



## **Press Statement:**

September 1, 2021

### **RE: Dr Akankwasah Barirega assumes office as NEMA Executive Director**

Following successful completion of a recruitment process that commenced in October 2020, and upon recommendation from the NEMA Board of Directors; the Minister responsible for Environment Hon. Sam Cheptoris appointed Dr. Akankwasah Barirega as Executive Director of the National Environment Management Authority effective September 1, 2021, for a period of five (5) years.

Dr. Akankwasah replaces Dr. Tom Okurut who served for ten years at the helm of NEMA since July 1, 2011. Section 22 of the National Environment Act states that the Executive Director shall serve for a period of five years and is eligible for appointment for only one more term.

Dr. Akankwasah has a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) in Environment and Natural Resource Management, a Master of Science, and a Bachelors degree in Environment and Natural Resource Management and a Diploma in Law; He brings with him a wealth of experience in biodiversity conservation and corporate governance to NEMA.

Hitherto his appointment as NEMA ED, Dr. Akankwasah served in the Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities in several positions since 2008; including as Director for Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Commissioner Wildlife Conservation, Assistant Commissioner for Conservation Planning and Partnerships; Principal Wildlife Officer, and Senior Wildlife Officer.

He has served as Member of Board of Trustees and Chairperson Human Resource Committee for Uganda Wildlife Authority and has also been a governing Council member at Uganda Wildlife Research and Training Institute for over six years. He has contributed significantly to several reforms in both institutions and the Ministry.

Dr Akankwasah has represented Uganda at International conservation fora in many aspects including being the Global Vice President for the UN Convention on Migratory Species, President UN Gorilla Agreement, Chairperson Standing Committee of African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement and National Focal Point for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of flora and fauna.

Key on Dr. Akankwasah's agenda is to oversee halting of environmental degradation through enhanced citizen engagement, strengthened environmental justice system (Enforcement and Prosecution) and automation of NEMA service processes to enhance service delivery. As the accounting officer, he will be responsible for the Authority's day-to-day administration and operations, resource mobilization, and strategic planning. He will ensure regional and international cooperation through coordination and implementation of bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements. Dr. Akankwasah will also support the NEMA Board in its operations as well as the Policy Committee on Environment to ensure that NEMA performs its mandate as the principal agency in Uganda responsible for the management of the environment.

## **About NEMA**

NEMA is a semi-autonomous institution of the Government that coordinates, monitors, regulates and supervises environmental management in the country. NEMA spearheads the development of environmental policies, laws, regulations and standards, and guides Government to make sound environmental management decisions.

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