

The Human Rights Commission commits itself to promote the work of indigenous communities in nature conservation.

NAPE has launched a report: *“A call for legal recognition of sacred natural sites and territories and their customary governance systems”* (2016).

The report has been co-authored by NAPE, the Gaia Foundation (UK) and the African Biodiversity Network (ABN).

The launch of the report was presided over by the Chairman of the Uganda Human Rights Commission, Hon. Med Kaggwa. The report among other objectives, issues discussed, aims to provide the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights with persuasive and substantive arguments relating to a core element of original African traditions, namely Sacred Natural Sites (SNS) and their customary governance systems. It calls for a decisive policy and legislative response.

The report follows a series of NAPE activities and support to the indigenous communities in the Bunyoro, Buganda and Busoga regions of Uganda in their efforts to revive and strengthen their cultural practices and knowledge as a fundamental process in nature conservation and climate change mitigation.

At the launch, the Executive Director of NAPE, Mr. Frank Muramuzi called upon the government to recognise the conservation role of indigenous communities, especially those in the custodianship of the country’s natural forests, water bodies, wetlands and other forms of ecosystems. He said that governments should support community-driven approaches to coping with wide spread climate vulnerabilities associated with food, water, land and livelihoods.

On her part as the activist for indigenous knowledge and sacred natural sites, Liz Hosken, The Executive Director of Gaia Foundation, applauded the work done by NAPE in accompanying custodians of sacred natural sites and territories. She gave a detailed synopsis of the report and the global processes meant to actualise the African Charter for Human and People’s Rights. She informed the participants at the launch that the report is meant to operationalize the recommendations of the Charter.

The Commissioner, Hon. Med Kaggwa applauded the work of NAPE and its partners for their leadership in mobilising indigenous communities in their noble cause of reviving and strengthening the traditional knowledge and practices.

He pledged the Commissions’ commitment to discuss and implement the report’s recommendations and also support all the efforts to promote the rights of communities in their quest for recognition of their cultural heritage and customary governance systems. (See the full speech)