

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

### East African CSOs ‘Storm’ Earth Day with Local Solutions on Sustainable Energy and Climate Action



Earth Day 2021 was commemorated in April 22, 2021 under the theme: 'Restore the Earth'. According to EarthDay.org, Climate change and other environmental degradations have broken our natural systems, leading to new and fatal diseases as well as a breakdown of the global economy. But just as climate change and coronavirus painfully remind us of the harm we have caused, Restore Our Earth reminds us of the opportunities that lay ahead.

During this year's Earth day, US President Joe Biden's Administration convened a 2-day Leaders' Summit on Climate. During this virtual meeting, UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, called on leaders everywhere to take urgent climate action. "Mother Nature is not waiting, he said. "We need a green planet — but the world is on red alert."

In the spirit of Earth Day 2021 theme to 'Restore Our Earth', Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD) and Joint Energy and Environment Projects (JEEP) as partners in the East African Civil Society for Sustainable Energy and Climate Action (EASE CA) Project, INFORSE East Africa and the East African Sustainability Watch (EA SusWatch) Network to which they also belong, took action through registering an Earthday event for a twitter storm campaign that was dubbed: **Local Solutions 2 Restore Our Earth! (Hashtag: #Sols4Earth)**. The Campaign was held against the backdrop of a world that is facing multiple challenges including COVID19 where several recovery schemes have come up and the continued threats posed by climate change. Nonetheless, local solutions exist that can be adopted by individuals, communities and change agents at the frontline of these global challenges.

This virtual campaign had an objective to scale up information and knowledge sharing about local solutions to counter climate change and energy poverty in East Africa, as part of 'Restoring Our Earth'. This was based on a recent online 'Catalogue of Sustainable Local Solutions - East Africa', developed as a partnership between JEEP, UCSD, SusWatch Kenya and TaTEDO (also part of INFORSE East Africa), in partnership with INFORSE secretariat and the Nordic Folkecenter for Renewable Energy with support from CISU (Denmark).

Hence, the campaign highlighted the different possible local solutions in sustainable energy, water harvesting, energy alternatives & efficiency, sustainable agriculture and reducing post-harvest food loss which are part of the 'Catalogue of Local Sustainable Local solutions - East Africa'.

Under the EASE CA Project (2019 – 2022) Partners aim at 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,

Read more about the 'Catalogue of Sustainable Local Solutions – East Africa' from: <http://localsolutions.inforse.org/>

## Community Reference Handbook Book on ‘Growing Your Own Vegetables’ in Support of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration Launched



The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration from 2021 to 2030, following a proposal for action by over 70 countries from all latitudes.

The Decade on Ecosystem Restoration challenges everyone to massively scale up restoration efforts that breathe new life into our degraded ecosystems. Ecosystem restoration manifests through local and global actions as varied as agroforestry, soil enhancement measures that can as well improve livelihoods, water availability and food security situations. Led by the United Nations Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, the UN Decade is building a strong, broad-based global movement to ramp up restoration and put the world on track for a sustainable future. That is expected to include build political momentum for restoration as well as thousands of on-ground initiatives.

Ahead of the formal launch of the ‘Decade on Ecosystem Restoration’ during the World Environment Day (June 5, 2020), one such on-ground initiative is a Self-Guided Reference Community Handbook titled ‘Growing your own vegetables: A Strategy for Improving Household Livelihoods’ by Henry Stanley Mbowa.

It is inspired by experts’ recommendation that among others, a diet rich in vegetables and fruits can lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, prevent some types of cancer, lower risk of eye and digestive problems, and have a positive effect upon blood sugar, which can help keep appetite in check.

This Handbook is written basing on his experiences and competencies in home gardening for over twelve (12) years. It is also in simple English using easy-to-understand illustrations for the reader to have a self-guided study in home gardening at his / her pace.

According to Mr. Mbowa, ‘The Handbook is vital to households and communities in establishing vegetable gardens in their homestead for sustainable livelihoods’. He adds that extension workers, teachers and instructors could use the Handbook as training guide to learners in social sciences, community development, agribusiness, agriculture, environmental management, and business studies.

This Handbook addresses the glaring gap in vegetable growing evidenced by limited knowledge and skills, limited land, scarcity of vegetables, poor nutrition and livelihoods amongst the households, worsened by COVID19, the impacts of weather change, soil exhaustion and other forms of environmental degradation in Uganda. Thus it is suitable for households, communities, learners, teachers and instructors as a guiding tool for backyard gardening in Uganda, East Africa and Great Lakes region.

For more information about this *Community Reference Handbook Book*, please contact: Mr. Henry Stanley Mbowa on Tel: +256772190265 | Email: mbowa200@gmail.com

# Safeguarding Gender Equality in East Africa's New and Updated NDCs – A Resource Guide



Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are commitments of each individual country towards the climate action goals of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

According to the NDC Partnership, threats from climate change loom large, from declining food security and water resources to coping with disasters and extreme weather events. To address these global challenges, countries need more effective solutions. Mainstreaming gender equality and supporting more inclusive approaches in climate action offer one such pathway to more effective, resilient climate action.

‘Women and disadvantaged groups are disproportionately affected by negative climate change effects. They also face unequal access to economic resources, and climate-related information and decision-making. Harnessing the knowledge, strengths and contributions of all people, understanding the gender-differentiated impacts of climate change, and empowering all people, regardless of gender, to manage and respond to climate risks will not only facilitate fair and just solutions, but can also galvanize impactful climate results,’ according to the NDC Partnership, a global coalition of countries and institutions collaborating to drive transformational climate action through sustainable development.

It is from this perspective that the Women and Gender Constituency (WGC) – a platform for observer organizations working to ensure women’s rights and gender justice within the climate change convention framework, are advocating for gender responsive climate action as crucial in the upcoming months as countries deliver new and updated NDCs until COP26, to take place at the end of this year.

According to an analysis by WGC, only 64 of the initial 190 NDCs (after adoption of the Paris Agreement) included a reference to women or gender; All the 64 countries that included a gender reference were non-Annex I (developing) countries; Women or gender were most commonly mentioned in relation to adaptation (27 countries), followed by mitigation (12 countries); 22 countries, however, referred to women or gender as a cross-cutting issue mainstreamed across several sectors.

A Uganda Civil Society Policy Brief (2019) by Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development titled: ‘Civil Society Proposals for Implementation of Uganda’s NDC and to raise its ambition after 2020’ points out a need to scale up stakeholder engagement (including women, youths, People with Disabilities, the Private Sector and others) in NDC implementation. It notes that taking a transparent and participatory approach can strengthen public support and therefore political will for implementing the Country’s NDC.

Ahead of COP26 in Glasgow, many Parties to the UNFCCC are in the process of updating / reviewing their NDCs. WGC has come up with a useful Brief: *What should I know about gender equality in new and updated NDCs?* This is a contribution to ensure that gender issues are adequately reflected in the forthcoming round of NDCs.

One of the key sections in this Brief highlights how to improve your country’s NDC. It provides tips on how to: strengthen / add language in the introduction; strengthen language across sectors; strengthen coherence; as well as monitoring and evaluation.

Read more about the WGC’s Brief: *What should I know about gender equality in new and updated NDCs?* (April 2021): <https://womensgenderclimate.org/wgc-publishes-new-advocacy-brief-gender-responsive-nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs/>