



The Environment Shield

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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."

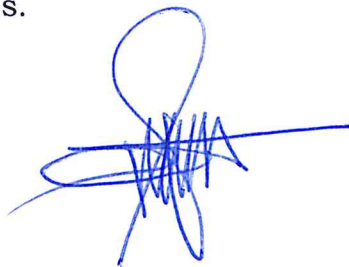
On **Tuesday, 9th May, 2023**, our documentation team, comprising Matte Derrick, photographer and Thomas Lesaffre, PHD fellow/researcher, visited Butabika in Kampala, Uganda, to document and investigate Kirombe wetland encroachment. They found that:

- 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, loopy initial 'K' followed by several horizontal and vertical strokes, crossing over itself.

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.



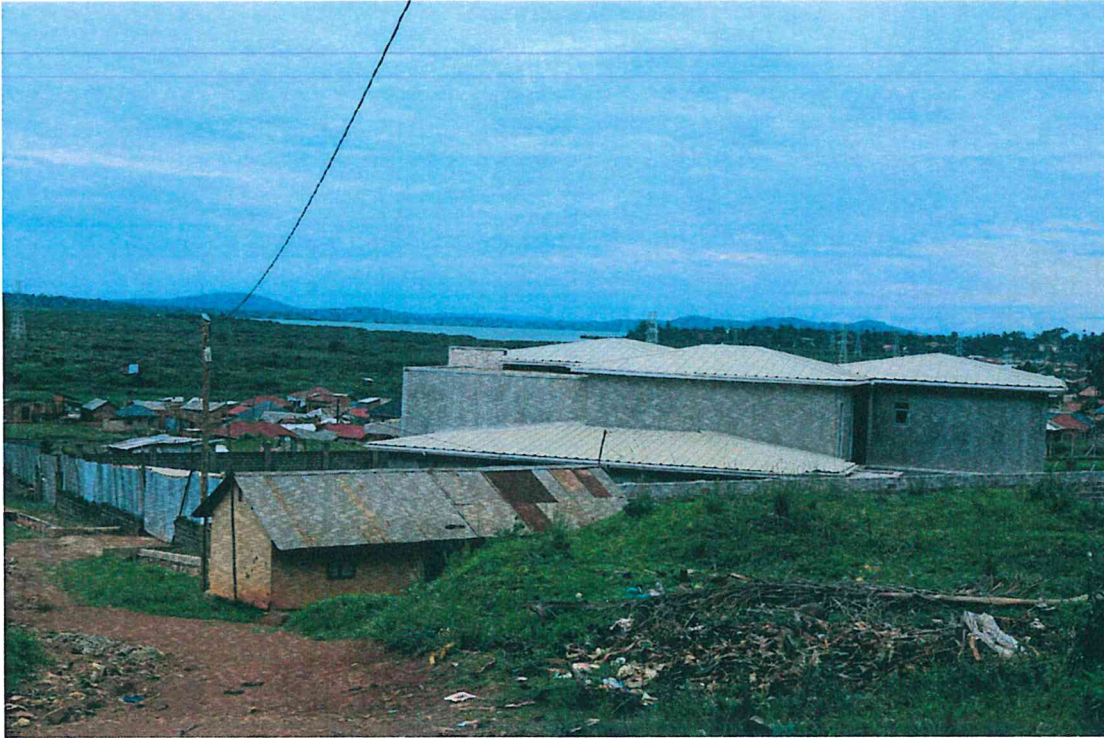
Kids stuck inside and around a flooded homestead, one looking at fellows playing in Kirombe - Butabika – Kampala, Uganda on Tuesday, 9th May, 2023.



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 Kiroombe - Butabika - Kampala, Uganda. Documentation done on Tuesday, 9th May, 2023.