

The

WATERFRONT

Newsletter

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Edition

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Rt. Hon. Justine Kasule Lumumba Opens UWEWK 2025 With a Call To Action on Water and Environment Management:



The Eighth Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK 2025) was officially opened on March 17, 2025, by the Rt. Hon. Justine Kasule Lumumba, Minister of General Duties in the Office of the Prime Minister representing Rt. Hon. Thomas Tayebwa-Deputy Speaker of Parliament. In her keynote address, she commended the Ministry of Water and Environment for consistently organizing this significant event for the past eight years, describing it as a “manifestation of consistency and accountability to the country and its stakeholders.”

She alluded to the critical role that water and environmental resources play in sustaining life, supporting economic development, and mitigating

climate change. She noted that while Uganda’s Constitution guarantees access to clean and safe water as a human right, the country still falls short in meeting this obligation. “Only 67% of the rural population and 73% of urban dwellers have access to safe water,” she said, emphasizing the need for stronger interventions.

Hon. Lumumba further highlighted the devastating impact of climate change, pointing out that recent prolonged droughts and heat waves have made water scarcity even more pronounced. She warned that continued environmental degradation caused by encroachment on wetlands, poor farming practices, and unplanned urbanization—could make sustainable socio-economic development a distant dream.

She observed that despite existing policies and strategies aimed at conserving natural resources, enforcement remains weak. “If there are gaps in our policies and laws, Cabinet and Parliament are ready to address them,” she assured. She also acknowledged the financial constraints within the water and environment sector, calling for innovative financing mechanisms, including carbon credits, to bridge the gap.

The Minister underscored the importance of partnerships and collaboration, stressing that the government alone cannot achieve sustainable water and environment management. She pledged the support of the Office of the Prime Minister in strengthening inter-agency coordination to ensure synergy in service delivery.

The theme of UWEWK 2025, “Water and Environment Resources for Enhanced Resilience and Improved Incomes and Livelihoods,” was particularly fitting, she said, as it aligns with the government’s priority

of poverty eradication and socio-economic transformation. She encouraged participants to deliberate on how best to manage water and environmental resources for inclusive growth, employment, and wealth creation.

As she concluded her address, Hon. Lumumba expressed deep appreciation for development partners, international organizations, NGOs, and community-based organizations that continue to support Uganda’s water and environment sector. She urged them to maintain their support as the country works towards achieving its national and international obligations, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement, and Africa’s Agenda 2063. “It is my honor and privilege to declare the Eighth Uganda Water and Environment Week 2025 officially open,” she announced, marking the beginning of a week of engaging discussions, knowledge sharing, and strategic planning for the future of Uganda’s water and environment sector.

Hon. Beatrice Anywar Calls for Practical Recommendations to Address Water and Environment Challenges:

UWEWK 2025: A Hub for Advocacy, Policy, and Knowledge Sharing:

UWEWK has become a flagship platform for advocacy, policy influence, and knowledge sharing, bringing together government leaders, cultural institutions, academia, and development partners. This year’s theme, “Water and Environment Resources for Enhanced Resilience and Improved Incomes and Livelihoods,” aims to generate practical solutions for Uganda’s environmental challenges.



Hon. Beatrice Atim Anywar the State Minister for Environment; addressing the congregation at UWEWK 2025

Uganda's Environmental Reality and Challenges:

Hon. Anywar highlighted pressing threats to Uganda's water and environment resources, including climate change, increasing unpredictability of rainfall patterns and extreme weather events, deforestation and wetland encroachment, which pose major threats to biodiversity and water sources, pollution from untreated waste and industrial discharge, and declining soil fertility that impacts food security and agricultural productivity. She warned that Uganda could face annual economic losses of USD 3.2 to 5.9 billion if urgent action is not taken. Key challenges faced by the Ministry include inadequate financing, operating at only 46% of its required budget, water catchment degradation raising the cost of water supply, weak enforcement of environmental policies and laws, and climate vulnerability due to reliance on rain-fed agriculture.

UWEWK as a Platform for Collective Action:

Hon. Anywar reaffirmed the government's commitment to environmental governance and called for innovative solutions to address these pressing issues. She acknowledged the critical role of development partners, NGOs, and regional organizations in supporting Uganda's water and environment initiatives, particularly through financial and technical contributions since 2018.

A Call to Action:

Hon. Anywar urged stakeholders to actively participate in discussions and contribute practical recommendations for policy improvement and resource management. She emphasized the government's commitment to implementing the outcomes of UWEWK 2025 to safeguard Uganda's environment for future generations.



Dr. Alfred Okot Okidi the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Water & Environment addresses delegates at the 8th UWEWK 2025

The Permanent Secretary Addresses the 8th UWEWK 2025:

Fostering Resilience through Water and Environment

The Permanent Secretary, on behalf of the Ministry of Water and Environment of the Republic of Uganda, welcomed everyone to the Eighth Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK 2025). The event was celebrated alongside three significant international sector days: International Day for Forests, World Water Day, and World Meteorological Day. This year's UWEWK theme was "Water and Environment Resources for Enhanced Resilience and Improved Incomes and Livelihoods."

The Permanent Secretary noted that since its inception in 2018, Uganda Water and Environment Week has served as a vital platform for dialogue, collaboration, and innovation in addressing water and environmental challenges. Over the past eight years, the event has continually evolved to improve its impact and reach. The Permanent Secretary highlighted the inspiring growth in interest and participation, with over 90 organizations now working with the Ministry to organize regional and national events, compared

to fewer than 10 organizations in 2018. This growth reflected the shared commitment to advancing sustainable water and environmental management in Uganda.

The Permanent Secretary expressed deepest gratitude to all partners and stakeholders for their unwavering support of UWEWK over the years, attributing the event's success to their tireless efforts. Special recognition was given to the Water Resources Institute Team, the driving force behind UWEWK, and the National and Regional Organizing Committees for their dedicated contributions. Appreciation was also extended to the Ministry's Regional Teams for mobilizing relevant stakeholders and ensuring robust participation in regional celebrations.

KEYNOTE: Integrating Technology to Combat Environmental Challenges:



Dr. Nagaraja Rao Harshadeep

During the 8th Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK) 2025, held at the Ministry of Water and Environment in Luzira, Dr. Nagaraja Rao Harshadeep, the Global Lead for Disruptive Technology and Lead Environmental Specialist at the World Bank, delivered an impactful keynote address advocating for the ongoing incorporation of technology to tackle environmental issues under the theme; Water and Environmental Resources for Enhanced Resilience and Improved Incomes and Livelihoods.

He pointed out several barriers to effective environmental stewardship, such as resource over-extraction, pollution, land degradation, poaching, insufficient investment, wetland loss, and climate change. Dr. Nagaraja emphasized that the world is grappling with a range of challenges, including urbanization, rising expectations, climate change, and the influence of disruptive technologies.

He noted that due to the interconnectedness of global communities, environmental issues tend to be similar across various regions, highlighting the urgent need for continuous efforts to protect water catchment areas and the environment at large.

According to Dr. Nagaraja, disruptive technologies hold the promise of revolutionizing development by enhancing data management and employing targeted technology to confront environmental challenges. He remarked that “the implementation of smart developments is vital for improving responses to climate change, which also affects water quality.”

These smart developments encompass areas such as water and natural resources, energy, food production, waste management, and transportation. Examples of disruptive technologies include online services, green energy innovations, broadband connectivity, and advanced data collection techniques such as sensors, bioacoustics, and drones for environmental monitoring.

Dr. Nagaraja further explained that by leveraging technology, it is essential to engage communities in monitoring various environmental aspects, including wetlands, forests, and water catchment areas. He also said utilizing technology enhances the precision of data collection related to environmental and water resources, which subsequently aids in formulating effective solutions to problems.

Artificial Intelligence a vital tool

Dr. Nagaraja highlights the significance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as an essential resource for tackling global issues, especially in identifying distinct environmental trends.

He emphasized the importance of promoting environmental conservation through several key strategies including strengthening institutions (office modernization, stakeholder participation, capacity development and training including distance learning, improved links

with academia, internships, visiting experts, professional networks/communities of practice; forums, competitions).

Strengthening policies (streamlining institutional design/policy/mandates, improving synergy, economic instruments, decentralization, open data/analytics); and Innovative Instruments (e.g. knowledge-driven facilitated diplomacy, policy instruments, incentive frameworks). He acknowledged the various challenges facing the environment but emphasized that proactive investments and operations are crucial for addressing these issues. He noted that it is essential to prepare strong climate-smart investments that consider technical, environmental, climate, social, economic, and institutional factors.

This includes enhancing current infrastructure and developing new projects within a systems framework. He said effective implementation, monitoring, and learning, supported by sufficient technical assistance, stakeholder ownership, and monitoring and evaluation, are vital for infrastructure planning and operational coordination across multiple sectors. Dr. Nagaraja also observes the need to enhance resilience and improve incomes and livelihoods.

He said this can be achieved through enhanced monitoring and the use of advanced data analytics, including Open Data, E-packaging knowledge competitions, decision support systems, dashboards, and General AI. He emphasized the importance of establishing community early alert systems within institutions to address emerging issues, as well as the necessity for strengthened stakeholder engagement and ongoing improvements in technical capacity.

Building Resilient Rural Communities: *Water, Sustainability, and Innovation*

Water is a fundamental resource that sustains agriculture, industry, and daily life in rural communities. In his keynote address, “Enhancing Resilience in Rural Areas: Sub-Saharan Africa and Ontario, Canada,” Dr. Leith Deacon, McCall MacBain Chair in Resilient Rural Communities and Associate Professor at the University of Guelph, highlighted the unique challenges rural areas face, including climate change, economic fluctuations, and infrastructure limitations.

Dr. Deacon drew comparisons between rural communities in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Uganda, and those in Canada. He emphasized the need to identify common challenges rather than focusing solely on differences. “When you talk about water and the environment, you find that Canada and Sub-Saharan Africa share many similarities,” he noted, citing issues such as drought, water stress, and market volatility, all of which significantly impact rural livelihoods. He stressed that rural resilience is about more than just survival. It’s about fostering self-sufficient communities that can withstand and adapt to external pressures. While Uganda faces challenges like unpredictable weather, limited resources, and economic instability, Ontario also contends with climate variability and economic shifts. Despite these differences, both regions have opportunities to enhance resilience through sustainable resource management, economic diversification, and community-driven development. “Climate change is one of the biggest threats to global resilience, and water is a critical factor in both regions,” Dr. Deacon said. Without reliable water sources, agricultural productivity declines, food security is threatened, and economic opportunities diminish.

Dr. Deacon outlined several solutions that have been effective in building resilience. In water management, rainwater harvesting and irrigation systems have improved agricultural productivity in both regions. Soil conservation efforts in Uganda, such as agroforestry and land conservation techniques, help prevent soil erosion, while in Canada, cover cropping enhances soil health. Energy resilience initiatives, such as solar-powered irrigation systems, reduce reliance on fossil fuels and lower production costs. Economic diversification allows smallholder farmers in Uganda to increase income through agro-processing, while farmers in Ontario boost profitability by creating value-added agricultural products like organic dairy.



Dr. Leith Deacon delivering a keynote speech.

Investments in infrastructure, including roads, e-commerce platforms, and microfinance programs, help farmers expand businesses and secure better income. Dr. Deacon emphasized that rural communities themselves are key to solving their challenges. “Rural communities are their best problem-solvers,” he stated, highlighting the importance of local knowledge and community-led initiatives in strengthening resilience. He pointed out a gap in environmental conservation support, noting that rural areas often lack the resources and education available to urban centers. He called on governments, NGOs, and partners to shift their focus toward community-driven models like cooperative farming to support environmental conservation.

Concluding his address, Dr. Deacon underscored the critical role of water and environmental resources in economic development. “These resources support agriculture, economic growth, and environmental health, key components of resilience,” he said. He stressed the need for sustainable strategies to protect and manage these resources for long-term development. By prioritizing water management, sustainable agriculture, and community-led solutions, rural communities in both Sub-Saharan Africa and Ontario can build greater resilience, ensuring their long-term stability and growth. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of land in biodiversity conservation and economic sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and tourism, all of which contribute significantly to the sustainability of rural.

Panel Session

Following the keynote presentation on “Water and Environmental Resources for Enhanced Resilience and Improved Incomes and Livelihoods,” which featured Dr. Nagaraja Rao Harsh, Global Lead Disruptive Technology at the World Bank, and Prof. Leith Deacon, Associate Professor of Rural Planning and Development at the University of Guelph, a series of key insights were shared by the panelists including; Hon. Herbert Ariko, Chair of the National Resources Committee in Parliament, emphasized the need to educate children about protecting water resources. He called for an increased budget for water and sanitation programs and proposed amending the National Water Act to ensure the equitable participation of women in water associations.

Effective collaboration between academia, civil society organizations (CSOs), and other stakeholders is crucial. Prof. Ariko suggested developing a defined strategy to bring these groups together, fostering a collaborative environment that drives innovative solutions. He also highlighted the importance of strategic partnerships between CSOs and businesses, citing successful initiatives focused on market research, product development, and procurement.

Mr. Tom Ssengalama, the UNDP Representative, underscored the importance of optimizing natural resources to improve livelihoods. He highlighted the UNDP’s efforts to restore catchment areas in around 24 districts and promote innovative financing initiatives, including biodiversity financing, to drive positive change in Uganda. To further these efforts,



Mr. Mukalazi Flynn Paul proposed that the government establishes a clear framework to enable businesses to operate sustainably while calling for investment in carbon trading- a critical move towards mitigation of climate risks. I will do the paper for free, Mukalazi proclaimed! This would help address climate change challenges and encourage responsible business practices.

Abass Mawanda, Mawanda, Acting Chief Corporate and Institutional Banking Officer at PostBank

Uganda Limited, also pointed out that growing businesses are increasingly concerned about climate change issues. He stressed the need for collective action to address these challenges and promote resilience. Further, Mr. Abaasi emphasized that financial inclusion is enabling farmers to adopt resilient farming practices and consolidate agricultural gains. He noted that farmers can now use small-scale irrigation schemes as collateral to access funding, allowing them to secure financing for essential agricultural inputs.

With this support, farmers can invest in fertilizers to enhance soil nutrients and improve crop yields, acquire high-quality seeds suited to withstand environmental factors, and purchase pesticides and herbicides to protect crops from pests and weeds, ultimately boosting productivity and resilience in the face of climate challenges.

Prof. Alex Ariho called for the need to align solutions towards issues affecting people including food insecurity, low incomes, and lack of jobs. He thus called for structuring water and environment resources to strategic areas including

market-driven investment, incentives, and benefits to allow more investments towards water and environmental resources and creative thinking calling for private sector attraction. Relatedly; he called for co-financing approaches encouraging basket pulling of funds through Public and private sector approach to funding.

Dr Patrick Moriarty, CEO of IRC and SWA Steering reinforced the former submission arguing how it is critical to observe access to safe drinking as a human right and therefore linking it to people's economic well-being.



Preserving Wetlands for a Sustainable Future:

Clergy calls for active conservation efforts



Rev. Father John Peter Musumba receiving a gift from Hon. Beatrice Atim Anywar, State Minister for the Environment.

Represented by Reverend Father John Peter Musumba, a member of the Diocesan Advisory Committee – Kampala Archdiocese, the Archbishop of Kampala Archdiocese, Most Rev. Paul Ssemwogerere, reiterated the urgent need for wetland conservation, emphasizing their critical role in environmental sustainability. He underscored that wetlands were essential ecosystems that enhanced environmental resilience, particularly within catchment areas.

Speaking on behalf of the Most Rev. Paul Ssemwogerere, Rev. Musumba reminded the public of their duty to uphold God's creation, stressing that the well-being of the environment directly impacted human health. "Our duty is to protect and nurture the environment, and as Pope Francis reminded us, the health of our surroundings is directly linked to our well-

being," he stated.

Wetlands play a crucial role in maintaining water quality by filtering pollutants before they reach lakes, rivers, and other water bodies. Scientists recognized wetlands as natural solutions to water pollution, as they absorbed contaminants, improving the quality of water from catchment areas. However, these vital ecosystems faced increasing threats from urbanization, agriculture, and deforestation.

To ensure the sustainability of wetlands, Rev. Musumba called for active conservation efforts, including tree planting around wetland areas and supporting local initiatives aimed at their protection. He emphasized that wetland preservation was integral to the broader effort of environmental stewardship, urging all stakeholders to take action.

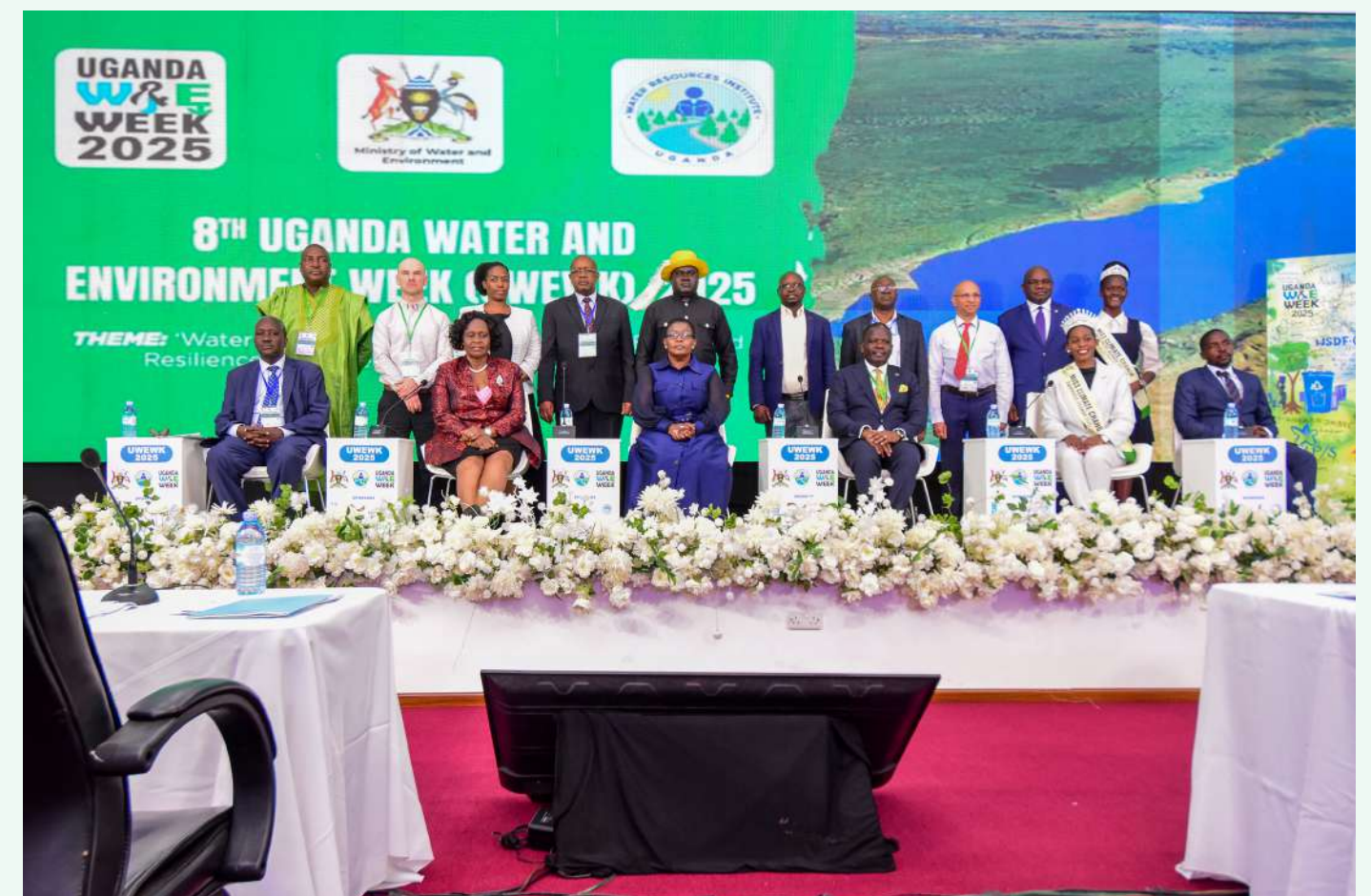
Drawing inspiration from Psalm 24:1, which states, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him," Rev. Musumba called upon communities, policymakers, and conservationists to work together to protect wetlands. He highlighted that maintaining clean water sources benefited all sectors of society, reinforcing the importance of collective responsibility in environmental conservation.

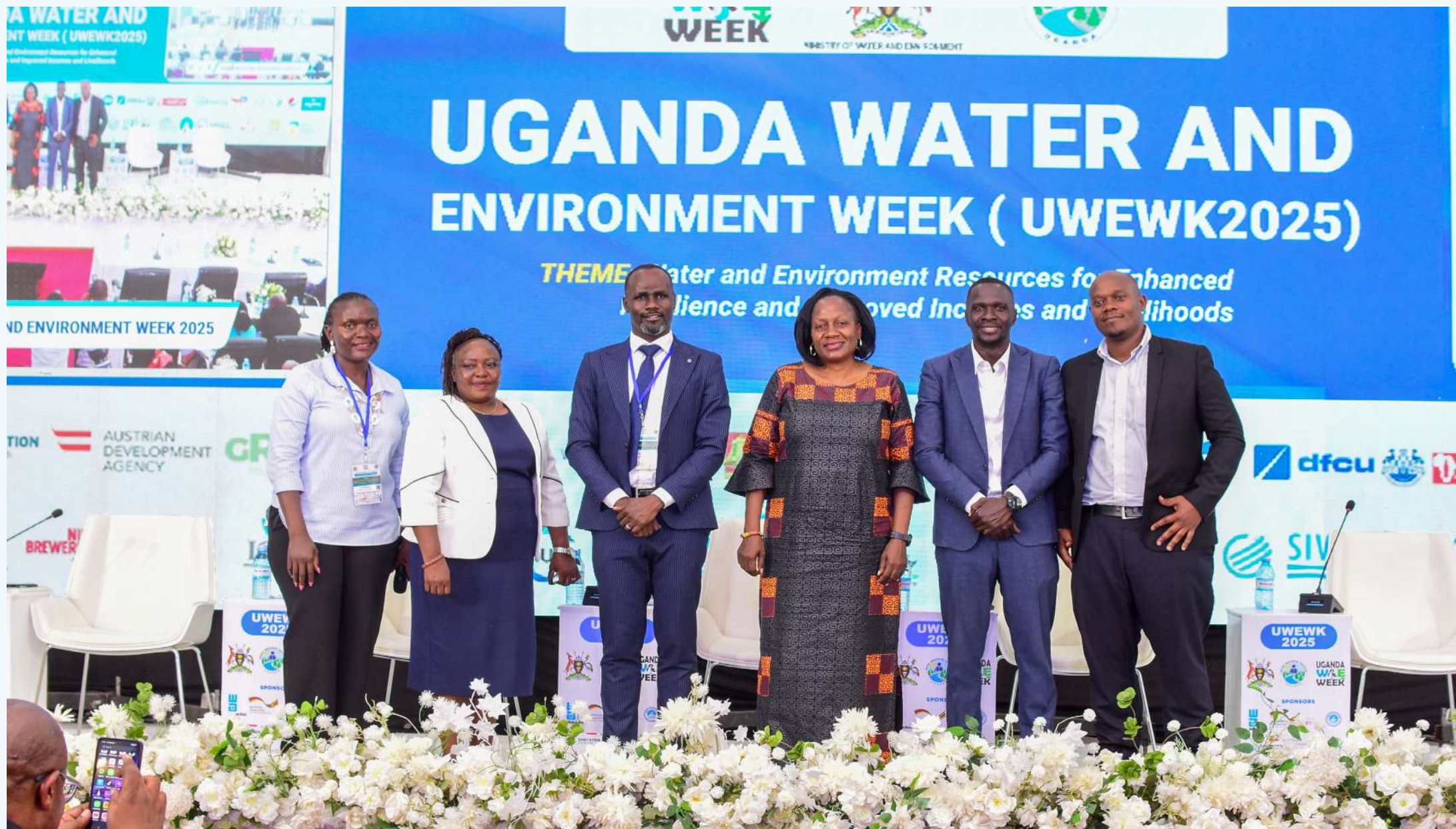
Augmenting, Rev. Musumba on the nexus between environment and human health, Mr. Lalit Patra - WASH Manager- UNICEF while representing Dr. Nandy Robin the representative from United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in Uganda said there is a need for deliberate effort towards child support. "This can be done through facilitating water protection and encourage all stakeholders to work towards devising means to conserve the environment, which has a positive effect on the quality of water", he noted!

Mr. Patra alluded that the government and all stakeholders should be deliberate in working together in a strengthened model to achieve quality water coupled with the conservation of the environment. He cautioned against practices that pollute the quality of water and urged all to embrace acceptable practices like; afforestation, and wetland reclamation among others.



Mr. Lalit Patra delivering his remarks during the 8th UWEWK 2025





Panelists of the Karamoja - Mbale Feedback Session pose for a group photo

Panelists Offer Insightful Feedback on Regional UWEWK Events, and Discussions:

In a recent series of UWEWK events held across four major regions—Albertine, Eastern, Northern, and Western—numerous panelists offered valuable insights that underscored the distinct challenges and outcomes associated with these gatherings. Their expert evaluations not only assessed the success of the initiatives but also initiated crucial discussions aimed at enhancing conservation efforts.

The activities included clean-up campaigns, marathons,

debates in universities and secondary schools, radio talk shows, and tree planting, all designed to raise public awareness about the significance of water and environmental conservation.

Northern Region:

As part of the Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK) 2025 pre-events held in Northern Uganda from March 10th to 14th, 2025, various activities were conducted to raise awareness and engage communities

in water resource protection and environmental conservation. One of the key initiatives was a series of radio talk shows aimed at educating the public on water source protection, with a particular focus on safeguarding the Oitino River. These discussions provided communities with valuable insights on sustainable water management and the importance of preserving natural water sources.

Additionally, school awareness campaigns were conducted to promote tree growing using drip irrigation, an approach designed to sustain tree planting efforts during the dry season. This initiative aimed to encourage climate-resilient agricultural practices among students and their communities. To further enhance knowledge sharing, youth debates were organized in primary schools, secondary schools, and universities. These debates created a platform for young people to discuss ecosystem conservation, climate change, and sustainable resource management, empowering them to become advocates for environmental protection.

Community engagement sessions were also held, focusing on the right to a healthy environment. These discussions urged stakeholders to take responsibility for environmental protection by adopting sustainable practices and advocating for stronger environmental policies. Furthermore, the Takata solid waste transport system was introduced as a solution to waste collection and management challenges in urban areas. This system aims to improve solid waste disposal efficiency and promote cleaner urban environments.

The pre-events also featured exhibitions showcasing innovative approaches in water conservation, waste management, and sustainable agriculture. These exhibitions provided a platform for organizations and innovators to present new technologies and best practices that can be adopted to enhance environmental sustainability. Finally, a stakeholder dialogue was held to discuss practical strategies for engaging local leaders in enforcing environmental policies and restoring degraded ecosystems. This session emphasized the importance of collaboration between government authorities, civil society organizations, and communities in achieving long-term environmental conservation goals.

Panel Discussion:

Key Feedback and Recommendations:

Following these activities, a panel discussion was held to assess the outcomes and gather expert insights on improving water and environmental conservation efforts.

Dr. Rosemiita Birungi emphasized the need for practical action rather than mere discussions. She highlighted that biodiversity protection must be prioritized, with an integrated approach that combines ecosystem restoration and sustainable land-use practices. She called for greater involvement of local communities in conservation programs to ensure long-term impact. Denise Ayebare focused on the impact of youth debates in raising awareness about environmental conservation. She noted that debates in schools help improve communication and critical thinking among students, fostering a culture of environmental responsibility. She recommended that these debates be expanded to more institutions to build a generation that values and protects natural resources.

Dr. Irene Nansubuga stressed the importance of decentralization in water resource management, noting that local stakeholder involvement is critical for sustainable solutions. She advocated for enhanced community participation in decision-making to promote inclusive water governance. Additionally, she addressed the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in environmental conservation, stating that AI should complement human efforts rather than replace them.

She highlighted how AI-driven data analysis can support water management and conservation initiatives.

One of the central themes of the discussion was how to effectively engage local leaders in enforcing environmental regulations and restoring ecosystems. Panelists agreed that political leaders and local authorities play a key role in driving environmental policies and ensuring compliance. They recommended strengthening collaborations between government agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), and private sector actors to implement sustainable solutions for water and environmental challenges.

Karamoja Region
UWEWK 2025 Pre-Event Activities and Feedback

As part of the Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK) 2025 pre-events in Karamoja, a series of activities were conducted to raise awareness, promote community engagement, and enhance environmental sustainability efforts. The region hosted a sanitation walk, aimed at mobilizing communities to embrace proper sanitation and hygiene practices. Additionally, water infrastructure inspections were carried out to assess the functionality and sustainability of existing water facilities, ensuring they effectively serve the communities.

The event also featured visits to six irrigation schemes, providing an opportunity for stakeholders to evaluate their effectiveness in supporting climate-smart agriculture and water resource management. In a significant step towards sustainability, a water system was officially handed over to district officials, reinforcing local ownership and long-term management of water resources.

To engage young people, an inter-secondary school debate was organized, fostering knowledge exchange on climate resilience, water conservation, and sanitation challenges in Karamoja. Furthermore, a Menstrual Health Run 2025 – 1st Edition was launched to raise awareness about menstrual health and hygiene, advocating for better access to sanitary facilities and education for young girls.

The Karamoja Water and Environment Week Football Gala was another highlight, bringing together eight schools to compete while promoting environmental awareness and teamwork. Alongside the football matches, a blood donation drive was successfully conducted with support from the Uganda Red Cross Society, encouraging community participation in lifesaving initiatives. The event concluded with the awarding of outstanding participants who demonstrated exceptional commitment to environmental conservation and community engagement.

Panel Discussion and Feedback

There was limited feedback from the region, with many participants highlighting the need for continued involvement in regional UWEWK celebrations. A key concern raised was that many water projects in the region face delays at the feasibility study stage, hindering timely implementation. Additionally, financing regional celebrations was noted to be increasingly difficult, raising concerns about sustainability and future engagements.

ED UWASNET expressed appreciation for the event, stating, “I am really happy and proud throughout this whole week for the success of this event. We have over 200 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), but in Karamoja, we have only 44, and in the Eastern Region, we have 23. We have established coordination mechanisms, with Save the Children leading efforts in Karamoja. Moving forward, we need to better understand who is doing what in the community to enhance collaboration and impact.”

Mr. Simon Odong (UNHCR) emphasized the urgent need to address water-related conflicts, recalling that in 2020, 10 people lost their lives due to water-related disputes. He highlighted the importance of joint projects as a strategic approach to mitigating water shortages and conflicts, while also noting that expanding access to water infrastructure remains a challenge due to funding limitations. Additionally, he stressed the need to promote smart agriculture practices to improve food security in the region.



Panel of the Western Feedback Session

Nekesa Jacinta from the CSO coordination team underscored the importance of stronger collaboration with local communities. She stated that over 150 CSOs are currently involved in organizing activities, but more needs to be done to ensure meaningful community participation. She also introduced the “Roots” campaign (Running Out of Trees), urging every Ugandan to plant at least one tree as a commitment to environmental restoration. She emphasized that spreading this initiative across communities would contribute significantly to climate change mitigation and ecosystem restoration.

South Western Region
Community Engagement in Ecosystem Restoration

During the Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK) 2025 pre-events in Southwestern Uganda, discussions focused on how to effectively involve local communities in ecosystem restoration efforts following the activities undertaken during ahead of UWEWK 2025 including community engagement with focus on solid waste and fecal waste management along river Rwizi, radio talk shows, press conferences to amplify ecosystem restoration awareness campaign.

The session brought together key stakeholders who emphasized the role of local leadership, community participation, and innovative approaches to environmental sustainability.

Pamela Katooro, a representative from the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, stressed that local leaders should take the lead in championing



community engagement. She highlighted the need for initiatives such as cleaning drainage channels and promoting proper waste disposal as critical steps toward ecosystem restoration. Additionally, she urged policymakers to establish sustainable and inclusive laws that encourage active participation from all community members. She also pointed out the economic opportunities in waste management, calling on stakeholders to leverage emerging entrepreneurship in this sector to enhance environmental conservation in Southwestern Uganda.

Dr. Charles Nuwagaba from Makerere University proposed a practical approach to curbing water pollution by deploying students to identify polluters and ensure those responsible for environmental degradation are held accountable. He also commended ongoing research efforts in water hyacinth management, particularly its conversion into manure and fertilizers, which has proven to be an effective method for addressing water pollution. He noted that universities in Mbarara are taking this case study seriously, contributing to sustainable solutions for invasive species management.

Gloria Namakula, a representative from the She Leads Consortium, expressed her appreciation for the inclusivity highlighted during the discussions. She noted that the active involvement of girls and young people in decision-making processes is a significant step toward ensuring sustainable environmental interventions. She also welcomed the water hyacinth innovation, emphasizing that it provides an opportunity for young people to engage in meaningful work through labor-intensive activities like manure and fertilizer production. However, she called upon all stakeholders to ensure adequate financing is available to support youth-led initiatives, particularly at the research and project implementation levels.

The discussions in Southwestern Uganda underscored the importance of local leadership, youth involvement, and innovative approaches in ecosystem restoration. Stakeholders agreed that by harnessing entrepreneurship, enforcing environmental accountability, and investing in research, sustainable ecosystem restoration can be achieved and sustained in the region.



Panalist of the Walk for Water, Environment and Climate Change pose for a group photo

Albertine region:

The Water and Environment Week in the Albertine region, held under the theme “Water and Climate Change Action,” took place across seven districts and Fort Portal City from March 1, 2025. Eng. Jacob Musinguzi, representing the Ministry of Water and Environment, shared that the event focused on raising awareness about water resources, environmental sustainability, and economic growth. Key activities included a cleanup in Fort Portal City in collaboration with Toro Kingdom, the Uganda Peoples Defense Forces, and the Uganda Police Force, a walk in Bulisa, and the distribution of 25 beehives in Kamwenge for income generation. There were also football matches, dialogues, and environmental exhibitions. Notably, hydrological meteorological stations were set up along the Mpanga River in Kitagwenda and in Kazo. These initiatives aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 6 and 13, reaching an estimated 7 million people through radio talk shows. Musinguzi emphasized the importance of political support, increased funding for research and innovation, and the promotion of sustainable livelihoods.

Reacting to the presentation, Mr. Moses Engaru, the Country Director for IUCN, emphasized the importance of partnerships to drive necessary actions. He urged that young people should take the initiative in proposing reviews that support environmental restoration. Eng. Diana Keesiga from Water for People noted that the introduction of hydraulic monitoring systems allows for more precise targeting of interventions, highlighting the need for innovative water solutions and the active involvement of youth in leadership roles. Dr. Albert Byamugisha from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Secretariat pointed out the

necessity for increased efforts to meet SDG indicators by ensuring the inclusion of all stakeholders. Eng. Wilberforce Kimezere, a representative from UNICEF, stressed the importance of data collection to accurately establish specific SDG indicators by the year 2030.

Return from the walk: After returning from the walk, a video showcasing the run was presented during the feedback session. Among the key recommendations discussed, it was emphasized that urban authorities must provide adequate waste disposal facilities and establish a dedicated fund to address climate-related loss and damage. Additionally, there is a strong need for sanitary facilities and an increase in government budget allocations for the water and environment sectors.

It was also suggested that the government should subsidize the costs of renewable energy to encourage wider adoption. During the feedback session, the moderator raised concerns about water access and the need for commercialization solutions. Patrick Allan from UP Energy explained the concept of carbon credits, suggesting that if carbon credits could be used to prevent emissions from entering local communities, individuals could actively participate in trading these credits.

Mr. Sam Mutono, a retired water expert, emphasized the importance of finding more resources for the country and highlighted that the Ministry of Health is still waiting for cabinet approval to make National Cleaning Days mandatory. It was also noted that all local government activities and projects must incorporate climate change considerations, and there is a need to think outside the box in implementing these projects to secure the required resources.

MWE Hosts Retired Professionals:

The Ministry of Water and Environment hosted retired water and environment sector professionals in what was dubbed “Meet and Greet session”. The session was chaired by Mr. Francis Xavier Kizito, Deputy Coordinator of the Water Resources Institute, and expertly moderated by Dr. Callist Tindimugaya, Acting Director of the Directorate of Water Resources Management (DWRM). Dr. Tindimugaya opened the event with a warm welcome, emphasizing the importance of fostering idea exchange and networking among professionals in the water and environment sector.

He offered a brief overview of the ongoing Water and Environment Week, providing insights into upcoming presentations, regional events, and community-driven recommendations. Dr. Tindimugaya highlighted the significance of the Meet and Greet session, which was first introduced in 2022, as a valuable platform for collaboration between experienced professionals and emerging talent. He assured attendees that retired professionals would also be given the opportunity to share their wealth of experience, underscoring the sector’s commitment to a sustainable, inclusive, and knowledge-sharing environment.

In his address, Mr. Kizito focused on the critical role of retired professionals in strengthening Uganda’s water and environment sector. He expressed gratitude to Dr. Tindimugaya for the opportunity to speak and emphasized that retired professionals are essential for retaining sector capacity and operationalizing key programs.

He also outlined how these professionals contribute to various thematic areas, including applied training, research, policy dialogue, and short-term technical support. He shared that a database of 50 retired professionals had been established in 2022, fostering a network for knowledge exchange and collaborative efforts in the sector. Retired professionals are also poised to play a significant role in applied training by supporting the redesign of graduate programs, offering guest lectures, and mentoring young professionals. Additionally, they will engage in applied research in areas such as water resources management, pollution control, and low-cost solutions for sustainable water use, and they will contribute to policy development by helping to draft, review, and advocate for sector strategies, he mentioned.

The interactive discussions that followed were marked by rich exchanges of ideas from the retired professionals igniting networking building. Although no formal questions were posed, one key topic of conversation centered around the importance of documenting the contributions of water and environment professionals, especially from Uganda’s colonial era. The idea of a Water and Environment Museum was raised as a future initiative where retired professionals could contribute their legacies to the sector’s history.

The session concluded with several recommendations. The proposed Water and Environment Museum will serve as a platform for retired professionals to document their contributions and preserve the sector’s history. Expanding the engagement of retired professionals was also emphasized as crucial for strengthening the sector’s capacity and ensuring the transfer of knowledge to future generations. Additionally, the need to expand the database of retired professionals was highlighted, ensuring continued sustainability and capacity-building. Finally, active promotion of the program to attract more retired professionals to contribute their expertise was seen as essential for the success of this initiative in the long term.



The Role of Art in Sustaining Ecosystems:

“Paintings for Water” by Visual Artist Tirusya Rolands



To increase public participation in environmental conservation, a 317km walk was conducted from Bulisa District to Kampala as part of the initiative United for Ecosystems – Paintings for Water. During this journey, five murals were painted in public spaces, schools, district headquarters, and factory walls, visually depicting key themes of Uganda Water Week. These murals carried strong messages on water conservation and environmental protection to raise awareness among the public.

The wall painting activity aimed to engage a wide range of participants, including stakeholders, road users, school children, college students, grassroots communities, local

authorities, and the general public. Through this interactive creative process, participants were encouraged to reflect on water and environmental challenges, find solutions, and appreciate their role in sustainability efforts.

Additionally, a curated thematic exhibition is ongoing, showcasing a collection of paintings created during the 14-day journey. This final exhibition, aligned with Uganda Water Week, highlights the stories, discussions, and key issues that emerged from the dialogues and interactions along the route.

Here are pictorial references from eight previous engagement and place-making events held along the walking route.



The Bishop of Kasana - Luwero Diocese, Right Reverend Lawrence Mukasa signing the Mural painting done by school children of St. Paul school Kasana with the artist



From classroom children amplifying their voices about water and environment.



The lead walker Geoffrey Ayeni signing the mural



The guest of honor signing the painting and pledging a commitment to continue conserving the environment



The Walkers arriving at the commemorative mural Kasana



Rolands Tirusya presenting about a creative methodology using Art - united for the Ecosystems.

Exhibition:

WASH Innovations Take Center Stage at the 8th UWEWK 2025

The 8th Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK) 2025 spotlighted a range of groundbreaking WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) technologies, bringing together civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector players, and government bodies to showcase solutions designed to improve access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene.

The exhibition featured innovative products and services aimed at tackling Uganda's most pressing WASH challenges, such as water safety, water scarcity, poor sanitation, and the lack of affordable hygiene solutions. From affordable water purification systems to low-cost sanitation technologies, the displayed innovations were designed to empower communities, especially women and children, with sustainable, life-changing solutions.

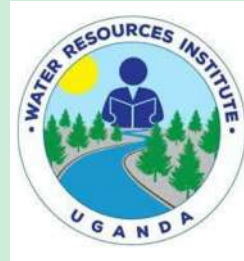


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