

Water Safety Summit

Improving service delivery and protecting public health

Uganda hosts global water meeting

Water management. Despite technological advancement in tools and methods of water supply management, emerging issues like climate change, population growth and improper land use are making it difficult to ensure safe water in developing countries.

BY EPHRAIM KASOZI
ekasozi@ug.nationmedia.com

In Uganda, clean drinking water is defined as 'water from a tap and piped water system, borehole, protected well or spring, rain water, or gravity flow schemes.'

Equally, unsafe water is typically drawn from open water sources, including ponds, streams, rivers, lakes, swamps, water holes, unprotected springs, shallow wells, and water trucks.

Currently, water supplies world over are faced with the challenge of providing adequate safe drinking water.

Minister for Water and Environment, Prof. Ephraim Kamuntu said although the government invests in improving water service delivery, access and safety of water remains a challenge, calling for experts to invent technology to enable the rural population harvest rain water.

He said there is need for experts to develop appropriate technologies that are affordable, durable and convenient for harvesting rain water from corrugated roofs.

"The run-off water from corrugated roof is sufficient because we have frequent rains throughout the year. If people can effectively harvest rainwater, it would increase access by up to 80 per cent, rather than following up the water that flows into the valleys during rains," added Prof. Kamuntu.

Water coverage

According to Prof Kamuntu, water coverage in rural areas stands at 65 per cent compared to the urban areas with 77 per cent.

"But even those who have access to clear water in rural areas move for long distances and when women are tired, the children walk all the distance to fetch water," he said.

Kampala summit

Speaking at the opening of the Water Safety Conference in Kampala, Prof Kamuntu said women spend up to 80 per cent of their time in collecting water and firewood, which negatively affects the national economy.

The Leadership and Change

Management Summit organised by the International Water Association (IWA), in partnership with the World Health Organisation (WHO), through the National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC), attracted water experts, practitioners, researchers and policy makers with a view of developing strategies for improving service delivery and protecting public health.

The summit, running from November 13 to 15 at the NWSC International Resource Centre, brings together experts from all over the world to discuss best practices and emerging trends for improving the safety of global water supplies.

It focused on among other things, water safety plan implementation, risk assessment and management, source protection, health impact assessments for water quality interventions, innovative policies and regulations for drinking water quality.

Other issues discussed include operation and maintenance of water supply systems, water safety in informal settlements, community



Mr Philipp Otter (L), the project coordinator of Autarcon, a safe water drinking technology company, explains to Prof. Ephraim Kamuntu, the water and environment minister (C), how a water filtering machine works. Such technology is needed to promote access to clean and safe drinking water in Uganda. PHOTO BY EPHRAIM KASOZI

managed water supplies, treatment and safe storage.

Value of safe water

Prof. Kamuntu said Uganda's transformation and development

is intrinsically linked to the continued effective management of water resources because water is the driving force providing productive input in agriculture, energy, industry, tourism and sustains human

health. "This is especially true for African countries in which it is currently estimated that on average, only 60 per cent of the population has access to improved water and sanitation services," added Prof. Kamuntu.

New strategies

Mr Alex Gisagara, the acting NWSC managing director, says the conference sought to lay strategies on how to address challenges of accessibility with a view to improving safe water.

"We are seeking to use this platform to deliberate on how to address the quality, quantity and accessibility of water starting from source in terms of infrastructure development, but also considering the water catchment and environment protection measures," Mr Gisagara said.

According to Mr Gisagara, the Water Safety Plan concept is highlighted as the most effective means to consistently provide safe drinking water supplies based on a preventive risk based approach.

MY Water Treatment Professionals



Call the Professionals for the water you want from the water you have!

D&S DAVIS & SHIRTLIFF
know H₂O through experience

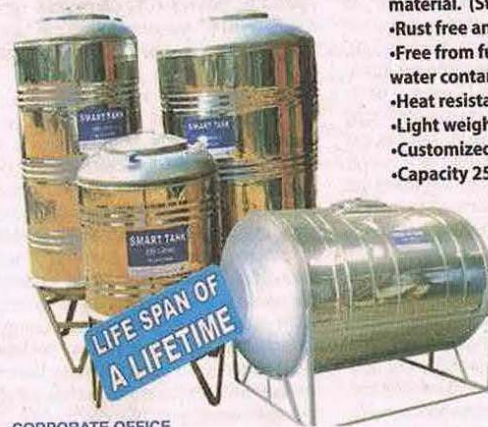
• KAMPALA, Tel: 414 346337/8, d&s@ug.dayliff.com
• NAKASERO, Tel: 029 734633, d&s@ug.dayliff.com
• GULU, Tel: 0471 433041, d&s@ug.dayliff.com

www.dayliff.com



STEEL & TUBE
INDUSTRIES

SMART TANK STAINLESS STEEL



- Manufactured from food grade material. (Stainless Steel grade 304)
- Rust free and fire resistant.
- Free from fungus, algae, Insect and water contamination.
- Heat resistant and solid body.
- Light weight and easy to install.
- Customized to buyer's specifications
- Capacity 250L to 7050L

CORPORATE OFFICE
Deals House, Jinja Road,
Plot 38-40 Mukabya Rd, Nakawa Industrial Area,
P. O. Box 33784 Kampala-Uganda,
Tel: +256 414 288560/287950/0312-261283,
Fax: +256 414 286293, Email: info@stii.co.ug
Website: www.stii.co.ug

OUTLETS: Lira: 0473 420 541 Nakasero: 0414 344 989 Nalokolongo: 0414 271 194 Bwaise: 031 2 513502

Smart Choice for Life