



## STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PP10 ACTIVITIES IN UGANDA

### Introduction

Partnership for Principle 10 (PP10) is a Type 11 Partnership that was launched in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002 during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) by the members of The Access Initiative (TAI). TAI is a global network of national civil society organizations promoting public access to information, participation and justice in decision-making that affects the environment. The Initiative was born in 2001-2002 when a global coalition of twenty five NGOs from nine countries around the world conducted assessments to measure progress made by their Governments in implementing Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration. PP10 was initiated to provide a mechanism for accelerating the implementation of the access rights: access to information, participation in decision-making and access to

**Principle 10:** "Environment issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by the public authorities.....and the opportunity to participate in decision making processes. .... Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy shall be provided."

justice as key principles of environmental governance. The Partnership is committed to translating the access rights into action by promoting transparent, inclusive, and accountable decision-making at national level. It provides a venue for governments, international organizations,

and civil society groups to work together to implement practical solutions that provide the public with access to information, participation and justice for environmentally sustainable decisions.

### Progress in the implementation of PP10 in Uganda

Since 2002, ACODE developed and submitted its PP10 commitments to TAI Secretariat at World Resources Institute based in Washington, USA which is a requirement for becoming a full-member of PP10.

## Establishment of the National PP10 Committee

In order to accelerate the implementation of access rights, the Ugandan Government formed a National PP10 Committee which has been providing strategic guidance to the process. The committee which meets on a quarterly basis is comprised of key officials from government agencies, and representatives of the civil society. This committee played a big role in developing the Government's PP10 commitments that have now been approved by other partners. The committee also has been instrumental in providing oversight in the implementation of Government of Uganda and civil society PP10 commitments.

## Establishing a one-stop Information and Documentation center in the Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment (MWLE)

A One-stop Information and Documentation centre was established and equipped with key policy documents on environment and natural resources related information. The Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment provided the space for the center. The purpose of the center is to provide the right of access to information held by Government; and to promote transparency and accountability by providing the public with timely and accurate information. This is in line with the Freedom of Access to Information Act passed into law in July 2005. The center acts as a depository for information on environment in Government's possession which can be accessed by the public: civil society, academia, development partners, researchers, affected communities and the general public in order to influence policy and decision making. The center is computerized fully operational and equipped with information. It has a full-time Internet access facility for online research. A flier was published and disseminated widely to inform key stakeholders about the services offered by the resource center. The Information and Documentation center can be accessed on the Ministry's website: [www.mwle.go.ug](http://www.mwle.go.ug).



A ONE-STOP INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION CENTRE.

The Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment in collaboration with the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment are establishing an Information and Documentation Centre to be located in the Ministry.

The Partnership for Principle 10 (PP10) is an initiative developed as a Sustainable Development Partnership under the auspices of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. PP10 provides a way for governments, civil society organizations, and international organizations to work together to implement practical solutions to provide the public with access to information, participation, and justice for environmentally sustainable decisions.

**What will the Resource center provide?**  
The Resource center is envisaged to become a one-stop center where key information and documents relating to the environment will be accessed. The center will also have full time internet connectivity for purposes of carrying out research. It will be open to the public. The Resource center will be responsible for generation, collection, processing, storage and dissemination of strategic information.

The establishment of the Information and Documentation Center is in line with the government's commitment to implementing Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, to which Uganda is a signatory. Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration states that: *Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens....At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment.....States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation ....Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings ....shall be provided.*

Once fully established, the center will enhance the Partnership for Principle 10 where government where government is also committed to accelerate implementation of access rights articulated under Principle 10.

**Funding of the Resource Centre:**  
The establishment of the Information and Documentation Centre has been made possible with support from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) of the United Kingdom, which has provided the initial funding. In order to realize the vision of the Information and Documentation Center, we hope that other development partners will come forward and offer support to sustain the center. We are grateful to the FCO for the support and we look forward to a continued relationship.

For more information, please contact:  
[www.acode-u.org](http://www.acode-u.org); [www.mwle.go.ug](http://www.mwle.go.ug)

## Information Needs Assessment Survey

An Information Needs assessment was conducted to ascertain the potential users, their needs and the relevant materials required to guide the establishment of the Information

and Documentation Center. From the survey, several stakeholders including civil society organizations involved in policy research and advocacy in environmental issues, independent researchers, academia, government and development partners expressed the desire to have the center.

### National Sensitisation workshop on access to information

A national workshop on Freedom of access to Information was organized. The purpose of the workshop was to create an opportunity for Government of Uganda officials and representatives of civil society to engage in a mutual dialogue to address the supply and demand side constraints of access to information regarding the environment. The workshop provided an opportunity to participants to explore the challenges in achieving freedom of access to information in Uganda.



R-L: Mrs. Edith Kateme-Kasajja, Commissioner, Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment, Mr. Nikesh Mehta, Second Secretary External political, and Mr. Godber Tumushabe, Executive Director, ACODE, at the closing of the information sensitization workshop on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2005 in Kampala.

### Enactment of the Access to Information Law

One of the commitments that the Government of Uganda committed itself to do was to enact a law on freedom of access to information. Over time, the Parliament of Uganda enacted this law and was accented to by the President in July 2005. Following the enactment of the law, Government has gone ahead to develop an implementation strategy although this strategy still lacks funding and is yet to be scrutinized by civil society to assess its compliance.

## Development of an Integrated Communication Strategy

As a follow-up to the operationalization of the Access to Information Law, MWLE has developed a communication strategy to enhance information sharing within Government related ministries, agencies and other stakeholders. The only constraint is that no funds have been obtained to operationalize the strategy.

## Fundraising for PP10 Activities

The Government of Uganda and its civil society partners have secured funding from the FCO to further implement PP10 activities in Uganda. Under the new project ACODE will conduct training of Judicial officers about the access rights. This training is expected to address the access to justice and remedy to communities in case their environmental rights are violated.

Finally, ACODE and its coalition partners and Government of Uganda remain committed to the full implementation of access rights. We are grateful to FCO and WRI for their continued support that has enabled ACODE and Government of Uganda to implement the TAI/PP10 activities in Uganda and the region. As a regional secretariat for TAI/PP10 in the African region, we are planning to fundraise for the partners in Kenya and Tanzania both Governments and civil society to develop and submit their PP10 Commitments.

*This Infosheet has been prepared under a collaborative partnership between ACODE and the Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment. This partnership is aimed at accelerating the implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration in Uganda.*

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