

**The Land Resource as an Engine of Growth & Sustainable Developm't in Uganda.**


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### Structure of the Presentation

- **Background & Introduction**
  - Definitions
- **Issues in Land Resource's Contribution to Growth & Development in Uganda**
- **Suggested Way Forward**

### Background



**“Earth’s population will be forced to colonise two planets within 50 years if natural resources continue to be exploited at the current rate.”**

World Wildlife Fund 2002

### Background

- **By 2050:**
  - **9 billion people**, *2.5 billion more than today*
  - **2 billion cars**, *double the number today*
  - Surge in energy demand
  - Supply of Resources will struggle to keep pace
  - Environmental stresses will continue increasing

### Background

- Uganda covers a total surface area of approx 241,038 sq mtrs, of which 18.2% is water & 81.7% land.
- 42% of the land is arable although only 21% is currently utilized.
- Land is fairly distributed among households countrywide with average holding of 1.6 – 2.8 ha in the south, & 3.2 ha in the north. There are 4 different types of tenure, customary tenure taking about 40 % of all land.

### Background

- The country is still predominantly rural, with over 80% of the population rural based
- Urban population fast growing, at an annual rate of 5.1%
- Uganda's population growth rate is among the world's highest. This, coupled with cultural norms, is leading to land fragmentation especially in the more densely populated areas of the country

### Introduction

#### LAND:

- Land is a primary input & factor of production, which is **not** consumed but without which no production is possible.
- It includes all physical elements in the wealth of a nation bestowed by nature; such as climate, environment, forests, minerals, mountains, lakes, streams, seas, etc.
- As an asset, it includes anything on the ground (such as buildings, crops, fences, trees, water), above the ground (air & space rights), and under the ground (mineral rights).

### Introduction

- It is the oldest collateral and still the most attractive to lenders as it cannot be moved, stolen or easily destroyed/wasted.
- In its most strict sense, land **cannot** be owned by an individual but individuals may only have **rights** (and obligations) on land!

***“Land is not bequeathed to us by our parents, it is lent to us by our unborn descendants”***

## Issues in Land Resource's Contribution to Growth & Development in Uganda

### Important facts:

- a) Without land, no production is possible
- b) Land is a finite resource
- c) Land satisfies competing needs, some of which are antagonistic (settlement – eg Basongora vs conservation)
- d) It can be degraded, but also can be improved

## The Issues

### 1. Underutilization/uneconomic use of land

- Sprawling Kampala instead of a few tall structures occupying only a fraction of the current K'la metropolitan area
- Engaging in less productive activities when there are better alternatives (most sugar cane outgrowers, tobacco growers in W/Nile & Bunyoro, traditional cattle, failure to adopt high value crops/animals)
- Slums in the most central areas
- Expensive structures in inaccessible areas, with very low returns
- The craze for owner occupier housing as opposed to renting
- Urban expansion into fertile agricultural land
- Settlement on areas with valuable minerals!

## The Issues ...

### 2. Overexploitation of some resources

- Forests disappearing (bag of charcoal chasing the 100k record!)
- Wetlands following suit
- Some streams drying up!
- Grazing corridors fast becoming semi-deserts
- Immature fish a delicacy??
- Sheer nut tree disappearing

## The Issues ...

### 3. Land Degradation

- Mostly due to poor agric practices
- Tons of fertile soil lost each year
- Low yields, food insecurity & less income for affected populations

### 4. Accessibility to land

- Some potential users of land have no access to it (eg many village youths & women)

### 5. Land Speculation

- Most land sales in most of the country, especially in urban areas, do not reflect the inherent value of the land. Most actors in the land market are speculators, many capable of reselling land at twice the price only after six months without any additional improvements! This shuts off many would be genuine land users.

The issues ...

**6. Security of Tenure**

- Most land in Uganda is not titled and is therefore prone to lots of conflicts. It is also removed from the formal land market, neither can it be used as collateral to raise capital.
- Such land may be abused (due to the absence of the feeling of individual responsibility, and discourages high value investments.
  - Customary land (untitled) – 68.6%
  - Freehold – 18%
  - Mailo – 9%
  - Leasehold – 3.6%

Source: MLHUD Statistical Abstract, Vol. 1, Dec 2010.

The issues ...

**7. Foreign land purchases for agriculture**

- A quantitative inventory of five African states (Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali and Sudan) documented a total of 2,492,684 hectares (25,000 sq km) of approved land acquisitions from 2004 to early 2009.
- The land acquisitions typically involve lease periods for 50-99 years and are often in excess of 10,000 hectares with some reports of deals of up to 1 million hectares
- The bulk of the produce from such farms benefits foreign nationals while the local environment bears the brunt of these large scale activities.

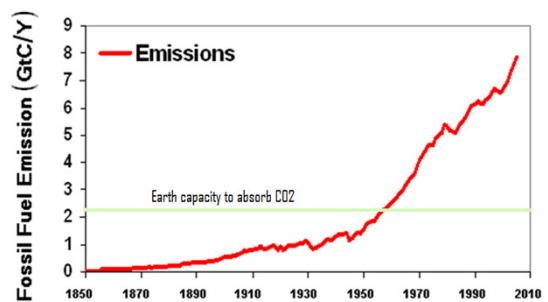


The Issues...

**10. Pollution**

- Lots of water bodies are fast becoming sewers – parts of L. Victoria are!
- Unleashing hazardous wastes into our environment (from batteries, oils, electronics, health facilities ...)

**World CO2 Emissions from fossil fuels**



## But ... Who is responsible?

### People! Individually & collectively, all of us!

- We always choose the easiest option.
  - We plant rice in the wetland because there is enough water!
  - We catch immature fish coz its easier to catch!
  - Forest areas are more fertile (never mind its only for a season or two)
  - We dump waste in Nakivubo channel, how else should we get rid of it?
- We tend to delegate action to the state
- We think it is impossible to cause a difference in our lifetime, is it?

## Suggested Way Forward

- In order to harness the potential of land resources for growth & sustainable development, the following are inevitable;
  1. We must have & be seen to implement the right policies for land acquisition, holding, and utilization.
    - Land should be easily accessible to those who have the means to use it economically & sustainably - but should also be available – by whatever mechanism - ***for*** the needs of the disadvantaged.
    - We cannot continue shying away from land consolidation – we must tell our people the truth and prepare them for such revolutions

## Way forward ...

- All land must be secure, meaning that all land must be titled. Moreover this would have numerous other advantages on revenue generation, trucking of land transactions, investment capital, etc
- All activities on land must be planned for - must be regulated – no activity should take place unless it is permitted at that location and time.
- Move away from 'fire fighting' as in the cases of Bududa & Kanungu landslides. If people must not live in place x, we must find a permanent solution now – and, we must learn to separate active politics from development issues

## Way forward ...

2. We must promote sustainable practices in the use of land resources
  - Sustainable agricultural practices in their broad spectrum
  - Promotion of renewable energy sources
  - Sustainable solid waste management practices – **waste has a lot of unexploited value!**
  - Planned sustainable settlements
  - Tree planting – the right species too.
  - Energy efficiency
  - 'Green' houses

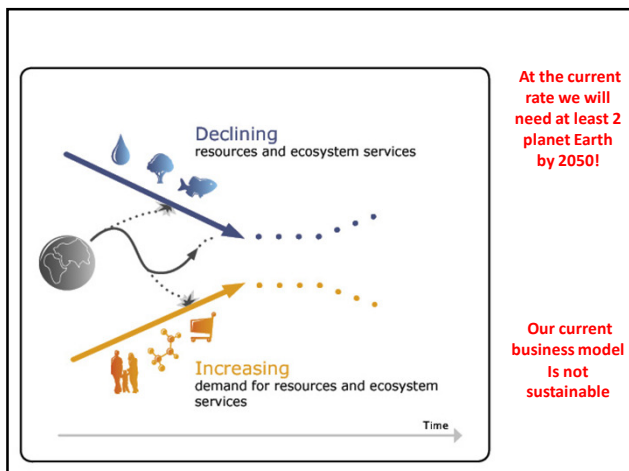


### Way forward ...

3. We must build the necessary threshold population to influence a change of attitude among us.
  - Adoption of green transport modes
  - Starting to care about mother nature
  - Willingness to 'buy' green and act green

### Way forward ...

4. Widespread sensitization about sustainable use of land resources
5. Collectively find solutions for environmental refugees, and those who need to survive today but think they can only do so at the expense of tomorrow.



**Thank you for your kind attention**