

UCSD News Bulletin June 2007

Monthly news Bulletin from the secretariat of Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD)

Rio and beyond...

Worried about the ban on polythene bags? Do not despair....!

Recently Government of Uganda banned buveera (polythene bags) of not more than 30microns effective July 1, 2007 but with a grace period of up to September 2007 to allow traders clear their existing stocks. Many people may think it is impossible to live without the 'bag beast'... probably having grown up using them. For inspiration, other parts of the world have since taken the bold step to stop using these bags, and are already sharing dividends. For more information and inspiration and Buveera trends from around the world, visit: <http://www.reusablebags.com/facts.php?id=9>

UCSD elects a new Executive Committee

UCSD held its Annual General Meeting 2007 on Thursday June 2007 at Hotel Equatoria - Kampala. The AGM heard progress of UCSD since the last meeting, discussed the financial audit report (2006) and adopted amendments to UCSD (July 2004) constitution. In addition elections for new office bearers was conducted which brought in **Frank Muramuzi** (National Association of Professional Environmentalists, **Chairman**), **Sarah Kisolo** (Rural Development Media Communications, **Vice Chairperson**), **Nicholas Senyonjo** (Uganda Environment Education Foundation, **Treasurer**), **John Kagambirwe** (Uganda Gender Resource Centre, **General Secretary**), **5 Committee members: David Ssemwogerere** (Agency for Environment and Wetlands), **Rosemary Namirembe** (Junior Chamber International - Uganda), **Carolyn Nambuya** (Bahai Community in Uganda), **Kefa Kaweesa** (ECOVIC Uganda), and **Ramadhan Kalanzi** (Uganda Fish Development Association). **UCSD Secretariat takes this opportunity to give thanks to the outgoing executive committee for the work done, and to welcome the new one to build on, and further consolidate UCSD's achievements.**

East African Civil Society Watchdog Project for Sustainable development in the Lake Victoria basin formally launched in Kampala

During the AGM 2007, the East African Civil Society Watchdog Project for Sustainable Development in the Lake Victoria basin was formally launched by Mrs. Gertrude Ngabirano - Regional Programme Manager, Embassy of Sweden, Kampala. As part of this, she also formally launched the maiden bilingual biannual *East African SusWatchdog newsletter* (Jan. - June 2007), and the Civil Society Discussion paper No.1: *Barriers to the promotion of sustainable development in the Lake Victoria basin*

Gertrude noted that Sweden has made a long-term commitment to the people of Lake Victoria basin on poverty alleviation and sustainable development, in which Civil Society organizations like the East African SusWatch Network are recognized as important stakeholders. She noted that many of the poor communities in the Lake basin are not aware that commitments have been made on their behalf. However, she added that CSOs working at a regional level have to appreciate the challenges (for example upholding democratic principles and values in their work) and opportunities (for example new alternatives in working methods). Sida recognizes the need to enhance the capacity of CSOs in the Lake basin, hence the support to the East African Suswatch network. She revealed that Sida's Lake Victoria Initiative is embarking on a strategy process later on this year in which CSOs will be consulted on areas that they deem most relevant to Swedish support.

Mr. J. Biimbwa Programme Officer - MS Uganda who represented the Country Director welcomed Sida support to UCSD as a major step to further consolidate UCSD and CSO work in East Africa. He noted that MS Uganda that has supported UCSD since 2000 in preparation of the Johannesburg Summit will continue to provide more support targeted at increasing visibility, involvement of environment and development CSOs, and consideration of gender aspects and to do research aimed at holding Government accountable for commitments related to environment and sustainable development in Uganda. **Get a free copy / copies of the East African SusWatchdog Newsletter (Wangalizi wa Maendeleo Endelevu Afrika Mashariki) and the Civil Society Discussion paper (in English and Swahili) from UCSD Secretariat.**

UCSD membership still open

UCSD secretariat is still open to interested institutions for membership. *For more information/ questions regarding updating membership, please contact Robert Kugonza / Rebecca on tel: 256 41 269461*

SOS: We are Midway to the Millennium Development Goals!

July 7, 2007 is the midway point for achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This is an historic opportunity for civil society to hold their political leaders to account and to challenge them to speed progress towards meeting and exceeding these goals. For campaigners worldwide 07-07-07 provides a crucial opportunity to hold decision-makers to account and to challenge them to do more. Follow the global CSO activities by contacting D. Nyanzi (Uganda NGO Forum: ngoforum@infocom.co.ug) to participate in activities planned by the Uganda MDG / GCAP Coalition on July 7, 2007 or visiting the website <http://www.whiteband.org/Action/midway-point-of-millennium-development-goals>