

27 January 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,  
President of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at a tree planting ceremony during the official visit to Uganda**

**The Minister of Water and Environment,  
The Executive Director, Kampala Capital City Authority  
The Executive Director, National Environment Management Authority,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Thank you for being committed environmentalists, and for attending this tree planting event.

As you all know, climate change is one of the major issues of concern to the international community. Moreso, it is a concern to developing countries like Uganda, for we have the least means to adapt to its effects. Yet, we are the least contributors.

Science continues to paint a bleak future, and has made a resounding warning about humanity's very existence. It has called for immediate steps to address global warming, which increases by the day due to human activity.

Here in Uganda, we have seen increasing flooding during the rainy season. Tragically, landslides killed many people in Buduuda District in 2010. We are also experiencing extended dry periods, posing a threat to the agricultural sector which supports our survival. On the Rwenzori's, snow coverage has shrieked from 2.7 square miles at the start of the last century, to less than 0.4 square miles. We need to act, and act now.

Fortunately, the international community has started to heed the warning. Through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), every effort is being made to address the problem. Later this year in December, the Conference of Parties (COP21), will be held in Paris, and is expected to adopt an internationally binding agreement on climate change.

This agreement is expected to, among other things, address climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as appropriate financing. For most of us in developing countries, availability of financing, especially for green technologies will be critical. We cannot, for example, dream about saving forests without alternative sources of fuel for people's survival, such as for cooking. Rural electrification will therefore be important.

This tree I have planted today should be one of many we should all plant. Addressing climate change in the long term will require concerted effort from all of us, at national regional and international level.

With more than 34 million people in Uganda, if each one of us planted a tree each year, the cumulative effect would be phenomenal. Let us challenge ourselves to do the right thing to spare Mother Earth. Let each one of plant a tree or two. Let our municipal and city authorities spare and preserve green spaces and wetlands. Let us preserve nature and forest reserves across the country.

I thank you for your kind attention.