

Uganda Wildlife Society Policy Dialogue, February 22 2013
How Best Can Uganda's Wildlife and, Communities Adjacent to Protected Areas Co-Exist in Harmony?

Dr. John Makombo, Director of Conservation at the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), the key speaker on the day's theme began his talk by giving a background on Wildlife Conservation legislation in Uganda establishing Game department in the 1920s, Gazetting of National Parks in the 1950s and, the Uganda Wildlife Authority in 1996, adding that the latter currently manages ten National Parks and twelve Wildlife Reserves. Dr. Makombo said Wildlife Protected Areas (PA) cover 11% of Uganda's total area but UWA estates hold only about 50% of the country's Wildlife and these include four RAMSAR sites, three Man and Biosphere reserves and one site in provisional world heritage list. Uganda is a convergence zone for five of Africa's important Ecological Zones, the country is also home to 53% of the World's Mountain Gorillas (with Bwindi alone being home to 400 individuals), 10% of the World's and within Africa 50% and in East Africa 72% of Birdlife is found here he said. Dr. Makombo further mentioned that 7% of Global and within Africa 39% of Mammal species diversity are found in Uganda, adding that the country is also home to 19% of Africa's Amphibians and 14% of her Reptile diversity.

Following the background, Dr. Makombo went on to highlight the importance of Wildlife to Uganda mentioning among others that Wildlife (Crested Crane and Uganda Kob) appear in the Country's Court of Arms. Adding that Uganda is the only country with substantial glacier held in mountains at the Equator. He said Wildlife contributes up to 9.2% of the Uganda's GDP, adding that the country's water resources support power generation, fisheries and even domestic water needs. The Pas support education, science and research (giving examples like Makerere University Biological Field Station in Kibaale and ITFC in Bwindi), protect against disasters like landslides, climate modification, soil erosion and are reservoirs for medicinal and food. The Pas also are important historical and cultural sites including for archeology, they support agriculture and help in vectors, pests and disease control. They are important for aesthetics and also provide employment Dr. Makombo said.

Dr. Makombo said the need for wildlife – human co-existence is important and arise among others from, the fact that there are more wildlife outside PAs than inside, the increasing population of Uganda which means more land resource need and thus the increasing encroachment in PAs, clearance of wildlife corridors and poaching by communities. These activities have consequently led to increased wildlife attack on communities and even diseases spread between wildlife and livestock Dr. Makombo said. These problems he further acknowledged underpin the need for management strategies to secure harmonious wildlife-human co-existence and to address this need UWA has come up with a number of strategies, he said. One of the strategies is collaborative management. The Authority deems collaborative management will yield protection for communities and wildlife outside PAs and, money for economic development (user rights – entailing sport hunting, farming, trade, and revenue sharing for examples). The Authority controls problem animals using a number of approaches for example, trenches, scare shooting, capture and translocation, vermin elimination, barriers and staff training Dr. Makombo said. Adding that, UWA additionally endeavors to employ local communities, implement livelihood projects at household level, promote ecotourism and is educating and raising awareness among communities so as to change their attitude change and inculcate in them tolerance and appreciation of wildlife.

Concluding his talk, Dr. Makombo recognized other players now helping UWA and the Government of Uganda to realize human-wildlife harmonious co-existence. He mentioned Local Governments, IGCP, CARE, WWF, WCS, FFI, CTPH, MGVP, UNESCO, AWF, IFAW, WB and, ERECP/EAC and the other players- private sector including hoteliers, lodge owners, tour operators and civil society like UWS, security agencies (UPDF, Policy and Interpol), LATF and the Judiciary.



Dr. John Makombo, Director of Conservation, Uganda Wildlife Authority giving his presentation at the Uganda Wildlife Society Public Policy Dialogue held on the 22nd of February 2013 at Hotel Africana. The theme of the dialogue was *‘how Best Can Uganda’s Wildlife and, Communities Adjacent to Protected Areas Co-Exist in Harmony?’*

Dr. Makombo’s presentation was followed by a documentary and summary presentation from Uganda Wildlife Society Experiences and lessons from working with communities adjacent to Lake Albert, Bugungu Wildlife Reserve and the Murchison Falls National Park in Buliisa District in the Albertine Rift – Oil Region. Summarizing experiences and lessons learned from working with PAS adjacent communities, Mr. Joel Buyinza the UWS Ecosystems Alliance Project Officer based in Buliisa mentioned that communities say they want to

1. Collect Grass for thatching houses and for making hey for the livestock
2. Collect Firewood for household fuel use
3. Access to Fishing grounds in Murchison Falls National Park
4. Harvest Papyrus for hand craft making from the wetlands in Bugungu Wildlife Reserve
5. Plant trees along buffer zones of Bugungu Wildlife Reserve
6. Keep Bees along the buffer zone of Bugungu Wildlife Reserve and,
7. Harvest building poles from the PAS

Joel said simple things like those will go long way into providing the incentives communities need in order to actively support and participate in PAs management. He went ahead and presented five resource (resources encompassing the listed above) access MOUs the communities drafted with facilitation from UWS using funds the Royal Dutch-Netherland Government gave the Society through, Ecosystems Alliance (Wetlands International, BothEnds and IUCN-NL). The Society is now in dialogue and is advocating with UWA to ascent to, sign and adopt these resource access MOUs, and implement them among its collaborative management strategies for engaging communities in PAS conservation.



Mr. Joel Buyinza, the UWS Buliisa Based Project Officer – Ecosystems Alliance presenting a summary- Uganda Wildlife Society Experiences and Lessons from Working with Communities adjacent to Lake Albert, Bugungu Wildlife Reserve and the Murchison Falls National Park in Buliisa District in the Albertine Rift – Oil Region. This was during the Uganda Wildlife Society Public Policy Dialogue themed *‘how Best Can Uganda’s Wildlife and, Communities Adjacent to Protected Areas Co-Exist in Harmony?’* Funded by the Royal Dutch Government through Ecosystems Alliance (Wetlands International, BothEnds and IUCN-NL), this dialogue took place at Hotel Africana on the 22nd of February 2013.

Discussing Dr. Makombo and Joel's presentation, the audience among others raised the need for

1. UWA and UWS to show how women and the youth are being involved and/or benefiting from initiatives being implemented to promote co-existence of wildlife and humans
2. UWA and UWS not to impose their own initiatives upon communities but rather engage the communities to come up with initiatives they think will help resolve the many issues hampering their co-existence with wildlife in harmony
3. UWA to share with communities 20% of total revenue and not just PAs' get collections
4. UWA to consider resettling the Batwa displaced from Bwindi National Park
5. UWA to come up with plan B for generating revenue to support conservation just in case instead of increasing, the number of tourists and income from Tourism in Uganda dwindles and revenue from oil is invested elsewhere other than in conservation
6. The Government to consider funding Wildlife Clubs in Uganda to inculcate conservation values and appreciation among the youth and the elites as well
7. UWA to come up with a strategy for compensating human life lost due to wildlife (such as Hippo's) attack other than hiding behind the definition of Wildlife



From the audience, a member raises his policy concern; the need for UWA and Uganda Government to design compensation strategy for human life lost due to wildlife (such as Hippo's) attack other than hiding behind the definition of Wildlife. This was in discussion-question answer session during the UWS Public Policy Dialogue in February 22, 2013 at Hotel Africana in Kampala. The dialogue theme was *'how Best Can Uganda's Wildlife and, Communities Adjacent to Protected Areas Co-Exist in Harmony'*? This dialogue was funded by the Royal Dutch Government through Ecosystems Alliance (Wetlands International, BothEnds and IUCN-NL).