

The Uganda NGO Rio+10 Coalition Position Paper on Energy for Uganda towards World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) due in Johannesburg of 26th Aug.- 4th Sept. 2002

Whereas the Uganda Constitution (1995) guarantees every citizen's right to a clean and healthy environment.

And whereas the Uganda National Energy Policy 2001 (*Energy 21*) has a goal to meet the energy needs of the Ugandan population for social and economic development in an environmentally sustainable way.

The Uganda NGO Rio+10 Coalition¹ having completed the assessment of Uganda's compliance to Agenda 21 and related internationally binding agreements forwards the following issues:

National issues

▪ Poverty and the increasing energy demand

Poverty has put pressure on the natural resource base manifested in loss of forest cover due to high and growing wood-energy demand and consumption.

▪ Planning for climate change impact and mitigation

There exists inadequate adaptation activities to the effects of climate change manifested in the increasing frequency of droughts and severity of famines, and health related effects especially malaria occurrence in Uganda and the Great Lakes region.

▪ Energy use trends

Uganda's energy consumption trend indicates that woody biomass caters for over 90%, 5% petroleum and 1% electricity. However, the high tariffs imposed on electricity means higher fuel wood use, further diminishing the natural forest cover from the current 3% of Uganda's land area.

Moreover, less than 2% of Uganda's new and renewable energy potential except biomass (includes solar, wind, geothermal, bio-energy, etc) is exploited.

International issues

▪ Compliance to International conventions

Ensure the entry into force of International conventions that relate to energy and in accordance with the Millennium Declaration.

¹ The Uganda NGO Rio + 10 Coalition, made up of up to 50 NGOs has as its backbone, the NGO focus groups. The Coalition has since October 2001, been carrying out assessment of Uganda's progress in implementing Agenda 21 and other commitments of the Earth Summit (1992), Rio de Janeiro – Brazil.

- **Development and Investment in renewable energy sources**

Two billion people worldwide have no access to electricity, and the same number relies on traditional fuels such as firewood, agricultural residues and dung for cooking and heating.

- **Energy for development**

Priority to energy services as a basic human need and support for development of localized energy solutions based on renewable energy sources

- **Corporate accountability**

Environmentally and socially responsible Private sector investments that emphasize transparent procedures in projects' design to ensure equitable distribution of benefits.

We, the Uganda NGO Rio+10 Coalition do recommend that under national actions the following should be considered:

- The Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) should explicitly integrate quantifiable and tangible environment improving actions such as promotion of low cost energy-efficient technologies.
- Programmes that educate the public about all aspects of unsustainable and sustainable production and consumption should be promoted at all levels, including mandatory curricula in schools and workplaces.
- Adaptation activities for mitigating climate change effects should be integrated in the sector wide plans in addition to the National Disaster Preparedness and Management Action Plan.
- Government should review the prevailing high electricity tariffs to make it more affordable to the public in order to mitigate the underlying environmental impacts (specifically on the decreasing tree cover both from private and protected areas to supply the alternative fuel wood).
- Government should opt for the more environmentally appropriate small (mini and micro) hydropower energy to provide cost effective decentralized power to eliminate the high ecological and social costs associated with large hydropower projects.
- Petroleum revenue returns should cater for clean and renewable energy development
- Incentives should be provided for the private sector to exploit the potential in new and renewable energy sub-sector by engaging in programmes that lead to energy efficiency to sustain economic activity (solar for rural electrification, bio-energy, wind, geothermal, etc.)

- There should be transparent Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process that adequately addresses the ecological and social issues through genuine local community participation

At International level

- An International fund to support projects in energy conservation and sustainable sources of renewable energy should be established through governments and civil society partnerships in order to achieve the due poverty-related goals of Agenda 21 and in the Millennium Declaration.
- Rich nations must increase their energy efficiency and promote the use of renewable energy options. The percentage of commercially renewable energy per country should be at least 20% by 2010.

- International financial institutions and national export credit arrangements should support the development and dissemination of renewable energy technologies to increase the share of new and sustainable forms of renewable energy production and consumption by at least 10% by 2007 and 25% by 2012 and accelerate the development, diffusion and use of energy efficient technologies.
- Environmentally harmful and trade-distorting subsidies that encourage unsustainable consumption and production patterns in all economic sectors must be eliminated, for OECD countries by 2006, including subsidies of international agencies and intergovernmental entities supported by funding from OECD countries, and for non LDC developing countries, and economies in transition consider making commitment in 2007 depending on progress made by OECD countries in their commitments.
- Legally binding and enforceable international framework on corporate accountability and liability, beyond voluntary initiatives, should be established to ensure equity and transparency in the behavior and operation of corporations with respect to social and environmental matters.
- All nations should sign and ratify internationally binding conventions not later than 2005.

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