

Ugandan presidential candidate vows green revolution

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Rejecting the last outmoded approaches to dealing with the challenges of the 21st century, a Ugandan presidential candidate has vowed to implement a green revolution in the country.

Last week, Timothy Mugerwa, a Ugandan environmental activist, announced his candidacy in presidential elections to be held next year and said he would bring a Green New Deal to Uganda.



"I have come to bring a revolution of our time that resonates with today's challenges. I want to transform the politics of Uganda to a system that works for all," Mugerwa, who will compete against current President Yoweri Museveni, told Anadolu Agency.

Saying the decision came after observing a gap in Ugandan politics, he said the ongoing political system in the East African country was outdated and did not belong in the 21st century.

Uganda's politics are "driven by populism, emotions and excitement," he said.

Touching on the effects on Uganda of climate change, one of the top priorities of his campaign, he said the country was being hit harder than most, with many having died due to extreme weather events.

"Frequent floods covered many parts of the country. A prolonged drought affected livestock and crops. Floods cut off roads, leaving many people stranded and businesses paralyzed. Deforestation is at its worst, making the country very vulnerable to desertification," he noted.

He also stressed that everything is at stake and the future of children, as well as other future generations, is uncertain due to climate change.

Renewable energy

"I will prioritize heavy investment in renewable energy to promote clean energy that will increase electricity in Africa and boost trade," Mugerwa said, referring to one of his election pledges.

Adding that investing in technology and research would also be a priority, he stressed that Africa had the potential to lead in supplying renewable clean energy, but that this potential remained untapped.

Touching on the fast-disappearing Mabira Central Forest Reserve, he said businesses that cause deforestation would be removed and that reforestation work would begin.

"I'll ensure that environmental laws are enforced and hold the National Forest Authority (NFA) accountable," he added.



Commenting on a government attempt last year to build a hydropower dam in the northwest of the country near Murchison Falls, the most powerful waterfall in Uganda, he said "selfish individuals" supported the project in partnership with an oil company and that it was wrong to be engaged in a project that was not in the interests of the people or environment.

Last year, the government of Uganda announced it would construct a hydroelectric dam on Murchison Falls, though environmental groups and the tourism sector fought the project arguing it would negatively affect the environment.

"I strongly condemn this act and advise the government to drop the project. Ugandans need Murchison Falls more than the dam. We should be now investing in solar and wind energy, not in hydroelectric dams," he added.

Hydroelectricity

Mugerwa argued that in the country plagued by electricity shortages, renewable energy must be the priority, but that hydroelectricity was not sufficient in achieving power security. "We have depended on hydroelectricity since Uganda was created, but it has just kept us a third world country. It is not reliable, it is expensive, it benefits few, it affects business and comes at the expense of our ecosystem," he argued.

Proposing to increase the use of solar energy in the country with an initiative to fit homes with solar panels, he urged Africa to act together in the face of the devastating effects of climate change.

"Africa needs to get its act together and address its challenges, rather than waiting for others to bring solutions. But this should not exonerate developed countries, which have a historical responsibility of polluting our planet."



He said developed countries "must" pay for the damage they caused, which continues to affect Africa.

"Climate change is already with us. We need now to be discussing solutions and taking action."

Source: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/ugandan-presidential-candidate-vows-green-revolution/1726353#>