

# Embassy Kampala Environment and Climate Change Workplace Policy

This environment and climate change work place Policy defines Kampala Embassy's explicit commitments to support environment and climate change principles. The policy implementation guideline sets out mechanisms and standards the Embassy will follow to green the office operations. This policy statement therefore endeavours to make collective effort to make the work place and individual practices more cost effective, aimed at reducing the Embassy's carbon foot print.

## Background

Uganda is already experiencing impacts of climate change manifesting through increased temperature and change in rainfall variability leading to increased frequency and intensity of disasters including droughts, floods and landslides in recent years, with negative implications for food security. Uganda has been ranked as high risk under the risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters with impacts on displaced people and vulnerable groups, increasing inequality and social economic vulnerability. With projected increase in the frequency of extreme events, the exposure and vulnerability of the country is likely to increase, thus affecting the coping capacity further. Environmental and climate change impacts have the potential to halt and reverse the development gains made in Uganda over the past decades.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that daily operations of the Embassy in delivering its aid programme in Uganda do not exacerbate the impacts of climate change and environment degradation.

## Policy objectives

1. To regularly track the carbon foot print, (at least once every two years), and assess the extent to which the embassy operations are contributing to carbon emissions and devise mechanisms of reducing the carbon foot print.

2. To reduce, to the extent possible, emissions of carbon arising from daily Embassy operations, and
3. To explore best options for offsetting emissions of carbon arising from Embassy operations so as to maintain a carbon neutral status, but also contribute to social, economic and environment outcomes through purchase of certified emission reduction credits

## Scope

This policy describes specific commitments, implementation mechanisms and common standards for Kampala Embassy to ensure that environment and climate change are fully incorporated in Embassy operations. It calls on the embassy to work in a collaborative way towards the goal of reducing emissions in all aspects of our work, and urges individual members to consciously change their own actions to ensure that there is minimum and cost effective use of resources.

## Rationale

Climate change mitigation seeks to reduce emissions and stabilize<sup>1</sup> concentration of GHGs in the atmosphere. Article 2 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) underlines the need to ensure that GHG emissions do not increase beyond a level that would result in dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. The Paris Agreement has defined as one of its objective to “holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels” (Article 2, paragraph 1a).

In terms of meeting the SDG, the dashboards for OECD countries report, 2017 revealed that the greatest challenge on achieving some of the SDGs for developed countries is mostly around sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12), climate change (SDG 13), clean energy (SDG 7), and ecosystem conservation (SDGs 14 and 15). The collective green practices at the embassy contribute to the above SDGs.

Ireland’s Policy for International Development; One World One Future, identifies climate change as one of the priority areas of action. It commits to achieving sustainable development by ensuring that developing countries, especially Ireland’s Key Partner Countries, can develop in a way that is resource-efficient, climate-resilient (protecting themselves from the risks of climate change) and low in carbon emissions.

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<sup>1</sup> Stabilization means restricting the increase of GHGs concentrations in the atmosphere.

The Government of Uganda commits to undertaking a number of policies and measures to support low-carbon development in key priority sectors. The implementation of these policies and measures assumes the continuation of ongoing and planned international financial, technology transfer and capacity building support to complement domestic efforts as set out in the 2015 National Climate Change Policy. The Embassy work therefore contributes to the emission reduction targets for the country.

Cognisant of the fact that routine daily operations can have a negative environmental impact and increase emissions, Embassy Kampala has formulated this policy to improve its environment and climate credentials, focusing in particular on reducing carbon emissions. Opportunities for reduction in carbon emissions exist in energy use, transport, air travel, water, waste management and information sharing.

## Key Policy Commitments

In implementing this environment and climate change policy, the Embassy commits to becoming green<sup>2</sup>, through a multifaceted green behaviours and practices and promoting environmental awareness through; reduction, reuse/recycling, and recovery

### **The following policy commitments will be implemented;**

In implementing the policy, Kampala Embassy commits to;

- Reducing energy consumption by using incandescent lamps with energy-efficient compact fluorescents bulbs which enable to save up to 75% of energy
- Turning off electronic appliances when they are not in use.
- In order to save trees, we shall print or photocopy on both sides of paper or print only when necessary, promoting the concept of a “paperless office” system or less paper for that matter.
- Practice waste sorting into biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste -- kitchen waste, papers, cans, bottles, glass, metals, toners, cardboards, and other types of plastic that is reusable. This will reduce litter in the embassy premises and also promote good waste management practices, including reuse

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<sup>2</sup> From the carbon emissions assessments, the three largest emissions contributors are – air travel, electricity and fuel (official travel).

- Devise better plans of disposal for non-biodegradable waste including wood, metal, and other debris. The procurement and disposal team will discuss and promote better disposal methods that are environmentally friendly
- Removing extra devices from computers when they are not used and Switching off computers when leaving the workplace
- Switching off lights when leaving workplace and only leaving those that are necessary.
- Discourage smoking in the office premises for both internal and external users
- Coordinate vehicle movements and sharing whenever possible to reduce emissions from combustion of fuels
- Turn scrap paper into notepads and re-use envelopes for internal circulation to avoid paper waste.
- Reducing air travel which is the highest source of emission, examples include doing on line courses, on line meetings, and when travels happen to combine different activities to make the journey more effective.

## **Policy Implementation**

### **Promoting awareness on green practices**

The Embassy will support in house lunch time seminars on environment and climate change and effects and identify resource persons who can share best practices for greening the Embassy.

The embassy will also engage in advocacy through sharing of best practices with other donors through the donor working group on environment and climate change, and the EU climate diplomacy week

Efforts will also be made to promote official tweets on the internal work place policy and the best practices as policy implementation is monitored

The green team will support a mechanism of sharing weekly tips based on the embassy practices as reminders of what is going well and what is not.

### **Establishing a green team for the Embassy**

The embassy will establish a green team, which will be responsible for ensuring that the agreed practices are put into practice. The team will be divided into 2, the leadership team and the monitoring team.

Senior Management Team (SMT) will form one team, to support and approve decisions that might require changes in how the embassy is operating. At the SMT meetings, discussions of green practices will be on the agenda at least once a month.

The second team will be nominated to monitor the embassy practices and highlight emerging issues. Suggested members include; programme staff representative, the climate change focal point for the embassy, a driver, a CST member and a caretaker. These will do the daily policing on lapses in what we have agreed to do in this policy, guided by a checklist which is attached as annex 1. One agreed on representative will report any emerging issues in the Monday morning business meetings.

### **Offsetting emissions**

The Embassy will continue to maintain a carbon neutral status by conducting carbon emission assessments to determine the amount of carbon being generated. These will be offset by buying the carbon credits from certified entities. However efforts will be made to reduce the carbon foot print, instead of relying on purchasing emissions resulting from unsustainable practices.

### **Policy monitoring and review**

The embassy will work collaboratively to undertake a review of this policy. This will take place when the carbon foot print of the embassy is being conducted (after 2 years). The green team will report progress in regard to respective implementation activities and how they have reduced costs for the embassy. The amount of carbon generated as a result of the embassy operations will determine if the policy objectives are on track or not.

The above will form a basis for reviewing or maintaining the commitments in the work place policy

## Annex 1; climate and environment definitions for the policy

**Greenhouse gases;** A greenhouse gas is a gas in an atmosphere that absorbs and emits radiant energy within the thermal infrared range. This process is the fundamental cause of the greenhouse effect. The six gases covered by the Kyoto treaty are; carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, Hydro fluorocarbons, per fluorocarbons and Sulphur hexafluoride

**Carbon** is the element that combines with oxygen to produce carbon dioxide. For every one molecule of carbon, there are two molecules of oxygen (hence CO<sub>2</sub>). Carbon on its own is not a greenhouse gas, but often CO<sub>2</sub> is shortened to carbon for ease of reference.

**Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)** – A naturally occurring gas, and also a by-product of burning fossil fuels and biomass, as well as land-use changes and other industrial processes. It is the principal human caused greenhouse gas that affects the Earth's radiative balance. It is the reference gas against which other greenhouse gases are measured and therefore has a Global Warming Potential

### **Carbon Footprint;**

The total amount of greenhouse gases that are emitted into the atmosphere each year by a person, family, building, organization, or company. A persons carbon footprint includes greenhouse gas emissions from fuel that an individual burns directly, such as by heating a home or riding in a car. It also includes greenhouse gases that come from producing the goods or services that the individual uses, including emissions from power plants that make electricity, factories that make products, and landfills where trash gets sent.

### **Emissions**

The release of a substance (usually a gas when referring to the subject of climate change) into the atmosphere.

### **Energy Efficiency**

Using less energy to provide the same service

**Biodegradable waste** includes any organic matter in waste which can be broken down into carbon dioxide, water, methane or simple organic molecules by micro-organisms and other living things using composting, aerobic digestion, anaerobic digestion or similar processes. Biodegradable waste is a type of waste, typically originating from plant or animal sources, which may be degraded by other living organisms

**Non Bio degradable waste** - a substance or chemical that is non-biodegradable cannot be changed to a harmless natural state by the action of bacteria, and may therefore damage the environment. These substances consist of plastic materials, metal scraps, aluminum cans and bottles, hazardous chemicals etc. These things are practically immune to the natural processes and thus cannot be fed upon or broken down even after thousands of years. Therefore, these contribute to solid waste which is very hazardous for the environment.

A **paperless office** (or paper-free office) is a work environment in which the use of paper is eliminated or greatly reduced. This is done by converting documents and other papers into digital form, a process known as digitization.

## Annex 2; Check list of specific green practices

	<b>Green Practices</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>1.</b>	Has the Embassy done the carbon audit? Does the organisation know its carbon footprint?			
<b>2.</b>	Are all bulbs energy efficient?			
<b>3.</b>	Is all equipment turned off fully when not in use?			
<b>4.</b>	Is there an up-to-date travel plan that promotes low-carbon transport and reduces unnecessary travel			
<b>5.</b>	Are all lights in offices, corridors, toilets, etc switched off whenever it is not necessary to have them?			
<b>6.</b>	Are all computers (including monitors), printers and copiers switched off at the end of the day?			
<b>7.</b>	Do the staff use both sides to print or photocopy?			
<b>8.</b>	Is the office waste sorted and classified into degradable and non-biodegradable waste with a good disposal plan?			
<b>9.</b>	Is the non-smoking practice in the Embassy enforced?			
<b>10.</b>	Are the green practices discussed at the SMT and Monday morning business meetings?			
<b>11.</b>	Are the agreed on recommendations implemented?			