

Challenges And Opportunities For Community Ecological Governance



THE CASE OF CULTURAL FORESTS IN UGANDA

DEC 2007



Source: www.myuganda.co.ug

Left: Jaija Budhagali, a Spiritual Leader in Busoga Kingdom

Bottom Centre: A tropical Rain Forest in Kiziru Mukono district that has been encroached on by the local communities.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAS	the African Academy of Sciences
ABN	African Biodiversity Network
BFCDO	Budongo Forests Community Development Organisation
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CEG	Community Ecological Governance
CDI	Climate and Development Initiative
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CoP	Conference of Parties
DFS	District Forest Services
EC	European Commission
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GoU	Government of Uganda
ILO	International Labour Organization
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEA	Multilateral Environment Agreements
NAADS	National Agriculture Advisory Services
NAPE	National Association Professional Environmentalists
NEMA	National Environment Management Authority
NEAP	National Environment Action Plan
NEMP	National Environment Management Plan
NFA	National Forestry Authority
NFP	National Forestry Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NRM	Natural Resources Management
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PMA	Plan for Modernisation Assessment
TEK	Traditional Ecological Knowledge
THETA	Traditional and modern Health care providers Together against AIDS - Uganda
ToR	Terms of Reference
UK	United Kingdom
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNCCD	United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification
UNDF	Uganda Nile Basin Discourse Forum
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority
UWTPM	Uganda Women Tree Planting Movement
VEC	Village Environment Committee
VFC	Village Forest Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The productivity and sustainability of Africa in general and Uganda in particular are highly dependent on how her environment is managed. Many of the resources on the continent that mankind is struggling to conserve, but that have suffered severe degradation in recent times, have survived over the last centuries as a result of the ingenious application of indigenous traditional, cultural and spiritual practices and knowledge by the people of old. The traditional, cultural and spiritual practices are now what are called Community Ecological Governance (CEG).

However, the application of CEG has over the years been undermined by the advent of the so called modernity characterised with modern laws, regulations, principles and practices in natural resources use. This has eroded the application of CEG principles and practices and has threatened the survival of natural resources upon which communities are heavily dependent for their survival. Consequently, there has been continued environmental decay and loss of culture, spirituality and civilisation. Mankind is currently in a civilisation that is destructive to life systems of the earth and one that is losing its capacity to provide any satisfying human fulfilment. The forests and living creatures that roam the earth and the land itself have been devastated in the name of development. This instead has led to escalating poverty, disease stress, loneliness and social disorder. In addition, there is decline in food productivity and availability of water for agriculture, human and animal consumption and for commercial and domestic use. There is also loss of biodiversity, sacred cultural sites, ethical values and morality. Due to this natural resources devastation, the continent and Uganda in particular is experiencing severe climate change that is responsible for the frequent floods and has exacerbated the disease burden, poverty and failing productivity of the land and human survival.

In a bid to reverse this trend and the realisation of the importance of traditional cultural and spiritual wisdom and knowledge in natural resources management, NAPE, ABN and Gaia Foundation, with financial support of the European Commission (EC), decided to undertake joint effort to promote the revival of indigenous knowledge application in natural resources management under the theme “Community Ecological Governance (CEG)”. This publication is a result of some of these efforts. A study was undertaken to identify the challenges and opportunities of CEG revival in Uganda and propose the way forward for CEG work in Uganda.

The study was conducted in three Ugandan kingdoms, namely; Busoga, Buganda and Bunyoro because of the presence of culturally governed natural resources and a long history of renowned cultural heritage. These kingdoms traverse the districts of Bugiri, Mayuge, Jinja, Mukono, Wakiso, Kampala and Masindi where the study was conducted. Several approaches were used to gather information and these include face-to-face interviews of selected respondents based on a questionnaire schedule, focus group discussion with local communities, literature review, field visits, observation and photography. The study was limited by the general lack of documentary information concerning traditional cultures, practices, lifestyles and knowledge (wisdom), because such information is held in the minds of the elderly or custodians of this knowledge and is usually passed-on from generation-to-generation orally.

Uganda currently has a population of slightly over 30 million people (CIA, 2007), with more than 90% depending on subsistence agriculture for their livelihoods. The country has a forest cover of approximately 49,500 square kilometres consisting mainly of tropical rainforests and savannah woodlands. But the country is presently losing her forest cover at an alarming rate of 86,700 hectares per year. It is projected that at this rate of loss, the country is likely to lose all her forest cover in the next 20 years. It is often alleged that this loss is attributed to the land tenure system whereby 70% of the forests in the country are privately owned with no specific legal framework for their sustainable management. But instead in recent times, the country has registered forest degradation that is propagated by the very party (i.e. government) supposed to protect or conserve endangered forest ecosystems. Yet, in the past, forests were preserved and sustainably managed based on indigenous traditional, cultural and spiritual knowledge (wisdom) and practices.

There are more than 52 tribes in Uganda with 33 being the major ones. These tribes are classified into 5 major ethnic (cultural) groups, namely; the Bantu, Nilotics, Madi-Muro, Highland Nilotics and Nilo-Hermits (www.myuganda.co.ug). Of these, the Bantu are the largest ethnic group with the greatest population in the country. These ethnic groups have similar cultural, spiritual beliefs, practices and lifestyles with minor differences. For example, they believe in the deity where there are superhuman spirits of the dead that are capable of influencing their lives and have control over their property. In this regard, majority of the tribes maintain sacred sites and shrines associated with nature e.g. rivers, lakes, waterfalls, swamps, forests, hills, animals and mountains, which if desecrated by man's activities are believed to bring a curse upon the affected person or community. A desecration of such objects of nature would

require performance of a cleansing ritual by a special person (spiritual healer or culturist) in the community. In this way, such objects of nature are preserved. However, over the years, these cultures, beliefs, lifestyles and practices of the different ethnic groups have been influenced and modified by the invasion of alien Arab and western cultures, beliefs, lifestyles and practices and the inter-marriages across different ethnic groups. Consequently, the original cultures, beliefs, practices and lifestyles of the indigenous peoples have been eroded or lost completely.

Uganda is considered to have very good policy, legal and institutional frameworks that are capable of preserving and protecting natural resources and ensuring their sustainable use and management. But in practice, the policies, legal and institutional provisions are often ignored, are not implemented or adequately enforced or are abused by the very institutions put in place to enforce them. Uganda is also a signatory to many international treaties, conventions, protocols (agreements) some of which have been fully ratified and domesticated and others not.

In Uganda, the challenges to the application of indigenous and traditional knowledge and practices (CEG) in natural resources management include; the invasion of foreign cultures, practices and lifestyles; the community shared responsibility of caring for forests and other natural resources which has been lost overtime; the continued and widely spread belief that everything African is evil, a misconception that threatens the survival or revival of traditional African culture, practices and lifestyles; most traditional institutions in Uganda do not have complete jurisdiction over the land in the kingdoms (Chieftdoms), making it difficult for the institutions to take appropriate decisions and action for the sustainable management of the resources; the current culture (belief or expectation) among local communities that development in the communities must be initiated by the central (local) governments stifles individual (community) innovations and initiative to spur own development in the community; and the existing policy, legal and institutional frameworks do not adequately recognise and incorporate traditional and cultural practices and knowledge in mainstream governance of natural resources;

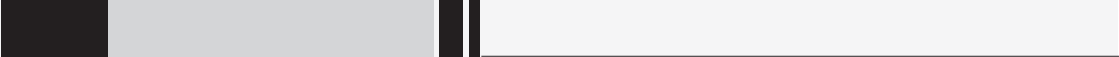
Despite the challenges, there are opportunities for reviving the application of traditional and cultural practices and knowledge (wisdom) in natural resources management these include; a diversity of cultures in Uganda that all have rich Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), which is good foundation for CEG; the Constitution of Uganda recognizes people's culture, customs, beliefs, wish-

es, traditions and aspirations, which provides legal basis for CEG; there are many cultural institutions in Uganda such as Buganda, Busoga, Bunyoro and Toro Kingdoms that have a long history. In each of these institutions, there are cultural leaders who are custodians of indigenous knowledge through whom the indigenous knowledge is passed-on from generation-to-generation. These leaders offer opportunity to work with and educate the people about the use of indigenous knowledge in natural resources management, especially forests; there are civil society organizations (NGOs, CBOs & Local Communities) whose mandate and work are linked to cultural survival and revival and use of indigenous knowledge. These offer a diversity of established organizations through which the skills, principles and practices of natural resources management based on indigenous knowledge, can be passed on; there is a growing body of international interest that support indigenous and cultural conservation practices as an alternative way of natural resource management; in Uganda, there is growing interest in developing multistakeholder dialogue processes that bring together different cultures and actors to discuss matters concerning natural resources management and human survival based on indigenous knowledge. Such processes could also help prevent cultural clashes and loss of cultures; there is an existing practice in the country for communal use and management of natural resources; Uganda is a signatory to several international conventions, protocols and treaties e.g. CBD, RAMSAR, CITES, UNFCCC UNCCD, Kyoto Protocol, United Nations Conventions of Cultural Heritage, among others, which provide opportunity for communities to demand for the protection of natural resources based on international law; and all cultures in Uganda have gender differentiation of roles where men, women and the youth (children) have specific functions (roles) in natural resources management. This provides an opportunity for all gender to participate in natural resources management and forms a good basis for community ecological governance.

In conclusion, the upsurge of foreign traditions, beliefs, cultures and lifestyles have continued to erode indigenous traditional cultures, spirituality, practices and lifestyles; there is also a general lack of understanding and appreciation of the roles of community ecological governance in natural resources management; and the degradation of forests and other natural resources is occurring at alarming rates and needs to be reversed.

The study recommended that there be a national inventory of community forests and other privately owned forests that is updated regularly; there is need for a national fund to facilitate (promote) the management of natural resources based on cultural (traditional) approaches; there is also need to put in place a

resource centre with a decentralised structure where information on traditional knowledge (wisdom), cultures and practices in natural resources management can be documented or stored for present and future use; the existing cultural institutions such as Buganda, Busoga, Bunyoro, Toro and Ankole kingdoms and Teso and Alur Chiefdoms should be supported and encouraged in the application of traditional practices in natural resources management and the promotion of Uganda's cultural heritage; there is need to put in place laws, ordinances or byelaws at national and local government levels that respect and recognise indigenous and traditional knowledge and its application in sustainable natural resources (especially forests) use and management; the laws should be translated into local languages to enable the majority of the people internalise and understand them; there is need for political will from government to ensure proper implementation and enforcement of existing policies, laws and regulations on natural resources management; the institutions of government involved in the implementation (enforcement) of natural resource management policies and laws should be properly facilitated and coordinated to ensure effective service delivery and avoid duplication of services; there is need to create awareness and empower communities to understand their rights and entitlements and demand for them (e.g. the rights of participation in management of natural resources); promote the approach of planting trees in the commemoration of important community or social events such as birth, death, visitors, activities, etc.; there is the need for a National Elders Forum where indigenous knowledge on governance of natural landscapes can be exchanged and strategies to protect them can be collectively developed; priority should be given to reconnecting and building the interest of the youth towards traditional approaches in natural resources use and management, so that the knowledge held by the elders is passed-on before the elders die; and communities should be encouraged to document their process of recuperation and those aspects of their governance systems that others should understand, respect and recognize.



1.0. Background

1.0. BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

Africa's productivity and sustainability is heavily dependent on how her environment is managed (UNEP, 2006). Many of the resources that we are struggling to conserve, but are severely being degraded, have survived as a result of the ingenious application of indigenous traditional, cultural and spiritual practices and knowledge by the people of old. The traditional (cultural) and spiritual practices are now what are called Community Ecological Governance (CEG).

However, over the years this CEG practice has been undermined by the advent of the so called modernity. This has eroded the application of CEG principles and practices and has endangered the survival of natural resources upon which communities are heavily dependent for their livelihoods. As a result, there has been continued environmental decay and loss of culture, spirituality and civilization. Mankind is currently in a civilisation that is losing its capacity to provide any satisfying human fulfilment, a civilisation that has become terribly destructive to the life systems of the earth on which mankind is dependent (Cullinan, 2003). The forests and living creatures that roam the land and the land itself have been devastated in the name of development.

Consequently, poverty, disease, loneliness and social disorder reign. The above phenomena are prominent in Uganda where Natural resources are experiencing unprecedented degradation and abuse that has led to loss of forest cover, indigenous seeds, biodiversity, sacred cultural sites, ethical values and morality. There is also decline in food productivity, and availability of water for human and livestock consumption and for commercial and industrial use. In addition, the country is experiencing severe climate change which has caused frequent flooding and exacerbated the problems of productivity, disease, poverty and human survival.

On the realization of the importance of traditional, cultural and spiritual wisdom and knowledge in the natural resources management, NAPE, ABN and The Gaia Foundation, with support from the European Commission, decided to undertake joint effort to promote the revival of indigenous knowledge in natural resources management under the theme "Community

Ecological Governance (CEG)". This publication is a result of these efforts. A study was undertaken to identify the opportunities and challenges of CEG in Uganda and propose the way forward for CEG work in Uganda.

1.2. A Brief Profile of Institutions Involved in Community Ecological Governance (CEG)

Community Ecological Governance (CEG) is one among the three working themes for African Biodiversity Network (ABN). The theme brings together individuals and organizations in Africa working to nurture local and indigenous solutions to poverty and environmental degradation, enhancing biodiversity and livelihood options, re-discovering and harnessing Africa's vital cultural knowledge of ecological governance and strengthening communities. CEG uses a holistic approach centred on community elders to revive and strengthen indigenous knowledge systems and carry them through to the next generation. CEG promotes a more integrated endogenous approach to development in order to solve the interrelated crises of climate, biodiversity and livelihoods. In this study, the following institutions were involved:-

1.2.1. National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE)

The National Association of Professional environmentalists (NAPE) is a registered non-profit making, environmental NGO in Uganda. It was founded in 1997 by a group of environmentalists in response to a wide range of environmental problems in the country. NAPE is a membership organization and is managed by a board of directors with the general assembly being the supreme organ of the organization. Using a number of approaches, NAPE promotes sustainable use of natural resources through advocating and promoting sound environmental management practices.

Since its inception in 1997, NAPE has participated in a number of local and international activities and campaigns on issues relating to forestry, energy, water resource, waste and chemical management, among others. NAPE is also a member of several local and international networks on energy, water and other environmental issues.

1.2.2. African Biodiversity Network (ABN)

African Biodiversity Network (ABN) is a regional network that promotes the sustainable development and conservation of biodiversity based on local

community rights and livelihood systems in Africa. The network is coordinated from a Secretariat in Kenya with support from The Gaia Foundation in United Kingdom (UK), and with regional coordinating nodes in Ethiopia and South Africa.

ABN was first conceived in 1996, in response to growing concern in the region over threats to biodiversity in Africa, mainly due to globalization; and the need to develop strong African positions and legislation at the international and regional level. By 2002 the ABN was formalized in name and structure and now comprises over 300 concerned Africans and their organizations. ABN organizes workshops and training and provides information on a range of issues that cover the four interrelated areas: Seed Security; Genetic Engineering, Intellectual Property Rights and Bio-safety; Cultural Biodiversity and Community Ecological Governance.

1.2.3. The Gaia Foundation

The Gaia Foundation (Gaia) is an international non-governmental organisation based in London. It provides a European base for a network of community and indigenous organisations, NGOs and policy-makers in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Gaia's work focuses on reviving cultural and biological diversity and promoting community ecological governance as the basis from which to enhance livelihood options to be able to better adapt to climate change; and to overcome increasing poverty. Over the past two decades, Gaia has worked with associates and partners in the Amazon, Africa and Asia to evolve a culturally centred approach to these tasks.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

The aim of the study was to identify good indigenous knowledge practices and find out how this knowledge could be used to enhance sustainable forest management and governance in Uganda. The rationale for the project was the recognition that indigenous knowledge in natural resource management has been sidelined and has received little attention from academic literature, the government or the public. There has been a neglect of indigenous knowledge in natural resource management that has led to decline in its use and transmission. Very little effort has also been put in place to determine the relevance of this knowledge in natural resource management and how traditional governance systems function. Some policies are responsible for this decline,

especially where they alienate the communities from effective participation in management of natural resources or recognition of traditional governance systems. This alienation of communities by policies could also be considered an issue for further investigation.

1.4. The Study Objectives

The primary objective of this study was to look into aspects of use of indigenous knowledge into natural resources management in Uganda. The specific objectives of the study were:-

- i. To document key forest resources governed through cultural approaches in Uganda and how such resources (land) are held
- ii. To document community wisdom in governance of selected culturally respected forest resources in Uganda (Key elements to highlight include: geographical background of the area, traditional governance including taboos, important species and their uses, sacred sites in the forest, rituals carried out, local traditional governance arrangements, etc.)
- iii. To document the relationship between traditional governance institutions, state, land administration and communal tenure
- iv. To highlight current health status of the forests and challenges facing cultural governance practices in Uganda
- v. To document relevant prevailing policy, legal and institutional provisions vi-a`-vis land tenure, culture, governance and environment, territory, sacred sites, collective community and traditional rights
- vi. To highlight how these provisions in (v) above affect the rights of indigenous (rural communities); whether the enforcement of the provisions is in line with important constitutional provisions; and also highlight the opportunities and challenges of the provisions
- vii. To discuss the extent to which Uganda is applying provisions in international conventions she is a party-to in national policy and legal formulation and implementation

1.5. Scope and Limitations of the Study

Through purposive sampling, the study selected 3 kingdoms of Busoga, Buganda and Bunyoro because of the presence of indigenously governed natural resources and a renowned cultural heritage. The study was carried out in seven districts of Uganda located in these kingdoms that included Bugiri, Mayuge, Jinja, Mukono, Wakiso, Masindi and Kampala. These districts were selected because of their varied degrees in the use of indigenous and cultural knowledge over the years in the management of natural resources and the presence of renown sacred cultural forests. The cultural forests that were visited included; Waitambogwe forest, Mangira forest (Kintu forest), Mawuta forest, Meru forest, Ssezibwa cultural sites and Iyirimbi deforested area. These forests are of cultural significance and have been governed based indigenous (traditional) knowledge for a long time.

The major limitations to the study were:-

- i. The absence of sufficient literature on indigenous traditional (cultural) and spiritual knowledge and practices. This is attributed to the lack of a culture of documentation from the past.
- ii. The fact that traditional knowledge is held in the minds of individuals (usually the elders) and is passed-on orally from generation-to-generation. Such knowledge is consequently dwindling in quality and consistency due to the adulterations of other cultures as people of different cultures and traditions intermingle. The quality of the information is also diminished from generation-to-generation through sudden death of the custodians of such information before they pass it on, hence negating the quality of information that is finally passed on.
- iii. The limited number of people knowledgeable about traditional cultures and practices
- iv. Limited financial resources.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

In order to address the requirements of the Terms of Reference (Annex I), a combination of methods and approaches were applied during the study and these include:-

2.1. Review of Existing Literature

The review of literature included reports, publications, bulletins, etc from the cultural institutions visited. Documents relating to policy, legal, institutional and other related information from local and the central government were also reviewed. Documents containing information on cultural and traditional natural resources management experiences and practices in the international arena were also reviewed and included in this publication.

2.2. Field Visits, Observations and Interviews

A Field Survey Team comprising of 2 researchers was dispatched to gather field data. The field visits to the different locations in the country were carried out on alternate days. The team visited cultural institutions and sites renowned for their cultural (traditional) significance in Kampala, Mukono, Jinja, Mayuge, Bugiri, Wakiso and Masindi districts in Uganda. Descriptions of the cultural sites the team visited were made. While in the various sites (districts), the research team with the guide of local contact persons identified cultural (traditional) leaders (custodians) and individuals whom they interviewed based on a structured questionnaire (Annex II).

2.3. Focused Group Discussions

In addition to the interviews in section 2.2 above, focus group discussions were held with members of the local communities visited to obtain their views on the application of traditional (cultural) knowledge, practices and lifestyles in the management of natural resources in their areas. The discussions included traditional and government custodians of the forests and other government officials, civil society organisations (NGOs & CBOs), researchers and academicians.

2.4. Audio Recordings

During the interviews and focus group discussions audio recordings of respondents were made after seeking permission from the respondents.

2.5. Photography

Photographs were taken of some of those interviewed and of unique sites (scenes) in the areas visited.

2.6. Verification Meetings and Workshop

Information obtained through the above approaches was pooled and analysed and a report of preliminary findings made. The preliminary findings were subjected to several meetings and one multistakeholder workshop in Uganda to verify the findings and make additional input; and finally, the results, including various stakeholder inputs (amendments) were shared with the institutions participating in the study before this publication was made.

3.0 Literature Review

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Geo-physical, Environmental and Socio-economic aspects of Uganda

Uganda, located in east central Africa, covers a land area of 241 040 km² between latitudes 1° 30' S and 4° N and between longitudes 29° 30' and 35° E. It is bordered on the north by Sudan, on the east by Kenya, on the south by Tanzania and Rwanda, and on the west by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FAO, 2005).

Physically, the country consists of a plateau, generally between 1,200m and 1,500m, dissected by numerous streams. In the west, this plateau is interrupted by an escarpment forming Lakes Edward and Albert, with the up thrust of the Rwenzori Mountains (5,110 m) in the centre, between the lakes. In the extreme north, the plateau extends across the Nile into the district of West Nile. The south-west is very hilly and higher than the rest of the country. In the east, along the border with Kenya, three high mountains, Elgon (4,321 m), Kadam (3,068 m) and Moroto (3,083 m) dominate (FAO, 2005). These features are considered sacred by many cultures in the country. Many people in Africa have shrines or sacred sites situated near lakes, rivers, escarpments, hills and mountains (Tengeza 2000; www.myuganda.co.ug).

The Nile divides the country in two parts, flowing from Lake Victoria at Jinja through Lake Kyoga to the northern tip of Lake Albert, and then north to the Sudan. A significant proportion of the southern part of Uganda contains swamps.

The climate is tropical but mild because of the generally high altitude. The temperature ranges from about 16°C to 29°C, with 1,000mm to 1,800 mm of rainfall over most of the country. Karamoja (in the extreme north-east) is a small zone that experiences less than 500 mm of rainfall. Apart from Karamoja, a bigger part of the country is forested.

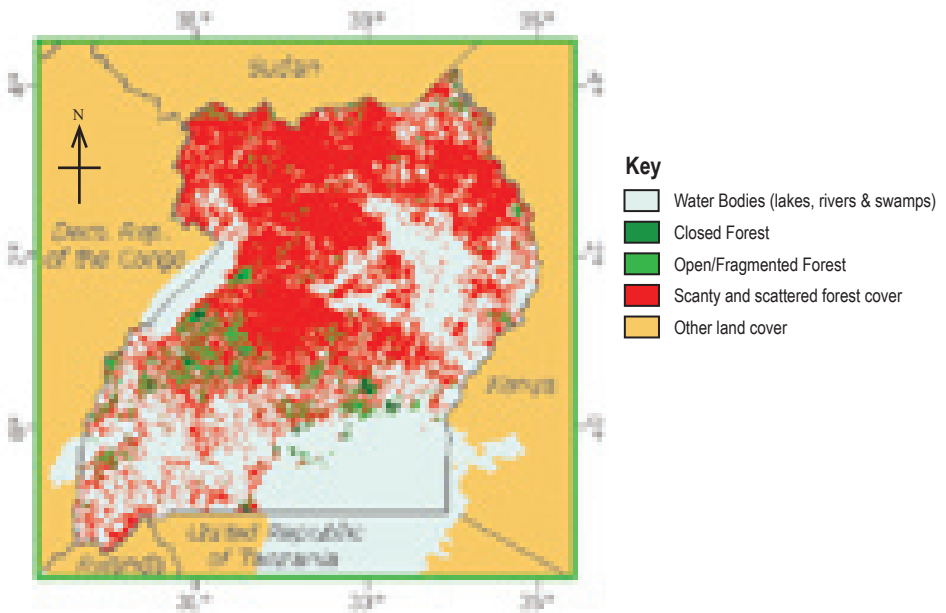
The country's land surface is comprised of 199,710 Km² of land and 36,330 Km² of open water surfaces, which includes swamps, rivers, and lakes (CIA, 2007).

Uganda currently has a population of slightly more than 30 million and a population growth of 3.5% per annum (CIA, 2007). The country has substantial natural resources, including fertile soils, regular rainfall and sizeable mineral deposits of copper, cobalt and oil. It is an agriculture based economy that employs over 80% of the work force. Coffee and fish exports account for the bulk of export revenues. Since the 1960s to date, a number of policy reforms were undertaken aimed at rehabilitating and stabilising the economy and boosting production and export earnings. But since then, the country has registered varied economic growth interrupted with periods of political instability; until recently in the 1980s when some form of political stability was ushered in did the country register growth rates ranging from 5% to 6% per annum. Despite this economic growth rate, majority of Ugandans, especially in the rural areas remain poor. The poverty levels in the country are closely linked to peoples' dependence on biomass (natural resources) for food, water, energy, housing, health, employment and income generation (Keizire and Mugenyi, 2006). There is a high dependence on biomass resources in the country. Consequently, forests and other forest resources have continued to be lost since the 1960s, especially in privately managed forests ecosystems.

3.2. Forest Cover in Uganda

Forests cover an area of about 49,500 Km² of the country and consist of Tropical Rain Forests and savannah woodlands. Seventy percent of these forests lie outside protected areas i.e. are privately owned with no specific legal framework for their management. This scenario exposes forests in the country to unabated overexploitation, encroachment and degradation that is consequently dwindling the forest estate in the country. For example, the country has lost 1.3 million hectares of forest cover in the last 15 years (FAO, 2005). This is a loss of 86,700 hectares annually. It is predicted that at this rate Uganda's forest cover would be annihilated in the next 20 years. This loss is further complicated by the ownership (tenure) of forests in the country whereby 70% of the forests are privately owned with no specific legal framework that controls their use and management. Yet in the past, forests were preserved and sustainably managed based on ingenious traditional cultural and spiritual wisdom, knowledge and practices.

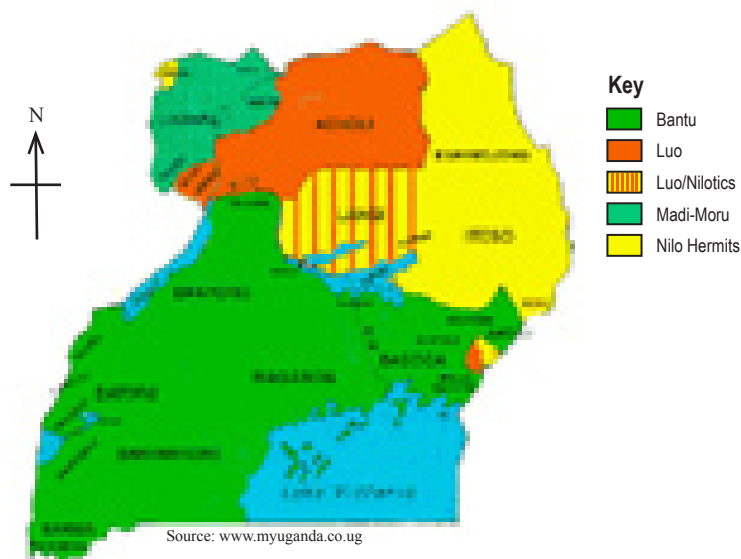
Map 1: Showing different forest zones in Uganda (FAO, 2005)



3.3. Cultural Diversity in Uganda.

There are up to 52 tribes in Uganda of which 33 are the major ones (www.myuganda.co.ug). These tribes are classified in 5 major ethnic groups with different languages and dialects, namely; Bantu, Nilotics, Madi-Muro, Highland Nilotics and Nilo-Hermits (www.myuganda.co.ug). Each ethnic group has different cultural and spiritual practices and conduct by which they interact with various objects of nature. “Culture defines society, fuels our differences and highlights our similarities” (www.TalkAboutCulture.com). The original indigenous cultures, beliefs (religions), practices and lifestyles have been influenced and modified over the years by the invasion of alien cultures, religions (beliefs), practices and lifestyles from the Arab and European countries over the years (Oded, 2007) and intermarriages of people of different ethnic groups (www.myuganda.co.ug). This has resulted in the erosion of indigenous cultures, beliefs (religions), lifestyles, practices and knowledge at the detriment of traditional identity, family integrity, core values, ethics and the sustainable use of natural resources.

Map 2. Showing Location of various Tribes (Cultural Diversity) in Uganda



The Bantu are an ethnic group of people with different languages and dialects, but have a common suffix “ntu” signifying a person (e.g. Bantu plural for people or Muntu singular for person) and have similar social structures. They constitute almost half of Uganda’s population and are believed to have originated from the Congo and settled in Uganda in 1000-1300 AD. It is believed these came from their original homeland in search of fertile farm land, in pursuit of animals they hunted and also probably fleeing from tribal conflicts, disease and natural disasters. They constitute the Baganda, Bagisu, Bagwere, Bakiga, Banyankore, Banyole, Banyoro, Basamia, Basoga, Batooro, Bafumbira & Banyarwanda and Bakonjo & Bamba. It is believed that the Bantu introduced the use of iron in farming and hunting and brought with them the centralized government system, although this is often disputed by some modern historians.

The Nilotics and the Nilo-Hamites are another extensive group of people that include the Karamojongo, the Iteso, Kumam, Langi, Acholi, Alur, Kakwa, Sebei, Jopadhola and the Luo who are spread all over East Africa. They are sometimes classified together as the Luo.

The Luo are Nilotics believed to have originated from the Rumbek region of Southern Sudan who migrated to Uganda in the 15th century fleeing from natural calamities, tribal conflicts, and diseases and in search of new areas to settle. The major group came under the leadership of a man called Olum who had three sons, namely; Gapiir (Nyapir), Labongo (Kyebambi) and Tiful. Two of Olum's sons (Gapiir & Labongo) conflicted over the Loyal Spear which was the symbol of power. Thereafter, Gapiir and Labongo separated with Gapiir going to the west of the River Nile and intermarried with the Lendu and Okebu to form the present day Alur tribe. The Alur speak Luo and retained some elements of Luo culture. Labongo moved to Acholi land that was originally occupied by the Langi and they intermarried. Consequently, the Langi lost their Ateker language and pastoralist culture and began to speak Luo and adopted Luo culture of settled agriculturists. In essence, although the Langi speak Luo, they are not Luo, but Nilo-Hamites. Tiful also moved to west Nile, but little is known about his off-springs.

A group of Luo moved southwards to an area called Pawir now occupied by the Bugungu in Hoima district. Of these, a small group called the Biito-Luo led by one Isingoma Rukidi Mpuga moved to the present day Bunyoro and formed the Babiito dynasty that since then ruled the Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom, which was comprised of Bunyoro, Toro and Ankole. The Luo who went to Bunyoro were assimilated among the Banyoro, they lost their language and culture and adopted Bantu culture and practice. It is not clear whether there was any interaction between the Bachwezi and Babiito, although traditions among the Banyoro attempt to link them.

Another group of Luo moved eastwards in the middle of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century led by Adhola and settled in Budama. They chose to settle in thickly forested area as a defence against the attacks from Bantu neighbours who had already settled there. This self-imposed isolation helped them to maintain their language and culture amidst Bantu and Ateker communities. Between 1550 and 1800, other Luo groups crossed into the Nyanza province of Kenya.

The Nilo-Hamites are believed to have originated from the Kaffa region of Ethiopia north of Lake Turkana. Some of them like the Langi lost their original language and some cultural traits and practices due to Luo influence, although some original Langi cultural traits and practices can still be identified today. For example, Lango society is segmentary with Leadership being cen-

tred on the clan which would be both a kinship unit and the basic constituency of politics within the Rwotdom. The Rwot (chief) has the duty of controlling the entire clan. He is helped by a council of elders. The other senior members besides the Rwot are the leading elders of the clan. The Council of Elders is responsible for general administration and the maintenance of law and order within the clans. They organised the payment of debts, luk (adultery and fornication fines) as well as bride wealth. This Council is also responsible for organising the distribution or disposition of the property of the deceased. Many clan elders are brought together to form the Odonge-Atekere and one of them would be elected Rwot or Awitong as he is also called. The Odonge-Atekere are the clan branch leaders and the Rwot has the duty of controlling all the affairs of the clan. In the past, the Rwot used to lead the warriors to war and mobilised defence during an invasion. After battle, he would organise a feast during which the Moo and Moi (military ranks) were conferred upon those that deserved them. These ranks were for those who had displayed excellent performances during the battle.

The Madi-Muro is a group of people that are comprised of the Lugbara, Madi, Metu, and Okebu. They are thought to have originated from Sudan and the Congo. Little is currently known about them.

The Baganda are one of the largest Bantu tribes in Uganda and mainly occupy the central part of the country called Buganda. Baganda can be found in the districts of Kampala, Mpigi, Mukono, Masaka, Kalangala, Kiboga, Rakai, Sembabule and Mubende. Their origin is not clear. But, Baganda believe that they are descendants of a man called Kintu. While they agree on the man, they disagree on his origin. Some Baganda believe Kintu came from Heaven and set foot on earth at Podi Habour in Bunyoro in western Uganda, while others believe he came from the east of Uganda through the direction of Mt. Elgon through Busoga and finally settled in Buganda. Another Buganda tradition thinks they are Hamites from Ethiopia or Luo from Sudan. However, being Bantu speaking, it can safely be said that they originated from central Africa where all Bantu originated.

The Baganda believe in superhuman spirits in the form of mizimu, misambwa and balubaale. The balubaale are believed to have been men whose exceptional attributes in life were carried over into death. The mizimu are believed to be ghosts of dead people for it was believed that only the body would die and rot, but the soul would still exist as omuzimu (singular of mizimu). Such ghosts

were believed to operate at the family level to haunt whoever the dead person had grudged with. If the mizimu entered natural objects, they are believed to become misambwa. At another level, the mizimu could become tribal figures and also be known as balubaale.

The supreme being among the Baganda is the creator, Katonda, believed to have had neither children nor parents. He is said to have created the heavens and the earth with all that they contain. Katonda is however, not believed to be very different from the other balubaale. In fact, he is believed to be one of the 73 balubaale in Buganda. There are 3 temples for Katonda in Buganda and all of them are situated in a place called Kyaggwe under the care of priests from the Njovu clan.

The other balubaale have specific functions. The most important of them being Katonda Ggulu-god of the sky and the father of Kiwanuka (god of lightning); Kawumpuli (god of plague); Ndaula (god of smallpox); Musisi (god of earthquakes); Wamala (god of Lake Wamala); Mukasa (god of Lake Victoria); Musoke (god of the rainbow); and Kitaka (god of the earth). All these gods are highly venerated by Baganda.

There are temples dedicated to the different balubaale throughout Buganda. Each temple is served by a medium and a priest who has powers over the temple and acts as a liaison between the balubaale and the people. In particular clans, priesthood was hereditary, but a priest of the same god could be found in different clans. The priests (mediums) occupy a special place of religious importance within society and they usually avail themselves for consultation.

The kings have special shrines of worship. The royal sister known as Nnaalinya is the one in charge of the king's temple. Similar tradition exists in Busoga among the Basoga people with slight variations in the pronunciation of the names of the different spirits. The different spirits have different functions in society. Spirits that are associated with natural objects i.e. misambwa are believed to protect those objects and in this way the objects are not destroyed by people. This is one concept of using cultural (spiritual) knowledge (wisdom) in the preservation of natural resources. In fact, many forests, water sources or points, falls (rapids) and other natural objects are associated with misambwa in Buganda and Busoga regions of Uganda. Other tribes also have similar cultural practices and spiritual beliefs as do the Baganda and Basoga, but only vary in terminology.

There is a tradition among the Baganda that the balubaale cult was introduced by Kabaka Nakibinge to strengthen his authority and that he combined both political and religious functions for that matter.

3.4. Forests and Natural Resources Protected (Managed) based on Traditional Knowledge (Wisdom)

There are tree species e.g. *Ficus natalensis* and *F. thonningii* from which backcloth is obtained that is used by traditional spirit mediums and priests as cloak and also used to wrap bodies of the dead in Buganda, Busoga, Bunyoro and the Luo. Backcloth was (is) a highly valued material and therefore the tree from which it is obtained is culturally protected (www.myuganda.co.ug).

People are prohibited from cutting a tree when it is still green in some sacred forests. There are taboos associated with this action. A person is only allowed to gather the dead and fallen wood in such a forest (Muthee Thuku & Nsuguna Gichere, 2006). If such a prohibited action is done, the concerned (affected) person must undergo a cleansing ritual that requires him/her to sacrifice an animal and other predetermined items. Similarly, in some forests, people are not allowed to fell a tree using man-made iron tools, but instead must use stone tools to cut the trees. It was believed that if anybody cut a tree using a man-made iron tool, the tree would bleed blood, which would amount to a curse to the person who uses the iron tool to cut the tree (Muthee Thuku & Nsuguna Gichere, 2006). To cut a tree using a stone is one of the most difficult ventures to undertake. Therefore, one is not likely to cut many trees at a go. In this way, the trees in the forest are preserved and protected from over-exploitation.

In the past, any body that accidentally set a forest on fire would have committed a heinous crime against the gods and would require a cleansing ritual to be performed to rid him/her of the curse. This usually involved sacrificing either an animal or any other predetermine item by the spiritual leaders or mediums in the community.

Among many tribes the killing of some animals is a taboo e.g. killing a Colobus monkey is a taboo among the Baganda and Banyoro. Also, the killing of a pregnant animal is traditionally a taboo among many tribes in Africa in general and Uganda in particular. Such practices preserve certain species and animals. Such an act necessitates spiritual cleansing rituals for the culprit

(UNEP, 1999 & Kalyango pers. Comm).

If a lake or river exists in a sacred forest, such a lake or river is believed to be the home of spirits and nobody is allowed to trespass on the lake or river. It is believed that if anyone contravenes this rule, he/she would disappear and never be seen again alive (UNEP, 1999). It would require a cleansing ritual to be performed by the relatives of the deceased (lost person) for them to recover the body of the dead person (Muthee Thuku & Nsuguna Gichere, 2006).

Some forest are preserved as burial grounds for the dead, are considered dwelling places for the spirits of the dead and therefore are not entered before rituals have been performed. Such forests must be kept un-desecrated by human beings at all times. Otherwise, it is believed that calamities would befall the affected community (UNEP 1999; Muthee Thuku & Nsuguna Gichere, 2006; www.myuganda.co.ug).

Mankind would do well to remember that in many cultures the wilderness (forest in this case) is strongly associated with wisdom. It is a place to which people go in times of transition or confusion and it is the place from which new insights emerge (Cullinan, 2003). Therefore, to destroy the wilderness (forest) is to destroy mankind. Wilderness is inherent in all people and organisms. It can also be understood as another name for creative life force inherent in the universe. Much of what is best in us is contained within our wild hearts (Cullinan, 2003). Hence, wilderness is the heart of our existence and expressing it is fundamental to our role in natural resources management.

An authentic culture is the product of an active community life of individuals who are in contact with the spiritual energy that expresses itself through them. The shared values, symbols and beliefs of an authentic culture are in turn the foundation on which society's more formalized institutions of polity and community is built. It has also been noted that in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, the management of tropical forests by African foresters is a comparatively new experience. The key constraint to effective communication of forestry knowledge is that development workers, both foreign and national, do not communicate effectively with local communities. FAO (1999) observed that powerful and strong stakeholders tend to be ignorant of site-specific issues that are relevant to developing appropriate ideas for support. People manage their resources differently according to their cultures and require location specific interventions. This cultural diversity significantly contributes to sustain-

able natural resource management. Knowledge about these different cultural norms however, is very scanty and within the confines of few elderly members of the community. The limits in knowledge regarding traditional management practices greatly affect management of these resources.

Africa and Uganda in particular are at crossroads trying to reconcile the conservation and recuperation of their vast cultural and natural heritage to meet the growing needs of her population. But, powerful external forces continue to divert Africans from solutions that originate from within Africa as they push for privatisation and industrialisation of land, knowledge and biodiversity in the name of poverty alleviation, yet, the solutions that Africans seek lie within their indigenous cultures (ABN, 2007). It is noteworthy to submit here excerpts of Dr. Tewolde Berhan Gebre Egziabre's speech at his acceptance of the UNEP Earth Champion Award at an Award Ceremony in Singapore in April 2006 where he stated as follows: "Polar ice is melting. The sea level is rising. The Earth's surface is desiccating. Hurricanes, typhoons, tornadoes and sandstorms are blowing. Soil is eroding. Ground water is drying up. What is left is being polluted. And so is the air. Species are dying out faster and faster. Epidemics are devastating human and other life."

Meanwhile, in the banquet hall of pomp and power, the conversation continues: "Save the biosphere by privatizing it. Solve all by selling off all. Sell off the soil. Sell off the forests. Sell off the grasslands. Sell off the water. Sell off the air. Sell off all the species. The private sector can genetically modify them to replace those that have died out. Never mind unforeseen impacts. If they happen, it will be after I am gone. And sell off all that sustains the women, the children, and the poor. But, mind you! Appear to be improving life for them all. Oh - and don't forget to leave some public assets just around my palace" (CEG News, No.4, 2006). This mindset of selling-off everything through privatization (industrialization) bedevils most of our leaders today, albeit the devastations happening to mankind and other life due to our mismanagement of earth in the name of development.

3.5. Policy, Legal and Institutional Frameworks

3.5.1. The 1995 Constitution of Uganda

The Constitution of Uganda is the Supreme Law governing the country, which in relation to the environment assures all the people living in the country the

fundamental right to an environment adequate for their health and well-being. It also provides for the development and management of the environment and natural resources sector in a sustainable manner and for the formulation of laws and regulation to this end. Therefore, in fulfilment of this constitutional provision, the government of Uganda put in place the following policies and legal provisions for the sustainable use and management of her natural resources.

Article 237 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995 states that, “all land in Uganda belongs to the citizens of Uganda”, while Article 26 (1) of the same Constitution states that, “every person has a right to own property either individually or in association with others”. Subsection (8) of the same Article provides for the security of Occupancy of lawful and bona fide occupants (settlers). Article 237 of the Constitution of Uganda recognises 4 land ownership regimes, namely; Customary, Freehold, Leasehold and Mailo. These land tenure systems are defined as follows:-

- Customary ownership of Land is one in which land is passed-on from off-spring to off-spring, community-to-community or from generation-to-generation in a customary manner often times without legal title, but with a document of “Will” or verbal agreements between the concerned parties. Such land is owned in perpetuity by the concerned parties, unless of-course, these parties choose to sell it or lease it.
- Freehold is a land ownership regime in which an individual can freely occupy land that does not have any claimant (encumbrance) on it. Such individuals are deemed to own the land for life. It is the right in a property to hold it with perpetual right. In a freehold right there is no limit of time for which the land can be held. A freehold property lies with the title holder until such a time when the owner freely transfers it to another person.
- Leasehold is land ownership in which an individual is given a certificate of lease to the land to occupy and use it to the stipulated venture in the lease for a given period. Leases to land can legally be issue for a minimum period of 49 year and maximum period of 99 years, all of which are re-

newable upon agreement between the concerned parties. The concerned parties can either be individuals, families, communities, co-operations, the state, etc.

- The Mailo land ownership regime was adopted from the Colonial Government as a token of gratitude to the Buganda Kingdom for having collaborated with the Colonial masters and enabled them to successfully manage and integrate Uganda into a British Protectorate. The term Mailo originates from the English word “Mile” that was badly pronounced by the local Baganda people. It referred to the miles of land allocated to Buganda Kingdom by the British Colonial Government. Some of these lands were lands captured from the former tribes that resisted the Buganda Kingdom and Colonialists in the pursuit to integrate Uganda.

Leasehold, freehold and Mailo are new land ownership regimes that are alien to Uganda’s traditional natural resources management systems.

Article 237 (2) of the Constitution also creates a trust over particular kinds of land. For example, sub-section 2 (a) states that “the Government or local government may, subject to article 26 of the constitution, acquire land in the public interest”. Also sub-section 2(b) states that “Government or a local government shall hold land in trust for the people and protect natural lakes, rivers, wetlands, forest reserves, game reserves, national parks and any land to be reserved for ecological and tourism purposes for the common good of all citizens”.

The Constitution of the Uganda 1995 recognises and permits kingdoms in Uganda to exist as purely cultural institutions without political power and the ability to levy taxes (Buwembo, 2001). The cultural institutions recognised in Uganda include; the Buganda, Busoga, Ankole, Bunyoro, Toro and Bukonjo Kingdoms and the Alur, Lango (Rwot), and Teso Chiefdoms. Unlike in the past when these cultural institutions (kingdoms) had political power and the ability to levy taxes, this change in the management of cultural institutions (kingdoms) has rendered them politically and economically impotent and unable to make decisions concerning development and natural resources use.

This kind of situation has complicated the use of indigenous (cultural or traditional) wisdom, practice and knowledge in natural resources management, especially forests, in Uganda.

3.5.2. Other Legal Provisions

i. The Land Act Cap 227

This Act enforces the above Constitutional provision concerning ownership of land and also enshrines the above 4 land tenure regimes and protects natural resources from alienation. It also creates a Land Fund that is supposed to be utilised by the government to acquire registered land to enable tenants by occupancy to acquire registrable interests pursuant to the Constitution and to resettle persons rendered landless by government action or natural disaster. This provision creates a precedent for communities being deprived of control over their resources. In some districts, such provisions have resulted into conflicts between the communities and the local leaders.

ii. Land Acquisition Act 1997

Whereas Article 26(2) of the Constitution prohibits compulsorily depriving any person of his or her property or right to possession, the Land Acquisition Act (1997) provides for procedures and method of compulsory acquisition of land for public purposes whether for temporary or permanent use. The Minister responsible for land may authorise any person to enter upon the land and survey the land dig or bore the subsoil or any other thing necessary for ascertaining whether the land is suitable for a public purpose. The Historical Monuments Act gives the minister powers under sections 2 and 3 to declare any object of archaeological, ethnological, traditional or historical interest to be a preserved or historical object. The minister may also require the acquisition of any land by government, which is necessary for preserving or affording access to the object. Such land is then vested in the Uganda Land Commission. However, the declaration by a Minister does not affect the estate, right, title or interest in the object of the owner or any person beneficially entitled to it. When a minister declares an object to be protected, a written agreement with the owner or any person beneficially entitled to the object for its protection is made. After, which he/she can pass a declaration for acquisition (gazettement) of that land (forest or object) in public interests and all tenable provisions concerning the involuntary resettlement and compensation

processes must therefore apply on the affected persons. The law provides that Compensation must be paid to the land owners at a fair market valuation assessed on a willing seller and willing buyer basis and that a person whose land is acquired shall not be evicted (resettled), until the awarded or agreed upon compensation is received. Section 41(6)(c) also provides that assessment of compensation must include losses caused by severance or injurious affection. But, often times, the compensation and resettlement of the affected people is inadequate and leaves them more impoverished than before and the natural resources so acquired end-up being neglected, abused and degraded instead.

Government may in terms of section 44(5) of the Land Act, grant concessions or licenses or permits in respect of a land subject to any law. The permit would authorize use of the land in a manner stipulated by the relevant laws, but would not confer ownership of the land. Also, the Government (local governments) may hold in trust on behalf of the people sensitive areas such as national parks, game reserves, water bodies (swamps, rivers & lakes) and forests. Government (local governments) may issue permits, concessions and licenses to individuals or companies of a given piece of land they hold in trust, but are prohibited from leasing Protected Areas such as game reserves, national parks and gazetted forest reserves.

iii. The Local Government's Act Cap 243

This Act causes the devolution of functions, powers and services from the Central Government and enforces the local government to take effective actions in the governance of natural and other resources in their domain. It also enforces the Decentralisation Policy and establishes decentralised governments at district level. This confers power upon local governments to determine how natural resources in their domain are managed. The Decentralised Policy states that it is the responsibility of Local Governments to protect and preserve natural resources from abuse, pollution, degradation and to manage the resources sustainably for sustainable development within the district. The Act also prescribes the functions of the District Councils as to include: - land surveying, land administration, physical planning, forests and wetlands, environment and sanitation, protection of streams, lake-shores, wetlands and forests. The District Councils also have power to enact district Laws (Ordinances), while Urban, Sub-county division or Village Councils may, in relation to specified powers and functions, make by-Laws. Through this approach,

the district and other lower local councils are empowered to effectively control and manage their natural resources and the environment within their local areas and jurisdiction. This is a great opportunity for the promotion of indigenous knowledge in natural resources management at local community level. But, most districts have not yet enacted ordinances or byelaws to this effect.

iv. National Environment Management Policy (NEMP) of 2004 and the National Environment Act Cap 153

This Environment Policy and Act was developed to establish sustainable social and economic development that maintains or enhances environment quality and resource productivity on a long-term basis. The policy led to the enactment of the National Environment Act Cap 153 and the formation of the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). The objective of the National Environment Act Cap 153 is to provide for sustainable management of the environment and establishment of the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) as the principle agency in Uganda responsible for the management of the environment and for coordinating, monitoring and supervising all the field of environment.

Objective XXV of the Objectives and Principles of the Constitution provides for the preservation of public property and heritage. This objective obliges the state and its citizens to endeavour to preserve, protect and generally promote the culture of preservation of public property and Uganda's heritage. Also, Section 49 of this Act provides for the protection of natural heritage sites. It provides that NEMA, with the assistance of Local Environment Committees, District Environment Committees and the lead agency, identify those elements, objects and sites in the natural environment, which are of cultural importance to the various peoples of Uganda.

This Environmental Policy and Act is supported by other policies and Acts such as the forestry, wetlands, water, fisheries, agriculture, energy, wildlife, community protected areas, disaster preparedness, among others.

v. The Uganda Forestry Policy (2001) and National Forestry and Tree Planting Act (2003)

This Forestry Policy and Act are aimed at establishing an integrated forest sector that achieves sustainable increases in the economic, social and environ-

mental benefits from forests and trees by the people of Uganda, especially the poor and vulnerable. The policy also recognizes the need to promote development and sustainable management of natural forests on privately owned land; the need to promote collaborative partnership with rural communities for sustainable management of forests; and the need to manage and conserving Uganda's forest biodiversity in support of local and national socio-economic development and international obligations. It also provides for government to support sustainable forest sector development through appropriate education, training and research. The National Forestry Plan (NFP) is Uganda's strategic sector plan that is expected to guide all developments in the forestry sector.

The National Forestry and Tree Planting Act provides for the declaration of forest reserves for the purpose of protection and production of forests and forest produce among others. It aims at encouraging participation of the public in the management and conservation of forests and trees and to facilitate greater public awareness of the cultural, economic and social benefits of conserving and increasing sustainable forest cover. It also provides for decentralization and devolution of functions, powers and services within the forest sector and to ensure that environmental benefits, costs and values are reflected in strategies and activities relating to forestry. Section 4 of the Act classifies forests in Uganda as Central Forest Reserves; Local Forest Reserves; Community Forests; Private Forests; and Forests that form part of a Wildlife Conservation Area declared under the Uganda Wildlife Statute 1969. Section 9(3) of the Forestry and Tree Planting Act confers upon the responsible Minister the authority to declare a forest as a Local Forest Reserve and specify the Local Government that will be responsible for the management of such a reserve in trust for the people of Uganda.

While the Forestry Policy and Acts outline the vision for managing forests in Uganda and how forests could be utilized in future to eradicate poverty, create wealth, conserve biodiversity; provide vital ecological and social services and make a contribution to the global community, there are no specific policies to regulate the use of forests outside protected areas. This has further been complicated by the limited (absence) of extension services for the promotion of forest conservation and apparent lack of political commitment and capacity to reverse the current trend of forest degradation.

- vi. The National Policy for the Conservation and Management of Wetlands Resources 1994.

This Wetlands Policy also compliments the goals and objectives of the National Environment Management Policy (NEMP) and maintains an optimum diversity of uses and users when using wetland resources.

vii. The Water Act, Cap 152 and Regulations

The water Act and Regulations provide for the use, protection and management of water resources and supply in a sustainable manner.

viii. The Uganda Wildlife Policy (1996) and Wildlife Act. Cap 200. (1996)

The Wildlife Policy and Act are aimed at conserving wildlife resources within the National Parks and other Wildlife protected areas. They also enable the people of Uganda and the global community to derive ecological, economic, aesthetic, scientific and educational benefits of wildlife. The Act consolidates the laws relating to Wildlife management and establishes a coordinating, monitoring and supervisory body, the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA).

ix. The National Policy on Internal Displacement of Persons and a National Policy on Conflict Resolution and Peace Building

This Policy replaced what was called the Disaster Management and Preparedness Policy of 1999. The replacement was intended to improve the original to address issues of conflict resolution and the impact of displacement persons on natural resources where they are resettled.

x. The Water Policy (1999) and Water Act

The Water Policy and Act were developed to sustainably manage and develop the water resources in an integrated and sustainable manner, so as to secure and provide water of adequate quantity and quality for all social and economic needs of the present and future generations. The Act gives general rights to use water that naturally exists on the land to the occupier of that land for domestic use, fire fighting or irrigating a subsistence garden. But, water underground may only be used by the occupier of the land with explicit permission from the Water Authority responsible for the area. The general rights to use water do not per se authorize a person to construct any works.

According to section 6 of the Act, no person acquires any rights to use water

or to construct or operate any water works, unless authorized under the Act. In this regard, a permit is issued by the Water Authority that ensures the sustainable use of water under- or above-ground in an environmentally friendly manner.

xi. The Energy Policy for Uganda (2002)

The Energy Policy is intended to meet all energy needs of Uganda's population for social and economic development in an environmentally sustainable manner.

xii. National Agriculture Policy (2003)

The Agriculture Policy aims at providing farming systems and land use practices that conserve and enhance land productivity in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Government put in place a Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA). This Plan provides a framework for eradicating poverty in Uganda through multi-sectoral interventions that enable people to improve their livelihoods in a sustainable manner. The PMA recognizes and includes forestry as one of the main sectors that contributes to the livelihoods of poor people. While this plan is well intended, it has failed to make appropriate linkages with other existing policy, legal and institutional frameworks, consequently leading to conflicting mandates. For example, the Forestry sector in the Ministry of Water and Environment believe that they are the lead agency responsible for the provision of forest related extension services in the country. According to the PMA, forest extension services will be provided under the National Agriculture Advisory Services (NAADS), yet this programme mainly focuses on the provision of extension services under agro-forestry that have quick economic gains and benefits, unlike the conventional forestry. Also, provision of forestry extension services under the NAADS programme is further complicated by its design, whereby services are only provided when demanded by the people, implying that if people do not demand for forestry extension services under NAADS, the services will not be provided.

xiii. The Fisheries Policy (2004)

The Fisheries Policy is aimed at ensuring increased and sustainable fish pro-

duction and utilisation by properly managing the capture of fish, promoting aquaculture and reducing post harvest losses.

xiv. Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) of 2004-05 to 2007-8

The PEAP is a macro-economic development framework that guides public action to promote economic growth and eradicate absolute poverty. The PEAP integrates the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in its policy framework and provides for the integration of environment and natural resources management in poverty eradication strategies. It also provides for decentralisation of the planning and management functions for natural resources and encourages private sector participation.

xv. The National Gender Policy (1997)

The Gender Policy is intended to provide policy makers and key actors reference guidelines for identifying and addressing gender concerns when making development decisions.

xvi. Community Protected Areas Institution Policy (2000)

This Policy is primarily for establishing a transparent, fair and just system that will represent and articulate community interests in Protected Areas (PAs) management and concerns on people's actions on PAs.

The Policy provides for the right of public access to information and stipulate the procedures for obtaining such information. They state that "every citizen has a right to information and records in the possession of the state or any public body, except where such a release is likely to jeopardize security, sovereignty or interfere with the right to privacy of any information". The Acts also make provisions for mandatory disclosure in public interest, especially if the disclosure would reveal real evidence of an eminent or serious public safety, public health or environmental risk. The Policies and Laws also provide for the protection of the country's cultural heritage.

xvii. International Treaties, Conventions and Protocols

Uganda has ratified several international treaties, conventions and protocols (agreements) relating to the environment. These global and regional agree-

ments have great bearing on the management of natural resources. The need to abide to international obligations cannot be over-emphasized. According to section 27 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969), a State is under duty to honour its international obligations, even if it means amending its municipal (national) law. Uganda, therefore, is under obligation to comply with the terms of this treaty, if it is not to be accused of having bleached international Law.

Uganda ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) of 1992 in 1993. The major objective of the Convention is to ensure the conservation of biological diversity in situ where possible and ex situ where not and the sustainable use of its component parts. State Parties are required to undertake Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) on projects that are likely to have significant adverse effects on biodiversity and are expected to formulate plans and programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Uganda is signatory to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat, 1971 (the Ramsar Convention). This Convention was ratified by Uganda in 1988 and it has been an important tool for the management of wetlands in the country.

Uganda is party to the 1972, Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. This Convention seeks to establish an effective system of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value. Uganda as party is required to take all necessary legal, scientific, administrative and financial steps to protect her heritage.

Uganda is party to the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (1968) and signed the Protocol Agreement on the Conservation of Common Natural Resources (1982) and the Lusaka Agreement of Co-operative Enforcement and Operations Directed at illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora (1994).

Uganda is also a signatory in the Convention against International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD), Kyoto Protocol, among others.

3.6. Challenges and Opportunities in Natural Resources Management

in Uganda

While the poor and vulnerable are often highlighted in many national policy and legal statements, in practice they are often ignored, making the policies sound more like lip-service.

Whereas the country has very good policy, legal and institutional frameworks capable of protecting, conserving and using natural resources sustainably, often times these policy, legal and institutional provisions are flouted (abused) by both government itself and the local communities (users) living in the vicinity of the natural resources. This has resulted in over-exploitation and degradation of the natural resources that has brought into question the effectiveness and credibility of existing policy, legal and institutional frameworks.

The international conventions that Uganda has signed and ratified offer an opportunity for the effective use and management of natural resources in the country. However, most of these international conventions, treaties and protocols have not been completely domesticated in the country. This has consequently complicated and limited the country's adherence to these international agreements. Nevertheless, there is great opportunity for the implementation and enforcement of these international agreements because government is in the process of domesticating most of the international agreements and it is hoped that with time all the international agreements will be completely domesticated in the country's national policy, legal and institutional frameworks and will contribute to natural resources management in the country.

Since 1986, Government's plans for a private sector led economic growth and development have attracted into the country several investors interested in commercial agricultural ventures that require large pieces of land. Property rates, particularly for privately owned land are continuously hiking, making land a very expensive item for investors. In a bid to provide favourable conditions for investor interest, Government has continued to irregularly change land-use of many Protected Areas (PAs) for commercial purposes, yet Government holds these PAs in trust for the citizens of Uganda as provided in the country's Constitution. As a result, Government has violated its own operational policies, laws and regulations and abused the Constitutional tenets of holding protected lands in the interests of the population, especially the forests.

Uganda is losing her forest cover at an alarming rate of 86,700ha per year (FAO, 2005), despite the presence of laws and institutions to oversee the protection, preservation, use and management of these resources. According to NEMA (2004/2005) this forest degradation has been exacerbated by the fact that over 70% of forest cover in the country is privately owned with no proper sustainable management regime in place. The existing laws have little or no impact on privately owned forests. This kind of natural resources loss was not known when tradition (indigenous) approaches were applied in natural resources management, until the advent of the so called modern laws and methods of natural resources management.

It is therefore obvious that forests and other natural resources were better preserved and managed based on traditional (cultural & spiritual) practices prior to the advent of the existing modern laws, practices and lifestyles. Hence, it is important to recognise the role of indigenous (traditional) cultures, practices and lifestyles in natural resources use and management and learn (borrow or integrate) those good aspects of traditional management into the existing modern natural resources management approaches.

According to Borni Eyeraben (1996), local communities are aware of their interests, possess specific capacities or comparative advantage for participating in resource management and that they are willing to invest in management of their resources.

Mankind has convinced self that the human mind is capable of developing new economics, new engineering and new science to leap onto the stage of industrial development. There is no development anywhere in the World that does not go with destruction of the nature. According to Cullinan (2003) Systems of governance would be successful, if they were to be designed taking into account the attributes of what was being (intended to be) governed. The current reliance of governance systems on purely economic considerations and the functioning of markets to guide human behaviour are often highly inappropriate. Making certain decisions this way guarantees that bad decisions will result. This is especially so, even if market distortions are corrected by full cost accounting whereby the cost of pollution or environmental destruction is borne by the polluter or developer and incorporated into the price of commodities. Such accounting can never compensate the environmental damage or loss caused by bad actions. It would be appropriate, if the prologue of any Constitution could state in its opening lines a clear recognition that our

human existence and well-being is dependent on the well-being of the larger earth community out of which mankind was born and upon which mankind is dependent for continued survival. It is only self destructive arrogance that has convinced mankind that she/he can assume the rights to devastate what nature has brought into being, but which mankind or nature is unable to replace once destruction has taken place. Nelson Mandela¹ stated that “nature can do without man, but man cannot do without nature”.

Despite overwhelming evidence that mankind is now completely on the wrong track as far as regulation is concerned (Yergin, 1992; Cullinan, 2003), she/he is unwilling to address the most vital and evident issues concerning natural resources use. It is society’s belief that increased consumption is likely to increase personal happiness, cause development and reduce poverty. Regulating human consumption may not be an easy task, especially now at a time when most of us have internalised the false beliefs and approaches on which our civilisation (modernisation) is based and have abandoned old and better traditional beliefs and approaches to natural resources use and management. There is need for a paradigm shift in the way mankind views and manages (governs) the earth to a more ecologically holistic manner that includes a change in the governance paradigm (laws and political structures) of human society, how we personally understand the world and develop an earth jurisprudence and adopt the wild law (Cullinan, 2003). To achieve this will require the efforts of many people in many fields. This was recognised at the launch in 2007 of the Future World Council in Hamburg, Germany where it was stated that “we must share, cooperate and innovate together to build a world worthy of our highest aspirations. Natural laws supersede all others because they determine the condition of our existence” (Bianca Jagger, 2007). We should do everything in our power to help sustain life on earth in all its beauty and diversity for future generations (CEG News No.7, 2007). “Respect for life and nature and affection and love for one another is the way to a better life and planet” (Salifu Abdulai, 2007).

¹ Former President of South African

4.0. Study Findings

4.0. STUDY FINDINGS:

The following are the findings of the study regarding the role of indigenous knowledge in traditional governance of forests:

4.1. Forests in Uganda Governed based on Cultural Practices

The study found that there are a number of forest resources that are managed using indigenous knowledge. It was also found that for a long time the local communities in Uganda have generated and regenerated knowledge that has been effectively utilized to sustainably manage natural resources. Most of these forests and other resources have cultural connotation that inspire the communities to conserve them, a fact that explains why they still exist amidst the high levels of degradation.

Table 1: Forests Managed by Cultural means in Bunyoro, Buganda and Busoga Kingdoms

No.	Cultural Forest Resource	Land ownership	District	Kingdom
1	Mawuta	Customary	Mayuge	Busoga
2	Meru	Customary	Mayuge	Busoga
3	Wanumbe	Customary	Mayuge	Busoga
4	Ma ngira (Kintu) Forest	Lease hold	Mukono	Buganda
5	Ssezibwa cultural site	Lease hold and mailo	Mukono	Buganda
6	Iyirimbi forest reserve	Public land	Bugiri	Busoga
7	Ongo	Customary	Masindi	Bunyoro
8	Motokayi	Customary	Masindi	Bunyoro
9	Ewafala	Customary	Masindi	Bunyoro
10	Tengele	Customary	Mas indi	Bunyoro
11	Karongo Estate	Lease hold	Masindi	Bunyoro
12	Keith Bitamazire's Forest	Lease hold	Masindi	Bunyoro
13	Alimugonza	Customary	Masindi	Bunyoro
14	Maganga	Customary	Masindi	Bunyoro
15	Kapeka	Customary	Masindi	Bunyoro

4.2. Community Wisdom and Knowledge in the Governance of Culturally Respected Forest Resources

Most of the forests visited in the kingdoms are believed to be dwelling places for spirits. The spirits thought to reside in the forests are believed to be those that bring fortune, giving children, money, protection against diseases, etc. and misfortune and therefore need to be appeased to deter any misfortune. It is believed that in order to receive blessings of any kind, one has to sacrifice to the spirits, and to this end, many goats and chicken are slaughtered as a way of appeasing the spirits. During the study, evidence of sacrifice could be observed. For example, In the Ganda culture, forests are an interconnection between God and the community. It is believed that a person is made up of two parts, namely the body and spirit. The spirit is believed to consist of Lubaale, Mayembe and Emisambwa. People in the three Kingdoms believe forests are spiritually protected. It is said anybody who attempts to cut down any of the sacred trees is punished. Other trees are reported to resurrect (rise up again) once cut, can talk, producing sounds like humans and are capable of warning encroachers from cutting them down, a case in point is the Mawuta forest in Mayuge District in Busoga Kingdom. This spiritual attachment, has greatly contributed to the willingness of the resident communities to protect and sustainably utilise the forests.

Photograph Source: NAFPE



Photograph 1. Men performing cultural rituals at a Sacred Shrine in Mawuta Forest, Mayuge District, Busoga Kingdom

Community benefits from Culturally Managed Forests

The community obtains:-

- Food from the forest i.e. wild yams, fruits like guavas etc.
- Herbal medicine.
- Firewood for cooking
- Contribution to the hydrological cycle of the area by recharging the community protected wells and rainfall
- They are dwellings places for spirits.
- They help modify the micro-environment of the area

The loss of such forests would destroy community's spiritual, cultural and physical way of life which they have preserved and benefited from for many centuries.

The fact that some tree species are sources of locally known herbal medicines is also a factor that has contributed to the traditional protection of such forest resources. Examples of tree species of local medicinal value include Miziru that is known to cure anaemia; Emiwafu that chases demonically attacked people or devils from the community, others Mavugo, Ekinalisa, Nkago, Nongo, nsyabya, Kalitunsi, Nkarate, Empewe, Kirundu, Mikelemba, Muky-eyebuza, Luzu, Kamenyambazi and Mununkuli. Due to the local communities' attachments to forests, several meetings are usually held in the forests to discuss the forest's wellbeing.

Photograph Source: NAPE



Photograph 2. A resident in search of medicinal plants in Kintu Forest, Mukono District, Buganda Kingdom

Traditional governance of forests is not without challenges. The challenges include:-

- The community shared responsibility of taking care of culturally owned forests and other natural resources is decreasing. Management of culturally owned natural resources has been abandoned to a few or single individuals. This has resulted into increased management costs as services that were originally offered freely now demand a management cost. Yet such resources are like Cathedrals to indigenous people, where they connect with the Creator (deity). This is negatively affecting the health and spiritual wellbeing of the community and natural resources (e.g. wild fruits & other nutritious foods, herbal medicines, etc).
- With Christianity and the ever-increasing influence of western culture, continuity of indigenous knowledge is threatened. Some members of the communities believe every thing African is evil and that it should be done away with.
- Schools have also contributed to poor transmission of indigenous knowledge; children leave home for boarding schools before receiving the knowledge and do not have time to acquire this knowledge thereafter.
- In some communities, the clan system of governance is falling apart; this has led to the loss of people from these clans who would be interested in preserving the forests.
- The traditional oral system of transmission of knowledge, accumulated over centuries, to the next generation, has broken down due to western education ignoring or undermining these knowledge systems.
- Cultural or indigenous traditions of forest management and governance have not been documented and therefore this has created further breakage of continuity of cultural norms and knowledge regarding the management of forests.
- Culturally maintained forests are meeting excessive pressure from persons interested in expanding their farmland or carrying out unsustainable harvesting of resources from the forests.

- The current decentralisation of districts has proved to be a challenge to natural resources management. Often district councils consider locally existing natural resources, particularly forests, as sources of revenue and are therefore more inclined towards exploitation of forests solely for revenue purposes in disregard to their ecological, social and cultural significance. Sometimes, development programmes are proposed in areas occupied by such indigenous forests without due consideration. A contractor once proposed to expand a road that passes through Mangira (Kintu) forest, a culturally significant forest in Mukono district, without considering the damage to the forest or the community. This proposal, however, generated conflicting opinions among the local community and administrators.

Photograph Source: NAPE



Evidence of a forest encroached for Agriculture in Mukono District, Buganda Kingdom

4.3. The Relationship between Traditional Institutions, State, Land Administration and Communal Tenure

The study discovered that most traditional institutions in Uganda do not have much jurisdiction over the land in their kingdoms. These institutions own land like any other Ugandan and do not command any powers over the way land is used by their subjects. In Buganda however, the situation is a bit different, the kingdom was found to have its own land and a parallel Land Board to the national Land Board. The Buganda Land Board handles the land of the kingdom. Buganda has also been demanding for the return of its land (commonly known as the Mailo land i.e. 9000 square miles) that was confiscated by the government in the 1960s.

The study also found out that it was not easy for the communities to register community managed forests with government. This was mainly because, in many districts, the institutions responsible for establishing community forests are not yet established. It was also discovered that some districts want these resources to remain under their management, since they are a source of revenue for the districts. For example, the communities in Pakanyi Sub-county in Masindi district were in conflict with the sub-county authorities over the management of Alimugonza forest that the local authorities wanted to be put under their control since it was considered a source of revenue for the sub-county.



Photograph Source: NAPE

Photograph 4. Sources of Information: Left: Mzee Daudi Kayima, the custodian of Waitambogwe Forests in Busoga Kingdom & Right: Mzee Kalyango, the Custodian of Kintu Forest in Buganda Kingdom educating the local communities about the traditional practices in natural resources management

4.4. Status of the Forests and Challenges to Using Cultural Governance Practices

Privately owned forests have been faced with pressure from the growing population and from the growing demand of forest products. Many of the forests in Busoga kingdom for example, were found to be under pressure from the increasing demand for agricultural land, use of forest wood resources for timber, charcoal and brick baking. Many of the forests were found to have tree and animal species that are of great significance to the surrounding community. These trees include; Musizi (*Maesopsis eminii*), Nsyambya (*Markhamia lutea*), Luzu (*Teclea nobilis*), Mikelemba², Mukyeyebuza¹, Kamenyambazi (*Margaritaria discoideus*), Omununkuli¹ and animals such as Monkeys, Porcupine and others.

² Scientific name not readily available

Many natural forests have been preserved over the years because of the presence of culturally sacred sites within them. For example, communities living around traditional forests have taboos associated with the forests that have restricted people from encroaching on the forests (e.g. Mawuta & Kintu forests). Although communities may be restricted from encroachment, they are usually permitted at certain times or circumstances to harvest firewood and medicines from the sacred forests.

Trees that were identified by the communities to have become extinct in the traditional forests visited by the study team include Nongo (*Albizia grandibracteata*) and Enkago (*Albizia grandibracteata*) that are important medicinal tree species. The explanation given for their apparent extinction from the forests was that there was over-exploitation of the forests by the fast growing population in the area.

It was also reported that the reason why many things were getting spoilt in the community was because many people believed that development would only originate from the central government, meaning that the local communities would not take up the responsibility of confidently and freely participating in development processes. This mentality was common in Busoga kingdom. There is therefore need for attitudinal change among the society. Also, some natural resources in the country do not have specific ownership and identity, a reason probably why they are often mismanaged.

Government Extension Agents are not doing their job. Extension Agents in the Forestry sector were accused of merely being exploitative of the natural resources for self gain and were not performing their supervisory and advisory roles for sustainable management of natural resources. This was attributed to poor facilitation of Extension Agents by the central and local governments. It was therefore suggested that remuneration and facilitation of Extension Agents needed to be improved to enable them do their jobs.

4.5. Policy, Legal and Institutional Reform Processes

Whereas the country is said to have good policies, legal and institutional frameworks that provide for sustainable natural resources use and management and communal ownership and protection of land (See. Literature Review), many of the policies, legal and institutional frameworks neither adequately address natural resources management and nor capture the beneficial

aspects of traditional (cultural & spiritual) practices and lifestyles in the use and management of natural resources. For example, while Article 237 of the Constitution creates a trust over particular kinds of land for the good of all citizens and preservation of biodiversity and many laws recognise the importance of culture and cultural heritage, the Land Act has a provision for the acquisition of Land in public interest that could jeopardise the maintenance of culturally (traditionally) protected and managed lands. Also the Land Fund created by the Land Act that is supposed to be used by government to acquire registered land to enable disadvantaged tenants (people resettled involuntarily by government's action or natural disaster) is not yet in place. In addition, the existing compensation and resettlement frameworks are old and obsolete and have no reflection of current socio-economic realities and challenges. This results in many involuntarily displaced communities to be inadequately compensated and resettled and to lose their cultural identity and heritage.

While there are provisions in the national policies and legal frameworks for the participation of local communities (public participation) in natural resources use and management, often there are no proper guidelines (strategies) and institutional mechanisms for the involvement of local communities decision-making concerning natural resources management. Likewise, there are no explicit strategies for the involvement of traditional (cultural) approaches and practices in natural resources management in the country.

The classification of forests into Central Forest Reserves, Local Forest Reserves, Community Forests, Private Forests and Forests in Wildlife Conservation Areas does not explicitly recognise culturally (traditionally) managed forests ecosystems, but bundles these latter forests into the former categories, which does not adequately bring to the limelight (centre stage) forests managed in a traditional manner (based on indigenous Knowledge), yet it is an inherent character of the Laws to encourage the participation of culture (tradition) and other approaches in natural resources management.

The advent of modern laws (legislation), practices and lifestyles have usurped and eroded traditional customs, practices and lifestyles that preserved natural resources over the last many centuries. In some districts, the existing policy, legal and institutional provisions have resulted into conflicts between the communities and the local leaders over who has the right to the natural resources. In addition, the absence of the necessary laws or ordinances at the local government levels concerning the right of access to natural resources at the local level is aggravating the conflicts. This is further complicated by

the recently proposed controversial Land Amendment Bill (2007) that seeks to amend Sections 31, 32, 35 and 92 of the Land Act Cap 227. It is argued by government that whereas section 31 of the Land Act 227 provides that the lawful and bona fide occupants enjoy security of occupancy on the land, there have been widespread evictions of these categories of tenants in utter disregard of their interest in the land as provided by Article 237 of the Constitution and section 31 of the Land Act and therefore government seeks to enhance the protection of lawful and bona fide occupants through the amendment. However, some Ugandans think that the amendment is just a scheme by people in government with clandestine motives to grab land from innocent and unsuspecting citizens, especially in Buganda Kingdom, a reason why controversies and conflicts over land are rife in the country. According to some in the public, “What is needed is not an amendment of the Law, but rather enforcement of the existing Law”.

While Uganda has signed and ratified several international agreements, many of them have not yet been fully domesticated into the national policy, legal and institutional frameworks, making it difficult for the country to effectively adhere to and comply with the agreements.

There is therefore need to develop new, relevant and dynamic compensation and resettlement frameworks that are in tandem with prevailing socio-economic scenarios to ensure that people affected by government’s actions, developments or natural disasters are equitably compensated and resettled; there is need for policies, legal and institutional frameworks that recognise the importance of cultural property and heritage to avoid unnecessary loss of such property and heritage and those that take advantage of cultural (traditional) knowledge (wisdom), practices and lifestyles that could favourably contribute to sustainable natural resources use and management without losing national integrity and identity; there is need to develop laws in a public participatory manner to avoid unnecessary controversies and conflicts; and there is also need to completely domesticate international agreements signed and ratified by the country into national policies, legal and institutional frameworks.

5.0. Challenges and Opportunities

5.0. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY ECOLOGICAL GOVERNANCE IN UGANDA

The prevailing constitutional, legal, decentralisation, other institutional reform processes and policy provisions have variously affected the rights of indigenous (rural communities) on natural resources. The laws determine whether the community can access and utilise a given resource and if they do, how they utilise the resources. Some of the provisions have enhanced or limited the community's access to natural resources. Below are the opportunities and challenges of the existing policy, legal and institutional frameworks on Community Ecological Governance in Uganda.

5.1. Challenges

- Due to the invasion of foreign cultures, practices and lifestyles, the community shared responsibility of caring for forests and other natural resources is being eroded. Management of culturally owned natural resources has been abandoned to a few or single individuals. This has resulted in services originally offered freely by members of the community now demanding a management costs.
- The continued and widely spread belief that everything African is evil is misconception that threatens the survival or revival of traditional African culture, practice and lifestyles. This has been aggravated by the current education systems that Africans have adopted from the west that tend to negate traditional and indigenous approaches. Also, the impact of inter-marriages across different ethnic groups has continued to erode indigenous knowledge, cultures and practices of the individual ethnic groups. In addition, the practice of keeping traditional (cultural) knowledge and practices in the minds of the older people and it being passed-on from generation-to-generation orally is eroding the quality and sustainability of such knowledge.
- The current decentralised governance systems is proving to be a challenge to sustainable natural (forest) resources use and management, because governments under such system tend to focus on using the natural resources (forests) to generate the badly needed revenues to meet governance needs.

- The failure, by the districts, to put in place relevant ordinances or byelaws has frustrated effective management of natural resources. This has also frustrated the application of indigenous knowledge in natural resources management.
- While decentralisation and devolution of power from the centre to the local district level may be good and beneficial, most districts are still young and lack the capacity to adequately embrace this governance practice. Also, attitudes among the local communities and the local authorities have not yet effectively changed to completely harness the decentralisation concept and approach. Some leaders have been reported to be too autocratic. In addition, decentralisation has often focused on revenue generation at the expense of natural resource conservation.
- Most traditional institutions in Uganda do not have complete jurisdiction over the land in the kingdoms (Chieftdoms), making it difficult for the institutions to take appropriate decisions and action for the sustainable management of the resources and hence community ecological governance. It is also not easy for communities to register culturally owned natural resources under the current legal regimes. This makes it difficult to promote community ecological governance in the country.
- The current culture (belief or expectation) among local communities that development in the communities must be initiated by the central (local) governments stifles individual (community) innovations and initiative to spur own development in the community and hence application of community ecological governance approaches.
- The existing policy, legal and institutional frameworks do not adequately recognise and incorporate traditional and cultural practices and knowledge in mainstream governance of natural resources. There are no explicit strategies and institutional mechanisms that incorporate these approaches. This limitation will continue to stifle the advancement and application of traditional and cultural knowledge and practices in sustainable natural resources management.

- The Constitution of Uganda provides for holding in trust for all Ugandans a number of resources. Some of these resources are of cultural importance to the communities, especially those within the geographical locations of the resource. This often results in the deprivation of the indigenous communities of culturally important resources that they have sustainably managed over the years using their indigenous knowledge.
- All lakeshores and forested islands in Uganda have a protection zone of 200 meters from the low water mark intended to avoid pollution and degradation of water point. While this is good in itself, it limits community's access to the water bank, especially communities whose culture and spirituality are associated with water banks (falls or rapids). For example, in Busoga and Buganda traditions there are important cultural sites situated on the river or lake shores and water falls (rapids). In such a case, the legal provision is a challenge to the affected communities and in its implementation (enforcement). A case in point is the Bujagali Dam Project where communities have cultural and spiritual attachments to the Forested islands in the River and the riverbanks. These communities in the proximity of Bujagali Falls will lose their cultural and spiritual identity and heritage once the dam is constructed and floods the Bujagali Falls. These communities will not be adequately compensated for the loss of the falls. A similar situation is reflected on the Bugala-Kalangala islands on Lake Victoria where local communities are being negatively affected by the establishment of a Palm Oil tree estate and Oil refinery by BIDCO, a private company.
- There are several weaknesses with the acquisition and compensation regime. First, if the Minister acquires land under the Land Acquisition Act, it is not clear whether the tribunal in assessing the compensation must take into account the requirements of section 77 of the Land Act that seems to apply only where the government acquires land under section 42 of the Land Act. There is no logical reason why it should make a difference whether land is acquired under the Land Act or the Land Acquisition Act. Some local communities, especially in Busoga lost their forest resources that had been managed using indigenous knowledge to the central government. The forests have been the centre of conflict between the local communities and the Local government.
- The available laws are not translated into local languages and they also are not effectively disseminated to the various stakeholders. This has resulted

into the communities and other key players not adequately contributing to the management of natural resources. There is also inadequate manpower and financial resources to support the implementation (enforcement) of the various laws, policies and regulations.

- Whereas there are laws that demand the disclosure of public information, often times this is not achieved, because of an inherent desire and practice among public officers to conceal information.
- The existing Land policy and Land Act is ineffectively enforced, because of lack of political commitment and the existing gaps in the policy and laws that have complicated the management of natural resources, especially cultural resources that are usually based on indigenous knowledge. Also, the practice by government of irregularly giving-away protected lands, especially gazetted forests, has complicated the enforcement of existing laws.
- The policies on management of natural resources are fragmented among a number of government institutions, which are not well facilitated (do not have the financial & human capacity) to implement them. The fragmentation of responsibility among several government entities complicates the effective enforcement and implementation of the policies.
- There are no enabling laws to facilitate the implementation of the international conventions. Most of the conventions are usually not domesticated and therefore remain difficult to implement. For example, the UNFCCC, UNCCD, among others.
- There are no explicit laws, policies and regulations that deliberately target gathering, documentation and dissemination of indigenous knowledge. There has also been complicated by the general lack of funding for such activities locally and internationally.

5.2. Opportunities

Despite the above constraints, there are opportunities for the promotion of CEG in Uganda and these include:-

- There is a diversity of cultures in Uganda that all have rich Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). This TEK forms a good foundation for Community Ecological Governance in Uganda.

- The Constitution of Uganda recognizes people's culture, customs, beliefs, wishes, traditions and aspirations. This implies that use of traditional knowledge in community ecological governance has a legal basis.
- There are cultural institutions such as Buganda, Busoga, Bunyoro and Toro kingdoms that have a long history. In each of these institutions, there are cultural leaders who are custodians of indigenous knowledge through whom the indigenous knowledge is passed-on from generation-to-generation. These leaders offer opportunity to work with and educate the people about the use of indigenous knowledge in natural resources management, especially forests.
- There are civil society organizations (NGOs, CBOs & Local Communities) whose mandate and work are linked to cultural survival and revival and use of indigenous knowledge. These offer a diversity of established organizations through, which the skills, principles and practices of natural resources management based on indigenous knowledge, can be passed on.
- There is a growing body of international interest that support indigenous and cultural conservation practices as an alternative way of natural resource management. This provides an opportunity for supporting research and education in the use of indigenous knowledge in natural resource management and empowering communities to use indigenous knowledge for natural resource management.
- In Uganda, there is growing interest in developing multi-stakeholder dialogue processes that bring together different cultures and actors to discuss matters concerning natural resources management and human survival based on indigenous knowledge. Such processes could also help prevent cultural clashes and loss of cultures.
- There is an existing framework in the country for communal use and management of natural resources. This provides an opportunity for community ecological governance of natural environment and natural resources

- There are sacred forests and heritage sites that are culturally managed. This provides an opportunity for promoting community ecological governance
- The growing climate change crisis provides an opportunity for promoting and reviving community management of ecosystems based on indigenous knowledge
- There are growing transboundary partnerships for natural resource management that could be utilized to promote community ecological governance and vice-versa between countries and across shared resources. The partnerships could also be used as avenue for information exchange concerning indigenous knowledge.
- Uganda has signed and ratified international convention, protocols and treaties e.g. CBD, RAMSAR, CITES, UNFCCC UNCCD, Kyoto Protocol, United Nations Conventions of Cultural Heritage, among others. This provides opportunity for communities to demand for the protection of natural resources based on international law.
- All cultures in Uganda have gender differentiation of roles where men, women and the youth (children) have specific functions (roles) in natural resources management. This provides an opportunity for all gender to participate in natural resources management and forms a good basis for community ecological governance.
- In Uganda, education has brought women in the limelight and has enabled them to actively participate in natural resources use and management. Therefore, women can form a good entry point into a community to promote CEG. In addition, women are usually more in numbers in any given community and therefore are an avenue for soliciting majority support and influence regarding natural resources management in the community.
- In Uganda, there is a gender policy and law for mainstreaming gender and this is an opportunity for mainstreaming gender in natural resources management and thus CEG.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Conclusions

- Indigenous knowledge is vital for the sustainable management and good governance of natural resources, particularly forests. The traditional methods of sharing, passing on and preserving indigenous knowledge has been undermined since colonisation and independence. Knowledge has therefore been continuously lost from generation to generation.
- Traditional relationships between past, present and future generations are fading away due to the upsurge of alien cultures such as Islam, Christianity, other religions, education methods, western life styles, etc. Christianity and western cultures over-ride indigenous culture by regarding the latter as evil and backward. There is therefore a general failure to inter-marry local culture with current trends, and the youth are alienated from their ancient heritage.
- There is a general lack of awareness among the Ugandan society on the value and contribution of indigenous knowledge in sustainable management of natural resources, nor of the complex ecological governance systems that have evolved over the centuries. There is also little or no literature and information concerning indigenous knowledge because these are living, oral traditions.
- Forest degradation continues to occur at alarming rates, despite the presence of prohibitive regulations, to the extent that forest cover commonly thought to be existent has been discovered to actually be non-existent, because of the limited inspection and supervision by the responsible authorities. People encroach into a forest and it takes a very long time before government officials get to know about it, because they tend to be confined in their offices and do not conduct regular inspections and supervision
- Government of Uganda is still failing to fully ratify international conventions, of which it is a party, for natural resources management.

- Locally existing policy and legal provisions for sustainable natural resources management, although seemingly adequate, are poorly implemented and enforced, thus rendering them ineffective. While there is a desire among decision-makers to improve natural resources management, the problem remains the lack of effective commitment to accomplish the desire and the prevalent political patronage among administrators that hinders effective implementation of policy and legal provisions.
- Recognition of the vital role of indigenous knowledge in natural resource governance is not well catered for in the existing policies, laws and regulations. There is no deliberate attempt for its inclusions in the policies. There is need to link decision making regarding natural resource management between policy makers and the local communities.
- While there is a legal provision for a National Forestry Forum, there is no evidence that it exists. Such a forum would be a good avenue to discuss the wellbeing of forests resources in the country. The common explanation for its absence is the lack of finances to constitute it. In addition, while Village Forest Committees exist legally, they are not functional
- Cultural institutions, like Kingdoms, are not fully recognised. They have very limited authority to formulate or enforce policies and to influence decision making in society. The suspension of kingdoms in 1966 is responsible for the breakdown of traditional governance systems, weak cultural structures, and the current lack of respect for culture among the local community and especially the youth.
- There is little shared responsibility among the community towards governance of forests and other natural resources. Services that were offered freely are today paid for. This cultural breakdown has led to ecological degradation and therefore, poverty among the community, which leads to further cultural and ecological breakdown.
- The increasing demand for farm land and human settlements is affecting natural resources management to the extent of introducing new plant species in the environment such as sugarcane, Palm oil, tobacco, consequently, leading to extinction of indigenous plant and animal species.

- There is often unfair sharing of outcomes or proceeds, a general lack of accountability and unclear description of beneficiaries in programmes that are being implemented, which is a recipe for controversy and conflict among society.
- Inadequate capacity in terms of personnel and equipment at district and local levels to implement natural resources management
- Forests have great cultural significance to communities, wherever they may be. These are places where communities conduct traditional rituals and therefore they need to be preserved and respected. These are the living cathedrals of the community, where they communicate with their Creator. With the right kind of support communities can revive their strength, cohesion and governance systems to protect their ancient heritage, which is also their source of survival and responsibility towards future generations. This is understood traditionally. Community Ecological Governance can be revived in Uganda as has been demonstrated in other countries elsewhere.

6.2. Recommendations

The following are the recommendations suggested to address the issues identified in this report.

- A national inventory of community forests and other privately owned forests be made and regularly updated.
- There is need for a national fund to facilitate sound management of forest resources that are governed through cultural means. There is also need for a national resource centre for traditional knowledge on natural resource governance systems with a decentralised structure, where communities are fully engaged.
- Cultural institutions should be involved and empowered to practice cultural governance systems to enable them to effectively govern their community forests. There is also need for cultural institutions to promote and raise awareness of the additional value of Uganda's natural heritage.

- Government should provide security of tenure for communal land and forest resources to enable them to sustainably govern their traditional forests.
- There is need for laws, ordinances or byelaws at national and local government levels that recognize the role of indigenous and traditional knowledge in conservation of natural resources, especially forests. Civil Laws should respect cultural regulations and governance systems.
- Laws, policies and regulations should be translated into local languages and properly disseminated to stakeholders.
- There is need for political will from government to ensure proper implementation of existing policies, laws and regulations on natural resources management.
- Government institutions involved in the implementation of natural resource management policies should be properly facilitated and coordinated to ensure effective service delivery and avoid duplication of services.
- Government should put in place enabling laws for the implementation of international conventions
- Local government under decentralisation should develop mechanisms that promote effective participation of the communities in forestry management and should put more emphasis on conservation rather than exploitation for the sole purpose of generating revenue for the district at the expense of the survival of the natural resources.
- There is need to create awareness and empower communities to understand their rights and entitlements and demand for them (e.g. the rights of participation in management of natural resources). This requires sensitising communities on their roles in natural resources management. There is also need to establish Village Environment Committees (VECs) in areas where they do not exist or activate Village Forest Committees (VFCs), which should enhance traditional governance structures of the community.

- Promote the planting of trees in commemoration of community events such as birth, death, visitors, activities, etc.
- The local communities should be empowered and involved in the creation of local forest reserves by the districts. There is need for nurseries for indigenous tree seedling to facilitate indigenous tree planting and replenish tree species threatened with extinction.
- There is the need for a National Elders Forum where indigenous knowledge on governance of natural landscapes can be exchanged and strategies to protect them can be collectively developed.
- The most critical priority is also to reconnect the youth and the elders, so that their knowledge can be transmitted before the elders die. Although elements can and should be documented, there are some vital aspects of the elements that cannot be documented, but must be passed-on orally to properly prepared persons. This is true for many spiritual aspects where the deeper spiritual knowledge is not suited for public consumption.
- In order for communities to be able to defend themselves against external pressures for investment and industrial development on their cultural landscapes and territories, they need to work in unity and be more organised and coordinated. By so doing, they will be more capable of demanding and exercising their rights enshrined in the tenets of the Constitution and legal provisions of the country.
- Strong communities, with a range of allies at local and national level will in fact be able to assist the government to implement both its own legal provisions, and those international agreements it is a party to. It can be a win-win situation. This is also important as a legacy issues for the next generations.
- The recuperation of traditional ecological governance structures has been achieved in other countries. Uganda can do the same. Communities should be encouraged to document their process of recuperation and those aspects of their governance systems that are good for natural resources management. This is particularly necessary now that Africa is faced with the inevitable climate instabilities, which is threatening the continent's balance in biodiversity and human survival.

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Annex I

Terms of Reference

African Biodiversity Network - A Community Ecological Governance Project

Terms of Reference for

A Case study on cultural approaches to forest governance and legal provisions in relation to community participation in forest management, culture, land tenure and community rights in Uganda – A case for Community Ecological Governance

Background

The erosion of biodiversity and degradation of vital ecosystem services is an extremely serious problem in Africa, undermining the capacity of communities to sustain their livelihoods and reduce poverty. African Biodiversity Network (ABN) has been implementing micro-projects with organizations in Africa, which are working directly with traditional communities or communities living near forests, to seek greater recognition of rights and involvement of local communities in governance of local forests and other environmental phenomena. This initiative has been formulated to address simultaneously the development goals of each country as well as the objectives of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) such as: the CBD COP7 on protected areas and informal approaches, adaptation strategies for climate instability, and in some countries the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Convention Biological Diversity (CBD). This initiative is meant to influence policy-work towards greater recognition of community rights and catalysing community participation in governance of local resources. The target communities in this action are those specifically selected and who are eager to collaborate in developing their own culturally centred approaches to demonstrate how traditional knowledge systems can effectively contribute meaningful solutions to local development and environmental management problems.

ABN has planned to initiate a similar process in Uganda, where case studies on legal opportunities/challenges and community/cultural knowledge on environmental governance is documented for use in the target communities and nationally.

Objectives

1. To document key forest resources governed through cultural approaches in Uganda and how this land is held
2. To document community wisdom in management of selected culturally respected forest resources in Uganda (especially forests in Busoga kingdom). Key elements to highlight include: geographical background of the area, traditional management including taboos, important species and their uses, sacred sites in the forest, rituals carried out, local traditional governance arrangements, etc.
3. To document the relationship between traditional institutions, state land administration and communal tenure
4. To highlight current health status of the forests and challenges facing cultural governance practices
5. To document relevant prevailing constitutional, legal, decentralization, other institutional reform processes, and policy provisions vis-à-vis land tenure, culture, governance and environment, territory, sacred sites, collective, community, and traditional rights
6. To highlight how these provisions affect the rights of indigenous / rural communities and state whether these laws are in line with important constitutional provisions, while highlighting the opportunities and challenges for communities
7. To explain the extent to which the national government is applying the provisions of international conventions to policy formulation, constitutional and legislative processes (for instance, if ILO 169 for example is ratified, to what extent are other laws, practices and procedures implementation in synchrony with this / other international provisions? Is this happening?)

Expected Outcomes

- 1- List of forests (and other environmental phenomena) being governed culturally and their geographical situations
- 2- Documentation of community knowledge/wisdom in governance of selected forests and other relevant environmental phenomena
- 3- A SWOT analysis of relevant legal/policy and constitutional provisions regarding community rights, culture, land tenure.
- 4- Profiles of organizations working with communities on culture, environment, human rights
- 5- Recommended actions/next steps guided by the outcomes of the study.

Annex II

Interview schedule

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENTALISTS (NAPE)

AN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE ON COMMUNITY ECOLOGICAL GOVERNANCE STUDY TO BE ANSWERED BY MEMBERS OF COMMUNITY AND RESOIRUCE CUSTODI- ANS

A. PROFILE

- i. Respondent-----
- ii. Sex-----
- iii. Age-----
- iv. Marital status-----
- v. Educational level-----
- vi. Name of the site-----

B. INFORMATION ON THE FOREST RESOURCE

- i. Is the information on the forest cultural management documented?
- ii. Where can it be accessed?
- iii. What types of trees are in your community?
- iv. Who owns these trees?
- v. Who owns the land on which the forest is?
- vi. What type of ownership?
(a). Milo land (b). Lease holds (c). Free hold (d). Customary
- vii. Do you know any other forest that is culturally owned or managed in this area?
- viii. Name the forest?
- ix. Is there any other?
- x. If yes, mention the village and sub-county.

C. COMMUNITY WISDOM IN MANAGEMENT OF THE FORESTS.

- i. Who manages this forest?
(a) Individual (b) community (c) government (d) any other
- ii. Is there any cultural belief that is attached to this forest?
- iii. If yes, then mention?
- iv. What types of different trees are in this forest

- v. What are they used for?
- vii. Is the forest sacred or there are some sacred sites with in.
- viii. Mention the sacred sites.
- ix. Who performs the rituals in those sacred sites?
- x. How efficient has this form of management been?
- x. What have been the challenges in management of this forest?

D. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS, STATE LAND ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNAL TENURE

- i. Is this forest accessible to members of the communities?
- ii. What do they use it for?
- iii. Is there any relationship between this forest and other similar forests
- iv. Do the custodians/managers of the forest interact with other custodians of similar forest in Uganda?

E. CURRENT HEALTH STATUS OF THE FOREST AND CHALLENGES FACING CULTURAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF THE FOREST.

- i. Is this forest increasing or reducing?
- ii. Why? Is it increasing or reducing?
- iii. Have new species of trees been introduced in this forest
(a) yes (b) no
- iv. If yes, which species?
- v. Are some species that were originally in this forest now extinct?
- vi. If yes, mention the species.
- vii. What challenges have you met in managing this forest?
- viii. Have you addressed these challenges?

D. PREVAILING CONSTITUTIONAL LEGAL DECENTRALIZATION AND OTHER PROCESSES. (For Institutions)

- i. What are the constitutional and legal constraints in management of these forests?
- ii. Has decentralization affected management of these forests?
- iii. Explain how?
- iv. Is there any community initiative on application of traditional/cultural means to conserve these resources?

E. THE EFFECT OF THE PREVAILING LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL, DECENTRALIZATION AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORM PROCESSES ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS/RURAL COMMUNITIES.

(for Institutions)

- i. What are the constitutional and legal constitutions in management of these forests?
- ii. How are the constitutions or the cultural constitutions promoting the cultural knowledge in conservation of these resources?

F. SUGGESTIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS

Suggest what you think should be done for future sustainability of these resources

- On management
- On the knowledge used
- Relationship with other sites
- Relation ship with Government
- Health status
- Legal constitutional and other processes in relation to conservation of this nature
- Other current forums of conservation other than this but in collaboration.

Annex III

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Do you know of any forest that is culturally managed in this area?
2. Are there sacred sites in your forest?
3. Who then performs the rituals in these sacred sites?
4. Is the information on the forest cultural management documented?
5. Where can it be accessed?
6. Have new species of trees been introduced in your forest? Mention them;
7. Are some species that were originally in this forest now extinct? Mention them;
8. Has decentralization affected management of your forests?
9. What are your own opinions on this kind of conservation?
10. In order for this kind of knowledge to be used, adopted by community government and be replicated, what suggestions do you give?

Annex IV

KEY CONTACT PERSONS IN THE STUDY AREAS

No:	Names	Kingdoms
1	Mzee Daudi Kayima	Busoga
2	Patrick Izimba Gologolo	Busoga
3	Christopher Alule	Busoga
4	Luba Fred	Busoga
5	George William kalyango	Buganda
6	Dr Onegi (THETA)	Buganda
7	Davidson Madira (BUCODO)	Bunyoro
8	Rebecca Sarah (NFA)	Buganda
9	Kaluba John Patrick	Busoga

Annex V

Profiles of organisations working with communities on issues that relate to culture, environment, human rights, etc.

No.	ORGANISATION	CONTACT
1.	Sustainable Development Initiatives 0712 498461 sdi@yahoo.com	Wolimbwa Anthony
2.	Ecological Christian Organization 0712 628659, 0774136464 kaboisaac@yahoo.co.uk	Kabongo Isaac
3.	Rural Development Foundation 071 191152 stevenm@yahoo.com	Steven Mondo
4.	National Adult Education Association 0772 860366 dkaziro@yahoo.com	Kaziro Douglas
5.	Agency for Environment and Wetlands 0772 351736 ssemwogerered@yahoo.com	Ssemwogerere David
6.	Pro-biodiversity Conservation in Uganda 0782 393912 tumwesigye@yahoo.com	Robert Baganda
7.	Climate and Development Initiative (CDI) 0752 294606 nyakahumaedward@yahoo.co.uk	Nyakahuma Edward
8.	Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD) 0712 978520 mugambwa@arts-mak.ac.ug	Mugambwa Everest Kizito (Formerly working with UCSD, but now works with NEMA)
9.	Uganda Environmental Education Foundation 041 290740 ugandaenvironmental@yahoo.com	Ssenyonjo Nicholas
10.	Adult Literacy and Basic Education 0712 85 1481	Dranda Richard
11.	Uganda Women Tree Planting Movement (UWTPM) 0772 473963 Jessmuk06@yahoo.com	Jessica Kukasa
12.	Environmental Protection for Sustainable Economic Development	Nyabongo Apollo
13.	Uganda Nile Basin Discourse Forum (UNDF) 0782 436700 snaigaga@yahoo.co.uk	Sarah Naigaga
14.	Uganda Women Tree Planting Movement (UWTPM) 0774 223903 uwtpm@yahoo.com	Ruth Mubiru
15.	Traditional and modern health care providers together against AIDS (THETA) - Uganda Plot 724/5 Mawanda Road Kamwokya Tel: 256 41 532930 Fax: 256 41 530619 E-mail: msftheta@mul.com	Dr Alex Opio



