

Uganda Wildlife Society Policy Dialogues 2012

Policy Brief Number 1, 2012



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This Policy Brief has been prepared with the financial assistance of IUCN NL, Wetlands International and Both ENDS, partners in the Ecosystem Alliance. The views expressed, the information and material presented and the geographical and geopolitical designations used in this Policy Brief do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IUCN NL, Wetlands International or Both ENDS or the institutions and organisations providing these three organisations with funds.

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December 2012

Conservation Policy and Practice Issues in Uganda

Setting the scene- the Albertine Rift, Uganda's most sensitive biodiversity area

Home to 39% of Africa's mammals, 51% birds, 19% amphibians, 14% plants and reptiles and 79 globally threatened terrestrial vertebrates (Mittermeier *et al.*, 2004 in Winterbottom and Eilu, 2006; AmanigaRuhanga and Manyindo, 2010); the Albertine Rift is an area of conservation importance in Uganda. Also, 68 Butterfly, 11 Amphibians, 13 reptiles, 36 birds and 23 Mammal species are endemic to the area (Davenport 2002 in Winterbottom and Eilu, 2006). But these high diversity of species in the Albertine Rift are being degraded and threatened among other factors by oil industry developments, lack of management technical now how, weaknesses in enforcement/compliance to conservation policies and, use/access competition/conflicts among resource users and managers (Kujirakwinja *et al.*, 2010).

Although the Albertine Rift is the most studied region with regard to conservation issues, the drivers of natural resource degradation and thus conservation policy and practice concerns in the region apply everywhere else in Uganda. Lack of management technical now how, weaknesses in enforcement/compliance to conservation policies and, use/access competition and conflicts among resource users and managers is for example as much a driver of natural resource degradation in the Albertine Rift as it is the problem elsewhere in Uganda.

Conservation Policy and Practice Issues Nationally

Uganda is known to have some of the best natural resource use and management policies (Uganda constitution 1995, amendment 2005 inclusive) that when effected could lead to sustainable developments and environment wellbeing. Even though that is true, many of Uganda's natural resource use/management and/or conservation underpinning policies and legal/regulatory frameworks remain unimplemented. Here we give selected situation review.

Whereas natural resources revenue sharing is provided for under Local Government Act Cap 287, currently, this provision is being implemented for Wildlife only. Wildlife Act 1996 section 58 mandates UWA to control vermin but this is not being implemented as yet. Section 26(1) of the same Act guides on how to deal with wildlife resource use/management offenders, making provisions among others for payment of fines, imprisonment and restitution or compensation but most of these provisions are currently being violated, for example cases of

poachers being killed have been reported. The Act also does not provide for compensation in case of crop raiding on-farm and even human life loss caused by stray wildlife/problem animals. The Community Conservation Policy 2004 Section 3.2 provides for human-wildlife conflict management but despite this, the Wildlife Act is yet to be revised to functionalise the provision. Also, Community Conservation Policy makes provision for regulated resource access from protected areas but currently, one of the major conflicts between UWA and communities adjacent to the parks stem from restricted and in other cases prohibited access to resources from the protected areas.

In the Forestry subsector, the guiding National Forestry and Tree planting Act 2003 requires that every forest reserve have a management plan revised after every five years, technical service be provided by government to private forest owners, a tree fund be established to support tree planting nationwide but none of these are being well implemented yet. For oil, the most recent discovered commercial natural resource, a policy is already in place (the National Oil and Gas Policy, 2008) and the regulatory frame work developed. However, these are not yet being complied with by oil companies and or investors.

For fisheries, the 2004 National Fisheries Policy mandates local government and local community institutions like Beach Management Units (BMUs) to control fisheries resources in their jurisdiction. These mandated institutions however lack the resources and technical expertise required to do the job and thus the Fisheries Policy remain largely not adhered to. Also, the land Act Cap 227 provides for appropriate compensation for loss of land to developments including those furthered by the Government however even though this is being implemented; the compensation rates remain low and not timely. Related to land use, under the Cattle Grazing Act of 1945, the powers of declaration vested upon the minister has largely limited the applicability of the act in areas where it would otherwise help resource managers secure sustainable land use practices.

And in general, many of the current policies are sector specific and this limits realization of holistic sustainable development. The need for government and all stakeholders (civil society, academia, private sector, the general public and others) to engage in reviews to help come up with harmonized cross sectoral policies and legal frameworks necessary for sustainable natural resource use and management is thus evident.

Addressing the Gaps, Conservation Policy and Practice in Uganda

Towards the need for multi-stakeholder engagement to find solutions to existing conservation policy and practice issues in Uganda, UWS in 2012 convened six policy dialogues. The dialogues brought together about one thousand stakeholders including, government, the academia, private sector, policy makers, local communities and the general public. The topics debated covered conservation practice and policy concerns for natural resources including wildlife, land, forests, biodiversity, water, oil and, resources use and management conflicts. In the sections following, this policy brief summarizes recommendations the dialogue participants gave as action points, the stated natural resource managers/duty bearers and users need take on.

Central Government

- Enforce policies and laws on sustainable natural resource use and management.
- Implement the 2010 physical planning Act to allow effective land use planning.
- Prioritise tourism instead of focusing on oil that will only last for 20-30 years.
- Create an independent ministry for biodiversity conservation.
- The government should lift the ban on eviction of people from protected areas; stop giving away forests to investors for other development.
- Construct a road in the boundary between Budongo Forest and Bugungu Wildlife Reserve so as to resolve conflicts between UWA and NFA.
- Land ministry enforce timely compensation for people's land taken for developments.
- Water and environment ministry should finance community tree planting initiatives provided for in the 2003 Tree planting Act.
- Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities Ministry should review the 2000 Wildlife Act to provide for compensation for life and property lost as a result of wild life attack.
- Fast track completion and implementation of Climate Change Policy and Strategies.

Local Government

- Formulate Bye-laws and ordinances provide for collaborative management, benefit sharing, and local community access to resources in protected areas.
- Zone grazing and farm lands in Bunyoro and Teso region where conflicts exists intra and inter communities (cattle keepers and crop farmers) and,
- Enforce cattle grazing Act (in particular control stock density and movement).

Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA)

- Provide funds for public participation in wildlife resources management.
- Develop mechanisms for managing Human-Wildlife Conflicts.
- Disseminate publications/make them accessible to the academia and general public.
- Design and implement mechanism for public reporting of poachers.

National Forest Authority (NFA)

- Influence Carbon markets e.g. REDD, Payment for Ecosystems Services (PES) and the Sowlog Production Ground Scheme (SPGS) to consider farmers with small landholdings and, promote indigenous tree species.
- Ensure development of management plans for all central and local forest reserves, wildlife reserves and national Parks.
- Promote indigenous tree species instead of exotics like pines and eucalyptus.
- Disseminate their publications and or make them easily accessible to the academia and general public.
- Implement collaborative forest management with adjacent communities so that they realise benefits from participating in the resource conservation.

National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)

- Sensitize local communities about the values, ecology and behaviour of wildlife and dangers of living adjacent to protected areas.
- Disseminate publications and or make them easily accessible to the academia and general public.

Private sector (mining companies, investors and developers)

- Abide by set environmental standards.
- Have clear strategies for addressing oil spills and related accidents.
- Implement corporate social responsibility and support community based tourism initiatives.
- Involve local communities in decisions making regarding corporate social responsibility and in monitoring oil companies' adherence to set environmental standards.
- Provide opportunities and benefits from the oil industry to local communities.

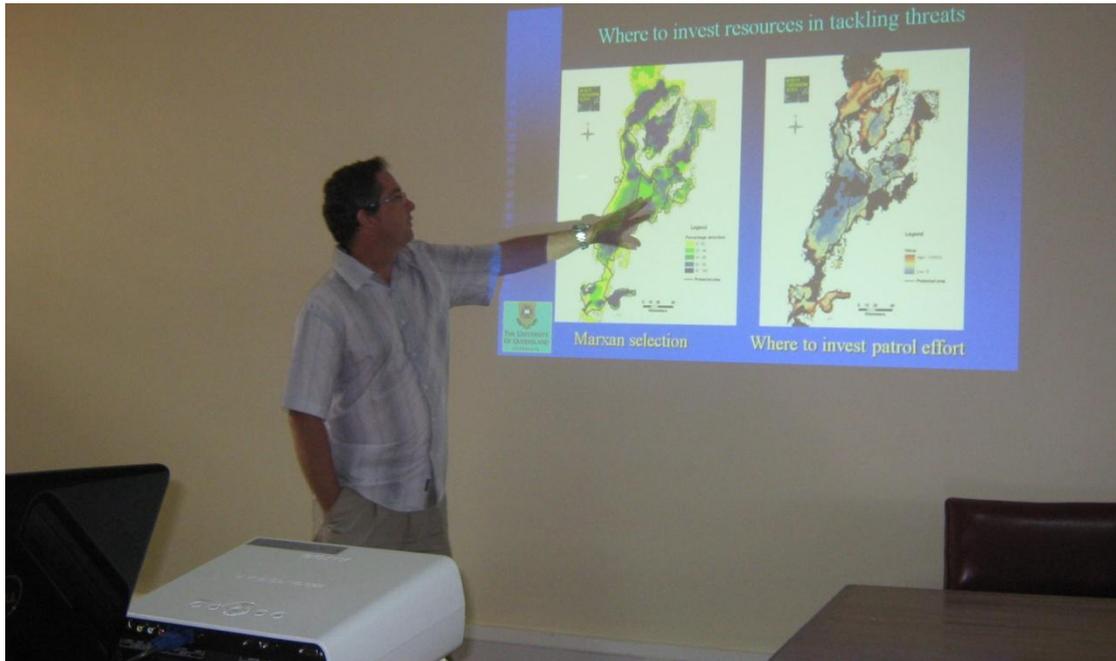
Local communities

- Diversify sources of livelihoods in addition to agriculture, to be able to tap into emerging opportunities from industrial developments.
- Adhere to resource use and management MOUs signed amongst themselves and between them and the resource managers (e.g. UWA, NFA, BMUs).
- Adopt and use sustainable natural resource use and management methods.

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Uganda Wildlife Society 2012 Dialogues - Photographs



Dr. Andrew Plumptre, presenting his research findings on key areas where government and development partners need invest resources in order to tackle threats to biodiversity conservation in the Albertine Rift Region. This was during September 28 2012 UWS Public Dialogue. The Dialogue theme was **Natural Resources use and management in the Albertine Rift Region, What are the pertinent Policy issues now?** The event took place at Makerere University's New Library Extension.



Honourable Mukitaale Biraahwa Adyeri, submitting his view on the need to construct a road between Bugungu Wildlife Reserve and Budongo Forest so as to minimise management conflicts existing between UWA and NFA. This was during September 28 2012 UWS Public Dialogue. The Dialogue theme was **BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN UGANDA, What are the challenges and the opportunities?** The event took place at Makerere University's New Library Extension.



Dr. Makombo John of Uganda Wildlife Authority giving his presentation during the October 31 2012 UWS Public Dialogue. The Dialogue theme was **BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN UGANDA, What are the challenges and the opportunities?** The event took place at Makerere University's School of Forestry.



Dr. Batungi presenting land related and other environment challenges affecting oil and other developments in the Albertine Rift. This was during September 28 2012 UWS Public Dialogue. The Dialogue theme was **Natural Resources use and management in the Albertine Rift Region, What are the pertinent Policy issues now?** The event took place at Makerere University's New Library Extension.



Communities living adjacent to Bugungu Wildlife Reserve in a consultative session with Uganda Wildlife Authority Community Conservation Warden. This was during a dialogue fora organised by the Uganda Wildlife Society in November 2012. The outcome of the interaction was a community – resource managers agreed upon draft MoU to be used as guidelines for access of resources from protected area by local communities.



Honourable Jacob Wangolo advising Buliisa Communities and Local Government Officials to take good care of their environment and guard against their culture erosion, threats that may come with oil developments in their District. This was during a policy dialogue convened by Uganda Wildlife Society in August 2012 in Buliisa.