



**MEDIA COUNCIL OF UGANDA**  
"for a free and responsible press"

# **JOURNALIST TRAINING ON ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE REPORTING IN UGANDA**

**HELD ON 27<sup>TH</sup> AND 28<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2022**

**THEME:  
COVERING CLIMATE IN THE  
MEDIA NOW!**

## **NARRATIVE REPORT**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Uganda is experiencing significant impacts of climate change which include among others; change in weather patterns, a drop and raise of water levels in the lakes and rivers, where we have some rivers drying up in some areas and in other areas, we have water levels raising up and causing floods. The country is also experiencing increased frequency in extreme weather events like torrential rains that result into floods, and extensive prolonged dry seasons which result in drought. Climate change is visibly affecting the vulnerable communities of our nation. We desire that information is disseminated through the right channels to both educate and inform the general public about climate change and its impact and to call upon the people of Uganda, communities, local leaders, religious leaders, students, teachers, the elite to work together to mitigate the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities.

On 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2022, Greenwatch successfully conducted the first training of journalists on the environment and climate reporting. The main objective of the training was to equip Ugandan journalists with knowledge about environmental reporting in an effort to advance climate change awareness in Uganda. The training was for two-day consisting of eight (8) sessions, six (6) of which were facilitated by the director of the Global Initiative for Food Security and Ecosystem Preservation (GIFSEP), 1 session was conducted by Mr. Kyetume Kasanga, Secretary of the Media Council of Uganda and 1 session conducted by Mr. Okello Jabweli Peter an officer of the Media Council of Uganda. The participants at the training included journalists from different media houses across the country. Nine (9) participants were from upcountry media stations and thirteen (13) were from media houses situated in Kampala.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Greenwatch is thankful to Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (ELAW) for supporting the training and the Media Council of Uganda a government body under the Ministry of Information Communications Technology and National Guidance, for collaborating with Greenwatch to organise and actively participating in the training.

We thank all the amazing participants who honoured our invitation and actively participated in the training with joy and enthusiasm.

Greenwatch extends her gratitude to the Minister of Information Communications Technology and National Guidance, Hon. Dr. Chris Baryomunsi for opening the training with educative and informative remarks that left us all pondering on our duty and role to make Uganda a better country.

### **The objectives of the Training were as follows:**

1. Exposition of journalists in Uganda to the conversation on climate change and environmental journalism. The training enabled journalists to become abreast with environmental knowledge particularly in climate change, climate action and climate justice.
2. To strengthen the capacity of journalists to effectively cover and report stories that are climate-related, training them on how to identify events that are climate-induced, and exposing the journalists to well-studied techniques that are being used by other journalists from around the globe in climate reporting.
3. To increase active participation of the media fraternity in climate action.
4. To foster an environment of networking in order to create a network of environmental journalists within Uganda and East Africa to share information and news relating to climate change impacts, action and justice.

## Opening Session

Summary of welcome remarks.

**Samantha Atukunda. K. Mwesigwa, the Director and Legal Counsel of Greenwatch** in her welcome remarks thanked the Media Council of Uganda for partnering with Greenwatch to ensure the success of the training, she also extend her gratitude to Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (ELAW) for supporting the training.

She gave a brief background on the genesis of Greenwatch explaining that Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development was the inspiration behind the establishment of Greenwatch in 1995. She said the catalyst to achieving Greenwatch's vision is through information dissemination this is why it is important for journalists to be trained in specific areas like climate reporting which is the focus of the training.

She explained that the overall objective of the training was to strengthen the capacity of journalists to efficiently cover and report news stories that are climate-related.

She made emphasis on how the knowledge shared during the training can be applied effectively in the journalist profession to promote climate justice.

She concluded by thanking the participants for honoring the invitation to the training and she also recognized the presence of Hon. Dr. Chris Baryomunsi, Minister of the Ministry of Information Communications Technology and National Guidance of Uganda at the training. Samantha invited Mr. Peter Okello a member of the Media Council of Uganda who stood in for, Mr. Paulo Ekochu the Chairperson of the Media Council of Uganda to give his welcoming remarks on behalf of the Media Council of Uganda.



Figure 1: Samantha Atukunda giving her welcoming remarks.

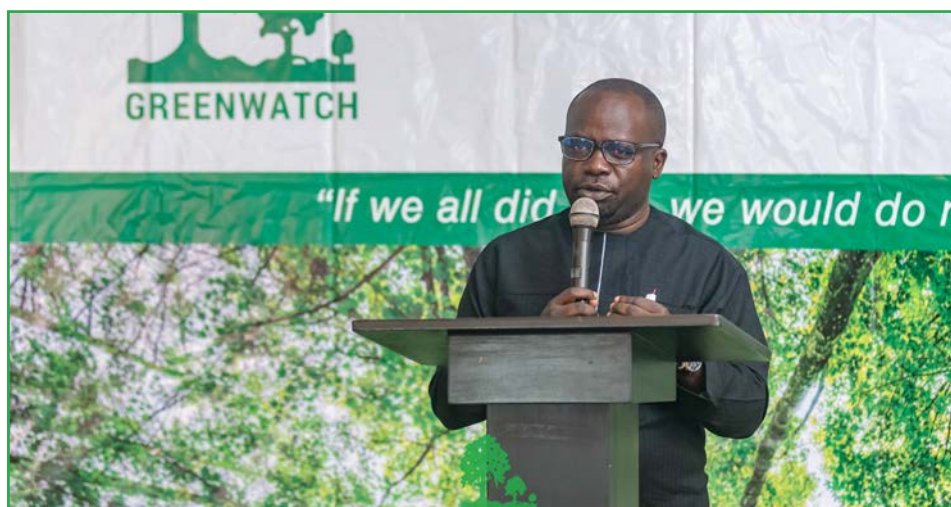
**Mr. Okello Peter a member of the Media Council of Uganda** who spoke for and on behalf of **Paulo Ekochu the Chairperson of the Media Council of Uganda**, welcomed the participants. In his welcoming remarks, he gave a brief background to the establishment of the Media Council of Uganda. He stated that it was established by the legislative body of Uganda to exercise disciplinary control over media information reported to the public by the journalists and therefore mentioned that the Council cherishes the aspect of training journalists on how to report on different stories since this is what they have done for a long period of time and it has proven to be effective in a long run.

However, he stated that this was the first journalist training on environment and climate reporting the Media Council of Uganda had been part of. Therefore he, appreciated Greenwatch for taking on the initiative to partner with the Media Council of Uganda to organize the training.

Mr. Okello took note of the importance of having similar engagements with journalists across the country to equip

them with sufficient knowledge on how to report on climate related issues and cover stories of a similar nature.

He concluded by inviting Mr. Moses Watasa, the Commissioner for Communications and Information Dissemination for the Ministry of Information, Communications Technology, and National Guidance to give his welcoming remarks.



*Figure 2: Jabweli Peter Okello, giving his welcoming remarks.*

**Mr. Moses Watasa, the Commissioner for Communications and Information Dissemination for the Ministry of Information, Communications Technology, and National Guidance.**

In his welcoming remarks, he honorably recognised the presence of the Minister of Information, Communications Technology, and National Guidance, and thanked Greenwatch and the Media Council of Uganda for organizing the two-day training.

Mr. Watasa made mention of the fact that he is an environmentalist and he believes the public needs to be informed about climate change from a simple but well informed point of view.

He advised the participants to make environmental issues core in their day-to-day news reporting bulletins.

He appreciated the government of Uganda for putting effort into environmental and climate problems, with many presidential directives issued like the relocation of the flood victims in Bududa and Kasese.

He made an emphasis on a call for action in the Eastern part of Uganda on the slopes of Mount Elgon which has had reoccurring incidences of landslides as a result of deforestation.

He urged the journalists to give climate-related stories more emphasis when searching for content because climate issues affect the daily lives of the public rather than putting more time into reporting about other fields like sports and politics.

He concluded by inviting the Honourable Minister of Information, Communications Technology, and National Guidance, Dr. Chris Baryomunsi to officially open the training.



*Figure 3: Mr. Moses Watasa during his speech at the training.*

## Summary of opening remarks.

**Hon. Dr. Chris Baryomunsi, the Minister of Information, Communications Technology, and National Guidance** officially opened the training.

In his speech, he commended Greenwatch and the Media Council of Uganda for taking on the initiative of organizing the journalist training in addition he thanked all participants for sparing their time to attend the training which focused on environment and climate reporting.

“It is important to note that the rapid increase of the population size of countries like Uganda is due to the high fertility rate of women in the country and this has led to extreme pressure on the natural resources for example the forest cover in Uganda has rapidly reduced because of the numerous population activities that have been taking place over the years, therefore, it is important that journalists carry out proper investigations as to why some of the country’s natural resources are getting to wastage so that they can report on accurate information to explain and educate the public on the impacts of climate change”, He said in his speech.

He implored all of the participants to be cautious and carry out further scientific investigation about the environmental disasters in the different parts of the country in order to be able to interpret this information in a simpler language for the public.



*Figure 4: Hon. Dr. Chris Baryomunsi, officially opening the training.*

## Learning Session One

Presentation by **Mr. Kyetume Kasanga the Secretary Media Council of Uganda.**

Topic: **The Legal Framework for Media Coverage in Uganda: The Journalist’s Rights and Responsibilities.**

Mr. Kasanga, mentioned the 17 laws that govern media coverage in Uganda. He emphasized the Article 29 under the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda which provides that, every person shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, which includes the freedom of the press and other media.

He mentioned that public interest shall not permit political persecution, detention without trial, or any limitation of the enjoyment of the prescribed rights and freedoms beyond what is acceptable and demonstrably justifiable in a free and democratic society.

He talked about The Complaint Against the Journalist Act, which states provides for professional misconduct and how to handle journalists that are not behaving in a professional manner.

Mr. Kasanga explained how the Official Secrets Act, 302 (1964) was established to protect state secrets and security therefore it prohibits the media from accessing government documents that are withheld for national security reasons, public officials are made to swear an oath of secrecy on appointment to the civil service and can release information after seeking authorization/consent from the Chief Executive of a Public Institution;

He talked about the Penal Code Act, which puts emphasis on the promotion of sectarianism, criminal libel, defamation, and terrorism however, it describes the prohibition of the importation of some publications by the media.

“Under this Act, publication of information regarding military operations, strategies, troop location or movement, location of military supplies or equipment of the armed forces or of the enemy, is an offense and can lead to imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years” Mr. Kasanga elaborated.

He concluded by listing the duties of journalists under the Code of Ethics Act, which include establishing correctness or truth of information or allegation before disseminating it he mentioned that there should be non-disclosure of the source of information, you can only divulge the source if there is an overriding consideration of public interest and within the framework of the law of Uganda. He added that journalists should not solicit or accept bribes in order to publish or suppress the publication of a story, no plagiarism of the professional work of others or expropriate works or results of research by scholars without acknowledging their contribution and naming their sources of information.

He concluded by inviting the next presenter Mr. David Michael Terungwa, the founder of the Global Initiative for Food Security and Ecosystem Preservation (GIFSEP) Nigeria.



*Figure 5: Mr. Kyetume Kasanga, presenting on The Legal Framework for Media Coverage in Uganda: The Journalist's Rights and Responsibilities*

The detailed presentation can be found here:

<https://www.greenwatch.or.ug/technical-presentations/legal-framework-media-coverage-uganda-journalists-rights-responsibilities>

## Learning Session Two

Presentation by Mr. David Michael Terungwa – Founder Global Initiative for Food Security and Ecosystem Preservation (GIFSEP) on

Topic: **Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation.**

He expressed his gratitude to Greenwatch for inviting him to facilitate the training and appreciated the participants for taking their time to attend the training to acquire enough knowledge on climate change and the environment.

“Today we are going to learn, unlearn and re-learn” he noted.

He displayed an image of the earth that was taken by a human being from outer space. He explained that the “Blue Marble” image was taken during the last Apollo mission and it became the most published photo in all of human history.

He explained how much of the incoming radiation is absorbed by the earth, causing it to warm up therefore half of the sun’s energy passes through the earth’s atmosphere to the surface, however, some energy is radiated back into space by the earth in the form of infrared waves.

He explained that carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) concentrations have increased by 40 percent since pre-industrial times, mainly from fossil fuel burning, and from changes in how we (human beings) use our land (agriculture and deforestation). He further explained that many people assume that the earth is too vast to be harmed through human activity, or that the planet can recover quickly from environmental damage though it is clear that when we burn dirty fuels like oil and coal, we are polluting our air and warming our planet.

He noted that the burning of fossil fuels is not the only cause of climate change, other sources of greenhouse gases exist though the main cause is the enormous increase in the burning of fossil fuels.

“Sometimes people wonder how global warming can be blamed for causing more precipitation and flooding, and at the same time, more drought. The extra heat trapped by rising levels of greenhouse gases actually leads to both and as the climate changes, precipitation patterns also change, leaving some places with less rainfall than before.”

“The fact that the World Economic Forum says climate change is the number one threat to the global economy, do you think this is true”? He posed this question to the participants who were in agreement with the statement from WEF.

He emphasized how the global food system has incredibly become complex and is shaped by many interrelated factors that are all affected by climate change therefore as temperatures increase, the availability of water changes, and the composition of the air changes increases as well, however, crops have responded to these challenges in increasingly disastrous ways that often diminish the nutrition they carry and increase the toxins they accumulate.

He explained that due to the fact that the planet is now experiencing more numerous and extremely hot days than any other time in human history more extreme temperatures over longer periods lead to droughts and hinder the transformation of nitrates in ruminants’ digestion, which can cause asphyxiation in animals like cows and sheep.

He concluded by stating that we have solutions at hand so we need to work upon them to solve the climate crisis around the globe.

You can access the power point presentation here;

<https://www.greenwatch.or.ug/technical-presentations/introduction-climate-justice>

<https://www.greenwatch.or.ug/technical-presentations/understanding-climate-change-david-michael>

<https://www.greenwatch.or.ug/technical-presentations/climate-change-mitigation-and-adaptation>

<https://www.greenwatch.or.ug/technical-presentations/climate-justice-perspective-april-2022>

<https://www.greenwatch.or.ug/technical-presentations/how-write-and-report-climate-journalist>

<https://www.greenwatch.or.ug/technical-presentations/climate-advocacy-use-social-media-david-mike-terungwa>

## Learning Session Three (Day 1 afternoon)

Presented by **Mr. David Michael Terungwa**

Topic: **The Introduction to Climate Justice.**

According to Mr. Terungwa, climate change is affecting different people and places unevenly, leading to inequalities within and across nations, between current and future generations, hence creating injustice.

He explained how climate change is a threat to everyone's physical health, mental health, air, water, food, and shelter, but some groups especially the socially and economically disadvantaged ones face the greatest risks leading to inequalities within and across nations, and between current and future generations, hence creating injustices.

He stressed that climate justice is a term used for framing global warming as an ethical and political issue, rather than one that is purely environmental or physical in nature. This is done by relating the effects of climate change to concepts of justice, particularly environmental justice and social justice, and by examining issues such as equality, human rights, collective rights, and the historical responsibilities for climate change.

He explained that the fundamental proposition of climate justice is that those who are least responsible for climate change suffer its gravest consequences.

He raised his concern and posed a question on who is most impacted by climate change between the global north and global south.

This question sparked a discussion between Terungwa and the participants, one of the journalists, **Winfred Mbabazi from Kasasa Broadcasting Service (KBS)** explained why she strongly believed that the global south is the part that is most affected by climate change.

Ms. Mbabazi expressed that Africa has less money to deal with climate change which is why it's the region that is affected by the climate crisis in the global south.

Mr. Terungwa asked the participants why they thought the global north has a greater responsibility of dealing with the impacts of climate change. **Emma Bwayo from Elgon FM** responded and stated that, the global north has a greater responsibility because they have more finances and technology to control the climate crisis.

Mr. Terungwa conclude the last session of day one by dividing the participants into 3 three working groups which he gave a reading assignment on the international conventions on climate change, each group was assigned one convention to read about and make a presentation of their findings to the audience the following day.

You can access the power point presentation here:

<https://www.greenwatch.or.ug/technical-presentations/introduction-climate-justice>



*Figure 6: David Michael Terungwa with some of the participants of the Journalist Training during the last session of day one.*

## Learning Session One

Day two started off with presentations from the participants that discussed the topics Mr. Terungwa had handed over to them on the previous day.

Presentation by; **Mr. David Michael Terungwa**

Topic: **The first topic was the Stockholm Conference 1970 which was presented by group one representatives.**

Group one participants described the Stockholm Conference 1970 as the first world conference on the environment, they mentioned that this conference made the environment a major issue and the participants of this conference adopted a series of principles for sound management of the environment including the Stockholm Declaration and Action Plan for the Human Environment. Group one explained that the treaty aims to protect human health and the environment from the effects of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and this convention entered into force on May 17, 2004.

**The second topic of discussion by group two was the Rio Earth Summit 1992.**

Group two participants described how the Earth Summit 1992 resulted into the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Statement of Forest Principles, and Agenda 21. They explained how the Earth Summit also led to the establishment of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

**The third topic of discussion was the Nationally Determined Contributions, (NDC) which was presented by the last group.**

Group three participants explained the Nationally Determined Contributions, they made emphasis on how Uganda is the first African country to come up with a National NDC Partnership Plan. The plan was developed through a participatory process by the government, the private sector, development partners, and non-state actors.

They explained how the objective of Uganda's NDC is to pursue a low-carbon development pathway and reduce the vulnerability of the population, environment, and economy to the impacts of climate change by implementing measures and policies that build resilience.



Figure 7: Group three participants illustrating the concept of Uganda's Nationally Determined Contributions.

## Learning Session Two

Presented by: Mr. David Michael Terungwa.

Topic: **Climate Journalism**

Mr. Terungwa kicked off the session by teaching the participants about the essential practices for writing climate stories.

He shared a video that illustrated how to gather information as a climate journalist. In the video footage it was explained that as a journalist one may require visiting the location where the story takes place, interviewing witnesses and people affected, and using online search engines for further research. A climate journalist needs to find an angle for his/her climate story, the theme and focus of the piece that makes it newsworthy.

Emphasis was made on the structure of the information reported, the importance to lead with the who, what, why, where, and when to let the reader know what the story is about.

Mr. Terungwa encouraged the participants to discuss climate related issues on radio talk shows, he made mention of the fact that speaking to communities in local languages using terms and phrases that are easily understood, providing two-way interactive social learning through listening clubs, call-in shows, and other forms of exchange, having eye-catching headlines for both print and broadcast media, creating slogans like (Plant a Tree Today. Do not Waste Food. If you destroy nature; Nature will Destroy You. If you protect nature, nature will protect you) is important when communicating to an audience using radio media.

## Learning Session Three

Presented by David Michael Terungwa.

Topic: **Climate Advocacy, The Use of social media**

During his presentation, Mr. Terungwa mentioned that climate justice advocacy is important because it addresses the need to amplify the link between environmental justice and social justice.

He explained that when using social media platforms to report a climate story, one should identify your target content to your niche audience this makes your content more relevant and interesting to them therefore your audience can be policymakers, Civil Society Organizations, youths, partners/donors and professional bodies/associations.

He advised the participants to brand themselves as climate advocates, by creating a memorable username based on their name, using their media house's approved logo, and colors.

He mentioned the popular social media platform that he considered to be the most effective for communicating conservation stories. He listed the various social media platforms and explained their prevalent usage for example, he explained that Facebook is mainly used for casual interactions, sharing links, sharing photos and videos and has no character limit, Twitter for short casual interactions, sharing links, sharing photos and videos with a character limit of 140 characters hence great for specialized topics, YouTube is basically used to upload and share videos, people can comment on, LinkedIn for creating professional groups, and Instagram for short and visual media which is fun and very casual.

During the final part of this session, Mr. Terungwa instructed the participants to create Twitter pages for those that didn't have accounts, he also instructed them to create hashtags for the Journalist Training on Twitter and tag Green-watch Twitter page.



Figure 8: David Michael Terungwa during his presentation on Climate Advocacy, The Use of Social Media.

## Learning session Four

Presented by Okello Peter a member of the Media Council of Uganda

Topic: **Evidence-based Gender and Conflict- Sensitive Climate Change Reporting.**

Mr. Okello started off his presentation by making emphasis on how the relationship between climate change and the deadly conflict is complex and context-specific but it is undeniable that climate change is a threat multiplier that is already increasing food insecurity, and water insecurity while disrupting livelihoods and sparking migrations.

“Conflict is normal, natural, and inevitable because it’s linked to our attitudes as human beings, by its nature conflict is neither good nor bad. It’s the way that we deal with it that determines the outcome therefore conflict is dynamic. Its trends & scope can change if handled well conflict can bring positive change in the community”. Mr. Okello mentioned.

He said that gender may be understood as the social (rather than biological) attributes, norms, roles, and attitudes of a given society therefore the resilience of population groups and individuals to the conflict dynamics and threats to their security that climate change exacerbates can vary by gender, ethnicity, age, religion (or lack thereof), class disability, education, etc however, the interplay between gender and other identities with respect to how people experience and respond to the linkages between climate change and conflict means that it’s essential not to view men, women, boys and girls as homogenous groups but rather to identify patterns of inclusion and exclusion.

He concluded by advising the journalists to report on more success stories highlighting how people are adapting and mitigating climatic change, developing solutions, and using technologies that can limit climate change damage.

“It is also important to report on stories that explain the causes of events such as droughts and floods as well as the effects on plants and animals”. He mentioned.

His power point presentation can be found here;

<https://www.greenwatch.or.ug/technical-presentations/climate-change-part-ii-first-journalist-training-environment-climate-change>

## Closing Session

The training was officially closed by **Mr. Paul Ekochu, the Chairperson of, the Media Council of Uganda**, who noted that there is a lot of ignorance and misinformation about issues of the environment and climate change therefore the participants that gained the knowledge during the two-day training should inform the public of the correct and right information.

He awarded the participants with certificates and thanked Greenwatch, the Media Council of Uganda, and the facilitators for successfully completing the two-day training.



Figure 9: Paul Ekocho, handing over a certificate to one of the participants of the Journalist Training.



Figure 10: GreenWatch journalist training participants.

#### ACRONYMS

GIFSEP	Global Initiative for Food Security and Ecosystem Preservation.
CO2	Carbon dioxide.
WEF	World Economic Forum.
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions.
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
POP	Persistent Organic Pollutants.



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