

## **Politician and the Enforcement of the Uganda Forestry Policy 2001: Lessons from South Busoga Central Forest Reserve, Mayuge District, Eastern Uganda**

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**Abstract:** There has been a conundrum in apportioning blame on the petering out of forest resources in central forest reserves amongst the politicians; foresters and the local communities engulfing the forest reserves in the post independent Uganda. This could be attributed to conflicts of interest amongst these major stakeholders in the forestry docket de-legitimizing the myriad of forestry and other related policies, acts and the constitution of Uganda. A total of 344 households, 76 local politicians inclusive and 31 environment conservationists with interest at South Busoga Forest Reserve, Mayuge district studied showed that there was a high/strong relationship between the politicians' interference with enforcement of Forestry Policy at SBCFR at  $r = 0.74$  at a 0.05 level of significance; the politicians from the communities engulfing SBCFR did not maximally endeavour to either protect or make strategies which could conserve the forest reserve in their proximity hence the immense non-compliance with the Forestry Policy manifested by illegalities in SBCFR, Mayuge district and there was a conflict between NFA and politicians over management of SBCFR. It was therefore recommended that a positive political will was necessary so as to avert truncation of government regulatory mechanism with a prevalence of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, incase of any misnomers.

**Key words:** Compliance, de-legitimization, local communities, non-compliance, politics, illegalities

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In East Africa generally and Uganda in particular establishment of reserves managed scientifically has a colonial bearing. They were created in order to conserve the erodible forest areas and allow forests to act as the main regulator of the hydrology of an area (Lind and Morrison, 1974; Vink, 1975). Some writers claimed that besides conservation they were to supply fuel wood for the Uganda railway line in Kenya (Omara-Ojungu, 1992; Mwangi, 1998). In Uganda, Hamilton (1984) traced the creation of forestry services in 1898 with the appointment of the first director to the Scientific and Forestry Department (FD) of Uganda thus ushering in scientific methods at the expense of the then traditional ones of the silent majority surrounding the forest reserves up to date.

In the colonial Uganda, the forests were state controlled and not open access as they were in pre-colonial days. The control was through various

agreements between the Protectorate Government under Britain and the native authorities as negotiated at the time for instance, Toro Agreement in 1900, Ankole Agreement in 1909 and later Bunyoro Agreement in 1933 (Olet, 1977; Hamilton, 1984). Olet (1977) added that in 1900 the Forestry Regulations, giving effect to these provisions was enacted and in 1907, they were replaced by the first Forestry Ordinance. This laid a firm foundation for creation and development of a permanent forest estate by 1910.

The apparent genesis of forest policies in Uganda can be traced from the 1929 Nicholson report which recognized the anthropocentric uses of forests hence, creating the need for delimiting and defining forest boundaries (Mugenyi *et al.*, 2005). Prior to it the colonial government capitalized on exploiting the forests, establishing ornamental trees on a number of plantation and species trial projects (Olet, 1977). Hamilton (1984) and Mupada (1997) claimed that to this effect the first forest reserves in Uganda were gazetted in 1932 facilitated by

policies and laws put in place by the colonial government. The boundaries of the forest estates, more or less as they are in present Uganda were established in 1940s. The boundaries barred the silent majority from freely accessing the nature's gift and lawfully placed these gifts in the hands of the powerful. This gave impetus to conflicts an avenue late exploited by elusive politicians.

Permits, fees and licenses were introduced to allow utilization of the forest resources; apart from firewood and poles for domestic use given that forest boundaries had been identified, evidenced by marks on the ground with numbered posts or some other forms of boundary mark as they are currently. Traditional systems of resource management were to this effect criminalized and a more civilized body of state law was adopted. Worse still armed foresters carefully watched over the reserves (Mugenyi *et al.*, 2005; Kantwi, 2001; Hamilton, 1984). This in essence meant that the reserves which were in the communities' ancestral land became separate entities from them. But the colonialist could use them at will a bone of contention.

In Uganda, apparently since, the creation of the first legislature in 1920 up to 1985, there were no clear cases that demonstrate how legislators have championed the environmental interests of their constituencies. Environmental issues, forests inclusive were largely political through decrees, personal and other considerations rather than from constituencies' demands (Tumushabe and Bainomugisha, 2004). Politicians play an increasingly critical role in environmental governance in general through, deciding the passing of the acts, policies, how environmental regulations are enforced, protection of vulnerable ecosystems and assistance offered to manage resources in the proximity of local users (Anderson *et al.*, 2006). Ideally, policies are proposed by the citizens to politicians who in passing them legitimize them (Ndemere, 2007). This gap was to be exploited by post independence politicians in Uganda for the decrees were not home made, especially in competitive elective posts.

The then president of Uganda Iddi Amin who called for people to double their production following the departure of the Asians in 1972 and the declaration of economic war could have been the genesis of official forest encroachment in the country by Hamilton (1984). Mugenyi *et al.* (2005) had it that in 1981-86 the government also encouraged settlements in the reserves which had become good sites for guerilla warfare. Thus, much of SBCFR was cleared for settlement. The forest department failed to evict the encroachers between 2000-2001 due to lack of resources and politicization of the forest reserves. National Forestry

Authority (NFA) tried in the 1st 2 years after its inception and has currently followed the suit of the then FD despite effective legislations on environment since, 1986 (Kamugisha-Ruhombe, 2007). This therefore meant the demise of South Busoga Central Forest Reserve (SBCFR), Mayuge district.

The enactment of the Resistance Councils and Committees Statute of 1987 established a Five Tiered System of elected Local Councils (LCs) build on and mimic the administrative hierarchy of the then and present Buganda Kingdom (Banana *et al.*, 2007). Sanginga *et al.* (2004) explained the system as follows the LC I-Butongole (village of about 50-100 households) comprising all adults residing in a particular village who elect nine member village local council executive committee. Beyond the LC 1, in ascending geographical size there are parishes headed by elected LC II-Muluka chairperson that is composed of 3-10 villages. LC II's composition depends on the number of villages elected from the village has at least 4 women. LC III-Gombolola, sub-county composes of 2-10 parishes. It has members elected depending on the number of parishes, 1/3 women; 2 youth and 2 persons with disabilities and elected councilors from parishes.

Sanginga *et al.* (2004) continued to explain that the LC IV-Saza county comprise 3-5 sub-counties thus has 5 chairpersons or vice chairpersons from each sub-county. LC V Buganda Lukiiko district compose of 3-5 counties and has the following members 36; 12 women councilors, 2 youths, 2 people with disabilities and 19 elected councilors. The district LC V is the highest level of local government and links with central government. Banana *et al.* (2007) added that this layer provide a viable platform for crafting by laws and enforcing forest rules at the various levels of local governance. Since, the local councilors around SBCFR are forest users they are accountable to other forest user groups through elections.

Currently, political interference with the management of the forestry sector is high in Uganda. It is assumed that official statements from government indicate a shift in its position on the sanctity of protected areas, especially the Central Forest Reserves (CFR) (Kamugisha-Ruhombe, 2007). This apparently oozed from National Resistance Movement's (NRM) the ruling party in Uganda manifesto Chapter 2 No. 91 Review the policy on forest reserves to ensure equitable usage of forestry resources and partly pacified by No. 92 Pursue policies to ensure a clean and safe environment. In the same year the Presidential Executive Order 2006 stopping evictions was dispatched (Manifesto, 2006; Nsangi, 2006). Kamugisha-Ruhombe (2007) claimed that these aspects

have posed a slow effect but discernible disintegration of the alliance of the law enforcement agencies which NFA painstakingly stitched together in its 1st 2 years of establishment. Nsangi (2006) added that with this, lawlessness openly and silently supported by local politicians has cropped up in forest reserves evident at SBCFR in Mayuge district.

Surprisingly, environmental issues rarely in Uganda receive a political airing especially not in pre-election periods, simply because no politician can subsume analysis and solutions into simple, tabloid dimensions (Jordan and O'Riordan, 2000). In Uganda for long there has been confusing government policies coupled with irresponsible political statements seeking cheap popularity. Thus, >80% of encroachments in Uganda's forest reserves have the backing of politicians who usually trade forest reserve land for votes (Jao and Kiyingi, 2005). These apparently irresponsible statements arise from gaps not addressed in either acts or policies hence deter enforcement of forest policy as seen in SBCFR, Mayuge district.

The following were the objectives of the study; to find out politicians' involvement in enforcement of the Uganda Forestry Policy, 2001 at SBCFR, Mayuge district; to establish politicians' interference with enforcement of the Forestry Policy at SBCFR, Mayuge district and to establish how politicians participation in the compliance with Forestry Policy at SBCFR, Mayuge district.

**Description of the study area:** The case study forest reserve was gazetted and demarcated in Legal Notice No.: 110 of 1938. Under Legal Notice No.: 41 of 1948 the title of the forest is South Busoga Central Forest Reserve (Leggat, 1954). It is currently under NFA with a total area of 16382 ha. It is absolutely situated on the Northern shores of L. Victoria between latitudes 0°16'59"N and longitudes 33°34'22"E (Davenport *et al.*, 1996). The area has a bimodal type of rainfall which begins in March or April with peaks in May to June and October to November. From December to March the area experiences dry spell though occasionally irregular rains fall in the former months (Leggat, 1954; Davenport *et al.*, 1996).

The natural vegetation conforms to the rainfall intensity thus decreases eastwards and southwards from Kityerera (Leggat, 1954). According to Davenport *et al.* (1996) the forest can be broadly classified as medium altitude moist semi-deciduous forest (*Albizia chlorophora* dominated) and moist *Combretum* savanna this is within an altitudinal range of 1140-130 m above sea level. The main species in the closed area were *Albizia markhamia* with *Chlorophora canarium*, *Croton macrostachys*, *Sapium*, *Premna*, *Pseudospondias*, over an

under storey mainly of *Caetacme*, *Teclea* and *Clausena* over a dominantly *Aframomum* and *Cyathula achyranthoides*. Besides these between 1949-1941 Mvule (*Chlorophora excelsa*) and other valuable species were planted in 765 acres (Leggat, 1954). Most of this vegetation has been devegetated due to de-legitimization of the Forestry Policy through encroachments leaving behind tree stamps of the mentioned species.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was a case study conducted through a cross-sectional survey research design. It was concerned with investigating politicians' meddling in enforcement of the Uganda Forestry Policy, 2001 at SBCFR, Mayuge district. It specifically investigated; politicians' involvement in enforcement of the Uganda Forestry Policy, 2001 at SBCFR, Mayuge district; politicians' interference with enforcement of the Forestry Policy at SBCFR, Mayuge district and how politicians participation in the compliance with Forestry Policy at SBCFR, Mayuge district. Such issues are appropriately investigated using a cross-sectional survey research design. The design nabled the researchers to obtain information that described existing phenomena with respect to one or more variables (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Given its nature as viewed by many researchers including the researchers, triangulation was used especially QUAL-Quan Model where qualitative study came before a quantitative study as arranged in the objectives/research questions of the research (Gay *et al.*, 2009; Bailey, 2007; Amin, 2005; Morse and Richards, 2002; Nachmias and Nachmias, 1987). A total of 344 respondents participate out of the expected 369 households. This number especially of the households was chosen in line with Krejcie and Morgan's sampling size for research activities determination table (Amin, 2005). There was also triangulation of sampling techniques thus both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were concurrently used (Bailey, 2007; Amin, 2005). The techniques applied were stratified sampling; snowballing, purposive sampling and convenience sampling techniques.

The researchers used questionnaires, interviews, observation and document analysis as the main tools for collecting data. The researchers were mainly concerned with views, perceptions, opinions, attitudes and behaviors of the respondents. Such information could be best collected using the given tools (Bell, 1999; Cauvery *et al.*, 2007; Oso and Onen, 2005). The percentage distribution techniques was used to show the particular frequencies of respondents preferring a

particular alternative to give the face value implications on non-compliance and enforcement problems of the policy on deforestation of SBCFR attributed to politicians' meddling in the process of enforcement. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 10 (SPSS) was used given the number of respondents and carrying out cross tabulations which cannot be done either manually or using Excel (Fisher, 2007; Fraenkel and Wallen, 2008). A Spearman correlation analysis was done to establish the relationship between the local communities' perceptions and the conservationists perception on politicians' meddling in the process of enforcement the Forestry Policy and other related regulatory systems at SBCFR, Mayuge district (Kothari, 2004; Oso and Onen, 2005).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**The characteristics of politicians in the proximity of SBCFR, Mayuge district:** The politicians who responded to the questionnaires came from within the proximity of SBCFR. This research viewed politicians as occupants of constitutionally accepted elective posts following decentralization system adopted in Uganda (The Republic of Uganda, 1995). The enactment of the Resistance Councils and Committees Statute of 1987 established a Five Tiered System of elected Local Councils (LCs) (Banana *et al.*, 2007). Their characteristics are shown in Table 1.

More than half of respondents from the local politicians (52.6%) were LC I according to Table 1 LC I was politically headed by a chairperson with a complete council of nine elected members of the council (Sanginga *et al.*, 2004). Slightly above one sixth of the politicians (17.1%) were representing the LC III (sub-county) according to Table 1. The LC III area of jurisdiction comprised 2-10 parishes (Sanginga *et al.*, 2004). LC III constituencies according to Table 1 were only two viz. Kityerera and Malongo sub-counties. These were the only active points of decision making within the proximity of SBCFR, Mayuge district politically. There were constitutionally empowered to make by laws affecting SBCFR besides the LC V, the highest decentralized political council in the district.

Results from Table 1 shows that more than half of the politicians (55.3%) were seasoned politicians having been in politics for more than one 5 years term (The Republic of Uganda, 1995). Incidentally, 5.3% of them were serving either a fourth term or fifth term as presented on the table. Table 1 also shows that more than a third of the politicians (39.5%) were not engaged in any other activity other than politics. In line with Rosenthal's writings cited

Table 1: Characteristics of politicians representing the local communities living adjacent SBCFR, Mayuge district (n = 76)

Characteristics	n	Percentage
<b>Elective post</b>		
LC I	40	52.6
LC II	3	03.9
LC III	13	17.1
LC IV	3	3.9
LC V	3	3.9
<b>Experience in politics (years)</b>		
<5	34	44.7
6-10	7	9.2
11-15	29	38.1
16-21	2	2.6
>21	4	5.3
<b>Occupation</b>		
Politician	30	39.5
Politician/self employed	46	60.5
<b>Responsibilities</b>		
Chairpersons	9	11.8
Vice chairpersons	12	15.8
Speaker	4	5.3
Deputy speaker	3	3.9
Secretary for finance	6	7.9
Secretary for information	9	11.8
Secretary for production and environment	14	18.4
Others	19	25.0
<b>Constituencies</b>		
Bubinge parish	7	9.2
Bukalenzi parish	13	17.1
Bukatabira parish	6	7.9
Bwondha parish	7	9.2
Kityerera parish	6	7.9
Kityerera sub-county	7	9.2
Malongo sub-county	6	7.9
Namadhi parish	7	9.2
Wandegeya parish	16	21.1

by Tumushabe and Bainomugisha (2004) the local politicians tend to be part and parcel of their constituents, to make voters feel their physical association with them through talking, sharing agony with them and communicating their problems to them forming a therapy even if the problems are not solved. Through interviews it was clear that the politicians attended funerals, made casual visits and attended any other occasion soliciting views from their electorates. SBCFR's neighbourhood had population pressure on land and poverty as their major challenges; cardinal in their proposed solutions was either land reclamation or change of SBCFR boundaries to allow them freely use both the forest resources and estate. Thus, articulating these issues meant re-election or election to any elective post; a peril to effective compliance with and enforcement of the Uganda Forestry Policy at SBCFR, Mayuge district.

The results from Table 1 clearly shows that three quarters (75%) of the respondents from the political domain were people whose dockets Forestry Policy had a stake viz., chairpersons, speakers and secretaries for finance, information, production and environment. This force was ostensibly appropriate in effective management

of forestry within their constituencies given the mandate they had over environment within their areas of jurisdiction as in the Uganda National Forestry and Tree Planting Act 2003, Forestry Policy 2001, Local Government Act 1987 and the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (The Republic of Uganda, 1995, 2003). This therefore made their decisions and enacting of by laws paramount in either compliance with or enforcement of Forestry Policy at SBCFR, Mayuge district.

On constituencies, the results in Table 1 shows that both Wandegaya and Bukalenzi parishes had >9 required members (Sanginga *et al.*, 2004). This could be attributed to the fact that every member elected had a parish of origin hence, some politicians could have preferred to associate with their parishes other than a wider constituency represented in the consequent layers of the tier. The results from the table also show that more than half of the members of the village councils responded to the questionnaires viz., Bubinge parish (77.8%), Bwondha parish (77.8%), Namadhi parish (77.8%), Bukatabira parish (66.7%) and Kityerera parish (66.7%). This therefore, authenticated the results given the fact that these politicians worked close to their constituents who are in the immediate neighbourhood of SBCFR, Mayuge district.

The background given from discussion of Table 1 clearly indicated the fact that given the powers that coalesce around politicians both local and national influenced the situation at SBCFR, Mayuge district. The opened space for a five tier political system with much representation and competition on the Ugandan political landscape had a relationship with the diminishing of forest reserves in Uganda. The year 1995 was very vital for it was a year preceding the first ever direct presidential elections and members of parliament besides the five tier system. The competitiveness of elective posts led politicians to stop evictions from SBCFR, backed by the then incumbent president of the republic of Uganda (Mugenyi *et al.*, 2005).

**Politicians' involvement in enforcement of the Uganda Forestry Policy, 2001 at SBCFR, Mayuge district:** The local politicians representing their Local Council (LC) constituencies positively involved themselves in the management of SBCFR, Mayuge district in accordance to The Local Government Act (Decentralization); The Leadership Code and the 1995 Constitution of The Republic of Uganda (The Republic of Uganda, 1995) as in Table 2.

Results in Table 2 shows that the politicians from the communities engulfing SBCFR could positively get involved in convincing their constituents on compliance with the Forestry Policy. This view was perceived by

Table 2: Local politicians involvement in enforcement of the Uganda Forestry Policy at SBCFR, Mayuge district (n = 344)

Politician's activities	Local communities' responses (%)	
	Agreed	Disagree
Make by laws which protect SBCFR	202 (58.7)	142 (41.3)
Make enforcement strategies for the Forestry Policy	165 (48.0)	179 (52.0)
Protect SBCFR individually	159 (46.2)	185 (53.8)
Can convince their constituents to comply with the Forestry Policy	209 (60.8)	135 (39.2)
Act as mouth pieces of their constituents on conservation of SBCFR	202 (58.7)	142 (41.3)

close to two third of the household respondents as shown in Table 2. This was in line with the fact that politicians had the power to cajole the local communities compared to the NFA officials whom the local community through the politicians viewed as anti-development (Nsita, 2006; Nsangi, 2006; Natusiimira, 2007). But the politicians' mobilization prowess was thwarted by the need to grab the votes from environmental criminals. This therefore led to a justification that politics and environmental conservation are parallel in goals (Pearl, 1996). Hence, continued degradation of SBCFR, Mayuge district evidenced by settlement, farming and charcoal burning in the reserve with the consent of the local politicians.

More than half of the respondents (58.7%) according to Table 2, agreed that those politicians did the following made by laws which protected SBCFR and acted as mouth pieces of their constituents on issues pertaining conservation of SBCFR. The politicians in these doings were representing their constituencies both nationally and locally given the five tier system of LCs. By laws making has oscillated between local and central government as per the Local Governments (Resistance Councils) Statute in 1993 and the instrument No. 52 of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda, respectively. This mainly affected the CFRs in Uganda (Nsita, 2006; Banana *et al.*, 2007). Because of insufficient sensitisation, the local communities were apparently unaware of the changes. On contrary these acts were not within SBCFR which was devegetated with their conscience.

Results from Table 2 showed that more than half of respondents disagreed with the following roles of politicians in relation to enforcement of the Forestry Policy at SBCFR, Mayuge district; protect SBCFR individually (53.8%) and make enforcement strategies for the Forestry Policy (52.0%). This disagreement could have a bearing on the fact that the local politicians were either active participants or participated in the illegalities within SBCFR by proxy according to many local communities interviewed. It therefore meant that the politicians from the communities engulfing SBCFR did not

maximally endeavour to either protect or make strategies which could conserve the forest reserve in their proximity hence the immense non-compliance with the Forestry Policy manifested by illegalities in SBCFR, Mayuge district.

**Politicians’ interference with enforcement of the Forestry Policy at SBCFR, Mayuge district:** The politicians representing the local communities living adjacent to SBCFR were found detrimental to the success of enforcement of the Forestry Policy on aspects shown in Table 3.

More than two third of the households (68.3%) agreed that politicians stopped evictions from the forest reserves during the national political campaigns periods according to Table 3. The results from Table 3 also show that the following utterances came out of the politicians during the campaigns; promises of change of SBCFR boundaries (62.5%) and land reclamation from SBCFR (61.6%). Politicians were believed to be mouth pieces of the local communities in issues related to SBCFR as shown in Table 2. Given their charisma and power the locals sided with them and they also do the same noted by more than half the respondents (52.3%). This loyalty to politicians at SBCFR was manifested in local community’s perception that professional foresters were anti-development, anti-people and ill advisers (Natusiimira, 2007). Therefore, deterring compliance with and enforcement of the Forestry Policy at SBCFR, Mayuge district manifested in degradation of the forest reserve.

More than half of the respondents agreed according to Table 3 on the following; politicians exploited conflicts between their constituents and NFA to campaign (57.6%), politicians used radio talk show programmes to express their dissatisfaction with the NFA as a campaign mechanism (56.7%) and they sided with their constituents on non-compliance (52.3%). All these were done by politicians to woe votes for themselves so as to get political positions either locally or nationally. Therefore, the fight between the political side of the government and civil service led to the peril of SBCFR which is directly under the civil service.

Table 4 shows the views of the lead agencies on politicians’ interference with the enforcement activities of NFA at SBCFR, Mayuge district. From Table 4, it was clear that the lead agencies in totality (100%) agreed that politicians use radio talk show programmes to express their disagreement with the NFA as a campaign strategy. The lead agencies also agreed that in close to totality (96.8%) that politicians exploited their constituents’ conflicts with NFA officials to campaign. Table 4 on equal

Table 3: Local communities’ response on political interference with the enforcement of the forestry policy at SBCFR, Mayuge district (n = 344)

Politicians’ activities	Local communities responses (%)	
	Agreed	Disagreed
Side with the locals in non-compliance activities	180 (52.3)	164 (47.7)
Use radio programmes to express dissatisfaction with NFA	195 (56.7)	149 (43.3)
Stop evictions during campaigns especially national	235 (68.3)	109 (31.7)
Exploit voters conflicts with NFA to campaign	198 (57.6)	146 (42.4)
Promise to change boundaries of the forest reserve	215 (62.5)	129 (37.5)
Advocate for land reclamation from the forest estate	212 (61.6)	132 (38.4)

Table 4: The lead agencies’ views on politicians’ interference with enforcement of Forestry Policy at SBCFR, Mayuge district (n = 31)

Politicians’ activities	Views of the lead agencies (%)	
	Agreed	Disagreed
Side with the local communities’ on non-compliance	28 (90.3)	03 (09.7)
Exploit voters’ conflicts with NFA officials to campaign	30 (96.8)	01 (03.2)
Express disagreement with NFA over radio programmes	31 (100.0)	0 (0.0)
Promise to change SBCFR boundaries	23 (74.2)	08 (05.8)
Reclaim the ancestral land	28 (90.3)	03 (09.7)
Stop evictions during campaigns	26 (83.9)	05 (16.1)

footing shows that politicians; backed their constituents’ non-compliance with the Forestry Policy (90.3%) and advocated for land reclamation from the SBCFR estate (90.3%). More than three quarters of the lead agencies (83.9%) agreed that politicians stopped evictions from SBCFR during political campaign seasons and promised a change in SBCFR boundaries (74.2%) as a campaign burner for elective posts (Table 4).

Statistically, the views of both the local communities and the lead agencies on political interference was correlated using Spearman’s correlation to establish level of association of political activities with non-compliance of the Forestry Policy at SBCFR, Mayuge district as shown in Table 5.

From Table 5 a Spearman rank correlation was computed to establish the relationship between local communities and lead agencies’ views on political interference with either compliance with or enforcement of the Forestry Policy at SBCFR as  $r = 0.74$ . This value lay on a (0.60-0.79) segment of the strength of a correlation, manifesting a high/strong correlation, at a 0.05 level of significance (Fowler *et al.*, 1998; Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003; Fraenkel and Wallen, 2008). It could therefore be concluded that there was a high/strong relationship

Table 5: A correlation of the views of local communities and lead agencies on politicians' interference with enforcement of Forestry Policy at SBCFR

Subject	Political activities	Views of the local communities (Table 3)		Views of the lead agencies (Table 4)		d	d <sup>2</sup>
		Agreed	Rank	Agreed	Rank		
1	Back their constituents on illegalities at SBCFR	180	6	28	3.5	2.5	6.5
2	Express disagreements with NFA over the radio	195	5	31	1.0	4.0	16.0
3	Stop evictions during campaigns	235	1	26	5.0	-4.0	16.0
4	Exploit voters conflicts with NFA to campaign	198	4	30	2.0	2.0	4.0
5	Promise to change boundaries of the forest reserve	215	2	23	6.0	4.0	16.0
6	Advocate for land reclamation from SBCFR	212	3	28	3.5	-0.5	2.5

Σd<sup>2</sup> = 60.75

between the politicians' interference with enforcement of Forestry Policy at SBCFR (Table 5). Hence, politicians' meddling in forest policy enforcement had de-legitimised the policy expressed by the observable lawlessness in SBCFR.

**Politicians and compliance with Forestry Policy at SBCFR, Mayuge district:** Local and national politicians emanating from SBCFR's neighbourhood had both direct and indirect link to compliance with the Forestry Policy, 2001 manifested in the following Table 6 and 7.

Results from Table 6 show that about two third (60.5%) of the local communities engulfing SBCFR, Mayuge district, agreed that politicians should be involved in the enforcement of Forestry Policy. This research only acknowledged incumbent politicians presumably active (76) (Table 1). It did not therefore, acknowledge political losers and mobilizers such as campaign managers and their cohorts who did not take up political positions and remained in the political limbo with high political ambitions. Thus, the apparently support that politician must be involved in enforcement of Forestry Policy. This active involvement of politicians in enforcement concurred with the fact that politics more than anything else is about how people organise their communities for the purpose collaborative tackling of problems they face (Sodaro, 2001). This therefore was positive given the politicians' charisma and organizational ability besides being elected by the same community.

In a positive gesture, the locals agreed that politicians did encourage them on reforestation outside the forest reserve by about 60% of their numbers (Table 6). In line with this it was also agreed that these people advocate for conservation after elections (59%). The politicians' minimally advocated for conservation before elections (48%) according to the local community. Admittedly, politicians from this region could not go contrary to a widely taken perception that politics is a game of numbers despite the nature of the voter (Schmidt *et al.*, 2005). This therefore meant less

Table 6: The role of politicians on major aspects of the Forestry Policy at SBCFR, Mayuge district (n = 344)

Statements	Local communities' perception (%)		
	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed
Advocate for conservation before elections	165 (48.0)	63 (18.3)	116 (33.7)
Advocate for conservation after elections	203 (59.0)	44 (12.8)	97 (28.2)
Advocate for collaborative forest management	179 (52.0)	59 (17.1)	106 (30.8)
Encourage reforestation outside the forest reserve	206 (59.9)	52 (15.1)	86 (25.0)
Encourage privatisation of the forest reserve	94 (27.3)	63 (18.3)	187 (54.3)
Politicians should be involved in enforcement of forest policy	208 (60.5)	53 (15.4)	83 (24.1)

Table 7: Politicians and illegalities in SBCFR, Mayuge district (n = 344)

Statements	Local communities' perception (%)		
	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed
Politicians encourage settlement in the reserve	158 (45.9)	29 (8.4)	156 (45.3)
Politicians encourage free use of forest resources	167 (48.5)	40 (11.6)	137 (39.8)
Politicians conflict with NFA over forest management	196 (57.0)	52 (15.1)	144 (41.9)
Politicians actively participate in illegal activities	182 (52.9)	58 (16.8)	104 (30.2)
Politicians incite people against NFA officials	159 (46.2)	70 (20.3)	115 (33.4)
Politicians claim to fight for peoples properties' rights	218 (63.4)	41 (11.9)	85 (24.7)

campaigns on conservation before elections for it would be counter productive politically on about 10,000 people in SBCFR, Mayuge district (Watasu, 2009). However, through observation the neighbourhood of SBCFR was reforested by exotic species of trees similar to those in the forest reserve an apparent acknowledgement of politicians' advocating on reforestation in the area.

Table 6 shows clearly that more than half (52%) of the local community living adjacent SBCFR claimed that politicians advocated for CFM. The idea of CFM is a pillar in the Uganda Forestry Policy in 2001. This apparently would ease enforcement and compliance by legitimization of the rules and regulations of conserving the forest reserve. CFM is the current way forward world wide for it

is a strategy for promoting rural development resource conservation through empowerment and partnership with the local communities living adjacent the forest reserves. In this case the local communities take responsibility for both protection and management of the reserve as agreed upon by the stakeholders besides reciprocation of accrued benefits (Fisher, 1995; Hoefsloot, 1997; Otieno and Buyinza, 2010; Buyinza, 2010). Contradictorily, SBCFR, Mayuge district had not adopted CFM instead took on privatisation.

From Table 6, it was clear that slightly more than half the respondents (54.3%) claimed that politicians discouraged privatisation. NFA licensed the Kakira Sugar Works and the Nile Ply Companies as investors in tree growing at SBCFR, Mayuge district (De Temmerman, 2007). These companies have faced the local population's non-compliance with the policy with an apparent political backing manifested in uprooting, grazing on and burning planted trees. On the same note politicians tested elsewhere on privatisation ended up planting beans and maize in the forest reserves (Lumu, 2007). All these justified the results shown on Table 6 where slightly more than a quarter of the locals conceded that the politicians encourage privatisation of SBCFR, Mayuge district.

Table 7 shows the local communities' perception on illegalities in SBCFR, Mayuge district. Through the given discussions it was clear that politicians sided with their constituents on derailing enforcement of Forestry Policy, 2001 at SBCFR hence, degradation of the reserve.

From Table 7, it was clear that about two third (63.4%) of the local communities believed that politicians were fighting for peoples properties rights. These rights included among others land and household commodities lost after evictions. The former being attributed to the fact that the gazettment of SBCFR like any other was done arbitrarily making the locals claim it as an ancestral property (Mugenyi *et al.*, 2005). The local communities engulfing SBCFR form constituents of both national and local politicians emanating from these areas who like any politicians elsewhere are accountable to them (Sodaro, 2001). This therefore made politicians to vehemently pester for either resettlement or compensation for damages caused by evictions using all medias.

Results in Table 7 show that there was a conflict between NFA and politicians over management of SBCFR accepted by more than half of the respondents (57%). The points of conflict ostensibly accrued from the perception of both sides on encroachers in SBCFR. In this case, NFA viewed them as environmental criminals while politicians viewed them as voters capable of initiating a political mileage. Jao and Kiyingi (2005) added that for long there has been confusing government policies in Uganda

coupled with irresponsible political statements seeking cheap popularity. Thus according to them >80% of encroachment in forest reserves had the backing of politicians who traded forest reserve land for votes. This therefore undoubtedly spurred the conflict between the conservators (NFA) and masked engineers of utility (politicians) as shown in Table 7. The conflict at extreme ended up making politicians incite the local communities against NFA officials acknowledged by about half the local communities' responses (46.2%).

The results from Table 7 also show that the local community also acknowledged that politicians were active participants in the illegal activities by slightly more than half their numbers (52.9%). Active participation in illegal activities is negative and therefore could not solicit much positive response from the local community given that the fact that almost half of these people's population were had political ambitions or will be active politicians. Through, observation the following activities like in other CFRs in the country were evident; farming, grazing, settlement, charcoal burning and timber exploitation (Otieno, 2003; Otieno and Buyinza, 2010).

There was also a claim that that politicians encouraged settlement in the forest reserve by about half the number of the local communities engulfing SBCFR (45.9%) a fact equivocally denied by the same (Table 7). To that effect the politicians encouraged free use of the forest resources accepted by almost half of the local community (48.5%). Through observation, there was an established settlement where shopping and refreshments within that part of the forest reserve were done. To condone the practice the government did established police post not purposely to handle the forest crimes but social crimes of apparently forest criminals in Nakalyango trading centre and the neighbourhood deep in the SBCFR. The act was in contrary to Article No.: 33 of the NFTP 2003 which prohibits free use of forest resources (The Republic of Uganda, 2003).

## CONCLUSION

There was a high/strong ( $r = 0.74$ ) relationship between the politicians' interference with enforcement of Forestry Policy at SBCFR. Hence, politicians' meddling in forest policy enforcement had de-legitimised the policy expressed by the observable lawlessness in SBCFR. The independent variable here was politicians' meddling manifested in their negative pronouncements which counteracted enforcement activities through direct and indirect activities viewed as illegalities in the forest reserve. The activities here included; settlement; farming; causing harm to the NFA officials with impunity by the



locals, siding with the encroachers on illegalities and the next. Dependent variable was enforcement of the policy which included evictions, imprisonment, notices and any other punitive measure which were barred by political meddling in the activities. This could be attributed to the fact that politicians had both charisma and power compared to NFA or lead agencies which had only authority. It was also ostensibly clear that there was no political will to support both compliance with and enforcement of the Uganda Forestry Policy in 2001. This therefore meant deforestation with impunity at SBCFR, Mayuge district.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Forestry Policy should be amended to include politicians' role. Their role should include among others mobilization, sensitization, making laws, by laws and policies on sustainable use of forest resources. The politicians' activities should be done in consultation with NFA as a lead agency in forestry. Otherwise truncation of NFPTA 2003, Act; National Forestry Plan, 2001 and the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda in 1995 would be exploited and jeopardize sustainability of the forestry resources in the country as it was in SBCFR, Mayuge district. NEMA should therefore be allowed to vet political party manifestos before official campaigns for presidential and national elections with a bias on environmental conservation.

Political interference with either compliance or enforcement of Forestry Policy contradicts The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda which is very clear on environment conservation. Politicians of any kind in Uganda before taking office swear to uphold it not partially but fully. So, there is a serious need to remind them of the objective No. XIII and Article 237 of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. They need to be conversant with both The 1995 Constitution and National Forestry and Tree Planting Act 2003 where no specific role is given to them other than protection of the environment where forestry docket is part and parcel. Therefore, there is a need for them to respect and appreciate institutions for the smooth running of the country. Truncation of any of the documents does not mean success.

There was a need for an appropriate political will which this research established that was immensely lacking to both effectively and efficiently either comply or enforce the Forestry Policy. Politicians need to upgrade from hand out promises to ideological and philosophical promises. They should therefore be exemplary on both compliance with and enforcement of forestry policies in

the country. Politicians should act as checks and balances to the mismanagement of the forestry sector if any. Thus should use their position to point out mismanagement of government funds for conservation; corruption of NFA officials the mode of evictions; negligence of NFA officials and the next. This would perfect forest resource utilization without confrontation of the legislative arm of the government and civil service for the good of the nation.

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