



**CIVIL SOCIETY POSITION ON AIR POLLUTION,  
PRESENTED AT THE NATIONAL EVENT TO MARK THE WORLD ENVIRONMENT  
DAY,  
HELD IN MOROTO, UGANDA, ON 5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2019**

We, Civil Society Organizations working to promote the integrity of the environment, are happy about our Government's commitment to celebrate the World Environment Day annually, and for allowing us to present our position during this event. The theme for this year's World Environment Day (Beat Air Pollution) comes at a time when there are air quality issues in Kampala and Uganda at large.

Global reports have reported that people in Uganda are more likely to die from air pollution than those in Tanzania, Rwanda, and twice as likely as those in Kenya, figures from the World Health Organization (WHO) show. <sup>1</sup>Burden of disease (mortality and morbidity) attributable to air pollution in Uganda has been on the rise in recent years. Kampala, Uganda's capital has the second worst air in Africa, according to the AirVisual's 2018 World Air Quality Report.

The mortality rate for air pollution in Uganda was 155.7 for every 100,000 in 2016. The rate was 70.5 for every 100,000 deaths in 2012, the WHO data shows.

#### **AIR QUALITY MONITORING IN UGANDA**

Uganda lacks real-time, sufficient and publicly accessible air quality monitoring network. Scarcity of reliable data and air pollution exposure information is a major issue in Uganda. There are a few privately installed air quality monitoring networks around Kampala. These include AirVisual Node Monitors and a real-time PM2.5 monitor on the U.S. Embassy compound in Kampala.

Air pollution in Uganda is driven by rapid urbanization and population growth in urban areas. Uganda's dirty air is characterized by smoke from car exhaust, industry, residential trash burning, road dust, and soot from indoor biomass-fuelled cook stoves for cooking.

### Charcoal Burning in Uganda

Energy poverty is one of the factors contributing to slowing down economic and social-transformation in Uganda (GoU, 2010). Energy is a social challenge in Uganda due to disproportionate access and consumption levels. Energy is an environmental challenge for Uganda because excessive energy use could aggravate climate change. (Charcoal and Wood) Energy is an economic challenge for Uganda because energy supply challenges hinder economic growth.

The Uganda National Household Survey (2005/06) reported that biomass contributed 88.3% of the total energy consumed for cooking in Uganda. It's provided 97.6% of the energy consumed in rural households, and 79% in the urban households. Households need access to safer and more sustainable cooking and heating fuels and stoves (i.e. minimum harmful effects on health and the environment ;)

The energy exploitation and consumption patterns reflect that the country is still in infancy stages of energy application in production processes. The exploitation patterns are such that biomass accounts for 92 per cent of total energy consumed while fossil fuels accounts for 7 per cent and electricity only 1 per cent. Most of biomass energy is from wood, which is consumed in the form of charcoal and firewood (NEMA). The dependency on firewood and charcoal as a major source of energy is straining the environment and partly contributes to depletion of Uganda's forest.

***Killer Fact***, A 2017 government report has revealed that the country's forest cover has dropped to 9 per cent, representing a 3 per cent drop in just two years. In 2015, a Joint

Water and Environment Sector Review Report put the country's forest cover at 11 per cent, but the 2017 report indicates that the country forest cover now stands at 9 per cent.

It is estimated that every year two million deaths are caused by the indoor air pollution originating from the combustion of solid fuels (World Bank, 2011). Many of the compounds formed under inefficient combustion, such as methane and black carbon, are also contributing to global warming

We noted that government is proposing a ban on charcoal in order to increase consumption of alternative cooking energy sources like briquettes, biogas, electricity and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) to check on felling of trees, which would mitigate global warming.

- We therefore call on the government to communicate to households in Uganda's urban centres and charcoal source communities to switch to better energy sources (LPG, Briquette and Electricity for cooking).
- We invite government to reduce value added tax and import duty on LPG and other cleaner fuel sources
- Subsidise urban poor households willing to switch to better and cleaner energy  
Provide affordable micro-credit to households to support purchase of required equipment in the case of MTN Ready Pay and Mkopa Solar
- Monitor standards and quality control
- Support charcoal producing communities to switch to alternative livelihoods