

AFRICAN FAITH COMMITMENTS FOR A LIVING PLANET

GREEN TOP – TREE PLANTING PROJECT: HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS AND RELIEF UGANDA & UGANDA MUSLIM YOUTH ASSEMBLY Long-term plan on the environment – summary

INTRODUCTION

Humanitarian Efforts And Relief Uganda (HEAR Uganda) and Uganda Muslim Youth Assembly (UMYA) are sister organisations. They have committed to drawing up a sevenyear environmental action plan, called 'Adapting to Climate Change and Tree Planting Initiative', with the Muslim community in Uganda.

Drastic changes in the forest cover have taken place in Uganda during the past century. Recent widespread deforestation has caused a reduction in the supply of wood and nonwood forestry products as well as in environmental services, such as watershed and soil protection, and in biodiversity. There is a growing demand for forest products, and a growing shortfall in supply, based on current investment levels. Due to deforestation there are increased fuel wood costs and much time and money is wasted in fuel wood collection.

The aim of this long-term plan therefore is to make Uganda's six million Muslims more aware about environmental conservation and tree planting, and to establish tree nurseries throughout the country distributing free tree seedlings.

This plan builds on the environmental work of HEAR Uganda and UMYA. For example, in 2011 both organisations held a four-day National Training Workshop for Training of Trainers, including representatives from the Uganda Muslim Teachers Association and the Uganda Muslim Education Association. Participants were trained by, among others, experts from the National Forest Authority in tree selection, planting, care and agroforestry.

In 2011 UMYA, in collaboration with Uganda Women Vision, organised an Iftar (breakfast/evening meal during the month of Ramadan) programme for professional Muslim women and Muslim female students from institutions of higher learning to plant trees and distribute seedlings.

Pilot projects to introduce tree planting and conservation have already begun in several Muslim primary schools, Islamic centres and mosques. Imam Ibban Iddih Kasozi is a British Council Climate Change Champion and Vice National Chairman of the UMYA. He has been giving sermons in mosques, training imams on climate change and participating in the Ugandan Green Friday initiative. He is also participating in the ARC/Kenyan Organization for Environmental Education toolkit to introduce environmental education into faith schools.

PROJECT GOAL

To distribute, help plant and grow 2.5 million tree seedlings for fruit, amenity, and agroforestry purposes, largely to the Muslim community of Uganda, over the next seven years.

The stakeholders and target group will also be encouraged and trained to grow trees and shrubs in their homes, gardens and fields. The project further aims to develop treegrowing clubs at every UMYA branch and UMTA centres in Uganda.

Seedlings will be planted on around 6,250 hectares of land owned by schools, mosques, local communities, local governments and urban authorities such as the National Environment Management Authority, Uganda Wild Life Authority and the National Forest Authority.

Tree nurseries will be established in five regions of Uganda: Kampala; Northern Uganda; Central (Buganda); Eastern Uganda and Western Uganda. 30% of the expected seedlings will be fruit varieties (750,000 over seven years); 30% will be indigenous varieties/multipurpose agroforestry (750,000 over seven years).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT

The project will enhance the livelihood of Ugandans and improve their resilience to climate change through:

- Increasing the number of wind barriers, which in turn reduces soil erosion, and prevents the destruction of crops and property;
- Improved livelihood through selling wood products and through selling fruits such as mangoes and oranges;
- Reducing the cost of energy for cooking through promoting the planting of short rotation trees or shrubs that can provide fuel wood;
- Reducing the pressure on protected areas such as central forest reserves, game reserves and wetlands which are cleared for fuel wood;
- Contributing to climate stabilisation;
- Increasing the number of shade trees especially in urban resting places such as green parks and recreation centres;
- Improving community knowledge and awareness of climate change issues by supporting the demonstration of adaptation practices.

DEMONSTRATION AND ADAPTATION OF BEST PRACTICES

- Target 50 schools, 50 mosques and 50 households to demonstrate water conservation and preservation through rainwater harvesting;
- Create a demo farm plot to demonstrate water and soil preservation techniques including terracing, crop spacing and contour farming as well as demonstrating hay harvesting storage and preservation for livestock;
- Set up training for teams to make energy saving stoves;
- Set up a centre to demonstrate solar and wind energy technologies;
- Set up an environmental award scheme.

Fires destroyed several Green Top farms in early 2012. HEAR Uganda now plans to launch a programme called 'Stop Wild Fires, Protect the Environment' to educate communities about the results of starting bush fires.

The leading partner in this plan is the Uganda Muslim Teachers Association (UMTA). This plan has been endorsed by HEAR Uganda and by the Uganda Muslim Youth Assembly.

This plan was launched at ARC's Many Heavens, One Earth, Our Continent celebration held in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 2012