

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

## **The East African Community @20: Growing With a Defying E-Waste Problem?**



Disposal of used lamps and other e-waste is a challenge in East Africa. Photo: UCSD

On November 30, 2019, the East African Community (EAC) will be celebrating 20 years of existence. It will mark the day when three heads of state of the Republic of Uganda, the Republic of Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, put pen to paper to sign the treaty reviving the EAC. This was at Sheikh Amri Abeid Memorial Stadium in Arusha, Tanzania.

The EAC with a population more than 170 million people, and a combined GDP of more than \$170 billion, has up to 19 areas of cooperation as envisioned in the Treaty, one of which is in environment and natural resources management. From the 20 year journey, environmental and natural resource-related challenges remain a stumbling block to the intentions of the EAC as stated in the Treaty.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) play a significant role in areas of development such as health, education, agriculture among others. However, ICTs are expensive to acquire and maintain. Difficulty in acquiring ICT materials such as hardware and software in developing countries has led to massive consumption of second hand products. Some of the second hand products that are extremely old resulting in electronic waste (e-waste). Electronic waste or e-waste describes discarded electrical or electronic devices. Used electronics which are destined for refurbishment, reuse, resale, salvage recycling through material recovery, or disposal are also considered e-waste.

The high demand for ICT services and the desire to bridge the digital divide in East Africa, have witnessed importation of high volumes of second-hand electrical and electronic devices over the last 20 years. According to Francis Wangusi, Chairman of the East African Communication Organization (EACO), the equipment in question include computers, mobile phones and TV sets many of which were either near-end of life, irreparable or obsolete. "Within a short time, many of these devices have turned into e-waste," said Wangusi. According to estimates, Tanzania and Kenya each generate about 45,000 tonnes of e-waste per year, followed by Uganda 25,000 tonnes, Rwanda 10,000 tonnes and Burundi 9,000 tonnes.

However, due to lack of proper guidance, e-waste of all sorts ends up being dumped in rivers, streams, wetlands. This lack of capacity to dispose of the discarded items, which contain substances that have been known to cause diseases and poison water sources and the soil. The toxic materials from electronic devices are released into bodies of water, groundwater, soil and air, affecting both land and sea animals.

The International E-waste Day is held every 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2019 and aims to create public awareness on E-Waste and to advocate for a proper E-Waste management by encouraging proper disposal of electrical equipment and electronic devices globally. Consumers are emboldened to repair, recycle, reuse and resale these appliances. East Africa unlike West Africa, has not been active on this day since it was designated 2 years ago. It is therefore important that at 20 years, a resolve to scale up public awareness in the EAC to commemorate this day more visibly should be a priority - starting 2020, given the potential threat is has on human health and the environment.

## Civil Society Call for Widening of Stakeholder Participation to Achieve 100% Renewable Energy by 2030 in Kenya



Participants at the SusWatch Kenya Coalition meeting. Photo: Suswatch Kenya

Access to modern energy services is a necessary precondition for achieving development goals that extend far beyond the energy sector, such as poverty eradication, access to clean water, improved public health and education, women's empowerment and increase food production

With this in mind, Sustainable Environmental Development Watch Kenya (SusWatch Kenya) organized a national coalition meeting on September 25, 2019 in Nairobi, which brought together 20 participants representing CSOs, NGOs, Academia, Private sector and Government officials (Ministry of Energy, Ministry of environment & forestry) to discuss the draft Strategies & scenarios for 100% renewable energy for Kenya

This is part of the *East African Civil Society for Sustainable Energy and Climate Action (EASE-CA) Project (2019 – 2022)*. During the meeting, participants agreed in principle that 100% Renewable Energy is an important intervention for Kenya, East Africa and the world at large, in light of the current global energy and climate change challenges. However, the meeting noted that the main barrier towards achieving 100% Renewable energy in Kenya is the overreliance on the fuel wood as a main source of energy for cooking by a large part of the country's population especially in rural areas. They also called for wider stakeholder participation in order for Kenya to realize this important target.

Under the Vision 2030, the Government of Kenya identified provision of reliable and adequate energy as a key enabler for development. This is critical in our goal to transform Kenya into an industrializing middle-income country providing a high quality of life to its entire citizenry. Recently, the Government unveiled the “Big 4 Agenda” focusing on Food Security and Nutrition, Manufacturing, Affordable Housing and Universal Healthcare. This agenda which has attracted support from different partners cannot be realized without the provision of adequate and competitively- priced energy. The National Energy Policy (2018) and Energy Act (2019) are the principal energy sector instruments to guide the country towards universal energy access.

Speaking at the meeting, Engineer Stephen M. Nzioka, Deputy Director, Renewable Energy Directorate, Ministry of Energy of Kenya appreciation the EASE-CA Project as it strengthens national response to climate change and energy deficit in support of the broader national development strategies for Kenya.

He also highlighted Kenya Government's sustainable energy related initiatives that include development and promotion of improved efficiency stoves and biogas programs for households and institutions; collaboration with Clean Cook stove Alliance (CCAK) to promote the development and dissemination of efficient cook stoves; and the clean cooking component of the Kenya Off-grid Solar Access Project (KOSAP) that seeks to disseminate 150,000 stoves for households in selected under-served Counties.

The EASE-CA Project is a three-year intervention (2019 - 2022) being implemented in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda as a partnership involving Tanzania Traditional Energy Development Organization (TaTEDO), Sustainable Environmental Development Watch Kenya (SusWatch Kenya), the International Network for Sustainable Energy (INFORSE), Nordic Folkecenter for Renewable Energy (lead coordinator) in Denmark, and Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD). The overall development objective of the Project is increased access to sustainable energy and other climate solutions to local communities in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania with both women's and men's full and effective participation and leadership for improved livelihoods and reduction of poverty.

## Civil Society Put Forward Proposals for Implementation of Uganda's NDC and to its Raise Ambition after 2020



Participants at the Uganda EASE-CA Partners meeting in Kampala. Photo: UCSD

As part of the strengthening Civil Society activities in Uganda, a meeting to formally introduce the *East African Civil Society for Sustainable Energy and Climate Action* (EASE-CA) Project to the Uganda civil society partners was organized by Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD) on October 7, 2019 in Kampala. It was attended by 21 participants including the media.

As the EASE-CA Project involved local to global interventions, presentations included plans and progress made by the implementing Project Partners UCSD and Joint Energy and Environment Projects (JEEP).

In Uganda, local Activities are planned in 3 districts to empower poor, rural communities to get access to clean energy and improved livelihoods in an economic and climate friendly way. Seminars, trainings reaching out to rural households, training of trainers (ToTs), local leaders, planners. Themes include: clean cooking, water, food security, tree planting, solar energy, sustainable energy & development, income generation to reduce poverty, entrepreneurship etc.

Prossie Nabiyonga (JEEP) noted that these local activities will be carried out in 6 Sub Counties of: - Nakaseke district in Nakaseke and Kasangombe subcounty; Nakasongola district in Kakooge and Nabiswera Subcounty and Nebbi in Parombo and Kucwiny sub counties.

Prossie noted that a number of activities has been carried out since the Project inception in July 2019, including a project baseline survey. She added that awareness seminars for district leaders, sub county leaders, community members and NGOs and CBOs in the three districts have been held. Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops in the 3 districts will focus on energy saving stove construction; tree nursery establishment and management; backyard gardening; income generating activities; water accessibility; training in hay basket making.

UCSD presented a draft Civil Society policy brief with proposals for Implementation of Uganda's NDC and to raise its ambition after 2020. This was discussed and approved with comments that were incorporated before its launch on the occasion of the UN Day 2019 in Kampala. The Policy brief provides a range of proposals on supporting the implementation of Uganda's NDC. It also seeks to generate timely public discussion and input (given that the NDC review process has not yet started in Uganda).

In its NDC, Uganda puts strong emphasis on adaptation actions, to ensure all people and communities are resilient to climate impacts. To reduce its impact on climate change, Uganda has committed to reducing its emissions by 22% by 2030, with actions focused in energy, forestry, and wetlands.

Among the proposals put forward, the 17 Ugandan CSOs urge Government of Uganda should work with more stakeholders and Partners to increase climate change expenditure in support of the NDC Implementation. CSOs also call for closer coordination and engagement across governments to implement the activities contained in the NDC implementation plan, stakeholder involvement is key in the implementation of the NDCs. CSOs further propose that Uganda should take advantage of the NDC 'hubs' provided by development agencies. For example, harnessing the current global interest to protect, restore and fund nature-based solutions to climate change; and the NDC Partnership's Climate Action Enhancement Package. **Read the full Uganda Civil Society Policy Brief from here: <https://tinyurl.com/y2n53w3h>**