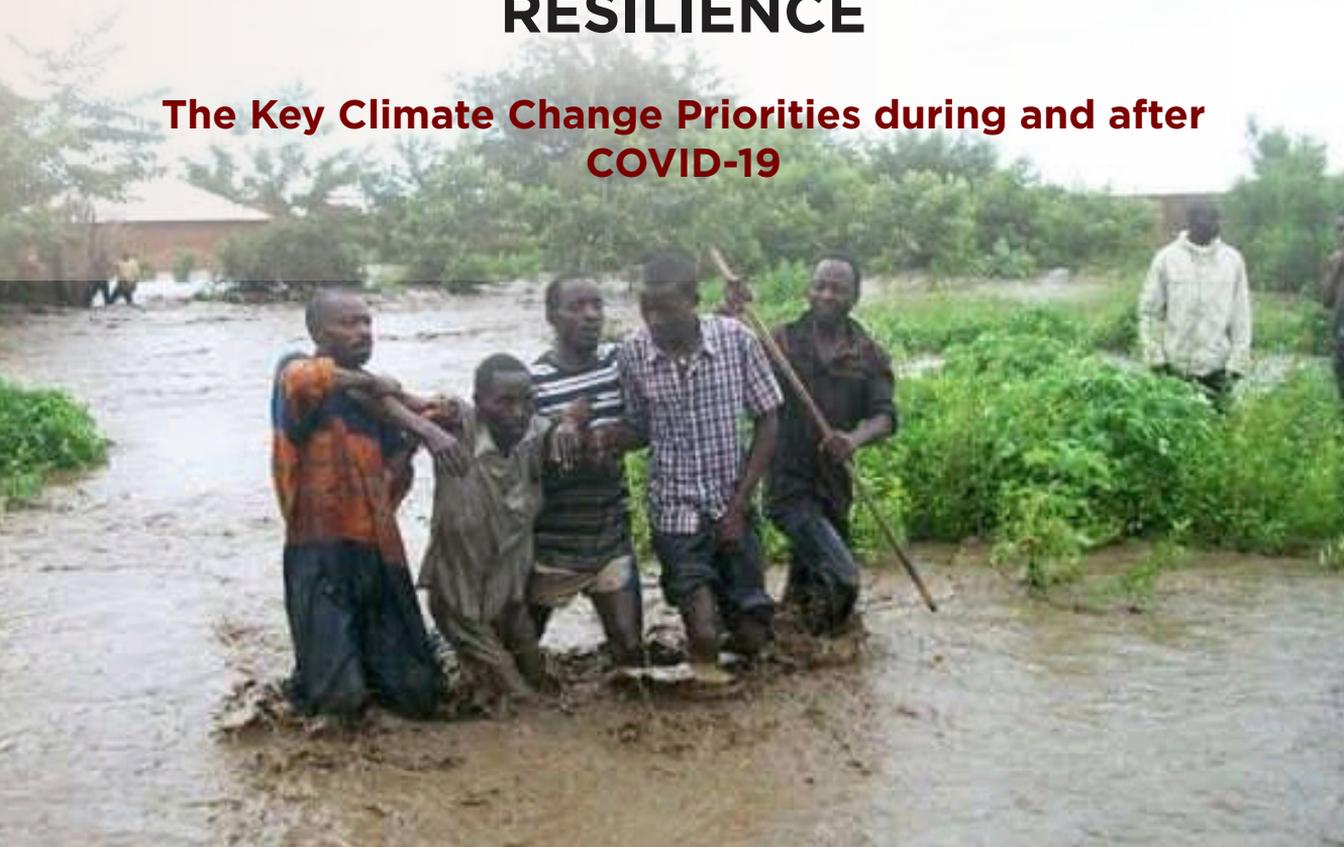




# CONSERVING THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENHANCING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

**The Key Climate Change Priorities during and after  
COVID-19**



Onesmus Mugenyi

Anthony Mugeere

Anna Amumpiire Akandwanaho

ACODE Policy Briefing Paper Series No.53, 2020

With support from



Published by ACODE  
P. O. Box 29836, Kampala  
Email: library@acode-u.org; acode@acode-u.org  
Website: <http://www.acode-u.org>

**Citation:**

Mugenyi, O., Mugeere, A., and Amumpiire, A., A. (2020). Conserving the Environment and Enhancing Community Resilience: The Key Climate Change Priorities during and after COVID-19, Kampala: ACODE, Policy Briefing Paper Series No.53.

© ACODE 2020

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher. ACODE policy work is supported by generous donations and grants from bilateral donors and charitable foundations. Reproduction or use of this publication for academic or charitable purposes or for purposes of informing public policy is excluded from this restriction.

**ISBN:** 978-9970-56-724-9

**Cover:** Flash floods hit Bundibugyo district after River Nyamwamba and Mubuku burst their banks in May 2020 (Courtesy Photo).

# **CONSERVING THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENHANCING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE**

**The Key Climate Change Priorities during and after  
COVID-19**

---

Onesmus Mugenyi  
Anthony Mugeere  
Anna Amumpiire Akandwanaho

ACODE Policy Briefing Paper Series No.53, 2020

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>List of Acronyms .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Key Environmental and Natural Resource Issues that out to be addressed during and after COVID-19 Pandemic.....</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1 Integration of Climate Change and Environment in Budgets, Plans and Programme .....	2
2.2 Implementation of the Green Growth Development Strategy.....	3
2.3 Prioritisation of Environmental Management in the post COVID-19 Interventions to Enhance Community Resilience .....	4
2.4 Involvement of Women in Decision-making in Environment and Natural Resources Management.....	4
<b>3. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>6</b>

# Acknowledgements

The Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) is grateful to Care International in Uganda for supporting the implementation of the Strengthening Resilience and Promoting Inclusive Governance (STRENPO) programme for which this policy brief is one of the outputs. The policy brief was prepared with funding from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) from which ACODE implements the Enhancing Climate Resilience in Vulnerable Communities and Inclusion of Women and Youth in the Governance of Uganda's Natural Assets (ERIWY) project.

ACODE further appreciates the continued partnership with the Climate Change Department (Ministry of Water and Environment) and the National Planning Authority (NPA) with whom we have collaborated to promote the integration of climate change resilience interventions in the national budget and district development plans. The authors of this policy brief wish to acknowledge the efforts of the ACODE Executive Director, Dr. Arthur Bainomugisha for the overall supervision of the process that resulted into this publication. We are also grateful to the ACODE review team that provided input into the publication of this policy brief namely: Dr. Susan Kavuma, Prof. Winistons Muhwezi, Ms Barbara Ntambirweki, Mr. Keith Kisaame and Mr. John Okiira.

Any errors or omissions in this briefing paper are the responsibility of the authors.

# List of Acronyms

ACODE	Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease-19
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
ENRs	Environment and Natural Resources
ERIWY	Enhancing Climate Resilience in Vulnerable Communities and Inclusion of Women and Youth
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LGP	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
NDP	National Development Plan
NPA	National Planning Authority
MWE	Ministry of Water and Environment
STRENPO	Strengthening Resilience and Promoting Inclusive Governance

# 1. Introduction

The environment sustains life and its sustainable management should be a concern of all nations. Uganda's Environment and Natural Resources (ENRs) play a vital role in the sustainable development of the country. They not only provides water for both domestic use and for industrial production, but also energy for the majority of the population, raw materials for the industries and employment opportunities. The environment and natural resources also support food security and are sources of livelihood for many communities. However, the sector is faced with challenges that inhibit it from effectively contributing to this sustainable development and enhance community resilience to climate change shocks.

According to the 2019 Water and Environment Sector Performance Report; Uganda has lost a large stock of its natural resources. For instance, the forest cover reduced from 24% in 1990 to 12.4% in 2015, implying an average annual loss of natural forest of 2% per annum. In 1994, wetland coverage on the surface area of Uganda was 15.6%; however, over time this had been gradually reducing and is currently at 8.9%. The 2019 sector performance report further observes that inadequate financing to the sector remains a major challenge and affects the fulfillment of core functions. As a result, the targets under the Strategic Sector Investment Plan (2018-2030) including the second National Development Plan are yet to be achieved.

Climate change shocks are already impacting all parts of the country. The shocks include the landslides in Bududa and Bundibugyo, floods in Kasese and the rising water levels of Lake Victoria that have left many communities devastated and vulnerable to hunger and disease. Besides, the locust infestation in Northern Uganda and the COVID-19 pandemic have rendered the country to face a crisis within a crisis. The country has also experienced frequent and prolonged droughts; reduced erratic and unpredictable rainfall which is affecting agriculture production and food security. Other climate change effects include; displacements of persons and destruction of properties and infrastructure. These disasters have negatively impacted women and other vulnerable groups. The destruction and degradation of the environment and natural resources like forests and wetlands has also greatly contributed to the climate change crisis. The climate change impact assessment report by the Ministry of Water and Environment estimated that damages due to climate change in the agriculture, water, infrastructure and energy sectors will collectively amount to 2-4% of GDP between 2010 and 2050.

The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated nations leaving many people dead and others vulnerable to hunger and poverty. Many people - especially those employed in the informal sector - have lost their jobs and livelihoods. Most of them have resorted

to natural resources-based activities for survival. Uganda has largely been able to sustain supply of food because the agriculture sector remained operational during the lockdown and there were no adverse climate change shocks that affected the supply of food. Therefore, the pandemic has demonstrated Uganda's reliance on natural resources and the need to keep its natural resource and environment base productive and manage it sustainably both during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is against this background therefore, that this policy brief argues for the conservation of the environment during and after the COVID-19 pandemic while at the same time enhancing community resilience to climate change shocks. The brief proposes recommendations that need to be addressed by the Government of Uganda and all stakeholders in this sector in order to achieve sustainable development.

## **2. Key Environmental and Natural Resource Issues that out to be addressed during and after COVID-19 Pandemic**

### **2.1 Integration of Climate Change and Environment in Budgets, Plans and Programmes**

In its Third National Development Plan (NDP III), the Government of Uganda acknowledges that climate change poses one of the greatest challenges for the realization of its Vision 2040 and associated objectives. Although some sectors have registered great strides in integrating climate change at planning level as emphasized by the planning and budget call circulars and sector planning guidelines, the lack of integration of climate change at budgeting and implementation levels is still evident.

Therefore;

- The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should - through the NPA - ensure that environment and climate change issues are integrated in national and district development plans, national programs, projects and budgets.
- The Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development should expedite the development and operationalization of the Climate Change Budget Tagging tool to support the mainstreaming of climate change in public financial management. The tool will help to identify, track and analyze climate-relevant

public expenditures including facilitating consistent reporting by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to inform budget planning.

- The Public Finance Management Act should be amended to provide for a certificate of climate change compliance to ensure that climate change activities are defined and allocated funds in all Ministries, Departments and Agency budgets.

## **2.2 Implementation of the Green Growth Development Strategy**

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) defines a green economy as ‘one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. It is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive.’ Green economies are widely perceived as a pathway to sustainable development. Uganda developed and adopted a Green Growth Development Strategy (2017/18 – 2029/30) intended to operationalize the broad green growth principles highlighted in the Uganda Vision 2040 and the NDP to support Uganda’s accelerated transition to a middle-income status. It has been observed that if the identified green growth interventions were fully implemented, they could provide a boost to economic activity, worth around 10% of GDP by 2040, deliver employment of up to 4 million jobs and reduce future greenhouse gas emissions by 28%.

A study by ACODE on Greening Uganda’s Economy as the Sustainable Pathway to Middle Income Status 2018 observed that Uganda’s transition to a green economy is largely limited by low funding for research and development, inadequate financial resources and low capacity to mobilise these resources, low access to green technologies coupled with the low levels of its adoption and underdevelopment of modern agriculture techniques. The study also highlighted the low prioritisation and funding to key strategic sectors such as agriculture, water and environment, waste management and social development that accelerate Uganda’s transition to green growth. The inadequate appreciation of green growth by policy makers and the general public is also a major drawback to the strategy’s implementation. In this case therefore:

- The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should increase public expenditure for green growth initiatives to promote increased supply and access to renewable clean energy sources that will reduce the emission of greenhouse gases—such as carbon dioxide, methane, ozone, nitrous oxide and chlorofluorocarbons;

- The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should scale-up fiscal incentives that promote investment in green growth initiatives such as the recently waived taxes on Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG).
- The Ministry of Education and Sports in collaboration with its counterparts of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Energy and Mineral Development and their development partners should put in place initiatives for skilling and training Ugandans in the use of new green technologies such as solar power, biogas, green insulation and the use of smart energy appliances, low-energy house and zero-energy building designs.

## **2.3 Prioritisation of Environmental Management in the post COVID-19 Interventions to Enhance Community Resilience**

In April 2020, President Yoweri Museveni directed the ministries of Water and Environment (MWE) and that of Local Government (MoLG) to fire all Gombolola (Sub-county) and Muluka (Parish) Chiefs who failed to stop encroachment on wetlands. In a letter to the MWE, the President explained that it would be suicidal for people to encroach on wetlands, steep mountain ridges, shorelines, and river banks especially in the wake of rising water levels that recently disrupted life on landing sites. In his subsequent national addresses to the public before and during the COVID-19 lockdown, President Yoweri Museveni emphasized ‘key’ sectors that support the economy and strengthen economic resilience. Whereas he greatly emphasized the role of agriculture, and manufacturing, he gave little emphasis to sustainable management of the environment and natural resources that provide raw materials, water for production and supports community livelihoods. It is therefore more likely that the ENR sector will during and after the COVID-19 pandemic continue to face marginalization in terms of resource allocation. It is therefore, important that the climate change, environment and natural resources sector be prioritized in the allocation of resources and programming during and post COVID-19 to fund monitoring of illegal natural resources exploitation and other priority issues.

## **2.4 Involvement of Women in Decision-making in Environment and Natural Resources Management**

Women play a critical role in the management of natural resources. Largely constrained by their socially constructed roles and responsibilities in society namely; their role as primary providers of food, water, and fuel for their families, many women remain highly vulnerable to the vagaries of climate change in many parts of Uganda. The majority of the women depend on agriculture yet they don’t participate in decision-making over natural resources like land. Women and girls have to walk far-off to find food, water

and firewood during droughts. They must also care for family members who are exposed to the health risks linked to climate change. This leaves them with less time for education, income-generating activities and participation in community decision-making processes, further contributing to unequal gender relations. Government should therefore:

- Increase effective participation of women in decision making over management of environment and natural resources by promoting their access, ownership and utilization of such resources; and;
- Provide more resources towards creating various incentives to enhance clean and renewable energy (clean cooking technologies) to reduce deforestation for wood fuel and charcoal. This would not only promote environmental conservation but also reduce vulnerability of women and girls to indoor pollution and abuse as they trek long distances to fetch firewood.

### **3. Conclusion**

As discussed above, the environment is at a risk of depletion and degradation during and after the pandemic. In order to conserve the environment and enhance community resilience during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, the government should deepen the integration of climate change and natural resources management in its budgets, plans and programs; provide adequate financial resources to the environment natural resources sector; support vulnerable communities to adapt to climate change and strengthen their resilience among other commitments. Government and other stakeholders should also ensure the sustainability of the ENR sector in its response to the COVID 19 pandemic.

## References

- Kaggwa, R., Namanya, B. (2018). Greening Uganda's Economy as the Sustainable Pathway to Middle Income Status, Kampala. ACODE Policy Research Series, No. 85.
- Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. (2016). Achieving Uganda's Development Ambition: The Economic Impact of Green Growth: An Agenda for Action; A Report by the Government of Uganda and the New Climate Economy Partnership, Kampala.
- Ministry of Water and Environment. (2019). Water and Environment Sector Performance Report, Kampala, Ministry of Water and Environment.
- Ministry of Water and Environment. (2015). Economic Assessment of the Impacts of Climate Change in Uganda, Kampala, Ministry of Water and Environment.
- National Planning Authority. (2015). Uganda National Development Plan II, Kampala, National Planning Authority.



## About the Authors

**Onesmus Mugenyi** is a Public Policy Analyst with ACODE. He has undertaken policy research and analysis in a number of areas. He has extensive knowledge of the working of national and international environmental policy and legal processes, adequate knowledge on the national development frameworks and rural poverty reduction strategies. Mugenyi holds a Master of Laws from Makerere University, Kampala. He is an advocate and the Deputy Executive Director of the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment.

**Dr. Anthony Mugeere** is a Research Fellow with ACODE and holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. He specializes in teaching, research, public policy and advocacy in climate change, vulnerability and health studies. He is also a trained journalist and was founding reporter and features writer on Education for the New Vision newspaper. Dr. Mugeere is also a lecturer at the Department of Sociology & Anthropology, Makerere University and has published articles in peer reviewed journals and contributed chapters in books. He has also held various academic placements in several universities in Africa, Europe and the United States.

**Anna Amumpiire Akandwanaho** is a Research Officer with ACODE. She is currently working under the Environment and Natural Resource Governance (ENRG) Programme. She has an LLM in Environmental Law and Policy from the University of Kent, Canterbury, United Kingdom, a Bachelor of Laws Degree (LLB) from Makerere University, a Post Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice from the Law Development Centre and is enrolled as an advocate of the courts of judicature in Uganda. Her interests are in environmental issues such as climate change adaptation and mitigation, environment and natural resources governance, environmental law and policy analysis.

ISBN: 978-9970-56-724-9



**Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment**

Plot 96, Kanjokya Street Kamwokya

P. O. Box 29836, Kampala UGANDA

Tel: +256 (0) 312812150

Email: [acode@acode-u.org](mailto:acode@acode-u.org)

Website: [www.acode-u.org](http://www.acode-u.org)