

Anada Tiega, Former Secretary General Ramsar Convention. He shared his view on the goals of capacity building for the wise use of wetlands during the Kigali Forum for Wetlands, 8 to 12 July 2013, which took place in Kigali, Rwanda.

UNEP-TEEB: *“Wise use smart plans” is the theme for the 2013 Kigali Forum on wetlands what for you is the main take home message?*

Anada Tiega: The main message of the Forum is the role of wetlands for people. Many people are not aware that conserving and managing wetlands wisely is important for adapting to climate change. As more knowledge about wetlands and climate change becomes available, it is important that information sharing is facilitated. A recent World Bank study showed the importance of coastal wetlands for storing carbon, and calls on investing in coastal wetlands in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This workshop is important to keep the momentum going and give enough information to focal points to raise awareness in their countries



UNEP-TEEB: *Wetlands provide vital water related ecosystem services and yet they continue to be degraded. What is being done to raise the profile of wetlands?*

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Anada Tiega: Forums such as the one here today in Kigali are examples of actions to raise the profile of wetlands because they provide opportunities to share information and lessons. For example this Forum is an opportunity for people to learn about the TEEB for Water and Wetlands report, which gives information on the social and economic values of wetlands. We also advise our focal points and partners to speak with Members of Parliament in their respective countries because they control policy-making at the national level. In my view the implementation of the Ramsar Convention cannot happen if there is no commitment at the national level.

UNEP-TEEB: *What advice would you give to a policy maker faced with the dilemma of whether to grow rice or to conserve a wetland?*

Anada Tiega: My advice is that they should think about the future generation. We all need nature to survive. Nature that is healthy to provide us with livelihoods. We always have different options available to us. It's important to select the option that meets immediate needs and at the same time meets long term needs. Finding a balance is cheaper, because when you degrade that which supports life, you realize you can't live

without it and you have to do restoration, which is costly. Without the technology or finances degradation can quickly become irreversible.

UNEP-TEEB: *What was the main reason the Ramsar Secretariat produced the TEEB for Water and wetlands report?*

Anada Tiega: The Report is very timely especially now when the international community is discussing the post 2015 sustainable development agenda. This report is a tool that provides evidence that conservation and wise use of wetlands can ensure a better future if we take good action. The report presents the economic value of wetlands and this makes it is easier to talk to decision-makers. As a result of this report, some countries are now interested to undertake an economic valuation of their wetlands .We expect that the report findings will support national implementation because everything should start at the national level.

UNEP-TEEB: *Reflecting upon your time as Ramsar Secretary General, what is a memorable achievement in your role as a champion for wetlands?*

Anada Tiega: One of my memorable achievements was presenting the concept of wetlands and urbanization to the Ramsar contracting parties, and witnessing the adoption of this resolution at the Conference of the Parties in Korea. The adoption of this resolution made it possible to develop guiding principles on how to integrate wetland management in urban development planning. Together with UN habitat we went on to develop a pilot project in Africa, starting with some cities and this illustrates how the city council can integrate wetland issues in urban planning. Other memorable achievements include bringing to the table the issue of wetlands and climate change, and displaying how wetlands have a key role to play in mitigation and adaptation.