

The LVEMP II Civil Society Watch E-bulletin

A Monthly from the **East African Sustainability Watch Network** comprising: Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD), Tanzania Coalition for Sustainable Development (TCSD) and Sustainable Environmental Development Watch Network (SusWatch Kenya)

December 2016

Why the East African Community Integration Process Could Benefit From Adopting a More Sustainability ‘Menu’ in 2017



East Africa (shaded)

On 1 January 2016, East Africa joined the rest of the world to officially flag off implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development—the transformative plan of action based on 17 Sustainable Development Goals—to address urgent global challenges over the next 15 years. In 2016, East Africa has continued its path towards closer integration in a number of ways counting on its 150 million citizens of which 22% is urban population.

On August 15, 2016, the Republic of South Sudan joined the 5 other East African Community (EAC) Partners – Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda to become a full member. As one of the fastest growing regional economic blocs in the world, the EAC is widening and deepening co-operation among the Partner States in various key spheres for their mutual benefit. These spheres include political, economic and social.

In 2016, EAC leaders have continued to argue that the existing (urban) market is an untapped opportunity for improving economic and social development in the region.

But with this huge urban population that is also fast growing as more youths flock cities and towns, East Africa also needs to prepare itself to effectively serve them fairly and equitably within the context of Sustainable Development Goals / Agenda 2030 (*Leave No One Behind*) and the African Union’s Agenda 2030. This might remain a tall order, if East Africa does not arm itself with the right policies, institutions, human resources, partnerships and determination to sustainably harness the environment and natural resources – the bedrock for its economic growth.

According to the Africa Economic Outlook (2016), rapid urbanisation with slow structural transformation creates a significant obstacle to achieving the development objectives set by the Agenda 2063 and the SDGs. While African urbanisation patterns are diverse, up to now few may be deemed sustainable economically, socially or environmentally. Without productive jobs in rural areas, most economies have seen labour move from agriculture into urban, low-skilled and informal service activities. Access to public goods remains highly unequal even within urban areas, often putting the social fabric at risk. African cities are facing an unprecedented combination of developmental challenges together with rising environmental risks such as unsafe sanitation, climate change and air pollution. For example, the UN-Habitat (2008) estimated that 62% of sub-Saharan Africa’s urban population live in slums.

Come 2017, the EAC Governments need to robustly serve all the Community citizens within the framework of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063. One of the key strategies for this is job creation for the youths. But this requires incorporation of adaptive skills to enable the youths cope with and build resilience to climate change and the unpredictable natural disaster patterns that have shown high propensity to spread in this region. For example, the flux of refugees to cities poses specific challenges for social cohesion, urban economic productivity and the integration of refugees into society for a decent life; while earthquakes and disease outbreaks have deactivated communities.

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East Africa, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs: Looking ahead in 2017



President Museveni at the UN Sust. Dev. Summit (2016)
Photo: UN News centre

The fifteen – year 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the transformative plan of action based on 17 Sustainable Development Goals) is a road map for people and the planet that will build on the success of the MDGs and ensure sustainable social and economic progress worldwide. It seeks not only to eradicate extreme poverty, but also to integrate and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental — in a comprehensive global vision.

East Africa has played a key role in securing that this agenda comes to fruition. Uganda's President Museveni co-chaired the 70th session of the UN General Assembly with the outgoing UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and the Danish Prime Minister - Lars Lokke Rasmussen for two consecutive days alongside holding various other bilateral. Similarly, the UN 69th General Assembly under the Presidency of Uganda led by Hon. Sam Kutesa successfully chaired the intergovernmental negotiations that lead to adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Furthermore, one of Kenya's top diplomats at the UN - Ambassador Macharia Kamau played a leading role in drafting the Sustainable Development Goals and was earlier this year appointed by the UN Secretary General as one of the two UN special envoys on El Niño and climate.

In the same vein, East Africa should remain at the forefront during implementation of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. Already, Uganda was part of the 22 voluntary reporting countries during the 2016 High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development – the UN central platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Forum, which adopted a Ministerial Declaration, that is expected to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations on the 2030 Agenda's implementation and follow-up; keep track of progress of the SDGs; spur coherent policies informed by evidence, science and country experiences; as well as address new and emerging issues. Uganda's civil society rejoinder was one of the few contributions that made direct reference the contents of the National report. It also made reference to the limiting of civil society space at the national level.

As an outcome, the HLPF (2016) Ministerial declaration highlights the importance of participatory and inclusive implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at all levels. It acknowledges the primary responsibilities of Governments in this regard, the contribution of parliaments, sub-national governments and all other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society, academia and philanthropic organizations. It underscores the fact that their participation supports accountability to all citizens and enhances the effectiveness of Government action, fostering synergies, multi-stakeholder partnerships and international cooperation, and the exchange of best practices and mutual learning.

Form East Africa, as Kenya prepares to submit its National Report to the HLPF 2017 due to take place July 10 – 19, 2017, it is important to provide adequate support to this process in terms of time and space for all actors to genuinely point out progress as well as challenges in implementation of this Agenda. The theme will be "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". Goals 1, 2,3,5,9, 14 and 17 will be reviewed in depth. **Follow the High-Level Political Forum 2017: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>**

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UN Biodiversity Conference results in significant commitments for action on Biodiversity

Adapted from: The CBD secretariat



Governments agreed on actions that will accelerate implementation of global biodiversity targets, and enhance the linkage of the biodiversity agenda with other global agendas including the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Agreement and others. Governments from 167 countries agreed on a variety of measures that will intensify the implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including mainstreaming, capacity-development and mobilization of financial resources as well as actions on specific themes including protected areas, ecosystem restoration, sustainable wildlife management among others.

On capacity-building, the Parties agreed on an action plan (2017-2020) that will enhance and support capacity-building for the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols based on the needs of Parties with a focus on strengthening the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets. For the Protocols, emphasis will be on supporting the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and promoting the universal ratification of the Nagoya Protocol and the development of measures to ensure that it is fully operational, consistent with national legislation (Aichi Target 16). The Parties also welcomed the Biobridge Initiative established at COP 12 by the Government of the Republic of Korea to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Protected areas and Aichi target 11 also advanced starting with commitment of the Group of Like Minded Megadiverse Countries to achieve Aichi target 11, and the announcement of the Host Country to announce establishment of marine protected areas that contribute achieving 23 per cent of marine areas within national jurisdiction under protection, which is more than double than that of global target of 10 per cent.

The COP welcomed the progress towards achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 and recognized how this will contribute to the implementation of other Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, relevant targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, and Articles 5,7 and 8 of the Paris Agreement.

On biodiversity and climate change, COP 13 adopted a decision that welcomes the Paris Agreement and encourages Parties and other Governments, when developing their Nationally Determined Contributions, to fully take into account the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems. It encourages Parties to take biodiversity into consideration when undertaking climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction measures, and requests the Executive Secretary to prepare, in collaboration with relevant organizations, voluntary guidelines for the design and effective implementation of ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 196 Parties so far, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. **Read the full outcome from COP13:** <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/2016>