



H.E. Jovrine Kaliisa Kyomukama, MP and Member of Uganda's Parliamentary Forum on Climate Change

Dear ladies and gentlemen, dear esteemed guests,

It is my honour to speak to you today at the second plenary session of the Global Bamboo and Rattan Congress. As a Member of Parliament for Uganda, a country which is very vulnerable to the effects of climate change, as well as a Member of Uganda's Parliamentary Forum on Climate Change, I am very passionate about the issue of our changing climate. It gives me great pleasure to see so many people gathered here who are also interested in using our natural resources to combat climate change, and build a more resilient world.

Uganda is a country which is very vulnerable to climate change impacts. The economy and the wellbeing of our people are tightly bound to climate. In particular, climate change is likely to mean increased food insecurity; greater soil erosion and land degradation; flood damage to infrastructure and settlements; and changing productivity of our agricultural and natural resources. It will be the poor and vulnerable who feel these impacts the hardest. However, our economy also stands to be affected, with the shift of certain crop growing areas which are key to our economic growth.

As many of you will know, these problems are shared with a lot of countries across Africa. Flooding, drought, food and water insecurity, diseases, the destruction of homes and infrastructure, and ecosystem destruction are some of the many challenges African countries face in a changing climate.

Ladies and gentlemen,

INBAR has 18 Member states across Africa, and I am delighted to hear that we will soon be welcoming one more Member: the Central African Republic.

We have already heard from Her Excellency, Ms Patricia Espinosa, how important bamboo can be as a tool to help mitigate and adapt to climate change. In addition, I would like to share that bamboo is already one of the important indigenous plant resources in Uganda. A large number of communities depend on bamboo for day-to-day use, including as housing, food, agriculture and household utility products, and support structures for crops. According to a recent report released by INBAR, there is clearly potential for Uganda's bamboo sector to thrive and to provide more support to our country.



Uganda has already worked with INBAR on a number of projects that will help our country use bamboo to become more climate-resilient. Uganda is one of several countries involved in the Dutch-Sino-East Africa project, led by INBAR, and I was delighted to hear yesterday that the Dutch government is considering an extension to this important initiative. So far, the Dutch-Sino-East Africa project has helped Uganda to find out how many bamboo resources we have, where they grow, and to identify the key bamboo product value chains which would benefit from increased support. With further work, more Ugandans can benefit from bamboo as an important source of income, particularly those communities whose livelihoods are impacted by a changing climate.

We are also keen to learn new skills, from other INBAR Member states, which can help us build a more climate-resilient Uganda. These include using bamboo for land restoration, for renewable charcoal and gas, and as a source of disaster-resilient housing. All of these are critical uses for bamboo which can have an important impact on African countries' climate change preparedness. I am very happy to hear news about a new China-Africa training centre, which I understand will be established shortly. With more training and capacity-building, we can teach more people to use bamboo for climate adaptation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In Uganda, we take climate change very seriously. I am a Member of Uganda's Parliamentary Forum on Climate Change – a Forum which was created in 2008, by members of the 8th parliament of Uganda, to respond to the pressing environmental, social and economic issues presented by climate change. The forum's Vision is to help create a prosperous and climate change-resilient Uganda. I firmly believe that bamboo can play a role in this Vision.

On behalf of the government of Uganda, we remain willing to support INBAR in its work to promote bamboo and rattan for sustainable development. We are very pleased to be part of such an important network that connects, shares and builds on experiences of bamboo growers and users across the world, to create livelihoods, protect the environment and combat climate change. I wish you all the best for this Congress and for future work together. It is time to think bamboo!