COP28, WWF UGANDA POSITION PAPER

Climate change is happening now and its devastating effects are focused within a small handful of countries like Uganda. These countries bearing the brunt of climate crisis are not being supported by climate action, despite contributing very little to emissions. At COP28 world leaders must address climate injustice and support countries where climate change is contributing to natural disasters, food insecurity, displacement and suffering.

Uganda is eager for COP28 to yield more positive results than those achieved at COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in 2022.

Uganda and the rest of Africa’s position for COP28 is clearly articulated in the Addis Ababa Declaration of the 19th Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and reaffirmed by African leaders in the Nairobi Declaration adopted at the inaugural African Climate Summit (ACS) in Nairobi.

COP28 in Dubai is being touted as the “COP of transformation” where parties must deliver. Building on the outcomes of the African Climate Summit, COP28 presents Uganda with the unique opportunity to reshape her narrative as a “country of solutions” to the climate crisis. It also provides global leaders the opportunity to reaffirm their commitments made in various fora throughout the year.

Since COP27, WWF has continued to engage with government and other stakeholders to ensure that COP28 comes up with an “enhanced implementation strategy” which will entail the following actions: Moving from target-setting to coordinated policies and implementation of actions, aligning regimes and institutions to support implementation and Strengthening accountability and credibility.

Commitment to NDCs

For these actions to yield the necessary outcomes at COP28, developed country parties should deliver on their promises to mobilize US$100 billion per year for climate action in developing countries to support both adaptation and mitigation. Additionally, tangible commitments should be made on the urgent need to enhance Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for increasing the ambition for emissions reduction goals for 2030 and new ones for 2035, through the Global Stock take and the Work Programme on pre-2030 mitigation ambition and implementation. The role of communities in achieving landscape restoration and thus contributing to natural sinks for meeting ambitions need to be further emphasized. Lastly, Parties should state upfront the need for enhancing institutional capacity as a critical enabling condition and create a forum to share lessons and identify resources for enhancing institutional capacity.
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WWF is also calling on our government negotiators to strengthen the implementation of the new and updated NDCs. Uganda's climate responsibility arising from historical and current greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is extremely low. With total emissions accounting for just over 1% of the global greenhouse gas footprint, Uganda just like any other country in Africa is most vulnerable to climate change impacts, but the continent is nevertheless committed to providing solutions to the climate crisis. As a conservation leader in this arena, WWF UCO is committed to work with the government of Uganda and other parties to take lead in mitigation and adaptation actions that focus on people, nature and biodiversity.

Ensuring Energy Security

Promoting energy efficiency and shifting energy sources to accessible and affordable renewable energy solutions will be critical. More than 30 million people in Uganda still lack basic access to affordable, reliable, clean energy.

As impacts of climate change are accelerating, it is imperative that developmental gains be safeguarded against any geopolitical disruption.

For COP28; Parties should reiterate their commitment to support Africa and Uganda particularly in phasing out fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas), using just transition principles in a timely manner to meet its needs based on its strong supply of wind, sun, hydropower, and even geothermal resources, which offer great potential for deployment and investment.

Misplaced and expensive investments in fossil fuels will be obsolete in a few years as the climate crisis worsens and fossil fuel companies potentially lose their social license to operate. Uganda’s energy development should be based on capacitating it to unlock its massive renewable energy potential, and should aim to at least triple renewable energy capacity by 2030. A report by WWF Uganda, and partners including WWF Germany, World Future Council and Bread for the World; on Uganda’s Energy Transition: Towards 100% Renewable Energy by 2050 Renewable Energy Scenario Report has put in place a road map for 100% renewable energy for all by 2050. This report should inform our government negotiators as well as policy makers to take investment decisions geared towards attaining 100 Renewable Energy for all Ugandans. Uganda has announced that it will launch its energy transition plan at the upcoming 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) being held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) next month. The energy transition plan aims to ensure that Uganda meets its Net Zero targets on carbon emissions. The strategy, which will be a key part of Uganda’s delegation’s participation in the climate change conference, will outline how the country will achieve the objectives of carbon neutrality by 2050 while also ensuring universal access to electricity in the country by 2040. We ask that this commitment be operationalized by putting in place a clear funded road map, including financial commitments for the benefit of nature and all Ugandans.
Climate Action for Women and Girls

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by climate change. COP28 is an opportunity to address this imbalance and put women at the heart of climate change action. Women and children are up to 14 times more likely to be killed by climate disasters than men. Displacement and poverty resulting from disasters can also lead to increases in gender-based-violence and child marriage. Women and girls are also more likely to depend on agriculture and have fewer opportunities to relocate or adapt their farming model when faced with effects of climate change. WWF Uganda is calling for world leaders to address this imbalance by funding adaptation and climate resilience programs that will support small-scale farmers. Furthermore, climate finance needs to be more accessible to non-governmental and women-led organizations.

Youth at the Forefront of a Climate Resilient Future

Lastly, Uganda’s youthful population is her greatest asset, and COP28 provides an opportunity to harness this demographic for climate action. We urge COP28 to prioritize youth-centric engagement. This implies emphasizing the need to establish Ugandan youth as a “principal forum” for coordinating youth engagement in climate governance. Discussions at COP28 should therefore recognize, promote, and invest in mechanisms that enhance youth engagement in climate governance. COP28 should seize the opportunity to amplify the voices of Ugandan youth and youth worldwide. It should be the mechanism that ensures youth’s concerns and aspirations are not only heard but also systematically embedded in policy frameworks. The active involvement of young individuals is crucial for mitigating and adapting to the climate crisis, fostering innovation, and building a more resilient and sustainable future.