8565 young people took to the streets in Uganda to commemorate Earth Hour 2024 and demonstrate against the alarming deforestation statistics which are being driven partly by the demand for cooking wood in schools.

The National statistics indicate that the country loses over 100,000 hectares of forest cover annually. More alarming is the statistic that 7000 hectares of forest cover are lost every month of the school term.
WWF therefore decided to use this year’s earth hour to flag off a campaign that we see each school owning a woodlot.

“We are also flagging off a campaign that will rally over the 40,000 learning institutions in the Country embrace clean cooking technologies and put the pressure off the natural forests”, Stated Agnete, WWF’s Chief Operating Officer.
To ensure the success and sustainability of the campaign, WWF in Uganda is partnering with the Scouts Association of Uganda, the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral development, religious and cultural institutions that own over 60% of learning institutions in the country among others.

At the Earth Hour commemoration and symbolical of the campaign, WWF and all her partners established a woodlot at one of the learning institutions in the Albertine landscape.
The key wins for this year’s earth hour were the commitments from duty bearers to ensure that our learning institutions own woodlots to improve on the learning environment but also address the school cooking energy needs that are fueling deforestation in the country.

Take a look at the key highlights and commitments.
The Schools demand for firewood is killing the environment. With over 40,000 learning institutions in the Country, urgent action is required. As the Ministry, we are excited to work with WWF to rollout this massive action to green our schools.

This will provide a conducive learning environment. To show our commitment, we are going to set targets for learning institutions in terms of tree growing and the District Education Officers and Inspectors of Schools will ensure that this is enforced. As we commemorate Earth Hour, let us take action to stop deforestation.

*Hon Janet Kataha Museveni.*
*First Lady and Minister for Education and Sports*
This Earth Hour, we are here with the woodlots program in Schools. You can equally establish one in your backyard. I will work with our network of County Chiefs and Kingdom officials to ensure that this program is a success.

Today, I want to direct all learning institutions in Bunyoro Kingdom to establish woodlots and plant Fruit trees. One year from this Earth hour, we should be able to enjoy the fruits that come with trees.

**Owek. Andrew K. Byakutaga**
Omuhikirwa (Prime Minister), Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom
60
EARTH HOUR

As WWF Uganda, we are using Earth hour to draw attention to the massive deforestation fueled by the demand for cooking fuel in Schools. Research shows that every school in Uganda needs at least three trucks of firewood a week to meet the cooking energy needs. With over 22,500 primary schools and 2,000 secondary schools alone, this puts our forest sector and the environment under threat.

Statistics by the National Forestry Authority indicate that Uganda loses over 100,000 hectares of forests annually. Additionally, the country loses over 7,000 hectares of forests every 30 days.

The statistics often shoot up during school terms. With a woodlot for every school, we believe that these statistics will gradually go down. We are calling upon all Ugandans to treat this with the emergency it deserves to build the resilience of our schools to Climate Change and ensure continuity in learning.

Agnete Schonau
Chief Operations Officer (C.O.O)
The Directorate of Education in the Church of Uganda over-sees 55 Pre-primary Schools, 4,904 church-founded Primary Schools, 460 Secondary Schools, 50 post-Primary schools, including Vocational Training Schools and 6 Universities.

As we mark Earth Hour this year, we are committing that all the 5,000,000 learners in our schools and institutions will each give an hour for nature to establish own woodlots.

Rt Rev Nathan Kyamanywa  
Retired Bishop of Bumyoro Kitara Diocese  
Climate Change Icon, Inter-Religious Council of Uganda
Over the years, WWF in Uganda has continued to use earth hour as a moment to mobilize Ugandans to act against the different acts of environment degradation. In the last five years, we have been able to witness the establishment of 876-acre Earth Hour forest, policy and government actions to address plastic pollution, Government and Ministry directives on sustainable use of natural resources, local government bi-laws for nature protection among others.
“At WWF Uganda, we are excited that our Earth Hour advocacy engagements have yielded into tangible policy reforms and behavior change actions that are ensuring nature recovery. Last year, we pioneered the car free day in Kampala city to create awareness on the increased pollution and rally the public and our government to embrace environmentally friendly transport options. We are excited that this year, over 5 Cities across the Country are going to mark the car free day to commemorate Earth Hour”, stated WWF Uganda’s Communications, Policy and Advocacy Manager, Ritah Kyategeka.
Prince Edward planted a tree at Uganda’s National Botanical gardens to commemorate Earth Hour.

“Uganda is the pearl of Africa. Its beauty continues to mesmerize the world. However, we cannot close our ears to the sad realities and statistics of deforestation and nature degradation that also make it in the news. We must act now to guarantee the future of this beauty. As we commemorate earth Hour, I want to rally Ugandans and the world to act for nature recovery. I have planted my tree. I hope you will each take an hour to plant one, we need it”, he stated.

Prince Edward, the Duke of Edinburgh, is on an official visit in Uganda participating in a series of events aimed at promoting awareness of the Duke of Edinburgh’s International Awards.
In The Media

Context

Climate change

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.
WWF Uganda, Bunyoro Kingdom rollout campaign to plant woodlots in schools

BY JAVIRA SSEBWAMI | PML DAILY STAFF WRITER — March 21, 2024
@WWFUGanda and @BunyoroKingdom have flagged off a much sought-after campaign that will see both institutions support the establishment of woodlots in schools across the Albertine Region.

pmldaily.com/news/world/202...
Government urged subsidize clean cooking technologies to safeguard forests

By AGNES GRACE NABACHWA | REPORTER
Posted on 21/03/2024

Cut taxes on clean cooking technology to save forests- gov't urged
WWF Uganda, Bunyoro Kingdom roll out campaign to plant woodlots in schools