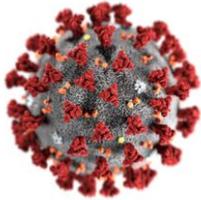


A Monthly from the East African Sustainability Watch Network founded by Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD), Tanzania Coalition for Sustainable Development (TCSD) and SusWatch Kenya

Green Solutions - Crucial Part of the Short and Long-term COVID-19 Response in East Africa



Corona Virus. Photo: Statnews.com

As Corona Virus (COVID-19) sweeps across the world, it has put to test not only existing national health systems, but is wreaking havoc on economies and ordinary lives. Furthermore, it is bringing to question the level of readiness for many countries including East Africa, to ably respond to such shocks (availability of intensive care beds, supply of drugs, masks and accessories). Though the number of COVID-19 cases has been relatively low in East Africa, a range of responses have been taken, from bans on public transport, minimizing crowds in public places and mass hand washing.

In its aftermath, it is important that global development priorities enshrined in Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (and the gains achieved so far) are not swept under the carpet. To date, the temptation to pump huge amounts of dollars into dirty industries instead of further moving away from fossil fuel dependence is suspect. For example, according to *The Sustainability Times* (March 2020), Governments and financial leaders are already considering recovery packages for an economy so badly hit by COVID-19.

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Surprisingly, these decisions decision on climate change. the paralyzed economy are assets and industries, we potential to bend the curve

of emissions this decade. On the other hand, with interest rates at an all-time low, political and financial leaders now have an unprecedented historical opportunity to accelerate the energy transition putting us onto a safe path toward a 50% reduction of emissions by 2030.

Based on lessons from the 2008 global financial crisis where billions were spent bailing out big business and stimulating the economy, climate action faded into the background. Governments used asset buyback programs to create liquidity to buy bonds from fossil dependent enterprises. While there was an initial drop in Greenhouse gas emissions, they quickly bounced back in 2010, once economic activity rebounded. COVID-19 pandemic aside, (super) 2020 is different in the sense that we still have a climate emergency that is intertwined with a planetary emergency. Fossil CO2 emissions from energy use and industry, which dominate total Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, grew 2.0 per cent in 2018, reaching a record 37.5 Gigatonnes of CO2 per year. There is no sign of GHG emissions peaking in the next few years; every year of postponed peaking means that deeper and faster cuts will be required. By 2030, emissions would need to be 25 per cent and 55 per cent lower than in 2018 to put the world on the least-cost pathway to limiting global warming to below 2°C and 1.5°C respectively (UNEP Emissions Gap, 2019). In addition to advance joint coordinated policies to cushion the negative impact and speed up the recovery, it is equally important to offer green solutions as part of COVID-19 emergency, as well as long-term response (including scaling-up investment in public health services). For the majority poor and vulnerable communities in East Africa, scaling up local climate and sustainable energy solutions in addition to provision of clean and safe water is urgent. In the long-term, the drivers of habitat and biodiversity loss need to be capped. Ultimately, it is only strong, resilient communities and ecosystems that can withstand COVID-19 spread, its aftermath and similar future shocks.

Kenya CSOs advocate for Flow of Climate Finance to Decentralized Renewable Energy Systems



Roundtable. Photo:
SusWatch Kenya

Sustainable Environmental Development Watch (SusWatch) Kenya participated in a roundtable meeting organized by the Kenya Climate Change Working Group and HIVOS East Africa, to discuss a research Report on flows and trends of Climate Finance towards Decentralized Renewable Energy Systems. The meeting brought together state and non-state actors including the National Treasury, Ministry of Environment and Forestry and Civil Society Organizations,

Climate finance continues to be a central issue in how the global community proposes to follow through with implementation of the Paris Agreement. This is appropriate in the context of the IPCC (2018) report showing a USD 1.6 - 3.8 trillion energy system investment requirement to keep warming within a 1.5-degree Celsius scenario to avoid the most harmful effects of climate change.

In Kenya and Africa in general climate Finance is critical to full realization of the policy goals as set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 2015 Paris Agreement and the African Union Agenda 2063. Developing countries such as Kenya, experience greater impacts of climate change therefore making , climate finance critical to catalyze actions through mitigation and adaptation.

However, global progress on policy measures that facilitate the actual deployment of renewables has been much slower than progress on planning stage policies to conduct assessments on renewables and set industry-level targets. Kenya has begun to incorporate renewable energy into its policies as part of domesticating international commitments - such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2015 Paris Agreement. For example Kenya's Energy Act 2019 stress finding reliable and cost-effective energy while also protects the environment, in support of the country's Climate Change Act 2016, the National Climate Finance Policy, 2018 and the National Climate Change Action Plan 2013–2022. The progressive development of these policies and corresponding regulatory mechanisms point towards a strong political will to support climate action and mobilize adequate finances.

Despite these achievements, Kenya needs to expand and maintain systems for targeted and continuous innovation, including development of locally contextualized technologies. Capacity building for both national and county entities and other stakeholders in climate finance is critical if progress is to be actualized.

Kenya CSOs made several recommendations to Central and County Governments as well as Non-State Actors. Among others, the CSOs call on Government through climate change secretariat to have more robust methodologies and mechanisms of tracking climate change projects in the Counties. This should include a monitoring and result oriented framework in order to give more accurate reporting of project progress, results and impacts of such projects. They also recommended that an aggressive and pro-active approach by Council of Governors, civil societies and county executives should be pursued to ensure that all counties have developed and enforced climate change laws and policies to ensure faster implementation of climate change initiatives. In order to strengthen financial management systems, for future climate change financing, CSOs recommended that Government needs to closely work with development partners. For instance OCED Creditor Reporting System (CRS) currently tracks all ODA and has developed markers for reporting on climate change adaptation and mitigation. In order to accelerate success among government agencies, CSOs recommended climate change projects to be embedded into performance contracting along with development and implementation of a Government score card on climate change finance and aid effectiveness.

Uganda Youth Biodiversity Network Call for Individual and Organizational Participation Earth Day 2020



Activists in a clean-up action
(Photo: UYBN)

On April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans — 10% of the USA population at the time — took to the streets, college campuses and hundreds of cities to protest environmental ignorance and demand a new way forward for our planet. This Action (The first Earth Day) is credited with launching the modern environmental movement. In 2020, the **theme for Earth Day 2020 is climate action**, and marks its 50th anniversary. As climate change represents the biggest challenge to the future of humanity and the life-support systems that make our world habitable, action on climate change has been flagged out for Earth day's 50th anniversary.

The human population has doubled in the 50 years since 1970, resulting in habitat destruction, the spread of pest species and wildfires spurred by climate warming. Every year, our actions endanger more species, an increase in the frequency of extreme events such as heat waves, and vast changes across the oceans and polar caps.

With the different advance effects, warming is affecting us now, with further warming projected, it is important that the 50 years of Earth day celebrations are participatory by all and influential for action.

The Earth day calls for action in areas of clean-ups, climate teach-ins, artists for the Earth, food prints for the future and green spaces around the globe. In this regard, youths under the Uganda Youth Biodiversity Network (UYBN) have participated in different conservation initiatives. This include Clean-up of Bwindi Impenetrable Park and lessons sharing with the indigenous Batwa Community, school teach-ins about climate change, walks that call for action towards living in harmony with nature.

UYBN is calling upon individuals and organizations to participate in Earth Day 2020 events, towards a global vision of "Living in harmony with Nature" while taking actions to address climate change at all levels.

Welcome New Staff at UCSD



Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development has a new staff joining the secretariat. Mr. Denis Ikanza replaces Mr. David Mwayafu, who left at the end February 2020.

Denis who holds a BSc. Environmental Science (Makerere University - Kampala) has been working a volunteer youth activist with Youth Leading Environmental Change (YLEC) Uganda since November 2015. YLEC engages youth from diverse fields in solving environmental problems geared towards environmental sustainability by doing research and imparting knowledge and capacity building in the society.

He has also previously been engaged in the EASE-CA project as an interviewer in Nakaseke, Nakasongola and Nebbi districts under JEEP in 2019. He has also been involved in JEEP's previous projects in Eastern and Northern Uganda (2015 - 19). He has also been involved in the open streets campaign organized by Kampala City Council Authority and TEENS Uganda