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WEMECO JOURNAL



Message From Executive Director



MR AKUGIZIBWE PETER ARAALI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WEMECO

Western Media for Environment and Conservation (WEMECO) welcomes you to our inaugural journal to be published quarterly. In this journal, we shall publish information about activities we conduct and participate in. Our core mandate as a media network of environmental journalists working in the Albertine region in Uganda is to defend and promote environmental justice.

We shall use this journal to execute this mandate. WEMECO works to empower journalists and communities with environmental education to create a sense of environmental activism through media advocacy. This journal is going to be a platform to promote environmental protection, address climate challenges, and build capacity for journalists. We commit to bringing our readers a wealth of informative content. Please, contact us for partnerships. Thank you

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Contact Us

Western Media for Environment & Conservation
P. O. Box 490027 Hoima
Hoima - Kasingo, Fort Portal Road, Uganda
Mob: +256782401237, +256-701-266134
Email: wemeco2018@gmail.com,
info@wemeco.org
Website: www.wemeco.org

WORLD MALARIA DAY

MALARIA TO ESCALATE POVERTY IN BUNYORO



The Western Media for Environment and Conservation (WEMECO) commemorated World Malaria Day (WMD) at Glory Summit Hotel on April 25, 2024, in Hoima City, western Uganda. The civil society organization, at a press conference organized to mark the Day, warned that malaria will escalate poverty if all stakeholders do not take full responsibility and seriously fight the killer disease.

Mr Peter Araali Akugizibwe, the Executive Director of WEMECO, urged people to embrace the simple measures put in place by the government to prevent the spread of malaria. The Executive Director of Bio Vision Africa (BIVA), Mr Geoffrey Kamese, speaking at the same press conference said malaria stands as the leading cause of death in the world with children below five years being the most vulnerable.

Mr Kamese said that Hoima is among the areas with the highest rates of malaria infections and the associated effects which lower production and rising expenditure in Uganda. He urged political leaders to mobilize funds to increase awareness about the disease. "The larger and long-term goal is to make our world malaria-free so that there is no more loss of life due to this illness," he said. Mr Kamese warned the public against the wrong self-medication which increases drug resistance and other health complications that can lead to death.

Malaria In Uganda

Uganda has one of the highest global burdens of malaria cases, with over 90% of the population at risk. In addition, malaria remains Uganda's leading cause of death, especially in children.

The disease causes immense detrimental health effects and is responsible for 30 to 50% of outpatient visits and 15 to 20% of hospital admissions.

The average economic loss in Uganda due to malaria annually was estimated at over \$500 million. In 2022, WHO reported that there were an estimated 12.7 million malaria cases and over 17,556 estimated deaths in the country.

World Malaria Day

World Malaria Day is an occasion to highlight the need for continued investment and sustained political commitment to malaria prevention and control.

The Day was instituted by WHO Member States during the World Health Assembly of 2007. It is held globally and acknowledged to increase awareness of this disease. The theme of World Malaria Day (WMD) 2024 is "Health Equity, Gender and Human Rights". To commemorate World Malaria Day this year, WEMECO partnered with BIVA and Tanzania's AGENDA for Environment and Responsible Development to carry out a series of activities in Hoima district, western Uganda.

The activities included a press conference, visiting St James Secondary School and Hoima Public Primary School to create awareness and sensitization and radio talk shows on Spice FM and Kazi-Njema Radio.



CELEBRATING EARTH DAY 2024

BURNING PLASTIC WASTE DANGEROUS TO OUR PLANET



Western Media for Environment and Conservation (WEMECO), together with partners Bio Vision Africa (BIVA) and with support from AGENDA for Environment & Responsible Development Tanzania, joined the rest of the world to commemorate Earth Day on April 22, 2024. Wemeco and partners conducted a series of activities in Hoima district, in western Uganda, to add their voice to efforts to protect Mother Nature. The activities included a press conference to create awareness about the day and the theme, two radio talk shows, and visits to primary and secondary schools to further preach the gospel of environment protection and climate change to the youth who are the future occupants of planet Earth.

Earth Day, which was first held on April 22, 1970, honors achievements in the area of the environment and raises awareness of the need to protect natural resources for future generations. The theme for this year's Earth Day celebrations was 'Planet vs. Plastics'. This theme is inspired by the historic UN treaty on plastics, which is expected to be approved by the end of 2024. This theme also aims at raising awareness of the harms of plastic pollution for human and planetary health. The Earth Day mission is founded on the premise that all people, regardless of race, gender, income, or geography, have a moral right to a healthy, sustainable environment. This mission is pursued through education, public policy, and activism campaigns.

In Hoima, Wemeco reiterated the need for Uganda to work towards ensuring that the environment is conserved not only for our good but also for the good of generations yet to come. It is our responsibility but also our obligation to conserve our planet because we have no any other planet to fall back to, Mr Peter Araali Akugizibwe, the Executive Director of Wemeco said at a press conference.

Public Warned Against Plastics

Mr Akugizibwe urged residents in Hoima and Uganda at large against the irresponsible use of plastics and poor management of plastic wastes because they are a danger to land, water bodies, and the atmosphere.

"They [plastics] kill soil fertility and affect aquatic life. Studies have shown that if the threat of plastics is not controlled, the quantity of plastics in water bodies will be higher than that of fish by 2025," Mr Akugizibwe said.

He pointed out that the drainage system of Hoima City pours its content into River Wambabya which also empties whatever it carries into Lake Albert. This means that if plastics in Hoima are disposed of wrongly, they will end up in Lake Albert something that endangers marine life.



"Everybody must take it upon himself to avoid plastics because it is a danger ahead of mankind. That is why as part of our Earth Day commemoration activities we chose to use media houses and community engagements to speak to amplify the global voice against plastics," Mr Akugizibwe explained.

Burning plastic waste is dangerous

The Executive Director of Bio Vision Africa, Mr Geoffrey Kameese, speaking to school students in one of the activities noted that burning plastic waste escalates their negative effects. He said it pollutes the land, aquatic environment, and air. "The smoke is not restricted to one place but rather circulates reaching many people through the air. Science tells us that when you inhale that smoke adulterated air, it moves into the fatty parts of the body. Given that they contain persistent organic pollutants, they remain in your body causing health complications," Mr Kameese told students.

Speaking to listeners of Kazi-Njema FM, a local radio station in Hoima, Mr Kameese called on leaders to play their role. He noted that the heaviest burden of the consequences of environmental pollution rests on the poor.

WEMECO ACTIVITIES IN PICTURES



Mr Akugizibwe Peter Araali with a team from collaboration on international ICT policy east and southern Africa (cipesa) after a partnership meeting on digital security at WEMECO offices in Hoima.



Mr Akugizibwe Peter Araali (L) stressing a point during a recent radio talk in Hoima ahead of the 2024 Earth Day commemoration. Next to him is Mr Goefrey Kamese of Bio Vision Africa.



The ED of WEMECO, Mr Akugizibwe Peter Araali (R), attending refresher training for Albertine Journalists Platform (AJOP) members on covering large land-based investments such as EACOP at Atkon Hotel in Kiboga district. Wemeco remains humbled and thankful for the invite from NAPE.



Mr Akugizibwe Peter Araali carrying out his duties as a professional journalist and executive director of WEMECO recently. Wemeco offers hands on capacity building for journalists.



Officials from our partners Bio Vision Africa joined our Executive Director Mr Akugizibwe Peter Araali to address members of the media during this year's Earth Day in Hoima.

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for a toxics-free future



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