



WATER AND ENVIRONMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND WEALTH CREATION SESSION

Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK) 2020

Sept 13th – 18th, 2020

No. 01



1.0 INTRODUCTION

FRA together with other actors partnered with Ministry of Water and Environment to co-convene the Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK). As part of the co-conveners, the Alliance provided both technical and financial support towards the event to strategically influence policy processes at a decision making level to reap its intended outcomes. Specifically, FRA co-organized a session on the sub-theme Water and Environment for Employment and Wealth Creation on the 3rd day of UWEWK 2020 on zoom to discuss how societies should govern and develop their water and environment resources for employment and wealth creation and

improving people's livelihoods.

The sub-theme also focused on innovative solutions for more efficient and productive development and management of water, environment and natural resources. Case studies of integrated water development and management schemes that account for water demand and supply were shared. The session highlighted opportunities for increasing incomes and employment through sustainable use and value addition to water, environment and natural resources.

The session moderator was Dr. Callist Tindimugaya, the Commissioner, Water Resources Planning and Regulation at Ministry of Water and Environment. The keynote address was made by Prof. Alex Ariho, the CEO of African Agribusiness Incubators Network. Panel discussants included Mr. James Ebitu, the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development (MoGSD), Eng. Joseph Eyatu, the Acting Director of Directorate of Water Development at Ministry of Water and Environment, Dr. Tom Okurut, Executive Director National Environment and Management Authority (NEMA), the Acting Director of Directorate of Water Development at Ministry of Water and Environment, Ms Agnes Kirabo, Executive Director FRA, Ms. Cate Nimanya Country

2.0 BACKGROUND

Sustainable management of water and environment resources underpins wider efforts to end poverty, improve health and advance sustainable development. Ensuring availability and sustainable management of these resources for all is essential for achieving SDGs.¹ In line with this, Uganda has made progress in strengthening water resources management; increasing awareness, public discussion and participation in planning and implementation of water resources management interventions; and improving national capacities for water and environment resources monitoring. A multi-sectoral approach is reflected in the representativeness of the National Water Planning Committee, which has representatives from different sectors, including the civil society. However, many challenges remain.

The fact that globally, there is inadequate water, it puts pressure on water and environment resources. The increasing urbanization will contribute to further degradation of the environment.²

There is need to create awareness on sustainable land use management to create sustainable opportunities for employment and wealth creation for women and youth. There is also need to invest in clean water, water re-use, and treatment of waste water in order to break the vicious cycle of poverty through sustainable utilization of water and environment resources, water for production.

Uganda as a country needs to create a link between business development and water and environment resources. These resources play a critical role in generating employment and thus there is need to focus on water governance, developing effective and efficient models for employment and wealth creation around natural resources. In addition, the need to look at other models on how they have managed capacity development, green economy and waste water reuse is very vital as far as sustainability is concerned. If water resources are developed, it can create job opportunities for the country.

There are four key drivers to Water and Environment employment and wealth creation which are ensuring technology innovation and functional management of water for wealth creation, water and environment accounting for sustainable livelihood improvement, inclusive access to water as a driver of job, employment and wealth creation and modeling employment and wealth creation around water and other environmental resources. These require the need to develop public private partnerships incubation models on hubs focusing in youth and women to realize employment and wealth creation in the country.

Well as there will always be plenty of water in the world, the amount of usable freshwater that is easily accessible is rapidly shrinking due to increasing populations, food demand and inadequate water infrastructure. Thus,

¹High level political forum on sustainable development, 2018

²The keynote address was made by Prof. Alex Ariho, the CEO of African Agribusiness Incubators Network.

water resources need to be managed for wealth creation through land use management, community engagements, improving livelihoods, increasing access

to safe water and improved standards of sanitation and hygiene, water reuse and innovation.

3.0 KEY POLICY ISSUES TOWARDS ENHANCING WATER AND ENVIRONMENT RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT AND WEALTH CREATION

Investing in water and environment is an essential product that will propel sustainable development in Uganda. It is unfortunate to assume water is available and does not need to be planned for or invest in as many people continue degrading the environment. The ever increasing population of about 45.7million Ugandans as of current is increasingly putting pressure on the country's natural resources. One of the factors is to make the natural resources relevant is to regulate the population and invest more in the national resources to create jobs. There is need for value addition on natural resources through development and use of innovative technologies. The productivity of land is declining and private sector need to contribute to addressing issues of degradation.

Sustainable management of water and environment resources underpins wider efforts to end poverty, produce food, generate energy and improve health, while at the same time maintaining the integrity of the environment. The centrality of food and how it underlays with water is very important hence the nexus between food water environment ecosystems and food must be recognized. Employment creation and wealth is huge but also fascinating. There is a perception that issues of water and environment are only for people within the sector. The other perception is that people outside the sector should

only complain, exploit and misuse the environment. There is need to appreciate the discussion and building the nexus in the different sectors to facilitate joint planning, decision making and implementation of government programs and projects.

Water and the environment are at the heart of transformation of other sectors including contributing to employment and achievement of the goals in the 3rd National Development Plan (NDPIII). It is unfortunate that many actors in the agricultural sector think about water only when it is too less or too much. But if it is in adequate amounts, they rarely think or talk about water. The thinking that the water is too much is the limited ability to exploit the water resource and this has caused challenges right from individual to institutional level. There is need to think about the awareness creation models to give out to Ugandans to appreciate the values of one single drop of water.

Generally, water has been perceived to be a burden in some areas of this country. If people's perspectives about water change as a precious item that can ever be accessed, then management of the resource can be improved. In most cases, discussions around water for agriculture are always around water for industrialization, irrigation and discussions on water for livestock, aquaculture is very limited. Any

water at disposal should be sustainably managed by ensuring technologies for water for agriculture are made available and accessible including solicited or unsolicited technical advice so that it is not a burden and can be utilised all year round.

In addition, Water and Environment is one aspect that really requires investment thus the need to make strategic decisions to ensure sustainable management of the available water and environment resources.

4.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Government should strengthen creation of awareness on sustainable water resource management to increase sustainable opportunities for employment and wealth creation in Uganda. Awareness creation models need to be developed for Ugandans that will promote value water and environment resources and how they are managed. There is need to sensitize the community on sustained waste management and the potential use of waste to create job opportunities and also safeguard water and environment resources from being degraded.
- The government needs to generate of up-to-date data on water and environment resources and scientific knowledge to inform and guide planning and prioritization of country strategies and plans enhance the creation employment opportunities.
- There is need to provide technical guidance to farmers and technologies to increase productivity. This should be part of the National Irrigation Master Plan that is under development by the two implementing sectors of Water and Agriculture. Thus the master plan needs to be expedited because it will streamline specific roles between the two core sectors, direct adequate investment for water for production and open opportunities for various stakeholder collaborations.
- There is need to appreciate the discussion and building the nexus in the different sectors to facilitate joint planning, decision making and implementation of government programs and projects. This will require the need to develop public private partnerships to realize employment and wealth creation in the country. Under the nexus interventions, stakeholders, communities and users should be at the center of planning, management and monitoring of natural resources, including water resources.
- Government should establish appropriate technologies for water for agricultural production and they should be made available and accessible even by the small holder farmers. It requires strategic investment in the sub sector to ensure sustainable management of the available water and environment resources. Excessive floods and surface runoff can easily be harvested for use in agriculture if the technologies are appropriate and efficient.

Printed by:

In Partnership with



Food Rights Alliance
Plot 82 Muteesa 1 Road – Namirembe
P.O. Box, 5796 Kampala Uganda
Tel: +256-788-104-782
Email: fra@frauganda.com

