

UCSD News Bulletin March 2007

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

Rio and beyond...

Not a sweet deal – ancient forests are lost once and for all!

While the temperatures are rising up following the breaking news of the likely degazettement of Mabira forest reserve (part of the remnant one third of Uganda's forest estate – classified as tropical high forests) by Government, UCSD want to join other concerned citizens, citizen groups and campaigners to reemphasize its earlier stand – Government should listen to the masses and act as a vanguard to explore alternatives in public interest (see *Uganda Sustainability bulletin* issue 4 Nov / Dec 2006: http://www.suswatch.org/index.php?option=com_remository&Itemid=90&func=fileinfo&id=112)

We believe that the mood is just right for the Government to act wisely and rescind from steps nearing to degazettement of the Mabira forest reserve for the sugar cane project. A lot of reasoning in favor of exploring alternative land has been and continues to be provided from within and outside government circles. We anxiously wait for Government to listen to the emerging consensus from its own people (and learn from this experience) so as to save time, efforts and resources for the mounting task of curtailing deforestation and land restoration elsewhere, as a result of the escalating demand for wood products and agricultural expansion from Uganda's fast growing population.

More new staff at UCSD Secretariat

UCSD secretariat has been strengthened by an additional full time and 2 volunteer staff. Robert Kugonza with a B.A in Environment Management joins UCSD as the Projects Officer from UWESO Trust, while Ms. Nancy Awidi with a B.A (SS) who worked with UCSD last year for more than 4 months on a part time basis, now joins as an Accounts Assistant and will work closely with Rebecca (Accountant) on Accounts and Administrative work. Ms. Grace Balikoowa with a B.A (SWSA) joins as the Information Assistant and will work closely with the Projects Officer and Programme Manager on information, publications and membership related matters. UCSD secretariat now has 3 full time staff and 2 volunteer staff. We wish to warmly welcome the new staff on board!

UCSD membership still open

UCSD secretariat is in the process of updating UCSD membership register. Therefore we wish to remind interested institutions to update their membership

Also, UCSD is in the process of updating information on its website which will include only the fully paid up members organizations brief profiles. As noted by the Executive Committee recently, we feel obliged to provide more service to those that have exhibited a commitment to UCSD. Similarly, UCSD plans to hold its Annual General meeting in June 2007, where invitation and participation will be based on paid up members only. *For more information/ questions regarding updating membership, please contact Robert Kugonza / Rebecca on tel: 256 41 269461*

UCSD Thematic group meetings in 2007

To continue with the bimonthly *Uganda Sustainability Bulletin* that was initiated last year, UCSD has started preparations that ensure ownership of the process (issues raised) and the product that can be proudly shared out. This year's Thematic group (TG) meetings are meant to create spaces where discussions can occur regarding possible areas of focus, as well as generating initial ideas to fit in MS Uganda's new democracy focus (MS being our main partner on this initiative). The TG meetings are also expected to initiate a process of reflection for input to UCSD's envisaged partnership with MS Uganda. 3 out of the 5 TGs (the integrated freshwater management, sustainable agriculture and biodiversity groups) held their meetings by March 26. The Climate Change and Energy; and Sustainable socio economic development groups are planning theirs soon.

Second meeting of PSC for the East African Watchdog project in April 2007

A second project Steering Committee for the East African Watchdog project for sustainable development in the Lake Victoria basin will be held April 11 – 14, 2007 in Dar es Salaam. The meeting will discuss the inception reports, plan and task specific project responsibilities to the individual networks.

Campaigns: End Water Poverty Coalition

Poverty comes in different forms beyond lack of income to include water poverty. For example in Africa, an estimated 5% of GDP is lost to illnesses and deaths caused by dirty water and the absence of sanitation. The **End Water Poverty campaign is calling on Germany as the host nation for this year's G8 meeting, to commit to a Global Action Plan for sanitation and water**; a plan that will deliver safe water and effective sanitation to those most in need - the poorest of the poor. *Learn more about the End Water Poverty Campaign including what actions you can take in Uganda, by visiting the website: <http://www.endwaterpoverty.org/>*