



REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

CELEBRATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY



NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY



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1. SETTING UP OF A COORDINATION COMMITTEE

In Uganda celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity 2010 began setting up a National Organizing Committee (NOC) comprising of various stakeholders from Government ministries, Government agencies, the private sector, NGOs and the media. The composition of NOC was done in line with the guidance given by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). NCC also involved schools and local governments during its grass root consultations. The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) coordinated the process on behalf of Government. The National Focal point for CBD in Uganda was assigned the task of providing technical guidance and relevant information to stakeholders during the meeting of the stakeholders.

2. ACTIVITIES LEADING TO IYB CELEBRATIONS IN UGANDA

In order to give the IYB more publicity, NCC discussed and agreed that IYB should be jointly celebrated with the World Environment Day on 5th June 2010. Accordingly a national theme that combined both the elements of the global themes for IYB and WED 2010 was also discussed and agreed up on as: **Biodiversity for National Prosperity. Conserve it.** The national theme was chosen to enable individuals, the public, Government and private sector to appreciate the importance of biodiversity in our fight against poverty and wealth creation, national development and the conservation of the environment.

In order to ensure proper coordination and flow of activities, a concept note for IYB was prepared by NEMA (annex 1). NOC discussed and adopted the concept note which gave details of the schedules of activities and responsibilities for implementation of these activities. The key activities that were conducted prior to the celebration were:

- a) Meetings of NOC to review progress of preparation were held. Four meetings were held between April–May 2010;
- b) Field work with the media for documentation on the biodiversity within the context of the national theme was carried out;
- c) Meetings with the district local government of Kanungu District where the IYB-WED celebrations were held;
- d) Fact sheets by stakeholders involved in biodiversity conservation and management was done;
- e) Radio messages on IYB-WED were prepared and aired on radio stations.

3. THE IYB CELEBRATION

The IYB-WED celebration in Uganda began with an address to the nation on the eve of the IYB-WED on national television by Hon. Maria Mutagamba, the Minister for Water and Environment on 4th June 2010 (details of the Statement in annex 2). The venue for the celebration was Kihhi High School in Kanungu District in western Uganda. Kanungu district is in the Albertine Rift which is a very rich biodiversity area in Uganda and hence the venue was found to fit with the national theme.

The celebration began with tree planting followed by inspection of exhibitions by the Chief of Honour, Hon. Jesca Eriyo Minister of State for Environment accompanied by the Minister of State for Water, Hon. Jennifer Namuyangu Byakatonda, Mr. Patrick Kahangire the Chairman NEMA Board of Directors, Dr. Aryamanya-Mugisha, Henry, the Executive Director NEMA, Mr. Herbert Zake, Head of Corporate Affairs who representative from Standard Chartered Bank (Uganda) and Kanungu district authorities. After the inspections, the National Anthem was song followed by a short prayer.

Speeches were made by the Executive Director NEMA (annex 3), the Chairman NEMA Board of Directors (annex 4), Representative of Standard Chartered Bank, Ms Josephine Kasya, the Local Council V Chairperson of Kanungu district, the Resident District Commissioner for Kanungu district and lastly by the Guest of Honour (annex 5).

Fact sheets (attached) that were prepared prior to the celebrations were distributed during the celebration. The exhibitions helped to demonstrate the importance of biodiversity and also fitted well with the national theme. School children presented songs on the importance of biodiversity. Drama groups presented short plays on biodiversity and why we should conserve it. Supplements for the celebrations were run in the print media by stakeholders involved in biodiversity conservation and management.

4. CONCLUSION

The celebration was very successful. Combining celebration of biodiversity day and WED was the first of its kind in Uganda and proved a big success as well. The approach was cost effective. More resources would have been spent if the IYB was celebrated separately on 22nd May 2010 and WED on 5th June 2010. Combing the two events and celebrating it on the same day made it possible for scare resources to be pooled together. The NOC was very instrumental for the success of the IYB-WED in Uganda.