

**Statement from Sydah Naigaga Executive Director, EMLI to the 1<sup>st</sup> African Regional Consultative Workshop on International Environmental Governance, 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2010, Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation, Makerere University, Kampala Uganda.**

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**Hon. Minister of Water and Environment  
Hon. Members of Parliament present  
Distinguished Representatives of Diplomatic Community  
Directors, Commissioners and Heads of Institutions  
Representatives from Civil Society  
Protocol observed.**

I am delighted to make this statement on behalf of Environmental Management for Livelihood Improvement (EMLI). I take this opportunity to welcome you to this workshop, focusing on environmental governance, an issue that has not only puzzled the international community but all the regional and national governments. Today marks the re-birth of environmental governance, a topic most had forgotten about due to its complexity, broadness and diversity in both the scope and locus of decision-making power. The term governance has been defined in many different ways. Ruggie (2004) defines governance, as conducting the public's business-to the constellation of authoritative rules, institutions, and practices by means of which any collectivity manages its affairs. Uganda State of Environment Report (2008) defines environmental governance as body values and norms that guide and regulate, use, control and management of the natural environment.

In 2009, important deliberations centered on reforming the UN's overall system of International Environmental Governance (IEG) and this was amplified by the recent COP15 in Copenhagen, negotiations of the fifth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the commencement of the preparatory process for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in Brazil in 2012.

The IEG reform has been linked to Heads of State when French President and German Chancellor wrote to the UN Secretary-General citing to reach an "effective and fair" agreement in Copenhagen, they stated that "a new institutional architecture will need to be set up to foster the development of international environmental law". They urged leaders to further progress towards the creation of a World Environmental Organization.

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In Africa, Kenyan President has urged African leaders to support the upgrading of UNEP into a World Environment Organization based in Nairobi. However, it is worth mentioning that;

1. An important element of IEG reform concerns the definition of the objectives and the functions of the UN's work on IEG and the status to be given the environment in the context of sustainable development.
2. The context of coherence of the IEG.

The UN Joint Implementation Unit's Report (2008) reviewing the IEG echoed the current extent of overlap, duplication, and fragmentation. It highlighted the weaknesses in international environmental governance due to institutional fragmentation and lack of a holistic approach to environmental issues and sustainable development. This was amplified by the South African Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism during his statement to the 2009 UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF), when he referred to "burgeoning fragmentation and duplication in an overburdened system" as a key obstacle to the integration of environmental concerns into macro-economic policy-making, as well as an issue of "critical importance" to developing countries.

The report is also critical of the management framework for failing to ensure that environmental considerations and Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEA) compliance are integrated into development strategies.

In 2009, UNEP Governing Council established the Consultative Group of Ministers or High-Level Representatives on IEG to present a set of options for improving international environmental governance. At the meetings in Belgrade (Serbia) in June and Rome (Italy) in October, the Consultative Group identified a set of options for the UN's environmental portfolio. The group reported at the Eleventh Special Session of the GC/GMEF in February 2010 in Bali, Indonesia where EMLI's Deputy Executive Director Robert Bakiika was officially recognized as the African Regional Representative to UNEP Major Group Facilitating Committee.

At the first meeting of the Consultative Group of Ministers or High-Level Representatives on IEG in Belgrade, the Co-chairs' summary reflected discussions that;

- Any IEG reform should be based on the principle that form should follow function
- Consultations on functions should lead to a discussion on forms that could range from incremental changes to other broader institutional reforms
- IEG debate should be addressed in the broader context of environmental sustainability and sustainable development
- Developing a set of options for improving IEG should follow from a fresh examination of multiple challenges and emerging opportunities
- Incremental changes to IEG can be considered alongside other more fundamental reforms
- THE work of the Consultative Group should continue to be **political in nature**

Proposals for IEG reform have addressed both incremental and broader reform. e.g. creating a global umbrella organization, World (or United Nations) Environment Organization capable of bringing all MEAs under a common institutional roof. The development of legally binding agreements has been the mainstay of IEG, yet the growing number of these agreements and the observed lack of coordination between them have been the basis of many criticisms of IEG. Proliferation of multilateral environmental agreements was singled out by the French president and I am certain during the 2012, UN Conference on Sustainable Development, more agreements will emerge.

You will agree with me that integration of the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainability is the key theme of international response to the current global problems. I hope this workshop will table proposals to integrate environmental concerns into economic and socio-economic development. It is worth noting the current steps Government of Uganda has so far taken in realizing environmental policy integration such as;

- Environment and Natural resources performance reporting
- Water and environment sector reviews
- Inclusion of environmental goals in the National Development Plan

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- Established National Sustainable Development Think tank/ Forum
- Ministerial Policy committees on environment, districts and local environment committees

However, with all this in place, we should always ask ourselves questions such as;

- ❖ What is the state of environmental policy integration in Uganda?
- ❖ How are the communicative instruments of IEG (MEAs) incorporated to make relevant provisions into national legal frameworks?
- ❖ How do we solve the dilemma in IEG of keeping the system with where the people want the world to act?
- ❖ How do we make our Governments accountable of the decisions they take and stop signing anything they want?

If you can get these answers, then you have completed part of the puzzle on IEG.

As we deliberate today, we should remember that we did not inherit the earth from our parents, we borrowed it from our children BUT we are doing absolutely nothing to return what we borrowed. We need to acknowledge that environment is the life support system of humans and also our economy.

As I summaries, I wish to inform you about the wide spread recognition that the current economic crisis and environment crisis have rooted from the same thing. They are not separate and competing issues. If we are to manage the future, we have to manage the economy and the environment as an integral part of the same management process.

I wish you fruitful deliberations.

Thank you.