

Pollution and Global Warming

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Past and Present Research Systems of Green Chemistry

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Deforestation in Uganda: Population increase, forests loss and climate change**Musasizi Josephat**

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Regarding the forest sector in Uganda, in the last one or so decades, Uganda has carried out several policy, legal and institutional reforms aimed at promoting the conservation and sustainable use of the country's forest resources. Among the key reforms include the putting in place of the National Forestry Policy 2001, enactment of the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act 2003 and the new institutional arrangements including the Forest Sector Support Department, the National Forestry Authority and the District Forestry Services being made. To address the question of enforcement in the forestry and other environment sub-sectors, government also established the Environmental Protection Police Unit. Despite these interventions, the country continues to lose forest cover at a very alarming rate. While for many years it was reported that Uganda was losing approximately 90,000 hectares between 1990 and 2010 of forest cover annually, recent studies indicate that forest cover loss has now increased to an estimated 200,000 hectares annually. The situation is being blamed partly on Uganda's booming population, which is growing at a rate of 3.6% per annum. Following the trends, Uganda may not have any forests left in the next 83 years due to high population growth unless serious interventions are executed not only by Ugandan Government but also International Community. In the late 1980s, Approx. 75,000 km² (31.7%) out of 236,040 km² of total land in Uganda consisted of forest and woodland. Today, forests and woodlands cover is about 15.2% of Uganda's land surface meaning that Uganda has lost 16.5% of forests and woodland cover. Over the last three decades, growth in human population and corresponding increase in demand for forest products for domestic and industrial use, expansion of agricultural land, illegal settlements and weak forest management capacity have adversely affected the status of natural forests in Uganda, particularly the biodiversity. Given that Uganda is a landlocked country that depends on agricultural, agro-pastoral and pastoral livelihoods, the population expansion has placed increasing stress on limited natural resources i.e., forests and woodland have been destroyed. Cropping regions in the West appear most affected by the observed changes in climate. Rainfall has declined in the West and North East threatening Uganda's future food production prospects. Drivers of climate change in most parts of Uganda are as result of deforestation, unpredictable rainfall, frequent droughts and reduced vegetation cover. The impacts of climate change has created challenges and imposing severe losses and hardships on the poorest communities as their livelihoods are sensitive to adverse impacts of climate change. The most dominant and widespread disaster due is drought, whose frequency is observed to be on the increase affecting the agricultural sector leading to impacts such as famine, malnutrition, low production and productivity of crops and animals. The general level of food insecurity in Uganda has started rising. Pastoralists in the northeast, especially in Karamoja are facing chronic food insecurity. More frequent droughts decrease their resilience, as well as the resilience of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in areas of Kasese, Isingiro, Karamoja among others

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