

Climate change: Uganda requires full transition to renewable energy

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Roughly two years ago, 196 parties came together at the 21st Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to negotiate terms to what is now referred to as the Paris goals. The cumulative agreement in Paris was to maintain no greater than 2 degrees Celsius increase in global temperature, eventually moving towards no greater than 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Each country was responsible for curating their own plans to mitigate global warming and setting them into motion. The Talanoa Dialogue, simply stated by the World Resources Institute, is the opportunity for nations to look back and assess the global efforts to achieve the Paris Goals. The difference between half a Celsius degree is imperative that the public is aware of the difference.

Uganda, a country located in the sub-Saharan Middle East of Africa, with a population of nearly 44 million people, calculated by World-O-Meters, possesses powers beyond their own knowledge to alter the effects of global warming. The knowledge and education about sustainable energy sources is prudent in the case of many African countries, specifically

Uganda is seeing an explosion of business and development in both rural and urban areas, demanding new levels of energy consumption that the country has never seen before.

Numida, an application that serves as a determinate for entrepreneurs credit-worthiness, estimates 450,000 small to medium business make up 90 per cent of the private sector, creating between four and five new jobs in Uganda. Not only do the people need to power their homes, they also need to power their small businesses.

In the fight for climate, this country is in need of transition to 100 per cent renewable energy, and becoming a true ambassador of change that the world so desperately needs. Currently, Ugandan government has been using hydro powered by the Nile and Lake Victoria to power its cities and major consumption areas. Although, this is not enough.

Introducing, the sun. Solar energy has taken the off-grid Ugandan energy scene by storm. With numerous companies on ground, the sun has been efficiently put to work. Options such as pay-as-you-go solar, linking even the most remote locations and poorest of people to an opportunity to gain the gift of light. Ensuring these small businesses and youth get the proper tools, is the fundamental first step towards combating global warming in a large scale. Another set of hydro dams are expected to hit the Nile River in Jinja in late 2018. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Uganda's agriculture land has the potential to feed 200 million people. With more than 80 per cent of its total land mass being arable, only 35 per cent is currently being used. The farmers around the country are slowly gaining access to increasingly more land, and understanding effects on the environment is where natural climate solutions are used to tackle climate change.

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The United States government export page on Uganda states that agriculture is responsible for more than 13 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions. When grasslands are tilled to create crops, roughly half of the carbon stored in the top soils is emitted into the atmosphere. The elimination of converting grasslands lay in the management of current crop lands and intensify the sustainable practises on them. Another place where gases escape into the atmosphere is between crops during an offseason.

Addressed by Natural Climate Solutions organisation, a method known as conservation agriculture, may be the answer, where a farmer would plant a cover crop in the off-season fallow period of certain crops. This method increases the amount of carbon in the soil while improving fertility and quality.

Practises of agro-forestry have proven to be helpful in several means of crop production. Innovative and sustainable practises for our globes oldest practice is another way to drastically decrease our footprint on our great planet. The Paris Goals do not seem out of reach for the rising Uganda. The practicality and necessity of creating a sustainable future, is our duty with global increases of less than 1.5 degrees Celsius. The transition to 100 per cent natural resources begins with the youth, the small business 'and the rural communities of Uganda.

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