



**STATEMENT BY EUGENE MURAMIRA AT THE TRAINING  
WORKSHOP FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND GOVERNMENT  
DECISION MAKERS ON PAYMENT FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES  
(PES) IN UGANDA**

**ON BEHALF OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY**



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Invited participants in your respective capacities  
The workshop organizers  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to this workshop on behalf of the Executive Director National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). NEMA is established by the National Environment Act as the principal Government agency for the management of the environment and in this regard, is mandated to supervise, coordinate and monitor all activities in the field of environment.

NEMA also carries out capacity building for lead agencies on matters concerning environment management. NEMA carries out its mandate in partnership with national and international organisations to deliver various programmes. Therefore NEMA's participation in this workshop is within its mandate and also fits well with the other functions of NEMA.

As most of you may already be aware, human wellbeing on this planet is dependent on healthy and productive environment that can provide the vital ecosystem services (like water, food, climate amelioration, soil fertility, medicine and cultural/spiritual values among others) that form the foundation for human wellbeing and socio-economic development at the national, regional and global levels.

For example world's fisheries resources is estimated to employ approximately 200 million people, providing about 16% of the protein consumed worldwide and have a value estimated at US\$ 82 billion. The fisheries of Lake Victoria are shared between Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda and provide an immense source of income, employment, food and foreign exchange for East Africa. The lake produces a fish catch estimated at over 800,000 tonnes annually, worth about US\$ 590 million.

However, ecosystem services are being lost at alarming and this is due to destruction of ecosystem arising from unsustainable use of the ecosystems.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment was carried out between 2001 and 2005 to assess the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being found that major causes of loss of ecosystems and biodiversity are habitat change such as land use changes, climate change, invasive alien species, overexploitation and pollution. The report found out virtually all ecosystems have now been negatively transformed by human actions.

Globally, a minimum of 16,928 larger animal species are threatened with extinction and these includes mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and of fish. The abundance of species worldwide has declined by 40% between 1970 and 2000. In the North Atlantic, fish have declined by 66% in the last 50 years. Since 2000, 6 million hectares of primary forest have been lost each year.

By 1890 forests and woodland covered approximately 45% of the total land area of Uganda, and today this has declined to 20%. Uganda estimated to be losing 80,000 ha of its forest cover annually. Already 30% of Tropical High Forest which provide high value forest products, environmental services and biodiversity is estimated to have been degraded.

At the global level, annual rate of deforestation is estimated 13 million ha. About 50% of the known 52,000 medicinal plants in the world are threatened with extinction. Thus loss of ecosystems and ecosystem services has environmental, socio and economic costs.

The costs of environmental degradation to the Uganda's economy are conservatively estimated at between 4-12% of the GDP due primarily to soil erosion. The annual economic value of soil nutrient loss is estimated at US \$ 625m. At the global level, annual losses as a result of deforestation and forest degradation is estimated at US\$ 2 trillion and about US\$45 billion is needed to mitigate further loss.

Aware of the importance of ecosystem services, the global community is now calling for urgent action to halt further destruction of ecosystems. One of the interventions is Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES). I am therefore glad to note that this workshop is being conducted on this very important subject. Uganda needs a critical mass of experts in this field in Government ministries, Government agencies, academia, the private sector and NGOs.

I would like to thank the workshop organizers, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for assisting Government of Uganda in accessing the funds for PES project in Uganda, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for supporting this workshop, the resource persons as well as Government of Uganda for the contribution it has made through NEMA.

Lastly I thank you for your positive response and finding time within your very busy schedules to attend this workshop.

With these remarks, I declare this workshop opened.

For God and My Country.