

COUNTRY PROFILE FOR INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT IN UGANDA



National Environment Management Authority

1. Background

Over the last 15 years, Uganda has achieved spectacular economic growth, thanks to the introduction of an enabling macro-economic environment and political stability. However, this economic growth has only recently manifested itself due to the fact that tremendous damage was done in the 1970s and early 1980s. Many Ugandans are still confronted with poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy, and a continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which the country's largely rural population depends.

Aware of these paradoxes and contradictions inherent in the development process, the Government of Uganda has gone ahead to institute measures that can reverse the trends. This is more evident, especially in the legislative and institutional arrangement that were made between 1992 and 2002.

All these efforts and others; point to the government's appreciation to take a balanced and integrated approach to environment and development questions in the context of sustainable development. Within the framework of this report, sustainable development is seen to entail integration of economic, social and environmental objectives and the choice among them where it's possible.

On the other hand, the term environment in the context of the guidelines is viewed as a complex dynamic system with many interacting components. In order to successfully implement any strategy for the protection and management of the environment, the different components, their interactions and relationships need to be understood.

One of the means to develop this understanding is through State of the Environment Reports (SOERs). State of the environment reporting is a systematic acquisition, analysis and presentation of information on environmental conditions. SOERs are meant to provide baseline information especially in their first editions. SOERs should be both intellectually stimulating yet simple. Potential users include scientists, resource managers, politicians, policy and decision makers, community extension workers, NGOs and CBOs, the private sector and community groups. State of Environment Reporting is

a communication tool used to monitor and assess changes in the environment and provide information necessary to put in place “best practices” to manage the environment. SOE dates back to the late 1960’s and its origins are linked to the introduction in 1969 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in the United States. The 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm put SOE reporting on the international agenda.

2. Rationale for State of the Environment Reporting in Uganda

The National Environment Act, Cap 153, 1995 in Uganda requires that the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) produces National State of Environment Reports biannually. The same law requires the Districts produce their District State of Environment reports annually. These reports can be used to measure government’s or local governments commitment to sustainability. Policy analysis from these reports can be used to promote environmental accountability, reflecting broad consensus on major environmental problems.

The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) has the mandate to coordinate, supervise and monitor all matters on the environment in Uganda. To support this mandate, one of the functions of NEMA is to generate information and disseminate it to create awareness and guide planning for sustainable use of natural resources. Among the key issues NEMA has been involved in the production of the National State of Environment report and aiding districts to produce their District State of Environment reports.

2.0 Status of environmental reporting in Uganda

After the 1992 Earth Summit, Uganda committed itself on the principles of sustainable development. By 1994, the National Environment Action Plan was in place which saw the development of the National Environment Management Policy 1994. One of the tasks spelt out in the Policy was to provide for an effective management system to facilitate the collection, storage, analysis and dissemination of environment information among others. The National Environment Management Policy, 1994 enabled the

formulation of the National Environment Act, 1995. In Section 7, subsection 1 of the Act, one of the functions of the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) is to prepare and disseminate a National State of Environment report once in every two years. Districts are also mandated under this same law to produce District state of Environment reports (DSOERs) annually. Uganda has had five editions of the National State of Environment reports produced in 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000 and 2002. The 2004 report was delayed because of circumstances beyond NEMA's control but it will be launched soon.

The first DSOER's were prepared in 1997 when the country had 30 districts. This process suffered a set back because of various reasons being lack of technical staff at the districts to undertake this activity. However, with the formation of the District Environment office this activity has taken route. All the 56 districts produced their 2004 DSOERs with assistance from NEMA. Presently there are 71 districts hence more challenges on building capacity in environmental reporting.

The purpose of these reports at whatever level of management are:

- to inform the public about the state of the environment in the country including the importance of resources and their value to society;
- to indicate key trends and projections and opportunities for improvement;
- to provide an accurate and useful reference document for those interested in environmental and natural resource issue.

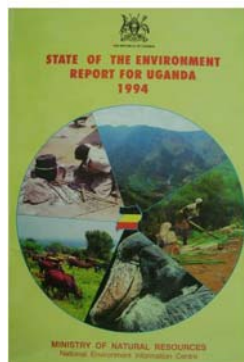
The reports so far developed have greatly supported the purpose and caused informed decisions and policies to be enacted. The 1994 National State of environment report was mainly taking stock of environmental goods and services of the country. This gave a baseline of the natural resources at that time. By 1996 a new constitution was in place and decentralization of environmental management was underway. The effects of a

growing and expanding economy were reflected in the 1996 report. Among the key environmental problems and the drivers listed were the degradation of fragile ecosystems such as wetlands, mountains, river banks and lake shores. This report also listed the drivers such as the land tenure and lack of a land use planning as some of the key issues contributing to environmental degradation. Beginning 1998, many of the problems predicted in the 1996 reports were manifested in disasters in mountainous areas, increased loss from soil erosion, conflicts in the wetlands and many others.

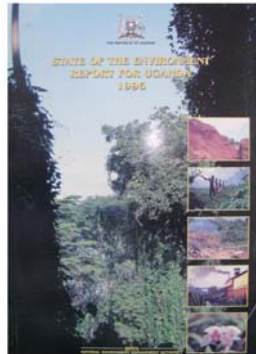
The 2000, 2002, 2004/05 and 2006/07 reports have been warning on the declining per capita arable land because of the increasing population. This calls for an urgent need to continuously review and refocus the country's development strategy so as to bring about the overall goal of sustainable development as is pursued by Government.

Environmental reporting requires learning both from individuals such as professionals and organizations. Individuals from different disciplines, organizations, or more broadly, different social interests, may also have different though equally legitimate views on the environment and the economy that they can bring into the reporting activity. The SOER reporting process should therefore encourage wide participation, and should seek an early commitment from others to help see the process through to the end.

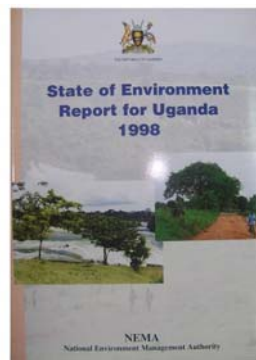
The 1st National State of Environment Report was published in 1994 and this report took stock of the environmental goods and services in the country.



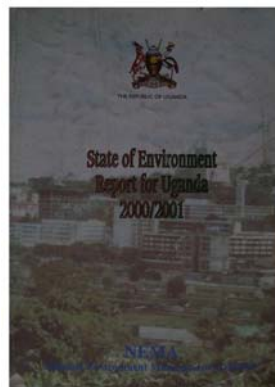
The 1996 report analyzed the effects of a growing economy with respect to decentralization and the 1995 National Constitution.



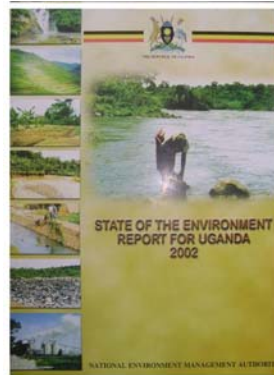
The 1998 report focused on the stresses on the natural and environmental resources in view of the rapid economic growth of the late 1990's.



The 2000/01 report addressed the implications of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan II (PEAP II) and Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) on the environment.



The 2002 report focused on the principles of sustainable development and the relationship between the environment and poverty. This edition discussed Uganda's future outlook through modeling and scenario building.



The 2004/05 report focuses on the drivers of environmental change, the ensuing pressures, the impacts caused and the responses adopted within an overall poverty-environment interlinkages framework.

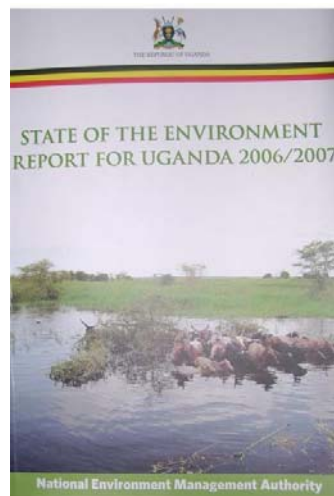


The National State of Environment Report also feeds into the IGAD Environment Outlook Report, Africa Environment Outlook (AEO) Report, and the Global Environment Outlook Report. NEMA coordinates the production of the IGAD Outlook Report and the AEO process in the East African sub region.

The seventh state of the environment report for Uganda was launched in November 2007. With the theme “managing emerging opportunities and threats from the environment”,

the report notes that many sectors that have shown some improvement in the past three years.

- Access to safe water supplies in rural areas has increased steadily from 57 per cent in 2004/2005 to 61 per cent in 2005/2006.
- Latrine coverage has also increased from 51 per cent in 2003/2004 to 58 per cent in 2005/6.



- The fisheries sector has also shown some remarkable growth. Fisheries activities provide an important source of livelihoods to many Ugandans and foreign exchange to the country.
- Between 2002 and 2006 Uganda's fisheries export increased by 82.5 per cent from US\$ 78.15 million to 142.69 million.
- Fish harvest increased from 249,000 metric tonnes in 2004 to 416,000 metric tonnes in 2005.
- 58 percent of Uganda's fish harvests come from Lake Victoria followed by 16 per cent from Lake Kyoga and 26 percent from the remaining lakes and rivers.
- In the 2004 it was reported that the wildlife numbers had increased hence the number of tourists' arrivals has also increased from 175,000 to 468,000 in 2005.

- The arrivals were mostly from Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda. Europe contributed 10 percent mostly from United Kingdom and Germany and a good number from USA. Tourism would increase if cultural sites are promoted.
- New opportunities and threats have emerged since the last State of the Environment Report published in 2005.
- The report notes that exploration and future production of oil, climate change and its impacts on communities and ecosystems are key opportunities that can be harnessed
- Uganda, like many countries in Africa, is experiencing climate variability. The long term trends in temperature and rainfall show indications of climate change.
- In 2005, Uganda along with other countries in East Africa experienced a severe drought that led to a decline in the water levels of Lake Victoria.
- The production of a National State of Environment Reports is not an isolated process. The Reports synthesis District State of environment Reports, District Environment Profiles, as well as Donor Country Assessment Reports

4. District State of the Environment Reporting

Districts are required by the law to produce the District State of Environment Reports (DSOER) annually. In 1997 and 1998 NEMA spearheaded this process and produced DSOER's for 39 districts. In addition 20 District profiles were also produced. DSOER's were produced again in 2004. Fifty six districts were trained and given support to produce these reports. Guidelines for the production of these reports were developed and distributed to the districts with the hope that the districts will now budget and own this process by continuing to produce these reports. The districts were also trained in the integration of the key environmental issues from these reports into the District Development Plans as most of the economies of local governments are still heavily dependent on natural resources. There is however an increasing number of districts in the country and these are raising administrative and environmental management costs at district level. The SOE reporting processes in Uganda are linked to achievement of key national development goals such as the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP).

Similarly the District Environment Reports have highlighted key issues some of which are increasing loss decline in agricultural productivity due to soil erosion, poor waste management due to unplanned settlements, wetland encroachment and degradation, declining water quality and quantity. Combined efforts between NEMA and Ministry Of Local Government has had environment to be adopted as one of the tools for monitoring the District Development Plans. The District State of environment reports is one of those integrated tool to guide this process hence its continuous production is very critical. The DSOER reports have been produced and owned by the districts. They have also been integrated in the District Development Plans. NEMA continues to lobby districts to budget for the production of these documents since they are good monitoring tool for the use of natural resources.

5. The future of reporting in Uganda.

The economy of Uganda is directly dependent on the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR). The success of many sectors of the economy is to a large extent dependent on ENR either because ENR enhances their productivity, provides the raw material for those sectors or reduces the cost of public expenditure for providing the services in those sectors. The estimated cost of contribution of the ENR sector to GDP is 54%. Despite this important contribution the sector continues to be faced with increasing problems such as deforestation, soil erosion, water pollution, over fishing and biodiversity loss among a few.

The Ministry of Water and Environment has just launched a ten year investment plan for the Environment and Natural Resource Sector Investment Plan (SIP). This SIP will be useful to guide the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in the allocation of budgetary resources. This plan is to be integrated in the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) review process that will be launched today 5th November 2007 by His Excellency the President of Uganda. Through careful lobbying and planning most the AEIN activities have been included in the SIP and will be integrated in the PEAP review. The National Environment Management Authority has been given the role to spearhead the coordination of climate change in the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) which

gives us an opportunity to mainstream most of the activities especially under information into PEAP. On a strong point the Ministry of Finance and Planning has given as a condition for funding for all sectors to mainstream and budget for environment activities. This applies to all sectors at local and national levels. In addition guidelines for the mainstreaming process are being developed and information management and use will be one of those key activities.

Most of the EIN activities will be funded under strategic objectives 0102, 0104, 0105, 0201, 0202, 0203 and 0303. This is a great achievement for the AEIN process in Uganda.

NOTE: AEIN, production of the National state of environment report and District state of environment reports are funded and will continue to be funded by the Government of Uganda.