

Climate skills key for green economy

Climate opportunities are growing across Uganda. Carbon markets are expanding. Renewable energy investments are increasing. Climate-smart agriculture is attracting support. Circular economy enterprises are transforming waste into valuable products.

Around the world, governments, investors and businesses are directing unprecedented resources towards activities that reduce emissions, strengthen resilience and support sustainable development.

Globally, climate finance now exceeds \$1 trillion annually, making the green economy one of the fastest-growing areas of economic activity. For countries like Uganda, this presents a significant opportunity. Yet an important question remains: Does Uganda have enough people with the skills needed to participate in this growing climate economy?

Opportunity alone does not create jobs. Skills do. Uganda's greatest resource may ultimately be its young population. Few countries have as many young people entering adulthood and the labour market each year. At the same time, employers increasingly

ify results, manage projects and attract climate finance often determines who captures the highest-value opportunities.

Across the world, the transition to greener economies is expected to create millions of jobs. Renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, waste management and environmental services are expanding rapidly as countries pursue cleaner and more resilient development pathways.

Uganda is well-positioned to benefit. The country has abundant renewable energy resources, growing digital connectivity and increasing interest in climate-smart development. It is also seeking to attract climate finance, strengthen environmental management systems, and promote circular-economy enterprises that transform waste into valuable products.

Consider waste alone. Uganda generates approximately 600,000 tonnes of plastic waste annually, while an estimated 60 to 70 percent of municipal waste is organic and potentially convertible into compost, fertiliser, biogas and other useful products. What is often viewed as an environmental burden could also become a source of enterprise development, employment and industrial growth.

But unlocking these opportunities requires more than investment capital. It requires people with the right skills. The issue is not simply unemployment. It is alignment. Too often, education and training systems continue preparing students for yesterday's economy while labour markets increasingly demand capabilities needed for tomorrow's.

Employers increasingly seek people who can work with environmental data, geographic information systems, digital monitoring technologies, renewable energy systems and sustainability frameworks.

Climate-related opportunities are becoming more sophisticated, requiring expertise in carbon accounting, environmental safeguards, project design, impact measurement and accountability.

Uganda should seek a different path. Universities and training institutions must continue adapting curricula to reflect emerging labour market needs. Stronger partnerships between academia, government and industry can help ensure graduates acquire skills that employers actually need.

Climate wealth alone is not enough. To benefit from climate wealth, Uganda must first build climate skills.

To benefit from climate wealth, Uganda must first build climate skills.



Juliet K. Kiiza
Climate

report difficulties finding specialised expertise in emerging sectors.

Climate action itself is becoming an economic sector. Solar companies require technicians and engineers. Carbon projects need specialists who can measure, monitor and verify environmental impacts.

Climate-smart agriculture programmes require agronomists and data specialists. Businesses increasingly seek expertise in sustainability reporting, environmental compliance and climate risk management. These are not future jobs waiting to arrive. Many of them already exist.

Increasingly, climate value is created not only through land, trees or infrastructure, but through knowledge. The ability to measure emissions, analyse environmental data, ver-

Dr Juliet Kabasiita Kiiza (PhD) is a climate change and green economy specialist. jkab75@yahoo.co.uk

61 219 3 26 0 11 217 6 102 113 31

Editor welcomes 450-word comments on topical issues. Prefe