

KENYA GREEN UNIVERSITY NETWORK (KGUN) LAUNCH

UNEP Headquarters, Nairobi, Kenya

4 - 5 February 2016



Background

- The Kenya Green University Network launch took place at the UNEP Headquarters, Nairobi, Kenya from 4 to 5 February, 2016;
- Over 160 participants attended the launch which formalized a national network which will bring together Kenya's 70 higher education institutions (HEIs) with the aim of incorporating environmental and low-carbon-climate resilience development strategies and sustainability aspects in their education, training, campus operations and enhanced student engagement; and
- The launch was jointly organized by UNEP's Environmental Education and Training Unit (EETU), Kenya's National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and Kenya's Commission for University Education (CUE).

Opening Remarks

- **Achim Steiner**, *Executive Director and Under-Secretary (UNEP)*, emphasized the need to integrate sound environmental practices and knowledge sharing into the higher education fabric. He also applauded the move by Kenyan universities to invest in greener campuses, greener curricula and ways of engaging staff, students and community;
- **Prof. Judi Wakhungu**, *Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Water & Natural Resources and Regional Development Authorities of Kenya*, called on all universities to green their programmes, policies and activities. She urged all stakeholders both from public and private universities, Civil Society and Private sector, to commit themselves and support KGUN;
- **Dr. Moses Rugutt**, *Director General, National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI)*, on behalf of *Prof. Fred Matiang'i*, *Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kenya*, affirmed that the Kenyan Government will ensure quality assurance in all our courses, as a contribution to the UN SDG Goal 4.7;
- **Prof. Geoffrey Wahungu**, *Director General, National Environment Management Authority – NEMA Kenya*, expressed NEMA's commitment to support KGUN's initiatives and mobilize resources for capacity building to enhance environmental sustainability across Kenyan Universities;
- **Prof. David Some**, *CEO, Commission for University Education (CUE)* urged universities to come up with innovative sustainability projects that will transform their campuses and communities;





Interactive Group Discussions/Recommendations

- **Performance contracting:** Develop a vision and strategy to implement Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the learning and training environment in partnership with all stakeholders. Inclusion of ESD into faculty training to improve their ability to teach sustainability issues and to conduct and supervise related research;
- **Green campus:** Universities to foster applied research and education by using their campuses to test real-time sustainability solutions i.e. 'living lab' or 'campus as a classroom'. Demonstrate how academic research and teaching can contribute directly to health, wellbeing, and prosperity;
- **Mainstreaming curricula:** Need for incentive for lecturers to engage in outreach; practical demonstrations of sustainable development; additional pedagogical tools, including tutorials, student exchanges, presentations, and ICT skills;
- **Community engagement:** Universities should establish governance structure of university-community engagement; Community engagement and performance should be measured over time. Should be included in the assessment of private universities for the award of charter;
- **Student engagement:** Create a Student Green Office or Committee in each university to generate interest, awareness, and action in sustainability on campus by raising awareness, fostering good habits, providing resources, and driving policy changes; Develop 'Live Projects' for students that entail application of learning to real workplace experience of improving their campus environments.

High Level discussions

- **Prof. Mucai Muchiri**, *Vice-Chancellor, Katarina University*, highlighted support from the students and the School of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies, enhanced their capacity to champion for environmental sustainability through change of attitude and various initiatives;
- **Prof. Kiama Gitahi**, *Director, Wangari Maathai Institute/University of Nairobi*, noted that an upcoming 'Green Campus' at the University of Nairobi (UoN) that will be home of the Wangari Maathai Institute (WMI) for Peace & Environmental Studies. WMI will be functional and inspiring international hub for sustainable development education;
- **Prof. John Okumu**, *Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Kenyatta University*, stressed that Kenyatta University has a school of environmental studies with four departments that offer various environmental courses that foster academic and social growth of young people, and promote conservation of the natural environment; and
- **Prof. Izael Da Silva**, *Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Strathmore University*, urged universities to embrace projects on renewable energy such as solar power with emphasis on investing on enough research prior to solar installations to ensure effective results.

Conclusion and Close:

- **Eusebius Mukhwana**, (*CUE*), emphasized the need for transformative interventions, and engagement of universities in ensuring quality education system;
- **Ayub Macharia**, (*NEMA*), emphasized the need for awareness and understanding of environmental sustainability performance targeting;
- **Walter Odera**, (*African Development Bank– AfDB*), expressed possibilities of financial support; and
- **Mahesh Pradhan**, (*UNEP EETU*) highlighted linkages with regional (Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in African Universities) and global networks (Global Universities Partnership on Environment for Sustainability), and investing in human capacity in achieving the SDGs through environmental education.

Follow up:

- **KGUN Enrollment of universities:** Membership forms to be circulated, also through EETU website;
- **KGUN Website:** CUE to host a page on KGUN on their website;
- **KGUN Initiatives 2016:** Kenya Greening Universities Toolkit, KGUN Charter, Pilot projects around KGUN pillars, Establish of KGUN Awards;
- **PC Targets:** NEMA to develop digital e-performance contract for universities; and
- **Online Course:** CUE, NEMA and UNEP to develop online/blended course on sustainability.