

# Land Restoration and Environment Management in Refugee Hosting Districts of West Nile , Uganda

WorkGrEEN Technical Working Group on Energy and Environment meeting 17/04/2018

George Muganga PhD  
Principal Officer Lead Agency Coordination

[+256776466050](tel:+256776466050)

[gmuganga@nemaug.org](mailto:gmuganga@nemaug.org)



# Outline

- ▶ About NEMA
- ▶ Uganda and Refugees
- ▶ Refugees and environmental losses in Uganda
- ▶ West Nile status
- ▶ Consequences of environmental degradation
- ▶ Current progress and Challenges:
- ▶ Proposed interventions



# About NEMA

- ▶ NEMA was established by an Act of Parliament-National Environment Management Act 1995
- ▶ National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) is a principal environment management agency mandated to coordinate, monitor and supervise all activities in the field of the environment.
- ▶ key functions of NEMA is to ensure the integration of environmental concerns in overall national planning through coordination with the relevant Ministries, departments and agencies of the Government and other partners
- ▶ It also liaises with the private sector, intergovernmental organisations, nongovernmental agencies and governmental agencies of other States on issues relating to the environment;
- ▶ Effective execution of environmental functions is therefore subject to coordination and collaboration with partners.

# Uganda and Refugees

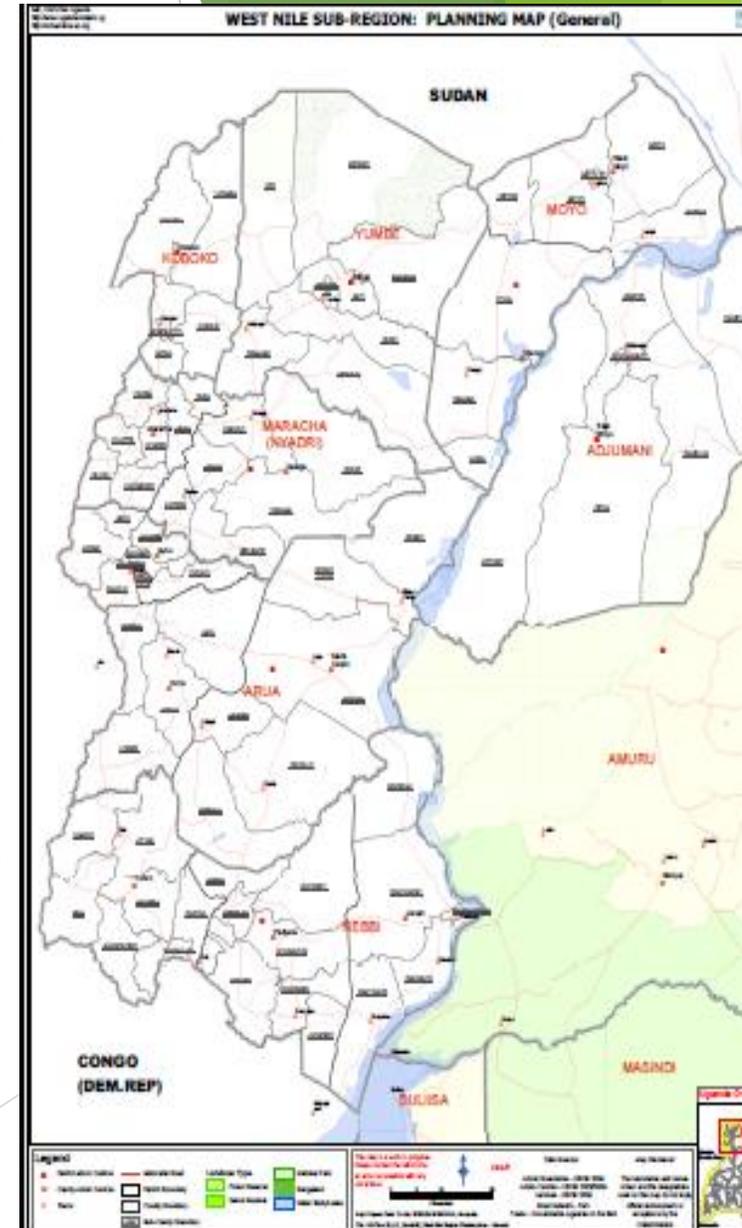
- ▶ Uganda is currently home to nearly 1.5 million refugees from over eight countries (UNHCR, 2010; Uganda Refugee Response Portal, 2018).
- ▶ This makes Uganda the second least developed country hosting the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest number of refugees in the world (UNHCR, 2018).
- ▶ The 2016 United Nations Summit for Refugees declared Uganda's refugee policy a model (UNDP 2017).
- ▶ Although the country's open-door refugee policy has been hailed as the most progressive, its environmental impacts have not been adequately addressed (World Bank, 2016)

# Refugee related environment aspects

- ▶ Research findings by UNDP (2017) show that for the year 2016/2017, Uganda lost land, ecosystems, biomass, and water resources equivalent to the value of US\$ 266,310,139 as a result of hosting refugees.
- ▶ Evidence on the ground shows more refugee economic environmental activities including charcoal, firewood, materials for construction, brick making animal grazing among others
- ▶ Environmental losses are expected to grow with the projected increase in the number of refugees (UNICEF, 2018).
- ▶ Integrating environmental issues into refugee response programmes, policies and local government planning is necessary if Uganda is to achieve its national and sustainable development goals.

# West Nile -Refugees-Environment

- ▶ The West Nile region hosts nearly 70% of the refugee population in Uganda (Uganda Refugee Response Portal, 2018).
- ▶ 85% of the population derive their livelihood from land and environmental resources (UBOS, 2018; Lwako et al. 2008)
- ▶ More new camps have been opened up in West Nile and Northern region including one at Maaji in Adjumani district, Palorinya in Moyo, Impevi in Arua and in 2017 Palabek in Lamwo district
- ▶ To date, about twenty refugee settlements have been populated in absence of a strategic environmental assessment plan
- ▶ Environmental audits have not been conducted
- ▶ The focus has mainly been humanitarian response.



# Consequences

- ▶ Watersheds in refugees hosting areas in the districts are the most degraded
- ▶ Higher river and stream sedimentations have also been reported
- ▶ Soil erosion is affecting water quality and silting rivers, wetlands and other eco systems. 15.5% of arable land already cleared
- ▶ While attempts have been made to restore the degraded environment mainly through buffer zones and planting of trees, these remain below the critical threshold for rejuvenating and restoring the eco system.
- ▶ In Adjumani for instance only an estimated 1.1 million trees have been planted compared to at least 15 million trees (Republic of Uganda 2018).
- ▶ Concerns over land degradation are increasing inter-communal tensions between refugee and host communities and are fueled by competition over limited resources

# Responses and Challenges

- ▶ Uganda comprehensive Refugee Response Plan 2017
- ▶ Solidarity summit on refugees-2017-USD 350 M against 2Bn
- ▶ UN family and the World Bank are developing a five-year Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) strategy,

## Challenges

- ▶ Continued humanitarian versus development approach
- ▶ Uncoordinated refugee settlement in the area of environment management
- ▶ Limited funding

# Interventions

- ▶ Office of Prime Minister-two concepts of restoration of degraded environment and land valuation
- ▶ Meeting between NEMA and UNDP-conduct a reconnaissance visit to West Nile
- ▶ We propose a programmatic intervention; West Nile Uganda Refugee Settlement Environment Management Programme (WURSEMP)

## The programme will focus:

- ▶ Land restoration and environment management including strategic environment impact assessment, environmental audits among others
- ▶ Sustainable Livelihood Improvement for both refugee and host communities,
- ▶ Research and development-land valuation, silviculture Centre.
- ▶ Community engagement -attitude, public education, awareness
- ▶ **Estimates cost USD US\$ 164,260,950 - US\$ 287,644,175 for the five year period**

Land restoration and environment management; afforestation, SEIA, EA

Coordination mechanisms, Monitoring and Evaluation

Sustainable Livelihood Improvement; SLM, agriculture, entrepreneurship, energy, water harvesting

**WURSEMP**

Community engagement - attitude, education, public awareness;

Research and development - innovations, land valuation, silviculture Centre;

**West Nile Uganda Refugee Settlement Environment Management Programme (WURSEMP)**

We believe the integration of Energy and Environment issues for Refugees will greatly benefit from a comprehensive environment management programme.

We seek for your support and collaboration to sustainably manage environment concerns in our refugee settlements in West Nile

*Thank  
you*

# Objectives of the proposed programme

- ▶ Restore , protect and support the functionality of degraded land and eco system within refugee host districts in West Nile
- ▶ To build capacity of host and refugee communities to sustainably utilise the environment
- ▶ To support diversification of livelihood sources of host and refugee communities and increase resilience and adaptation to climate change