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ENVIRONMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE  
(Efd-Mak) Centre Uganda)



## REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF POLICY DIALOGUE HELD AT MPIGI DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT HEADQUARTERS ON 22ND NOVEMBER, 2022

### THEME:

Forestry and Biodiversity: Addressing Challenges of Forest degradation and Enhancing  
Environmental Management in Uganda.

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**Concept:** Prof. Edward Bbaale

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## Contents

Table of Contents.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Abbreviations.....	4
1.0 Introduction.....	5
1.1 Executive summary.....	5
1.2: Program.....	7
2.0: Opening Session .....	8
2.1: Opening Remarks LCV .....	8
2.2: Keynote Address by the Chief Administrative Officer .....	8
2.3: Background paper from Makerere University .....	16
3.0: Discussions .....	19
3.1: Panel discussions.....	19
3.1.1: Guiding questions for the panelists .....	20
3.1.2: Questions, Panelists and their responses .....	21
3.2: Plenary Discussions. ....	24
4.0: Closing session.....	26
4.1: Closing Remarks by the Resident District Commissioner .....	26
5.0 Attendance list.....	27

## Abbreviations

<b>CAO:</b>	The Chief Administrative Officer
<b>CBOs:</b>	Community Based Organizations
<b>CFM:</b>	Collaborative Forest Management (CFM)
<b>CFOs:</b>	Community Forests Owners
<b>CFRs:</b>	Central Forest Reserves
<b>DFS:</b>	The District Forestry Services
<b>DLG:</b>	District Local Government the private
<b>EfD-Mak:</b>	Environment for Development Initiative, Makerere University's
<b>LCV:</b>	Local Council V
<b>Mak:</b>	Makerere University
<b>MDAs:</b>	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
<b>MWE:</b>	Ministry of Water and Environment
<b>NFA:</b>	The National Forestry Authority
<b>NGOs:</b>	Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>PFOs:</b>	Private Forest Owners
<b>RDC:</b>	Resident District Commissioner
<b>THFs:</b>	Tropical High Forests
<b>UBOS:</b>	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
<b>UETCL:</b>	Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Limited
<b>UNRA:</b>	Uganda National Roads Authority
<b>UPDF:</b>	Uganda Peoples Defence Forces
<b>UWA:</b>	The Uganda Wildlife Authority
<b>WB:</b>	World Bank
<b>WWF:</b>	World Wide Fund

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Executive summary

From 1998–2003, the forestry sector underwent a number of reforms aimed at providing more efficient and effective forest administration, management and utilisation of Uganda's forest resources, through: The Forestry Policy (2001), The National Forestry Plan (2002), The National Forestry and Tree Planting Act (NFTPA (2003) and a new institutional framework for the management of forestry resources in the country.

The reforms resulted in the birth of institutions such as the National Forestry Authority (NFA), the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), the District Forestry Services (DFS), Private Forest Owners (PFOs), and community Forests Owners (CFOs). The reforms distributed responsibilities between the central government, Local Government agencies, the private sector, NGOs, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), and the local communities.

In Uganda, all forestry activities are guided by the National Forestry Policy 2001.

According to section 54 (1) a of the National Forestry Act, 2003, management of all Central Forest Reserves is the mandate of National Forestry Authority (NFA) whereas that of Local Forest Reserves is the direct responsibility of the district forest officer as specified under section 48 (3) e of National Forestry Act, 2003.

Despite these good intentions, the forest estate in Uganda has continued to shrink from 4.9 million hectares in 1990 to currently 2.3 million hectares, NFA (2015) a loss of over half of the forests in a span of 25 years. The reasons for this decline are mostly attributed to poor forest governance, and particularly problems with forest law enforcement and governance, and associated institutional issues.

It is against this background that Makerere University's Environment for Development Initiative (EfD-Mak) Centre organized a policy to interface with Mpigi Local Government officials and forestry stakeholders on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022. The university team was led by the Director represented by Dr. John Sseruyange.

The meeting brought together representatives of the district political and technical arms, civil society organizations, the private sector, elders and opinion leaders, farmers leaders under the theme, "Forestry and Biodiversity: Addressing Challenges of Forest degradation and Enhancing Environmental Management in Uganda".

The participants discussed the key governance issues in the forestry sector, how communities can be strengthened to participate in forest recovery programs and what best forest restoration mechanisms should be adopted to revert the forest destruction trends in Uganda. Overall, the people of Mpigi want the governance of national forest reserves decentralized and handed over to the district. They contended that NFA has failed in its mandate to protect the resources, most of them deleted. They also implored Makerere university to conduct research on the impact of centralizing national forests to provide evidence for policy change.

Governance here referred to, "the norms, institutions, and processes that determine how power and responsibilities over forests are exercised, how decisions are taken and how citizens –

including women, men, youth, indigenous people and local communities – secure access to, participate in, and are impacted by the management of forests”

This report is a presentation of the discussions recorded during the meeting that will inform our next course of action in interacting with other stakeholders and influencing policy.

I invite all of you to read and get the insights of the people of Mpigi about the management of their forest.

I thank you.

**Prof. Edward Bbaale,  
Director**

## 1.2: Program

The policy dialogue started with a prayer and anthems as shown below in the agenda

### Policy Dialogue with Mpigi DLG 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2022

Start	End	Activity	Facilitator/ Participants
9:00am	9:30am	Arrival, Registration	Project Staff (Hilda and Jane, Senior Env't Officer)
9:30am	9:35am	Anthems Prayer	DNRO
9:35am	9:40am	Self-Introduction (DNRO)	DNRO
9:40am	9:45am	Welcome Remarks	Chairperson LCV Mpigi District
9:45am	10:00am	Communication from the Chair	CAO, Mpigi District
10:00am	10:20am	Background Paper Presentation	Dr. John Sseruyange
10:20am	10:30am	Brief Reaction to Presentations	All
10:30am	11:00am	Tea Break	All
11:00am	12:00pm	Panel Discussion	Moderator
12:10pm	1:00pm	Plenary Discussion	All
1:00pm	1:05pm	Closing remarks	RDC, Mpigi District
1:05pm	1:10pm	Group Photo	All
1:10pm	2:00pm	Lunch and Departure	All

## **2.0: Opening Session**

### **2.1: Opening Remarks LCV**

Representing the Chairperson Local Council V, Sharif Nalule welcomed all in this initiative and appreciated the university team for bringing the discussion to Mpigi district. She conveyed apologies from the district Chairman who was supposed to be there saying, he was engaged in other official duties but was aware of the activity and wished participants a wonderful workshop. She declared the meeting officially opened.

### **2.2: Keynote Address by the Chief Administrative Officer**

The Chief Administrative Officer(CAO) Kanyarutokye Moses was represented by the District Natural Resources officer Anthony Mwidyeki who read the speech for CAO. Mwanje presented the key note address on the Status of forests in Mpigi district.



The District Natural Resources Officer Anthony Mwidyeki

### **Introduction:**

Mpigi district located in central region has 21 Central Forest Reserves (CFRs) and a number Private forests covering over 15,000 hectares. These Central Forest Reserves in the district were divided into two sectors; Lwamunda sector and Mpanga sector. Mpanga sector comprises of 17 central forest reserves of Mpanga, Degeya, Lufuka, Kyansonzi, Kinyo, Naludugavu, Kavunda, Gangu, Kalandazi, Buwa Nakaga, Kabulego, Kabuye Lukolo and Luwafu, Wantangala and Navugulu. This gives a total of 4950 hectare (ha) distributed in four sub-counties of Mpigi town council, Kammengo sub-county, Buwama town council and Buwama sub-county whereas



Lwamunda sector comprises of 4 CFRs of Lwamunda, Buttobuvuma, Kattabalalu and Wantayi distributed in Muduuma and Kiringente sub counties. The Lwamunda Sector covers approximately 7,255 ha. These reserves are under the management of forest supervisors and supervised by sector managers from National Forestry Authority (NFA).

Ladies and Gentlemen, the management of forests in Mpigi has been so challenging and has on a number of occasions raised many issues involving NFA, the district and the community living adjacent to the forests. According to section 54 (1) a of the National Forestry Act, 2003, management of all Central Forest Reserves is the mandate of National Forestry Authority whereas that of Local Forest reserves is the direct responsibility of the district forest officer as specified under section 48 (3) e of National Forestry Act, 2003. All our forestry activities are guided by the National Forestry Policy 2001.

It should be noted however, that the once thick forests in Mpigi district which had a collection of Muvule, Setaala, Musizi and other indigenous tree species have and are still gradually being reduced to empty land or replaced with eucalyptus trees for many reasons. The natural forests that had survived for ages are now being abruptly ruined. This tragedy has befallen all the natural forests in Mpigi, a district once blessed with a wide range of biodiversity. Most natural forests in Muduuma and Kiringente have completely gone.

### **Challenges facing forestry in the district**

1. All the central forest reserves in Mpigi district with exception of Mpanga forest have been faced with the problem of encroachment in form of cultivation, grazing and settlement. Cultivation in these CFRs is mainly done by the collaborative forest management (CFM) groups which have failed to adhere to the set rules and guidelines of their agreements. Illegal grazing, sand mining, brick making and settlement are also common in some reserves but on a small scale.
2. In most of all the reserves, conflicts resulting from unclear boundaries are very common and these have sometimes resulted in court cases leading to loss of time and money. A case in point is in Luwafu, where a court case emanating from an illegal land title and another conflict caused by UPDF soldiers settling in the reserve to fight illegal fishing on Lake Victoria engaging in forest degradation for firewood.
3. The vegetation cover of most CFRs in Mpigi has been changed with time. In Mpanga CFR and some parts of Gangu, and Nakaga, we still have a tropical moist high forest cover. In Luwafu, Lukolo, Navugulu CFRs and Parts of Gangu the vegetation is just regenerating into a forest, in the rest of the reserves, vegetation cover was altered into eucalyptus plantations.
4. Unclear boundaries of CFRs because people have altered the boundary canes, uprooted the live markers and they are very bushy. This has increased forest encroachment in many areas in the district such as land grabbing and conflicts between NFA staffs and communities living adjacent to these forests.

5. Population pressure has increased the demand for fire wood, charcoal and land for settlement.
6. Creation of illegal land titles in these reserves, construction of roads and industrialization are other threats to the forest reserves in Mpigi district.

### **Opportunities for forestry in the district**

- Mpigi district has a number of stakeholders that include NGOs like MPIFA (Mpigi district farmers association) and several CBOs that have been essential in tree planting and management.
- A number of cooperate partners like Uganda Breweries Limited, Rotary Uganda, World Bank, UNRA, Bank of Baroda, UETCL, Serena Hotel, Nile Breweries Limited, World Wide Fund (WWF) And Standard Chartered Bank have been essential in restoring some of the CFRs in Mpanga sector where a total of 804 hectares of Gangu, Luwafu and Navugulu CFRs have been restored.
- Mpigi District has a number private tree planters and Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) groups distributed in the 21 CFRS.

### **Initiatives by the district to promote forestry**

1. Sensitization and training of communities in forestry management
2. Distribution of tree seedlings across the district
3. Establishment of the district nursery bed
4. Training and supervision of nursery owners on acquisition of quality tree seeds
5. Conducting routine inspections to detect and deter illegal forestry activities.



***Fig 1: Showing a section of the degraded kisitu forest***



*Fig 2: Showing stakeholders conducting a walk through the forest to assess damage caused*



*Fig 3: Showing Area Member of Parliament Hillary Kiyaga and other stakeholders getting briefed on extent of damage in the forest*





**Fig 4: Showing the Mpigi district, Kiringente Sub county Technical team, and Nama community inspecting the degraded Lwamunda CFR.**





**Fig 5: Showing the District Forest Officer presenting a session on sustainable forest management in Nama near Lwamunda CFR**



**Fig 6: Showing the NFA supervisors, Mpigi district technical Team, UPDF & Luwafu Community inspecting a damaged forest section**





**Fig 7: Showing bamboo seedlings at the District Nursery bed**



**Fig 8: Showing seedling verification at one of the nursery sites in Buwama**





**Fig 9: Showing an impounded truck during the routine inspections to deter illegal forest activities in the district.**

### 2.3: Background paper from Makerere University



Dr. John Sseruyange

Representing the Director EfD-Mak Centre, Research Fellow Dr. John Sseruyange presented a paper on the role played by forests in Uganda.

#### Overview

- As natural features in the landscape, ecosystems provide environmental, social and economic benefits to communities.
- Forests are ecosystems that represent almost 30% of terrestrial land cover worldwide (3, 999 million ha), containing 80% of all terrestrial biomass
- They provide extensive benefits from a variety of ecosystem services.

#### **Function as major stores of atmospheric carbon, contributing to the regulation of climate change.**

- Global forest resources with an average storage capacity of 73 tonnes per ha store approximately 292 billion tonnes of carbon
- The storage capacity of primary forests (24% of total) is in the order of 250 tonnes/ha, which is 82% of forest carbon worldwide

#### **They sequester atmospheric carbon.**

- Sequestration rate is estimated at 2.4 billion tonnes of carbon per year. This makes them extremely important natural ecosystems in terms of climate regulation
- **Forests regulate water quantity, mitigating the effects of high flows in wet periods and low flows in the dry periods.**
  - Increased infiltration regenerates local aquifers and surface streams are maintained providing water resources in drier periods.



- Through these processes water quality is increased as it moves through these systems
- **Forests contribute to soil and water protection and biodiversity conservation through:**
  - Soil stabilization including reduction of soil erosion, maintenance of soil organic matter, increasing water infiltration and storage.
  - Water supply protection through filtering water pollutants and regulating water yield and flow, enhancing precipitation and moderating floods, reducing surface erosion hence soil nutrient protection, protection against sedimentation and trapping of aerial pollutants.
  - Increased infiltration regenerates local aquifers and surface streams are maintained providing water resources in drier periods.
  - Through these processes water quality is increased as it moves through these systems

### **Role of Forests in Uganda**

- Sustainably managed forests give environmental benefits, sustainable economic development and improve the quality of life of people across the country.
- Forests provide habitats for many native flora and fauna species, renewable products and energy and contribute to the development of a green economy.
- Forests also provide a wide range of wood and non-wood products, clean water resources, and play a vital role in the mitigation of climate change.
- Forests supply well over 90% of Uganda's energy requirements in the form of fuelwood.
- Firewood and charcoal are important sources of energy not only to households (both rural and urban), but also for a majority of institutions and commercial establishments
- UBOS (2008) estimated that the total annual consumption of firewood was about 20 million tonnes (32.8 million cubic meters) of woody biomass.
- Although government and CSOs are promoting energy efficient technologies, such interventions are still insignificant, and hence have not had much effect on reducing the trend of consumption of wood based energy.

### **Governance and Forestry Sector Reforms in Uganda**

- The Uganda forestry sector reforms (1998 – 2003) aimed at providing more efficient and effective forest administration, management and utilisation of Uganda's forest resources, through:
  - The Forestry Policy (2001),
  - The National Forestry Plan (2002),
  - The NFTP (2003) and
  - A new institutional framework for the management of forestry resources in the country.
- It resulted in the birth of institutions such as:
  - The NFA, the UWA, the DFS, private forest owners (PFOs), and community forests owners (CFOs).

- Likewise, the reforms distributed responsibilities between the central government, LG agencies, the private sector, NGOs, community based organisations (CBOs), and the local communities.
- The reforms aimed at promoting multi-stakeholder participation and promote transparency, integrity and professionalism in management of the forestry sector.
- Despite these good intentions, the forest estate in Uganda has continued to shrink from 4.9 million hectares in 1990 to currently 2.3 million hectares, NFA (2015) a loss of over half of the forests in a span of 25 years.
- The reasons for this decline are mostly attributed to poor forest governance, and particularly problems with forest law enforcement and governance, and associated institutional issues.

### **Forestry and Forest Cover Changes in Uganda**

- According to the MWE report of 2015, forest estate has shrunk from 24% of the total land area in 1990 to 9% in 2015.
- Out of this loss, about 2.2 million hectares were from the woodlands. It's also true that the forest estate outside PAs reduced from 68% of the total forest land area in 1990 to 61% in 2005 and down to 38% in 2015.
- This means that almost half of the unprotected forests have been cleared in just 25 years.
- It is true that in a span of 25 years, Uganda has lost forests on 37% of the total land area despite the encouraging tree planting efforts by the both NFA and the private sector between 2005 and 2015.
- The biggest loss of forest cover is from the privately owned category where 88% of well stocked Tropical High Forests (THFs), 80% of degraded THFs and 79% of woodlands were lost between 1990 and 2015.
- Protected forests fared a bit better with only 2% of well stocked THFs lost over the same period and a growth of 20% in previously degraded THFs.
- However, over this period, 46% of protected woodlands- mostly those under NFA, were lost.
- Degradation - decline in quality and loss of natural biodiversity. There is increasing land degradation (loss of fertility and declining agricultural productivity); land, water and air pollution, landslides
- The rate of extraction (demand) increasingly exceeds the rate of replenishment (supply)

### **Major Drivers of Forest Cover Loss in Uganda**

- The main causes of deforestation have been mostly the conversion of forest land to other land use types such as agriculture and urbanization, and rampant felling of trees for firewood and charcoal burning.
- The other important ones are issues relating to governance in the forestry sector, issues associated with illegal and unregulated trade of forest products and the unsecured forest tenure rights.

#### **Governance crisis:**

- Poor governance has been blamed for the depletion of the ecosystem
- Governance here can be defined as “the norms, institutions, and processes that determine how power and responsibilities over forests are exercised, how decisions are taken and how citizens – including women, men, youth, indigenous people and local communities – secure access to, participate in, and are impacted by the management of forests”

#### **Policy Questions for Discussion**

- What are the key governance issues in the forestry sector?
- How can communities be strengthened to participate in forest recovery programmes in Uganda?
- What best forest restoration mechanisms should be adopted to revert the forest destruction trends?

### **3.0: Discussions**

#### **3.1: Panel discussions**



A panel of four comprising Mr. Frank Kawooya - a journalist by profession, businessman and also a politician, Nsamba Benon from Buwama Subcounty, Ssereko Micheal District Forestry Officer and Onyango Oluoch the district Senior Entomologist stepped forward to deliberate on a number of questions moderated by EfD-Mak Data Manager Fred Kasalirwe. Specific questions were also directed to different group representatives of teachers, farmers, NGOs, CSO etc

### 3.1.1: Guiding questions for the panelists

1. Uganda is blessed with a number of natural and commercial/artificial forests, however, majority of them have either been mismanaged, poorly governed or over-exploited. What could be the factors responsible for the observed governance and management patterns of forests in Uganda or even Mpigi as a District?
2. The government in collaboration with parliament and other stakeholders have come up with a number of legislations to govern the utilization of natural resources specifically forests in Uganda. In your own view, what could be the strength and weaknesses of the existing legal framework on forests utilization?
3. How can the institutional, legal and policy framework concerning the governance of Forestry be configured to stem the known cause-and-effect relationship between rural poverty and environmental degradation?
4. Who is responsible for Forests in Uganda (The Role of NFA and UWA) – the overlapping roles of UWA and NFA in the management of forests.
5. What is the definition of a forest? Central forest reserves are full of Pines and Eucalyptus trees – are these forest trees? Do they conserve the ecosystem? -
6. Effective and efficient governance of forests and other natural resources requires participation, cooperation and coordination of all stakeholders including the residents, local governments, CSOs and various MDAs. Is this being followed in Uganda? And what can be done to bring all the stakeholders on board?
7. We observe a number of environmentally unfriendly activities going on countrywide, including tree cutting for charcoal and firewood, Reclamation of swamps and wetlands for factory construction and roads, and other environmental atrocities. What has Mpigi as a local government where some of these atrocities on the environment take place, done to revert the situation?
8. Is the local community empowered to fight these environmentally unjust acts that take place in their areas?
- a) In a number of countries, government's use of coercive legislations to govern natural resources including forests has failed to achieve the desired results. What different approaches can be adopted in Uganda to ensure sustainable governance of natural resources?
  - a) How can these resources be used to improve the livelihoods of the people in the neighborhood and the country at large, for example what can the community do to earn a living but at the same time conserving the environment?

### 3.1.2: Questions, Panelists and their responses

Question	Panelists	Response
Uganda is blessed with a number of natural and commercial/artificial forests, however, majority of them have either been mismanaged, poorly governed or over-exploited. What could be the factors responsible for the observed governance and management patterns of forests in Uganda or even Mpigi as a District? – .....	<b>Senior District Entomologist</b> <b>Onyango Oluoch</b>	The forest sector is the least funded. Officers vehicles get stuck with no fuel. The moral fabric of the people of Mpigi is filled with, I don't care attitude. NFA has been nicknamed as "nfa" meaning I am dying. NFA efforts are not coordinated with the district office. The District Natural resources officer should have been a member of NFA, there is a lot of political interference while implementing policies with orders from above",
The government in collaboration with parliament and other stakeholders have come up with a number of legislations to govern the utilization of natural resources specifically forests in Uganda. Do you think that the laws are active or they work for a few and cannot apply to others what is your take about the laws that govern our natural resources?	<b>Opinion leader</b> <b>Frank Kawooya</b>	Yes, the laws are weak and segregatively applied to a few. . Those who are supposed to manage forests cut the forests and replace them with eucalyptus. Now we see that forests have begun being shared. Am touched, in the past forestry students at Makerere would not be awarded degrees without coming to study in Lwamata forest . Today no child ever comes to study because forests are no more.
Who is responsible for Forests in Uganda (The Role of NFA and UWA) – the overlapping roles of UWA and NFA in the management of forests. ....	<b>District Forestry Officer</b> <b>Micheal Ssengendo</b>	The major issue is governance. When you look back, the forests were intact and management was proper. All regulations were being followed. With the new changes in the policy of 2001 when they brought in NFA, that is where we all lost it because there was confusion and no coordination because of the bad governance.  The first thing we need to do is to revert back the old system. We need to have staff at every level. We need the forest guards, forest rangers but all

		these were reduced by two per district which is really over whelming when it gets to implementation of our forest management
Effective and efficient governance of forests and other natural resources requires participation, cooperation and coordination of all stakeholders including the residents, local governments, CSOs and various MDAs. Is this being followed in Uganda? And what can be done to bring all the stakeholders on board?	<b>Nsamba Benon, a Political leader</b>	<p>Districts had powers to safeguard forests but more damage has been done when powers were shifted from local government to central government.</p> <p>Ever since NEMA took over, there is a very big damage on our forests as compared to long ago. It is our mandate to protect the environment. The business of centralizing powers has done more harm than good to our country.</p> <p>It is possible to bring all stakeholders to board to protect the environment but it cannot be possible if people are seeing non-residents cutting away indigenous trees planting and owning eucalyptus trees. The biggest issue here is policy. It should be reversed and our Forest Officer takes charge”.</p>
Do you discriminate on who these laws apply to or it is cutting across board? How do you implement enforcement of our laws to make sure that they are effective and keeping our natural resources intact?	<b>Environmental Police Officer</b>	<p>those mandated to guard the forest are the ones that cut the trees. He is opposed to the idea of replacing natural forests by eucalyptus and enforcement is also problem.</p> <p>In 1924 we had an inventory for counting trees in Masaka. We counted trees about 2000. There is a forest called <i>Buzilango</i> but, of recent when went there, I found that there are people living there. It was no longer a forest for government. Forest guards are the ones who cut trees and sell to bakeries and schools. Eucalyptus is not good because they drain water at a high speed and, were introduced by industrialists who wanted to build industries.</p> <p>But we of enforcement have a problem. You go and see a person with a car</p>

		<p>carrying timber and there is no legal document showing. When you stop the car, you will hear the person referring you to talk to another person.</p> <p>Sometimes there is collaboration with NFA and timber dealers connected from above. I suggest the powers should be brought back, decentralize forest reserves so that districts own, oversee and manage the forests. We need to sensitize masses to look beyond financial gains but the future generation because in 50 years, we may not have any natural forest.</p>
Is the local community empowered to fight these environmentally unjust acts that take place in their areas?	<b>Representative of the NGO forum</b>	<p>Sensitization of the people on district and national forests is required. Different roles must be emphasized. Demarcations for individual, district and national forests must be emphasized. After sensitization they will know the species to plant. In Mpanga forest, those who came as workers are now titled owners of forest land. Get back to teach people, empower and facilitate them to protect the forests.</p>
What alternative livelihood activities would you give to farmers to avoid climate change but keep agriculture going on? ?	<b>Chairperson District farmers Stella Nantamba</b>	<p>Farmers are in weather crisis. Farmers rely on land. Soil is infertile, weather patterns have changed and many have resorted to forests and wetlands. Information given to farmers is distorted and weather changes are adverse Intervention requires adoption of agroforestry for environmental conservation and food security. Government has made so many promises but not implemented eg the campaign and commitment to plant 40 million trees per year. They have another commitment of 200 million seedlings planted every year. They have other campaigns and fully funded by donors and organizations and if I ask the Natural Resources Officer if he</p>

		knows about it and so we would ask for your help. Orders from above is also a big policy issue.
	<b>Teacher Emmanuel</b>	But for teacher Emmanuel, Education is key on impacting people to hold responsible officers accountable. We need to integrate conservation in the education curriculum. Charity begins at home and community. Sensitization from the community level will help children internalize the importance of forests. There is need for mindset change of those mandated to protect the environment so that children learn from them. Privatization of forests should be discouraged to save forests

### 3.2: Plenary Discussions.

Dr. Alice Turinawe poised a guiding question to participants.

#### **Question to all:**

I have listened and gotten educated from what you have said and what I think from everything, is that, there is a gap sometimes its lack of collaboration between the different powers. Sometimes there is no communication at all so different departments cannot help each other. My question to those of you who are in policy making positions and decision making positions do you think that if there was opportunity for district people with those people up there to actually sit on the table once in a while and talk honestly, do you think that would contribute solutions or we are faced with these predicaments and we cannot solve it? Given an opportunity, where you can sit with the top most management, would it be something that is helpful?

#### **Responses:**

All in all, respect but do you really respect what is mine? Respect only, talking does not refuse but if you give me that respect you will see me like a fool.

**Mwidyeki Anthony:** As a district, we have done a lot of talking, come up with good ideas but putting in action is the problem. Managers of forests, councilors who speak against degradation are the ones who deplete the forest. No one can come from far to destroy the forest unless there is collaboration with those in that community. It is a role of all of us, let us police our forests. Managers are selling shares and with guidelines, they are the ones selling timber and therefor people living near forests are also a problem.

We shall all agree or refuse to agree but the people who have destroyed our forests are within us. Many of us who are here, give very good ideas about how to manage forests but privately you find ways of approaching those who are managing those forests and ask if at all you can a



tree. What has to be done, is to find ways because protecting forests is the role of all of us. Let us all protect the forests. These very people you smile with are the very ones cutting trees down. However, we can all agree that its poverty but you have been given something to manage with guidelines but because you are very poor or you want to get more than others, you sell what is yours and you go on encouraging other people in the group to also sell.

**Bukenya Musa:** I really thank you for this wonderful sensitization. We are here working hard and talking more but the problem is to implement. The problem we have is NFA. NFA was given the job of keeping forests but it was given a business. NFA has not performed its mandate. Eucalyptus has become an issue and there is collaboration of businessmen with NFA. We must implement the laws. We are ready to go to the forest, cut down Eucalyptus and replant.

I am also going to add on that that we have learnt what we have learnt but the implementation is still missing. But as we are here we should identify all the forests that we have in Mpigi district after identifying them, we go on the ground and start to know what is the root cause of destroying forests and who are the people destroying forests because no one is above and we also approach those people and they tell us as to why there finishing up the forests.

I think its lack of seriousness that has led to loss of some things. Since I came here, I haven't heard anything new. Our problem is on policy makers. Since they forest are resources, they must be used but we should look for alternatives.

My point on forests is that NFA came to protect forests but me I can say that it came to finish up forests. This time if the order comes from above they cut down forests and they perish up after they plant Eucalyptus. There is a difference between Eucalyptus and cutting one tree and a forest is still there.

**Ssozi Ben.** Forests have become forests, forests have perished. We had a person called forest guard who used to play some big role but they put some other people like six of them from NFA Company who keep the forests but they are the ones who are destroying forests. What should we do? We should take back powers to the local council heads and also create an organization that controls forests like this organization should co-operate with the local council heads.

I would like to agree that we have very many policies in Uganda and the policies are not the problem but the implementation of policy and the people who would help us to enforce it are hand cuffed. Like Mr. Ben said that the NFA should be abolished, that cannot work at the local district government level.

**Hajji Zaake Faisal:** I think the word authority is being hidden from the word above because all the meetings that we have been to, connect forest problems to the word authority, if the authority goes to the person near the forest and he understands that the forest helps him as a person, he can protect it.

**Ahmed:** First of all, we have to know that the process of acquiring land titles, creating and destroying a forest all go through systems. Even destruction is systematically done. Destroyers get authority right from the district officials. The district forestry officers and land

officers have a relationship not seen. Departmental and sectoral boundaries are problematic. When resources come in terms of conditional grants, enforcement gets very little funding and this makes it difficult to implement. There is need to stress the linkage between land based sectors. In acquiring a land title one applies to the area land committee which recommends to the land board and they hold boardroom discussions without going for inspection in the field and sanctioned. Forest decisions are based on paper work not inspection. Most forests are not marked as CR. Systems are put in place to help but no one looks deep into them. We celebrate policies rather than implementation. All problems have causes but need a multisector approach in solving them.

We need to collaborate with tree planting organization and to encourage replanting. I also ask that we have a strong connection with all organizations for tree nurseries so that they can supply trees for planting. As Makerere joins us at the district, don't stop here, we need you to do more research, help us as a voice to reach those on top to ensure we protect the environment.

#### 4.0: Closing session

##### 4.1: Closing Remarks by the Resident District Commissioner



The Resident District Commissioner was represented by the deputy.

The Deputy Resident District Commissioner Maria Lubega described the dialogue as timely, thanked the university for choosing Mpigi, pledging the district commitment to support efforts geared towards restoring the environment.

Lubega wants an evidence based report on forest governance from Makerere university for presentation to the relevant government organs.

“Two weeks ago, the president sent someone from his office to come because he was interested in the environment restoration, and we are working on this report. When the report about this dialogue is ready share with us because it is timely, and I shall share with it directly with the president because NFA is just an authority and the other one is a fountain of honor so we shall take our views to the president”. She said.

The dialogue ended with a group photo and lunch

**5.0 Attendance list**