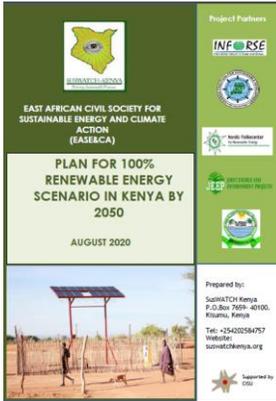


A Monthly from the East African Sustainability Watch Network founded by Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD), Tanzania Coalition for Sustainable Development (TCSD) and SusWatch Kenya

SusWatch Kenya Report Displays Kenya’s 100% Renewable Energy Possibilities by 2050



The energy sector in Kenya is largely dominated by biomass (68% of the national energy consumption), electricity (9%) and imported petroleum (21%), with biomass (wood fuel, charcoal, and agricultural waste) providing the basic cooking and heating energy needs of the rural communities, urban poor and the informal sector.

According to 100-percent.org, the change to a renewable world (dependent on renewable resources, which are naturally replenished on a human timescale, including carbon neutral sources like sunlight, wind, rain, tides, waves, and geothermal heat) is inevitable – and the beginning steps pose the greatest challenge. A world so overwhelmingly dependent on fossil fuels requires bold ideas, dramatic shifts in thinking, and action without delay. Fortunately we can find examples of this change across the world, at all levels of personal and collective engagement.

On Friday May 21, SusWatch Kenya organized a virtual validation meeting on a Policy Brief ‘How Kenya can become 100% Renewable’ based on a Report: *Kenya’s 100% Renewable Energy Plan (2020)* prepared by SusWatch Kenya as part of the *East African Civil Society for Sustainable Energy and Climate Action (EASE CA)* Project. The virtual event brought together twenty-two participants including SusWatch Kenya’s secretariat staff and Partners, as well as other interested stakeholders from Nigeria among other countries.

The validation meeting sought to further reflect on the extent to which the Report answered the questions: How will Kenya’s energy demand and system develop? How can energy efficiency help to meet demand? What renewable energy sources can energize Kenya? How can Kenya’s biomass use become sustainable? What will it cost?

Wendy Mitoko (SusWatch Kenya) informed the meeting that the Brief is a result if the EASE CA Project objective to develop joint proposals for Nationally Determined Contributions, Low Emission Development Strategies, and SDG7 as well as SE4All implementation in Kenya using experiences from local activities. Wendy emphasized that, ‘The policy brief will help in promoting the 100% Renewable energy scenario in Kenya by 2050, launched In September 2021, with the hope that the policy recommendations therein can be part of Kenya’s national development strategies’.

Justus Munyoki (SusWatch Kenya) noted that Brief contains scenarios and the renewable energy use projections, providing clear projection of various energy types and their current capacity for Kenya, in the year 2030 and 2050. The policy brief also includes key crucial policy recommendations if Kenya is to realize the renewable energy targets by the second half of this century.

Mr. Laban Okeyo (Energy department - Kisumu County, Kenya) suggested that policy recommendations should incorporate mainstreaming of more cross cutting issues in energy sector in addition to gender.

Kenya has vast potentials for renewable energy and has been ranked fifth globally in an annual Bloomberg index measuring investments and opportunities in clean energy, two facts that together give a good basis for realizing a development in the 100% renewable energy scenario.

Read the full Report: [Kenya’s 100% Renewable Energy Plan \(2020\)](https://tinyurl.com/rrtdwpxn) by SusWatch Kenya: <https://tinyurl.com/rrtdwpxn>

Uganda CSOs In For Local Solutions to Restore Degraded Ecosystems in Uganda



World Environment Day 2021 will be commemorated on June 5, 2021 under the theme: 'Ecosystem Restoration' and focus on resetting our relation with nature. It will also mark the formal launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration that runs from 2021 through 2030, that is also the deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals and the timeline scientists have identified critical for avoiding the worst impacts of climate change.

According to NEMA Uganda (2019), deforestation and forest degradation mainly due to conversion to agriculture has led to loss of large areas of forest cover and degradation of forest land in Uganda. Private forests are some of the most affected areas, as owners have gained more benefits from converting these areas to farmlands than retaining them as forests.

Many forests in the central region, Masindi and Hoima districts have been turned to farm lands due to their perceived fertile soils and the lure of high returns from investments in agriculture, where forests have been converted mainly to sugarcane plantations in the districts of Atiak and Amuru districts.

The Chairman Agago District - Leonard Opiyo Ojok, quoted by *the Black Star News* (May 4, 2021), attributes the rampant illegal logging and charcoal business in Northern Uganda to ignorance coupled with poverty “Imagine our people are selling an acre of mature trees at only 2 million shillings (562.78USD), and yet one acre would fetch 20 trucks full of charcoal which can be sold in Kampala or Kenya at more than 20 million shillings (5627.75USD) for each truck.”

The (informal) charcoal trade on which many people depend is indeed a challenge for ecosystems, as people cut down trees and degrade landscapes in search of wood for charcoal to meet the insatiable cooking national and regional demand. As a result, dependence on charcoal (and firewood) for cooking in Uganda is now a ‘red flag’ to the existing forest resource base and to the future of small holder rain-fed agriculture on which millions depend.

This has prompted Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development and Joint Energy and Environment Projects (JEEP) as partners in the East African Civil Society for Sustainable Energy and Climate Action (EASE CA) Project and INFORSE East Africa, to join the rest of Uganda and the World to scale up information and knowledge sharing about local solutions to counter climate change and energy poverty in Uganda. They firmly believe that these solutions can tangibly contribute to restoration of degraded ecosystems to fight the climate crisis, prevent further the loss of biodiversity and to enhance food security, steady water supply and sustained livelihoods at the community level to cushion Uganda’s fast growing population from resource insecurity.

This is based on an online 'Catalogue of Local Sustainable Energy and Climate Solutions' (that can help bringing energy, water and others to people in Uganda and East Africa, in climate friendly and as much as possible in affordable ways). However, this bottom-up intervention can best deliver results when relevant policies and laws work harmoniously, are fully enforced with widespread engagement of communities and stakeholders in planning and Implementation of related interventions, Scaling-up community actions through existing and future National strategies and Plans like the National Development Plan (NDPIII), the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and the Local Government Development Plans among others, is a sure way to cumulatively contribute to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

According to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 is a global effort aimed at restoring the planet and ensuring One Health for people and nature. Thus, the Decade unites the world behind a common goal: preventing, halting and reversing the degradation of ecosystems worldwide.

Read the full JEEP, UCSD and INFORSE East Africa Media statement for the World Environment Day from: <https://tinyurl.com/5xe9abz5>

How Energy Gardens Can Close the Biomass Gap While Restocking Degraded Lands in Uganda



Energy gardens could offset rampant deforestation at the community level (Photo: UCSD)

Energy Gardens are those that grow plants for energy production. Fuel wood is one garden product, and new technologies enable biomass to be burnt more efficiently. Plants can also be converted into biofuel or gas (BGCI, 2014).

Unfortunately, the energy gardens concept has been overshadowed by the negative publicity of large-scale bio-fuel monocultures. Instead of focusing on the benefits of decentralized energy production for local use, and researching the means to achieve that, biofuel production has aimed to mimic the scale and distribution systems of fossil fuels. This has resulted in problems with land ownership, use of alien species, and carbon-intensive methods of production.

But the Energy Garden concept is simple: grow fuel in situ using indigenous plants. Harnessing the sun's energy in this way side steps all the problems, and brings direct benefits to the people who need it most (Jon C. Lovett).

In Uganda and other parts of the developing world, biomass fuel plays a major role and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. For instance dependency on tree biomass in Uganda by 2013 was estimated at 44 million tons per annum. Out of the 44 million tons, the tree resource is estimated to sustainably supply only 26 million tons, which is well below the demand (MEMD, 2013). The household sector accounts for the bulk of biomass used (74%) of this. Fuel wood is the most highly consumed primary fuel with annual consumption of about 28 million tons of tree biomass. Another 16 million tons of wood are annually transformed into 1.8 million tons of charcoal using highly inefficient kilns. In addition to tree biomass, about 2.3 million tons of vegetal wastes are consumed annually.

Simple domesticated energy gardens could solve part of this dilemma and come with a range of benefits that include: reducing on deforestation and environmental degradation by making households energy secure; improving food and household; facilitate farm and household

With respect to gender income generating while on the other hand acquiring household will be a reduction in firewood.

Local Example: *Ficus natalensis* Energy Gardens:

The farmers grow *F.natalensis* trees on their farms in an agro-forestry system intercropped with banana and coffee; The farmer sustainably harvests the branches for energy and the bark for bark-cloth while the tree provides ecological services and fodder. This makes the household energy-secure; increases farm resilience; reduces deforestation and provides additional income to the farmer.

energy Security among income diversification; increase resilience to climate change.

equality, on one hand, women's potential will be improved, men participate more fully in energy. For both groups, there the distances walked to collect

Good species of energy gardens therefore include characteristics like fast growing; fast growing; soil fertility and conservation attributes; being multi-purpose; cultural attachment; regrowth/coppicing ability, etc.

In conclusion the Energy gardens concept uses simple, easy to adapt steps to address the most pressing common challenges like degraded landscapes amongst African farming rural households. In this way, a farmer keeps deforestation and environmental degradation in check because his farm provides energy for the household as a primary objective, while the energy garden serves other purpose.

The energy gardens when integrated with improved energy-saving stoves, addresses can serve a range of environmental, economic and social objectives at the community level, while enabling innovations to emerge. For example, diversification of farmers' incomes through sale of bark-cloth motivates them to conserve *Ficus species* while preserving indigenous knowledge like bark-cloth making.

The *Ficus Natalensis* Agroforestry system is part of the *Catalogue of Local Sustainable Energy and Climate Solutions*. More: <http://localsolutions.inforse.org/index.html>