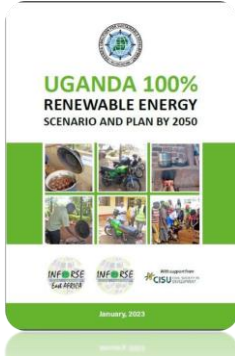


A *Monthly* from the East African Sustainability Watch Network and INFORSE East Africa

Challenges for Uganda to Attain 100% Renewable Energy Scenario Underscored



Uganda is endowed with abundant renewable energy sources including biomass, water, geothermal energy, sun and wind. What is required is to fully utilize this potential to make renewable energy a driver and shaper of the country's economic transformation. Today's skewed and heavy reliance on biomass as a key source of energy has a negative impact on both the environment and people's health.



On February 9, 2023 the Uganda Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD) and the International Network for Sustainable Energy (INFORSE) as part of the East African Civil Society for Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Project (2019-23) launched the *Uganda 100% Renewable Energy Scenario and Plan by 2050*. Speaking at the launch occasion, UCSD Chairperson – Ms Sarah Kisolo noted that, 'Uganda's urban areas depend on both hydroelectric power and wood based energy, while rural areas depend mainly on biomass and lately solar for lighting. Hence, natural vegetation is rapidly under threat as people seek to satisfy the rising demand for firewood and charcoal'

This 100% Plan provides a general overview of the Ugandan situation regarding energy supply and demand, and presents a scenario for how Uganda can move into a 100% renewable energy economy in 2050 and also move from a lower income country into an upper middle income country while sustainably harnessing its biomass resources along with other renewable energy sources. But there are challenges. One of these is that if political will is low or is lacking, attainment of the 100% Renewable Energy Scenario remains in balance. The key question here is how the Government is committed to attainment of a renewable energy future in the long run? For example, a steady allocation of public finance alongside private inflows will be needed to ensure a steady increase in the share of renewable energy in the national energy mix for the country, in the run up to 2050.

In addition, the Plan notes that purchasing power of households that is tagged to their income levels, remains very low. According to the Centre for Development Alternatives, domestic customers of electricity increased by 17% from 2015 to 2016 while sales grew by only 5% during the same time. The Plan also highlights technological challenges. Though rarely discussed, SID (2019) brings out this issue pointing out that East African countries still use 19th century models and are poised to industrialising using 20th century models just when the global energy system is changing to renewable energy base 21st century models. Furthermore, the current rates of deforestation and environmental degradation are quite alarming, partly because of the heavy reliance on biomass for cooking for a fast growing population with few alternatives. This is disrupting landscapes, land productivity, the water cycle and food security. Therefore, reducing the heavy biomass use is a major step to address this challenge.

Read a Policy Brief: *Towards 100% Renewable Energy by 2050 for Uganda (February 2023):*

<http://www.ugandacoalition.or.ug/sites/default/files/docs/Final%20Policy%20Brief%20100%25%20Scenario%20and%20Plan%20ver%206022023.pdf>

A Farewell Message: Frank Msafiri, You Promoted the Desertification and Climate Change Conventions in East Africa



Late Frank (left) with Kimbowa (UCSD) at UNEP in Nairobi (2014)

SusWatch Kenya fraternity with a heavy heart accepted the passing of their beloved Board chairman Mr. Frank Msafiri that occurred on February 8, 2022. Frank was an ardent environment and climate change champion in Kenya who started his work career at the National Museums of Kenya and later moved to the Department of Resource Survey and Remote Sensing (DDRSRS) where he worked until his retirement in 2010.

Frank was very bold especially on advocacy issues related to sustainable development. He was very instrumental in policy development matters such as National Climate Change Act 2016, National Climate Change Action Plan 2018-2022 among others, from a civil society perspective.

Frank was there during the formation of SusWatch Kenya and served as the board chairman and also in various capacities until his demise. ‘During his tenure as the Chairman of the Board, he proved to be a diligent and dedicated leader who worked closely with staff members and other board members alike. His commitment and passion for SusWatch Kenya ensured that the organization is where it is now, a regionally and nationally respected organization in matters of climate change and policy development’, noted Wendy Mitoko, a staff at SusWatch Kenya.

Kimbowa Richard - UCSD Programme Manager who worked with Frank for more than 20 years evokes similar memories. ‘East Africa will miss Frank Msafiri’s sense of humour, zeal to implement the actions against drought and desertification in Africa and his resourcefulness in linking this to climate action and biodiversity conservation from local to the global levels’ he sums it up. At the regional level, Frank was instrumental in formation of the East African Sustainability Watch Network that has brought together Kenya, Tanzania and Ugandan CSOs to follow up sustainable development commitments made during the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg.

Prior to that Frank was a key advocate for implementation of the sustainable development in the aftermath of the the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Conference. He was therefore very keen on securing full implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was established in 1994 to protect and restore our land and ensure a safer, just, and more sustainable future. No doubt that he was at the helm of the National NGO Coordinating committee on Desertification in Kenya at one point.

He actively participated in the UNEP Civil Society activities as well as at the UNFCCC climate change Conference of Parties over the years. He has also been actively involved in the activities of INFORSE East Africa related to climate action, sustainable energy and increasing civil society presence in global discussion.

Frank held a B.Sc. degree in Botany and Zoology from the University of Hull (UK) and had over 30 years’ of experience in vegetation survey for monitoring range condition and trend in the whole of Kenya arid and semi-arid areas. He worked with the Kenya Ministry of Environment and Natural resource, and majored in plant classification and identification, land use / land cover mapping, forest mapping, development of participatory forest management plans, community mobilization and consultative mechanisms. He also held a number of other natural resources credentials, worked as a consultant, authored and co-authored a number of publications.

Frank Msafiri will be remembered for all the good work he has done, may His Soul Rest In Peace.

Water Week 2023 Urges All of Us to ‘Be the Change’ with Actions to Use, Consume and Manage Water



The UN Secretary-General António Guterres while addressing the General Assembly (UNGA) on February 6, 2023, highlighted his priorities for 2023. Describing 2023 as “a year of reckoning,” he urged Member States to change the mindset of decision making from *near-term thinking to long-term thinking* and develop a strategic vision to act decisively “in deep and systemic ways.”

Water like energy and food are key ingredients to ensure the right to development. Water in addition has an extra role, being a medium for food production as well as energy (electricity) that many people in the Global South are aspiring to have. Indeed, because of the climate crisis, the frequency and intensity of both droughts and floods has increased, with untold impact on food production.

The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), QU Dongyu, recently warned that, “Because water is food, and food is water, food is life... Over 95% of the food we eat is produced on land, from soil and water”, he underscored. “Yet we are facing severe water challenges: droughts and water scarcity, floods and pollution”. “These extremes -- of too much or too little water -- impact farmers, crop production, livestock, food security, economies and livelihoods”, Qu emphasized.

It is in this regard that the World Water Day 2023 campaign, coined: *Be the change*, encourages people to take action in their own lives to change the way they use, consume and manage water. The change that is needed requires leaders at local, national, regional and global level in all walks of life to live by example in sticking to established policies and laws governing water resources. It defeats this campaign when wetlands, forest reserves and other water catchments are controversially destined for commercial agriculture, industrial development or even human settlement. The ‘*long-term thinking*’ that UN Secretary-General António Guterres reminds us about seeks to secure that these sources of water are a no-go area today for the future. What is needed are efforts to make efficient use of available water.

In addition, leaders ought to be vanguards by showcasing what others can do to change the way they use, consume and manage water. The World Water Day 2023 campaign: *Be the Change* urges all of us to make a list of personal commitments to solve the water and sanitation crisis through several actions:

1. **Save water:** Take shorter showers and don’t let the tap run when brushing my teeth, doing dishes and preparing food.
2. **Eat local:** Buy local, seasonal food and look for products made with less water.
3. **Break taboos:** Talk about the critical connection between toilets, water and menstruation.
4. **Be curious:** Find out where my water comes from and how it is shared, and visit a treatment plant to see how my waste is managed.
5. **Make it equal:** Share water fetching between women and men, girls and boys.
6. **Protect nature:** Plant a tree or create a rain garden – use natural solutions to reduce the risk of flooding and store water.
7. **Flush safe:** Fix leaking water and waste pipes, empty full septic tanks and report dumping of sludge.
8. **Build pressure:** Write to my elected representatives about budgets for improving water provision.
9. **Stop polluting:** Don’t put food waste, oils, medicines and chemicals down my toilet or drains.
10. **Clean up:** Take part in clean-ups of my local rivers, lakes, wetlands or beaches.

Read more about the World Water Day 2023 campaign ‘*Be the change*’ here: <https://www.unwater.org/bethechange/>