

FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR NEMA



National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)

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1. BACKGROUND

The perspectives of environment management

In practical terms, environment refers to the inter-relationships within nature and the interactions between human kind and nature. Environment has three aspects of:

- Existing surrounding (physical environment);
- Human actions which sum up socio-economic development activities; and
- Actions of nature like natural occurrences which are good when they ecological goods and services, and bad when they are

disastrous such as floods, storms, lightning, landslides, vectors/diseases and droughts that are triggered within nature;

Environment management, therefore, environment management is the systematic and effective regulation of human actions and interactions and their impacts on the environment. Environment management focuses on links between human social, cultural and economic systems, and the environment. Environment management is usually deigned to ensure environmental sustainability and human survival/livelihood.

The common environment management tools are:

- Environmental policies, laws, regulations, standards and guidelines;
- Environmental compliance monitoring;
- Enforcement;
- Education and awareness; and
- Technical interventions (project approach to environment management).

Environment management is usually affected by the following factors;

- Policy failures and gaps;
- Institutional limitations and failures
- The cross-sectoral nature of environment makes governance of environment complicated as no particular sector takes responsibilities to prioritize environment in the development process; and
- The mismatched ecological and administrative boundaries; environment has no administrative boundaries.

The Mandate of NEMA and Environment management in Uganda

The National Environment Act Cap.153 Section 5 empowers NEMA as the principal agency in Uganda for the management of the environment and shall coordinate, monitor and supervise all activities in the field of environment.

The three key elements in the legal mandate of NEMA are:

- Coordination;
- Monitoring; and
- Supervision

2. THE FIVE YEAR COMMITTEMENTS

In my five year terms of reference and commitments, while consolidating the achievements so far realized and recognizing the current challenges and emerging environmental issues, I commit myself and NEMA as an organization to re-focus the activities of NEMA to deliver on its mandate. The activities that NEMA has been implementing, and are outside its mandate, will be moved to the relevant Lead Agencies.

The following strategies will be prioritized in the next five years in order to effectively implement the mandate of NEMA;

a) Focus on the mandate of NEMA;

The focus on NEMA's mandate will be strategized as emphasized in the law as follows;

- (i) *Coordination*; this will be enhanced through;
 - Review of the National Environment Act to avoid the current duplication and conflicts of institutional roles, planning and activity implementation;

- Harmonization of policy implementation and enforcement strategies between NEMA and the Lead Agencies;
 - Effective coordination of all the key Lead Agencies (sectors, local governments, civil society and the private sector);
 - Strategic and focused public education and awareness program as a tool for environment management while taking into account the current challenges and the emerging environmental issues in Uganda; and
 - Transparency and information sharing among all the key stakeholders through a national think tank on environment and sustainable development.
- (ii) *Monitoring*; this is the checking for compliance of human activities and their interactions with the environment. This will be done through increased inspections and an efficient and effective Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) review process.
- The following strategies will be developed to ensure effective environmental compliance monitoring;
- Revision of the EIA process to provide for a fee on submission to facilitate the EIA review within Lead Agencies; increased support to Lead Agencies;
 - Reduction of EIA review process from 3 months to 45 days; and
 - Introduction of penalties for non compliance to EIA approval conditions and recommended mitigation measures.
- (iii) *Supervision*; this will be strengthened through;
- Regular and systematic performances of Lead Agencies;

- Introduction of a reward system for recognition of good conduct and performance; this could be further enhanced through the use of economic instruments.

b) Support functions within NEMA and to Lead Agencies;

The following support functions will be prioritized in order to enhance the performances of NEMA and the Lead Agencies;

- (i) Strong resource mobilization to complement the current support from Government of Uganda and development partners through;
 - Development of fundable project proposals and effective partnerships with development and environment management partners from the donor community, bilateral and multilateral agencies, civil society and the private sector;
 - Negotiation with Government of Uganda on retention of the pollution tax/fund (whole or percentage) as NEF for environmental restoration;
 - Strategic partnerships with the sectors and local governments to lobby and advocate for increased support for environment management in sectors and local governments;
 - Use of economic instruments such as bonds especially in oil/gas exploration and production to fund environment management activities;
 - Engagement in Corporate and Social Responsibilities, especially with the private sector and civil society; and
 - Strengthening internal accounting and monitoring systems to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability to clients and partners.

c) Taking advantage of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

MEAs will be domesticated as benefit to the people of Uganda through;

- Project investments (MEAs projects);
- Partnership for knowledge transfer; and
- Increased participation of Ugandans at Governmental, civil society, private sector, community and individual levels through local initiatives and agenda.

d) Promotion of value addition to natural resources in Uganda

Strategies will be developed through partnerships with the Lead Agencies, development partners, civil society, the private sector and the community to manage natural resources such as wetlands and forests as tourist centres to promote environmental conservation and socio-economic development.

e) Engaging dialogue with political, civil and legal fraternity in Uganda

NEMA will engage dialogue with top, central and local government leaderships through the cabinet, parliament and district councils to create strategic alliance for effective environment management in Uganda. This will be done through national and regional/district fora, a national think tank, negotiations and role sharing on environment and sustainable development.

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