Rivers and wetlands may be polluted by tainted flood water. Plants on farms can be destroyed by silt and sediment.

Frequent and more severe weather events including flooding are one of the consequences of human induced climate change and environmental degradation, including rampant and widespread wetlands destruction and deforestation. We urge Ugandans and the authorities to prioritize wetlands restoration, reforestation, environmental conservation and ambitious climate action through mitigation and adaptation measures and a rapid transition to renewables. The war on wetlands specifically and nature generally must stop if we are to win the battle against floods in Uganda. We must support the efforts of NEMA and other stakeholders working for nature, planet or the environment for the sake of our health, economy, lives and livelihoods. For the sake of a liveable future.

End.
Thursday, March 16, 2023