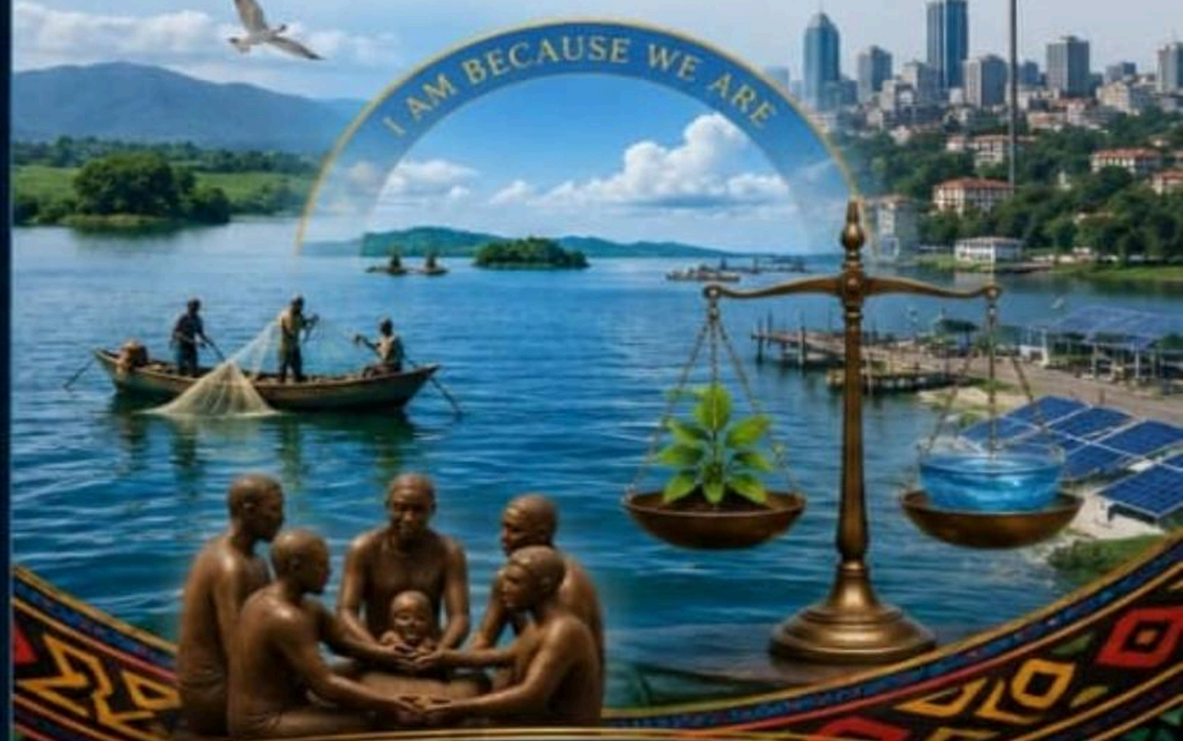


# UBUNTU AND THE BLUE ECONOMY IN UGANDA

Towards an African Jurisprudence of  
Ecological Justice, Human Dignity,  
and Sustainable Development



Isaac Christopher Lubogo

Suigeneris Consultancy, Kampala



SUIGENERIS  
CONSULTANCY

# UBUNTU AND THE BLUE ECONOMY IN UGANDA

*Towards an African Jurisprudence of Ecological Justice,  
Human Dignity, and Sustainable Development*

---

**Isaac Christopher Lubogo**

*Suigeneris Consultancy, Kampala*

## SUIGENERIS PUBLISHERS

Bukandula Tower, Plot 15, Rubaga Road, Kampala, Uganda  
**2026**

First published 2026

© Isaac Christopher Lubogo 2026

Published by Suigeneris Publishers, Kampala, Uganda

All rights reserved. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence (CC BY 4.0). You are free to share and adapt this material for any purpose, provided appropriate credit is given to the author.

**ISBN: 978-9913-0-12345-6 (Print) | 978-9913-0-12346-3 (eBook)**

ORCID: 0009-0003-0369-9590

Contact: Suigeneris.magnum.opus@gmail.com | +256 774 694 058

*"The earth does not belong to us; we belong to the earth and to one another." – African Proverb*

## DEDICATION

*To the fisherfolk of Lake Victoria and Lake Kyoga –  
whose hands touch the water at dawn and whose families depend on its bounty –  
and to all future generations who shall inherit Uganda's waters.*

*And to my grandfather, Y.K. Lubogo, ESQ CBE,  
whose roots in Busoga and love of knowledge run as deep as the River Nile itself.*

*"I am because we are – and through the waters that sustain us all."*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

Acknowledgements

List of Abbreviations

## **PART I: CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS**

Chapter 1: Understanding the Blue Economy

Chapter 2: Historical Evolution of Blue Economy Governance in Africa

Chapter 3: Ubuntu – Philosophy, Jurisprudence, and African Legal Thought

## **PART II: THE UGANDAN CONTEXT**

Chapter 4: Uganda's Aquatic Landscape and the Blue Economy

Chapter 5: Lake Victoria and the Fisheries Crisis

Chapter 6: Hydroelectric Power, Rivers, and Sustainable Energy

Chapter 7: Wetlands, Climate Justice, and Environmental Vulnerability

Chapter 8: Water Transport and Regional Economic Integration

## **PART III: UBUNTU AND THE BLUE ECONOMY**

Chapter 9: Water as Communal Heritage – An Ubuntu Analysis

Chapter 10: Intergenerational Justice and the Blue Economy

Chapter 11: Ecological Ubuntu – Human-Nature Interdependence

Chapter 12: Ubuntu-Centered Environmental Governance

## **PART IV: LEGAL AND JURISPRUDENTIAL ANALYSIS**

Chapter 13: Constitutional Foundations of the Blue Economy in Uganda

Chapter 14: The Public Trust Doctrine and Ubuntu

Chapter 15: African Communitarianism and Environmental Law

Chapter 16: International Frameworks and Ubuntu Jurisprudence

## **PART V: TOWARDS A NEW PARADIGM**

Chapter 17: Reconceptualising Uganda's Blue Economy

Chapter 18: Policy Recommendations and Implementation Frameworks

Chapter 19: Comparative Perspectives – Ubuntu and Global Environmental Governance

Conclusion

Bibliography and References

Appendix A: Key Terms Glossary

Appendix B: Relevant Legal Instruments

Appendix C: Ubuntu Principles for the Blue Economy

Appendix D: PULP Submission Details

Subject Index

## PREFACE

This book was born of two convictions: that African philosophy has something irreplaceable to offer the world's environmental crises, and that Uganda's extraordinary aquatic wealth is being slowly destroyed by governance frameworks that have no soul. Together, these convictions animated what has become one of the most urgent jurisprudential conversations of our time.

For too long, discussions surrounding the Blue Economy have been dominated by technocratic, capitalist, and ocean-centred narratives that systematically exclude Africa's indigenous philosophical foundations. In global policy discourse, water is treated primarily as an economic resource – a commodity to be exploited for industrial growth, commercial fisheries, energy production, and regional trade. Yet within African thought systems, particularly Ubuntu, water possesses a far deeper meaning: it is life itself, heritage, community, and continuity between the living, the departed, and the unborn.<sup>1</sup>

This book seeks to reconceptualise the Blue Economy in Uganda through the lens of Ubuntu jurisprudence. It argues that Uganda's lakes, rivers, wetlands, and aquatic ecosystems must not merely be treated as economic assets but as sacred communal trusts held on behalf of present and future generations.<sup>2</sup>

Ubuntu teaches that humanity survives together – or perishes together. And nowhere is this truth more visible than in the waters upon which civilisation itself depends. The choice before Uganda is not between development and conservation. Under Ubuntu, it is a choice between two visions of survival – one that consumes the future for present gain, and one that honours ancestors, serves communities, and protects generations yet unborn.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>See generally MB Ramose "The Philosophy of Ubuntu and the African Renaissance" in PS Makgoba (ed) African Renaissance (1999) 65. Ramose argues that Ubuntu provides an ontological and ethical foundation that Western philosophical traditions have systematically overlooked in environmental governance contexts.

<sup>2</sup>World Bank The Blue Economy in Landlocked Countries: Opportunities and Challenges (2019) 7. The World Bank notes that landlocked developing countries with significant freshwater resources – including Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Malawi – stand to gain enormously from appropriately adapted Blue Economy strategies.

<sup>3</sup>M Letseka "In Defence of Ubuntu" (2012) 31 Studies in Philosophy and Education 47 at 52.

**Isaac Christopher Lubogo**  
*Suigeneris Consultancy, Kampala*  
ORCID: 0009-0003-0369-9590  
May 2026

# PART I

## CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

Part I establishes the theoretical and conceptual foundations of this book's argument. Chapter 1 comprehensively analyses the Blue Economy concept. Chapter 2 surveys the historical evolution of aquatic governance in Africa. Chapter 3 presents Ubuntu as a philosophical system with full jurisprudential capacity to serve as an alternative foundation for environmental governance in African legal thought.

# CHAPTER ONE

## *Understanding the Blue Economy*

### 1.1 Introduction

The Blue Economy has emerged as one of the most significant global development paradigms of the twenty-first century. Originally associated with coastal and maritime nations, the concept has undergone a remarkable intellectual and policy evolution, expanding to encompass inland aquatic ecosystems – lakes, rivers, wetlands, and freshwater biodiversity – that sustain billions of people across the African continent.<sup>4</sup>

Uganda is among Africa's most water-endowed nations. Lake Victoria – Africa's largest lake and the world's second-largest freshwater lake – Lake Kyoga, Lake Albert, Lake George, Lake Edward, the River Nile, thousands of kilometres of rivers, extensive wetlands covering eighteen percent of the country's surface area, underground aquifers, and complex aquatic biodiversity systems together form an aquatic landscape of extraordinary ecological richness and economic importance.<sup>5</sup>

Yet despite this extraordinary natural endowment, Uganda's aquatic ecosystems are under severe and accelerating threat. Overfishing, water pollution, wetland drainage, industrial encroachment, agricultural runoff, and climate change are combining to erode the ecological foundations upon which millions of lives depend.<sup>6</sup>

### 1.2 Defining the Blue Economy

---

<sup>4</sup>United Nations The Blue Economy: Concept and Implementation (2012) 3. The UN notes that the term "blue economy" was coined to complement the "green economy" framework, and that its conceptual expansion to include inland waters was driven in large part by African states' insistence that their freshwater resources deserved recognition.

<sup>5</sup>Ministry of Water and Environment Uganda Wetlands Atlas Volume II (2020) 12. Uganda's water resources cover approximately 43,938 square kilometres of the national territory of 241,038 square kilometres, making Uganda one of the most freshwater-rich countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

<sup>6</sup>Government of Uganda National Blue Economy Strategy 2023-2027 (2023) 8. The Strategy explicitly acknowledges that previous governance approaches to Uganda's aquatic resources have failed to adequately protect ecological integrity or ensure equitable distribution of benefits.

The Blue Economy refers to the sustainable use of water resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, environmental sustainability, and social equity. It seeks to balance development, conservation, human dignity, and intergenerational justice. The concept gained prominence globally through the United Nations, the African Union, and the AU's Agenda 2063 framework.<sup>7</sup>

Three distinct conceptual approaches compete within the Blue Economy literature. The "growth-first" approach treats the Blue Economy primarily as an economic opportunity. The "balance" approach seeks to integrate economic, environmental, and social dimensions within a single governance framework. The "justice-first" approach – which this book argues is the most appropriate for African contexts – insists that the Blue Economy can only be genuinely sustainable if it begins from an explicit commitment to social justice, environmental rights, and community governance.<sup>8</sup>

Dimension	Key Resources	Beneficiaries	Principal Threats
Fisheries	Nile perch, tilapia, catfish	Over 5 million Ugandans	Overfishing, pollution, climate change
Hydroelectric Power	River Nile, major falls	All electricity consumers	Sedimentation, reduced flow
Wetlands	12,000+ km <sup>2</sup> wetland area	Farmers, urban residents	Drainage, encroachment
Water Transport	Lakes Victoria, Kyoga, Albert	Traders, farmers, oil sector	Poor infrastructure
Tourism	Scenic lakes, wildlife, culture	Tourism industry, guides	Environmental degradation
Aquatic Biodiversity	350+ fish species, waterbirds	Communities, scientists	Invasive species, pollution

### 1.3 The Philosophical Deficit in Conventional Frameworks

Conventional Blue Economy frameworks share a common and significant

<sup>7</sup>African Union Africa Blue Economy Strategy: Towards Sustainable Development of Africa's Aquatic Resources (2020) 6. The AU Strategy identifies six priority areas: fisheries and aquaculture; maritime and inland water transport; tourism and recreation; mineral and energy resources; biotechnology; and ecosystem services.

<sup>8</sup>IGAD Validation Report: Uganda's Blue Economy Framework (2022) 3. IGAD's validation process involved extensive consultations with government ministries, civil society organisations, fisherfolk associations, and academic institutions across Uganda.

limitation: they are philosophically grounded in Eurocentric assumptions about the relationship between human beings, natural resources, and governance institutions. These assumptions – the primacy of individual property rights, the legitimacy of state-mediated resource management, the authority of scientific knowledge over indigenous knowledge, and the reducibility of environmental value to economic metrics – are not morally neutral.<sup>9</sup>

Ubuntu jurisprudence offers an alternative: a philosophical framework that is indigenous to Africa, reflects the communal values and ecological knowledge of African communities, and is capable of grounding a genuinely different approach to Blue Economy governance – one simultaneously authentic and universally resonant.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup>MJ Matsuda "Looking to the Bottom: Critical Legal Studies and Reparations" (1987) 22 Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review 323 at 325. Matsuda's argument about the exclusion of marginalised perspectives from legal scholarship applies with equal force to environmental governance.

<sup>10</sup>T Mkandawire (ed) African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender and Development (2005) 10. Mkandawire argues that the decolonisation of governance frameworks requires not merely the inclusion of African voices but the recognition of African philosophical traditions as legitimate sources of governance wisdom.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *The Historical Evolution of Blue Economy Governance in Africa*

#### 2.1 Pre-Colonial Aquatic Governance

In the pre-colonial era, communities around Uganda's major lakes developed complex systems for governing access to and use of aquatic resources – sophisticated governance regimes with clear rules, enforcement mechanisms, and philosophical foundations. In Buganda, the institution of the Mukiize – a hereditary lakeside chief responsible for managing fishing rights and resolving disputes among fishing communities on Lake Victoria – represented a highly developed form of community-based resource governance.<sup>11</sup>

The Basoga maintained an intricate web of customary law governing fishing seasons, permissible fishing methods, sacred water sites, and the equitable distribution of catch between fishing communities and the broader population. This customary governance system was explicitly grounded in Ubuntu-like philosophical principles – communal solidarity, intergenerational responsibility, and the moral obligations that living communities owe to their ancestors and descendants.<sup>12</sup>

#### 2.2 Colonial Disruption

The British colonisation of Uganda transformed aquatic resource governance in ways both immediate and profoundly lasting. The colonial administration's approach to Uganda's lakes and rivers was characterised by two related moves: the dispossession of indigenous communities from their customary governance roles, and the replacement of communal governance systems with state-centred

---

<sup>11</sup>Y Lubogo A History of Busoga (1960) 45. Lubogo's foundational history of Busoga, one of the communities most directly dependent upon the waters of Lake Victoria and the River Nile, provides invaluable insight into the sophistication of pre-colonial aquatic governance in the region.

<sup>12</sup>IC Lubogo "Ubuntu and the Law in Uganda: Towards a New Constitutional Dispensation" (LLD dissertation, Makerere University, ongoing). Lubogo argues that legal signs embedded in Basoga customary aquatic governance demonstrate a sophisticated Ubuntu jurisprudence anticipating many insights of contemporary environmental law scholarship.

regulatory frameworks based on English property law.<sup>13</sup>

The Fish Act of 1951 imposed a European-style licensing system that fundamentally altered the governance relationship between fishing communities and aquatic resources. Fishing rights were no longer communally held; they became individual licences granted by the colonial state. This transformation undermined communal governance systems that had sustained Uganda's fisheries for generations, opened the door to commercial exploitation by non-community actors, and severed the philosophical connections between fishing communities and their aquatic environments that had grounded pre-colonial governance.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.3 Uganda's National Blue Economy Strategy 2023-2027

The National Blue Economy Strategy 2023-2027, validated with IGAD technical support, represents Uganda's most ambitious and comprehensive framework for governing its aquatic resources. The Strategy covers six priority sectors – fisheries and aquaculture, water transport, tourism and recreation, energy from water, ecosystem services, and emerging sectors – and is underpinned by a cross-cutting framework of institutional coordination, financing, and monitoring.<sup>15</sup>

This book engages critically with the Strategy to enrich it. The Strategy represents significant progress in Uganda's environmental governance. However, its potential to deliver sustainable and equitable outcomes will be significantly enhanced if explicitly grounded in Ubuntu jurisprudence – if its governance frameworks are anchored in the communal values, indigenous knowledge systems, and intergenerational ethics that Ubuntu embodies.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup>M Mamdani *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (1996) 62. Mamdani's influential analysis of the "decentralised despotism" of colonial governance demonstrates how the colonial state systematically undermined indigenous governance institutions while creating administrative structures that served colonial rather than community interests.

<sup>14</sup>EA Brett *Colonialism and Underdevelopment in East Africa* (1973) 145. Brett's analysis demonstrates how the imposition of colonial licensing systems primarily benefited European commercial interests rather than indigenous fishing communities.

<sup>15</sup>Government of Uganda *National Blue Economy Strategy 2023-2027* (2023) 32. The Strategy was developed through a process of national consultations involving over 150 stakeholder organisations and validated through regional consultations facilitated by IGAD in 2022.

<sup>16</sup>African Union Commission *Africa Blue Economy Strategy: Implementation Framework for Agenda 2063* (2020) 8. The AU Commission acknowledges the need for "culturally appropriate governance" of aquatic resources but does not specify what this requires in practice – a gap that Ubuntu jurisprudence is uniquely positioned to fill.



## CHAPTER THREE

### *Ubuntu – Philosophy, Jurisprudence, and African Legal Thought*

#### 3.1 The Meaning and Structure of Ubuntu

Ubuntu is among the most philosophically rich, culturally significant, and politically resonant concepts in African thought. The word derives from the Nguni languages of southern Africa but cognate concepts exist across virtually every major language family in sub-Saharan Africa, suggesting that Ubuntu captures something genuinely pan-African in human experience. In Uganda, the closest cognate is "obuntu bulamu" – "good human qualities" or "humaneness" – deeply embedded in Buganda's legal and moral traditions.<sup>17</sup>

The most widely cited formulation is the Zulu maxim "Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" – "a person is a person through other persons" or, more expansively, "I am because we are." This captures Ubuntu's ontological core: the claim that human identity, dignity, and flourishing are irreducibly relational – constituted through and sustained by relationships with other persons, with community, and with the broader ecological world.<sup>18</sup>

Ubuntu's relational ontology has direct implications for environmental governance: if human identity is partly constituted through relationships with the natural world, then the destruction of that world is not merely an economic or ecological harm but an ontological injury – a violation of the very conditions of human selfhood.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup>IC Lubogo "The Invention of Lusoga" Manuscript ID: JALL.2026.0035 (2026). Lubogo's linguistic analysis demonstrates that Ubuntu-cognate concepts are deeply embedded in Lusoga language and culture.

<sup>18</sup>D Tutu No Future Without Forgiveness (1999) 31. Tutu articulates Ubuntu as follows: "A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole."

<sup>19</sup>MB Ramose African Philosophy Through Ubuntu (2002) 42. Ramose's analysis of Ubuntu's relational ontology demonstrates how the Ubuntu understanding of personhood generates a distinctive approach to questions of individual rights, collective responsibilities, and the moral status of nature.

## 3.2 Ubuntu Jurisprudence

The application of Ubuntu philosophical principles to legal theory gives rise to "Ubuntu jurisprudence" – a distinctive approach to law grounded in African communal values, committed to restorative rather than merely punitive justice, and oriented towards maintaining harmonious relationships within communities and between communities and their environments.<sup>20</sup>

In the South African Constitutional Court, Ubuntu jurisprudence has been applied across a diverse range of legal contexts – criminal justice, property law, and labour law. In each context, it has operated as a source of constitutional values that supplements and, where necessary, corrects the Eurocentric assumptions embedded in South Africa's received legal traditions. Justice Mokgoro stated: Ubuntu is "a culture which places some emphasis on communality and on the interdependence of the members of a community. It recognises a person's status as a human being, entitled to unconditional respect, dignity, value and acceptance from members of the community."<sup>21</sup>

For Uganda, Ubuntu jurisprudence has been less extensively developed in explicit constitutional doctrine but is no less deeply embedded in the country's legal culture. As Juma has documented, Ugandan courts have repeatedly drawn upon communitarian values in adjudicating disputes involving natural resources, community land rights, and environmental protection.<sup>22</sup>

## 3.3 Ecological Ubuntu

"Ecological Ubuntu" extends Ubuntu's relational ontology to encompass not merely human communities but the broader ecological community of which human beings form a part. Ecological Ubuntu challenges the anthropocentrism implicit in mainstream environmental law and replaces it with an ecocentric perspective that

---

<sup>20</sup>C Himonga et al "Reflections on Judicial Views of Ubuntu" (2013) 16 Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal 370 at 371. Himonga et al provide a comprehensive survey of the Constitutional Court of South Africa's jurisprudence on Ubuntu.

<sup>21</sup>S v Makwanyane 1995 (3) SA 391 (CC) para 308 per Mokgoro J.

<sup>22</sup>L Juma "Ubuntu Jurisprudence and the Ugandan Judiciary" (2015) 15 African Human Rights Law Journal 345 at 352.

recognises the intrinsic moral significance of ecological systems.<sup>23</sup>

Chemhuru argues that Ubuntu's communal solidarity extends beyond the human community to encompass the ecological community as a whole. The well-being of a human community is inseparable from the well-being of the aquatic ecosystems that sustain it; to damage those ecosystems is to damage the community, and to damage the community is to damage the ecological systems upon which it depends.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup>GB Tangwa "Ecological Ubuntu and Environmental Ethics" in J Murungi (ed) African Environmental Ethics (2016) 78 at 85. Tangwa argues that traditional African cosmologies have always understood human beings as embedded within rather than superior to the natural world.

<sup>24</sup>M Chemhuru "Ubuntu and Environmental Sustainability" (2019) 18 *Philosophia Africana* 34 at 41. Chemhuru draws on both traditional Ubuntu philosophical literature and contemporary environmental ethics.

## PART II

### THE UGANDAN CONTEXT

Part II examines the specific realities of Uganda's aquatic landscape across five interconnected contexts: the fisheries crisis in Lake Victoria; hydroelectric power governance; wetland protection; water transport; and the integrated dimensions of Uganda's aquatic landscape as a whole. Each chapter presents both empirical dimensions and the ways Ubuntu jurisprudence illuminates causes and pathways to resolution.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *Uganda's Aquatic Landscape and the Blue Economy*

#### 4.1 A Nation Defined by Water

Uganda is bordered by five major freshwater bodies – Lake Victoria to the south, Lake Albert to the west, Lake Edward and George to the southwest, and Lake Kyoga at the country's centre – connected by the River Nile. These waters, together with Uganda's extensive network of rivers, streams, wetlands, and aquifers, form an aquatic landscape of extraordinary ecological richness.<sup>25</sup>

An estimated 36 percent of Uganda's population depends directly on these resources – through fishing, fish trading, water transport, and water-dependent agriculture – while the entire population depends indirectly through hydroelectric power, climate regulation, and ecosystem services. The Blue Economy is therefore not a peripheral policy concern for Uganda; it is a central dimension of the country's development trajectory and its moral responsibilities to present and future generations.<sup>26</sup>

Water Body	Surface Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Shared With	Primary Uses
Lake Victoria	68,800 (Uganda: 31,000)	Kenya, Tanzania	Fisheries, Transport, Tourism
Lake Albert	5,300 (Uganda: 2,650)	DRC	Fisheries, Oil, Transport
Lake Kyoga	1,720	Uganda only	Fisheries, Transport, Water Supply
Lake Edward	2,325 (Uganda: 1,163)	DRC	Fisheries, Wildlife Tourism
Lake George	250	Uganda only	Fisheries, Wildlife, Tourism

<sup>25</sup>Ministry of Water and Environment Uganda Wetlands Atlas Volume II (2020) 8. The Atlas provides a comprehensive survey of Uganda's freshwater resources, including quantitative data on lake surfaces, river lengths, wetland areas, and groundwater reserves.

<sup>26</sup>National Fisheries Resources Research Institute Annual Fisheries Statistics, Uganda (2022) 3. NaFIRRI estimates approximately 14 million Ugandans are directly engaged in fishing, fish processing, fish trading, or other fisheries-dependent livelihoods.

Water Body	Surface Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Shared With	Primary Uses
River Nile	470 km in Uganda	Shared watershed	Hydropower, Transport, Irrigation

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *Lake Victoria and the Fisheries Crisis*

#### 5.1 The Backbone of Uganda's Blue Economy

Lake Victoria is Uganda's most important aquatic resource – economically, ecologically, culturally, and philosophically. Fisheries from Lake Victoria contribute an estimated \$400 million annually to Uganda's GDP, with Nile perch exports alone generating over \$140 million in export revenue each year. Over five million Ugandans are directly engaged in fisheries-related livelihoods.<sup>27</sup>

Yet despite its economic importance, Lake Victoria is in a state of severe and accelerating ecological crisis. Nile perch stocks have declined by an estimated 75 percent over the past three decades, driven by overfishing, habitat destruction, water pollution, invasive species, and climate change. Tilapia prices have increased fivefold as scarcity has driven up market prices. Large areas of the lake experience hypoxic conditions uninhabitable for most fish species.<sup>28</sup>

#### 5.2 Ubuntu Analysis of the Lake Victoria Crisis

From an Ubuntu jurisprudential perspective, this crisis is not merely an environmental or economic problem; it is a moral catastrophe representing a fundamental violation of the obligations that present generations owe to their communities, their ancestors, and their descendants. The destruction of Lake Victoria's ecology constitutes "anti-Ubuntu development" – development that enriches a few while impoverishing communities, prioritises present consumption over intergenerational stewardship, and severs the relational bonds between human communities and their aquatic environments.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup>National Fisheries Resources Research Institute Annual Fisheries Statistics, Uganda (2022) 11. NaFIRRI's statistics document the lake's economic contribution across multiple sectors.

<sup>28</sup>M Njiru et al "Declining Fish Stocks in Lake Victoria: Causes and Consequences" (2019) 45 Journal of Great Lakes Research 456 at 461.

<sup>29</sup>IC Lubogo UBU-NTU: Being, Humanity, and Law (2026) 187. Lubogo's philosophical treatise develops the concept of "anti-Ubuntu development" as a jurisprudential category for classifying

Ubuntu governance of Lake Victoria's fisheries would begin from a fundamentally different premise than current governance. Rather than treating fishing communities as objects of regulation – licensees whose activities must be controlled through state-imposed rules – Ubuntu governance would treat them as primary stewards of a communal resource, whose knowledge, interests, and governance capacities must be the foundation of any sustainable management approach.<sup>30</sup>

---

development activities that violate Ubuntu's communal and ecological ethics.

<sup>30</sup>FAO Inland Fisheries Management in Africa: Community-Based Approaches (2018) 31. FAO's survey of community-based fisheries management documents the richness and reliability of indigenous ecological knowledge among fishing communities.

## CHAPTER SIX

### *Hydroelectric Power, Rivers, and Sustainable Energy*

#### 6.1 Water, Power, and Development

Uganda currently generates approximately 96 percent of its electricity from hydroelectric sources, making it one of the most hydropower-dependent economies in Africa. The River Nile's major hydroelectric installations – Nalubaale (180 MW), Kiira (200 MW), Bujagali (250 MW), Isimba (183 MW), and Karuma (600 MW) – represent an aggregate installed capacity now exceeding 1,400 MW.<sup>31</sup>

Ubuntu jurisprudence insists that communities whose territories are affected by hydroelectric development are not merely passive recipients of compensation but active participants in governance – rights-holders whose consent must be sought rather than stakeholders whose concerns must be managed. This is grounded in Ubuntu's communal ontology: if a community's identity and well-being are constituted through its relationships with ancestral territory, rivers, and ecological environment, then the destruction of that environment is a violation of the community's fundamental right to exist as a community.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup>Uganda Electricity Generation Company Ltd Hydropower Status Report (2023) 6. UEGCL's report documents Uganda's near-total dependence on hydroelectric power and identifies principal risks to the sector.

<sup>32</sup>N Musisi "Environmental Rights Litigation in Uganda: The Public Trust Doctrine" (2018) 24 East African Journal of Peace and Human Rights 112 at 124.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### *Wetlands, Climate Justice, and Environmental Vulnerability*

#### 7.1 Uganda's Wetlands and Their Value

Uganda's wetlands – covering approximately 12,000 square kilometres – provide ecosystem services of incalculable value: flood regulation, water purification, biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration, climate moderation, and the provision of food, medicine, and building materials to millions of Ugandans. Yet Uganda has lost over 30 percent of its wetland area over the past three decades – a rate that places it among the most rapidly deforesting wetland nations in Africa.<sup>33</sup>

Ubuntu jurisprudence offers a compelling framework for conceptualising this crisis as a matter of collective dignity and intergenerational justice. The destruction of wetlands is not merely a regulatory violation; it is a moral failure – a failure of the present generation to honour its obligations to communities that depend on those wetlands today, to the ancestors who entrusted those wetlands to present stewardship, and to the generations yet unborn who will inherit the consequences of present choices.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup>National Environment Management Authority Wetland Degradation and Climate Vulnerability in Uganda (2021) 35. NEMA's assessment estimates the economic value of wetland ecosystem services destroyed in Uganda over the past three decades exceeds \$2.4 billion – a figure that dwarfs the economic gains from the activities that caused the destruction.

<sup>34</sup>M Chemhuru "Ubuntu and Environmental Sustainability" (2019) 18 *Philosophia Africana* 34 at 47. Chemhuru argues that the climate crisis represents a fundamental Ubuntu moral failure: the present generation is consuming environmental capital belonging to future generations.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### *Water Transport and Regional Economic Integration*

#### 8.1 Inland Water Transport in Uganda

The Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) currently operates ferries and water transport services at over seventy sites across Lakes Victoria, Kyoga, and Albert, connecting communities that would otherwise be isolated from markets, services, and economic opportunities by difficult terrain or inadequate road infrastructure.<sup>35</sup>

The East African Community's regional integration agenda further amplifies the significance of inland water transport: Uganda's lakes provide natural infrastructure for connecting the country to Kenya and Tanzania across Lake Victoria, and to the Democratic Republic of Congo across Lake Albert, supporting regional trade, tourism, and development. EAC analysis suggests improved inland water transport could reduce the cost of regional trade by an estimated 23 percent.<sup>36</sup>

An Ubuntu approach to water transport governance would prioritise community connectivity, safety, and equitable access over commercial profitability. The MV Bukoba disaster of 1996, in which an overloaded ferry capsized on Lake Victoria killing approximately 800 people, is a powerful reminder of the consequences of governance frameworks that fail to centre human dignity. Ubuntu jurisprudence categorically demands otherwise.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup>Uganda National Roads Authority Inland Water Transport Strategic Plan (2023) 12.

<sup>36</sup>East African Community Regional Integration Through Lake Transport (2022) 8.

<sup>37</sup>Uganda Marine Safety Administration Inland Water Transport Safety Report (2022) 4.

## PART III

### UBUNTU AND THE BLUE ECONOMY

Part III develops the central philosophical argument: the reconceptualisation of Uganda's Blue Economy through Ubuntu jurisprudence. Four chapters explore Ubuntu's understanding of water as communal heritage; intergenerational justice; Ecological Ubuntu; and the practical dimensions of Ubuntu-centred environmental governance.

## CHAPTER NINE

### *Water as Communal Heritage – An Ubuntu Analysis*

#### 9.1 Two Philosophies of Water

Two fundamentally different philosophies of the human-water relationship compete in contemporary Blue Economy governance: the capitalist framework, which treats water as an economic asset governed by property rights and market mechanisms; and the Ubuntu framework, which treats water as a communal heritage held in trust by living communities on behalf of ancestors and descendants.<sup>38</sup>

Dimension	Capitalist Framework	Ubuntu Framework
Nature of water	Economic asset / commodity	Communal heritage / living trust
Governance authority	State + market mechanisms	Community stewardship + state support
Standard of conduct	Regulatory compliance	Ubuntu moral covenant
Harm characterisation	Regulatory violation	Betrayal of communal trust
Distribution principle	Market allocation	Equitable community benefit
Temporal horizon	Short to medium-term profit	Intergenerational stewardship
Knowledge authority	Scientific expertise	Community wisdom + science
Justice framework	Compensatory / punitive	Restorative / relational

Under Ubuntu, pollution is a moral wrong of a different and more fundamental order than a regulatory violation: it is an act of betrayal – a betrayal of the community's obligations to its members, to its ancestors, and to its descendants. It violates not merely a legal rule but the Ubuntu covenant of mutual care and collective stewardship that constitutes community itself.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup>MB Ramose African Philosophy Through Ubuntu (2002) 58. Ramose argues that the Ubuntu conception of natural resources as communal heritage represents a fundamental challenge to the property rights foundations of capitalist resource governance.

<sup>39</sup>L Juma "Ubuntu Jurisprudence and the Ugandan Judiciary" (2015) 15 African Human Rights Law Journal 345 at 362.

## CHAPTER TEN

### *Intergenerational Justice and the Blue Economy*

#### 10.1 Ubuntu's Temporal Philosophy

Ubuntu understands the living community as embedded within a temporal continuum that stretches backward to ancestors and forward to descendants – a continuum within which present choices are evaluated not merely in terms of their consequences for present actors but in terms of their faithfulness to ancestral obligations and their consequences for generations to come.<sup>40</sup>

Under Ubuntu, the obligation to protect aquatic resources for future generations is not merely a policy aspiration; it is a moral imperative. If the present community understands itself as constituted by its relationships with ancestors – those who created the ecological inheritance the present enjoys – then it must accept that the future community will understand itself as constituted by its relationships with the present generation. The present generation is, from the future's perspective, the ancestors.<sup>41</sup>

#### 10.2 Institutional Implications

Uganda should establish a Future Generations Commissioner – an independent institutional voice for those not yet born in governance processes affecting long-lived resources like aquatic ecosystems. At the normative level, Uganda's courts should apply Ubuntu intergenerational justice principles in adjudicating environmental disputes, including recognising the standing of plaintiffs to bring claims on behalf of future generations.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup>MB Ramose *African Philosophy Through Ubuntu* (2002) 71. Ramose characterises Ubuntu's temporal philosophy as a "communal temporality" that transcends the individualistic present-focus of capitalist economic reasoning.

<sup>41</sup>E Brown Weiss *In Fairness to Future Generations* (1989) 22. Brown Weiss' foundational work on intergenerational equity converges with Ubuntu jurisprudence in insisting that governance authorities owe obligations not merely to present constituencies but to future generations who will inherit the consequences of present choices.

<sup>42</sup>S Türkelli "Intergenerational Equity and the Role of Future Generations Ombudspersons" (2019) 29

---

Yearbook of International Environmental Law 62 at 65.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### *Ecological Ubuntu – Human-Nature Interdependence*

#### 11.1 Beyond Anthropocentrism

Ecological Ubuntu challenges the anthropocentric framework of mainstream environmental law at its foundations. Traditional African cosmologies – including the Ubuntu tradition – understand human beings not as masters of nature but as participants in nature: embedded within a larger ecological community upon which human flourishing depends and to which human communities owe moral obligations extending beyond instrumental calculations of human benefit.<sup>43</sup>

In many of Uganda's traditional communities, lakes, rivers, and specific water bodies are understood not merely as natural resources but as members of the moral community. Lake Victoria is known in Luganda as "Nalubaale" – "home of the water spirit." The River Nile is understood in many riparian communities as a living presence demanding respect and reciprocity, not merely a hydrological system to be engineered.<sup>44</sup>

Ecological Ubuntu proposes that this traditional understanding – of aquatic ecosystems as moral community members rather than mere resources – can ground a more effective approach to environmental governance than the instrumentalist frameworks currently dominant in Ugandan law. Communities that understand themselves as having relational obligations to their lakes are more likely to self-regulate, resist unsustainable exploitation, and hold governance authorities accountable.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup>GB Tangwa "Ecological Ubuntu and Environmental Ethics" in J Murungi (ed) African Environmental Ethics (2016) 78 at 85.

<sup>44</sup>Y Lubogo A History of Busoga (1960) 38. Lubogo documents the spiritual and cosmological significance of water bodies in Basoga tradition, including the names, stories, and customary protocols associated with Lake Victoria and the River Nile.

<sup>45</sup>M Chemhuru "Ubuntu and Environmental Sustainability" (2019) 18 Philosophia Africana 34 at 49.

# CHAPTER TWELVE

## *Ubuntu-Centered Environmental Governance*

### 12.1 Principles of Ubuntu-Centred Governance

Principle	Ubuntu Foundation	Governance Implication
Communal Stewardship	Water as communal trust	Community governance bodies with legally recognised authority
Inclusive Participation	Communal decision-making	Free, prior, and informed consent for all major decisions
Indigenous Knowledge	Community wisdom authority	Formal recognition of traditional ecological knowledge
Restorative Justice	Harm as relational violation	Environmental restoration obligations, not merely fines
Intergenerational Equity	Ancestral-descendant continuum	Future Generations representation in governance
Ecological Solidarity	Human-nature interdependence	Legal protection of aquatic ecosystem integrity

Ubuntu-centred governance would invert the current priority structure: community governance bodies – grounded in existing traditional governance institutions – would be recognised as primary governance authorities for aquatic resources within their territories, with state agencies providing technical support, regulatory backstop, and coordination functions.<sup>46</sup>

Ubuntu jurisprudence provides both a philosophical condemnation and a practical remedy for elite capture. Philosophically, elite capture violates Ubuntu's fundamental commitment to communal solidarity: the appropriation of communal resources by elite actors is a betrayal of the Ubuntu covenant that Ubuntu's moral framework categorically rejects. Practically, Ubuntu-centred governance provides institutional mechanisms for preventing elite capture: community governance bodies with legally protected authority, transparent decision-making processes, and

<sup>46</sup>FAO Inland Fisheries Management in Africa: Community-Based Approaches (2018) 52. FAO's global survey identifies Uganda as having significant untapped potential for community governance of aquatic resources.

mechanisms for communal accountability.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup>IC Lubogo UBU-NTU: Being, Humanity, and Law (2026) 225. Lubogo develops a comprehensive Ubuntu theory of elite capture as a governance pathology, arguing it represents a systematic violation of Ubuntu's communal ethics requiring both normative condemnation and structural remedy.

**PART IV**  
**LEGAL AND JURISPRUDENTIAL ANALYSIS**

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### *Constitutional Foundations of the Blue Economy in Uganda*

#### 13.1 The Constitutional Framework

The Constitution of Uganda (1995, as amended) provides a rich but incompletely developed constitutional foundation for Ubuntu-centred Blue Economy governance. Article 39 provides: "Every Ugandan has a right to a clean and healthy environment." National Objective XXVII requires the state to "take all practical measures to promote a good water management system at all levels." National Objective XIX requires protection of "important natural resources, including land, water, wetlands, minerals, oil, fauna and flora on behalf of the people of Uganda."<sup>48</sup>

Under a conventional liberal interpretation, Article 39 establishes an individual right. Under an Ubuntu interpretation, it establishes a collective entitlement: a right of Ugandan communities to the clean and healthy environments upon which their communal well-being depends, paired with a corresponding duty of each community member to contribute to the maintenance of that environment. An Ubuntu-informed interpretation would substantially expand both the scope of Article 39 and the standing of those who can enforce it.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup>Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) Article 39; National Objectives XIX, XX, XXVII. While the National Objectives are not directly justiciable, they provide constitutional guidance for the interpretation of justiciable rights provisions.

<sup>49</sup>L Juma "Ubuntu Jurisprudence and the Ugandan Judiciary" (2015) 15 African Human Rights Law Journal 345 at 364.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### *The Public Trust Doctrine and Ubuntu*

#### 14.1 The Public Trust Doctrine

The Public Trust Doctrine holds that certain natural resources are held in trust by the state for the benefit of all citizens and that the state, as trustee, is legally obligated to manage these resources for the benefit of beneficiaries rather than for private gain. For Uganda's Blue Economy, the doctrine has significant potential: Uganda's lakes, rivers, and wetlands are held in trust by the state for all Ugandans – present and future – and the state is legally obligated to manage them as a trustee rather than as a proprietary owner.<sup>50</sup>

Ubuntu jurisprudence extends the public trust doctrine's temporal horizon significantly. The public trust doctrine is primarily oriented towards present beneficiaries. Ubuntu jurisprudence insists that the trust obligation extends not merely to present beneficiaries but to future generations and – through Ecological Ubuntu – to the ecological community itself. This extension substantially strengthens the doctrine as a tool for long-term environmental governance.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup>JL Sax "The Public Trust Doctrine in Natural Resources Law: Effective Judicial Intervention" (1970) 68 Michigan Law Review 471 at 474.

<sup>51</sup>N Musisi "Environmental Rights Litigation in Uganda: The Public Trust Doctrine" (2018) 24 East African Journal of Peace and Human Rights 112 at 115.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### *African Communitarianism and Environmental Law*

African communitarianism – articulated by Wiredu's consensual governance theory, Menkiti's African conception of person, Gyekye's moderate communitarianism, and Mbiti's formulation of African time – converges on the centrality of community in African moral and governance thinking. For environmental law, the communitarian tradition's most important contribution is its insistence on the legitimacy of collective decision-making processes as sources of governance authority.<sup>52</sup>

Under African communitarianism, governance decisions affecting communal resources do not derive their authority from state fiat or market mechanisms but from the deliberative processes of the affected community. This implies that governance decisions affecting communities' aquatic environments are only legitimate when they reflect genuine communal deliberation rather than bureaucratic consultation rituals.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup>K Wiredu *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective* (1996) 65; JS Mbiti *African Religions and Philosophy* (2nd ed, 1990) 15; K Gyekye *Tradition and Modernity* (1997) 35.

<sup>53</sup>K Wiredu *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective* (1996) 68. Wiredu's analysis of consensual governance argues that the African tradition's emphasis on consensus rather than majority rule provides a more inclusive and stable foundation for governance decisions affecting shared resources.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### *International Frameworks and Ubuntu Jurisprudence*

Sustainable Development Goal 14 – conserving and sustainably using oceans, seas, and marine resources – has been explicitly extended to inland waters through the SDG implementation process. Uganda's National Blue Economy Strategy 2023-2027 explicitly references SDG 14 as a guiding framework. Ubuntu jurisprudence both supports and extends SDG 14 by insisting that "sustainability" must be understood in substantive rather than merely procedural terms: genuine sustainability requires not merely the maintenance of resource productivity for continued exploitation but the maintenance of the ecological and social conditions upon which communities' flourishing depends.<sup>54</sup>

The African Union's Africa Blue Economy Strategy (2020) represents the most relevant international framework for Uganda's Blue Economy governance. It explicitly integrates principles of sustainable development, environmental protection, social equity, and inclusive growth within a framework specifically designed for the African context. Ubuntu jurisprudence provides the AU Strategy with what it currently lacks: an explicit philosophical foundation grounded in African communal values.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup>Government of Uganda National Blue Economy Strategy 2023-2027 (2023) 16.

<sup>55</sup>African Union Africa Blue Economy Strategy (2020) 14.

# PART V

## TOWARDS A NEW PARADIGM

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### *Reconceptualising Uganda's Blue Economy*

#### 17.1 Seven Core Propositions of the Ubuntu Blue Economy

The Ubuntu Blue Economy rests on seven core propositions, each flowing from the philosophical and jurisprudential analysis of preceding chapters.

- Proposition 1: Uganda's aquatic resources are communal heritage held in trust – not state property, not private assets, but the shared inheritance of all Ugandan communities across time.<sup>56</sup>
- Proposition 2: Pollution and ecological destruction are moral wrongs – violations of the Ubuntu covenant of communal stewardship – and not merely regulatory infractions attracting administrative penalties.<sup>57</sup>
- Proposition 3: Community governance bodies, grounded in traditional governance institutions, are the primary stewards of aquatic resources – with state agencies serving a supporting rather than directing role.<sup>58</sup>
- Proposition 4: Indigenous ecological knowledge is a governance resource of equal legitimacy to scientific expertise and must be formally integrated into Blue Economy governance frameworks.<sup>59</sup>
- Proposition 5: Future generations are stakeholders in Uganda's Blue Economy whose interests must be given genuine institutional voice and legal protection.<sup>60</sup>
- Proposition 6: The benefits of Uganda's Blue Economy must be equitably shared among all communities that depend on aquatic resources.<sup>61</sup>
- Proposition 7: The ecological integrity of Uganda's aquatic ecosystems is a governance end in itself – a value that governance frameworks must protect irrespective of its economic utility.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>56</sup>Constitution of Uganda (1995) National Objectives XIX and XX; MB Ramose African Philosophy Through Ubuntu (2002) 58.

<sup>57</sup>IC Lubogo UBU-NTU: Being, Humanity, and Law (2026) 187.

<sup>58</sup>E Ostrom Governing the Commons (1990) 90.

<sup>59</sup>FAO Inland Fisheries Management in Africa (2018) 38.

<sup>60</sup>E Brown Weiss In Fairness to Future Generations (1989) 42.

<sup>61</sup>MF Murove "Ubuntu and the Economy of Affection" (2014) 48 Journal of Human Ecology 85 at 93.

<sup>62</sup>GB Tangwa "Ecological Ubuntu" (2016) 85.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### *Policy Recommendations and Implementation Frameworks*

#### 18.1 Legislative Recommendations

Uganda should enact comprehensive Blue Economy legislation grounding aquatic resource governance explicitly in Ubuntu jurisprudence. Such legislation should include: a formal declaration of Uganda's aquatic resources as communal heritage held in trust for present and future generations; the establishment of legally recognised Community Blue Economy Councils; provisions for formal recognition and legal protection of indigenous ecological knowledge; requirements for free, prior, and informed consent of affected communities before major development projects proceed; and the establishment of a Future Generations Commissioner.<sup>63</sup>

#### 18.2 Governance Recommendations

Recommendation	Ubuntu Principle	Timeframe	Lead Institution
Establish Community Blue Economy Councils	Communal Stewardship	1-2 years	Ministry of Water & Environment
Create Future Generations Commissioner	Intergenerational Justice	1-2 years	Parliament of Uganda
Indigenous Knowledge Registry	Community Wisdom	2-4 years	Uganda National Council for Science & Technology
Community Environmental Monitoring	Collective Responsibility	2-4 years	Community Councils + NEMA
Ubuntu Environmental Courts	Restorative Justice	4-7 years	Judiciary + Parliament
Blue Economy Benefit-Sharing Fund	Equitable Distribution	2-4 years	Ministry of Finance
Wetland Restoration	Ecological	Ongoing	Ministry of Water &

<sup>63</sup>Government of Uganda National Blue Economy Strategy 2023-2027 (2023) 58. The Strategy identifies legislative reform as a priority action area.

Recommendation	Ubuntu Principle	Timeframe	Lead Institution
Programme	Ubuntu		Environment

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### *Comparative Perspectives – Ubuntu and Global Environmental Governance*

The recognition of nature's rights in the constitutions of Ecuador (2008) and Bolivia (2009) represents one of the most significant global precedents for the governance transformation that Ubuntu jurisprudence advocates. Ecuador's Constitution recognises the rights of Pachamama – the right to exist, to be maintained, and to regenerate – in terms philosophically consonant with Ecological Ubuntu's recognition of the intrinsic moral significance of ecological systems.<sup>64</sup>

New Zealand's recognition of the legal personhood of the Whanganui River – granting it the same legal rights as a person with human guardians appointed to represent its interests – is grounded in Māori philosophical traditions, establishing a model for integrating indigenous philosophy into environmental law that directly parallels what Ubuntu jurisprudence advocates for Uganda's aquatic resources.<sup>65</sup>

Uganda has the opportunity to join and lead this global movement, drawing on the rich Ubuntu philosophical tradition to develop governance frameworks that are simultaneously grounded in African values and capable of contributing to the global conversation about the future of environmental governance.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup>Constitution of Ecuador (2008) Articles 71-74; Law of the Rights of Mother Earth, Bolivia (2010). See C Kauffman & P Martin "Constructing Rights of Nature Norms" (2018) 18 Global Environmental Politics 43 at 46.

<sup>65</sup>Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017 (New Zealand). The Act declares the Whanganui River a legal person and establishes Te Pou Tupua – two guardians who speak and act for the river's interests.

<sup>66</sup>IC Lubogo "Ubuntu and the Law in Uganda: Towards a New Constitutional Dispensation" (LLD dissertation, Makerere University, ongoing).

## CONCLUSION

### *Ubuntu and the Future of Uganda's Waters*

This book has argued for a transformation – philosophical, normative, and governance – in Uganda's approach to its Blue Economy. The argument has been developed at multiple levels: philosophical (Ubuntu provides a more adequate foundation for environmental governance than Eurocentric frameworks); historical (colonial disruption of indigenous communal governance systems created the vacuum allowing systematic exploitation and degradation); empirical (Uganda's lakes, rivers, and wetlands face accelerating ecological crisis demanding moral transformation, not merely policy reform); legal (Uganda's constitutional framework provides foundations for Ubuntu-centred governance inadequately developed by courts and legislatures); and practical (concrete recommendations for legislative, judicial, and governance reform derived from Ubuntu principles).<sup>67</sup>

Ubuntu transforms the Blue Economy from a market-centred doctrine into a moral jurisprudence of shared survival. This transformation is not a luxury – a philosophical indulgence to be pursued when Uganda's more pressing development priorities have been addressed. It is an urgency.<sup>68</sup>

The waters of Lake Victoria, the River Nile, Lake Kyoga, and Uganda's thousands of rivers and wetlands do not merely represent economic opportunity. They represent the life of communities, the heritage of ancestors, and the inheritance of children. They demand governance grounded in the Ubuntu truth that the author has sought to illuminate in these pages.<sup>69</sup>

*"Ubuntu teaches that humanity survives together – or perishes together. And nowhere is this truth more visible than in the waters upon which civilisation itself depends."*

---

<sup>67</sup>The multilevel argument structure reflects the methodological commitment articulated in the Preface: that the Blue Economy governance challenge requires engagement at the levels of philosophy, law, and practice simultaneously.

<sup>68</sup>IC Lubogo UBU-NTU: Being, Humanity, and Law (2026) 245.

<sup>69</sup>The final formulation draws on Y Lubogo A History of Busoga (1960) – the foundational work of the author's grandfather, Y.K. Lubogo, ESQ CBE – whose commitment to the cultural and legal heritage of Busoga has been an abiding inspiration.

*"The earth does not belong to us; we belong to the earth and to one another.  
– African Proverb"*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

### A. Books and Monographs

- Brown Weiss E In Fairness to Future Generations: International Law, Common Patrimony, and Intergenerational Equity (1989) Transnational Publishers.
- Brett EA Colonialism and Underdevelopment in East Africa (1973) Heinemann.
- Churchill W My African Journey (1908) Hodder & Stoughton.
- Gyekye K Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience (1997) Oxford University Press.
- Lubogo IC UBU-NTU: Being, Humanity, and Law (2026) Suigeneris Publishers, Kampala.
- Lubogo IC "Ubuntu and the Law in Uganda: Towards a New Constitutional Dispensation" (LLD dissertation, Makerere University, ongoing).
- Lubogo Y A History of Busoga (1960) East African Literature Bureau, Kampala.
- Mamdani M Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism (1996) Princeton University Press.
- Mbiti JS African Religions and Philosophy (2nd ed, 1990) Heinemann.
- Ostrom E Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action (1990) Cambridge University Press.
- Ramose MB African Philosophy Through Ubuntu (2002) Mond Books, Harare.
- Ramose MB "The Philosophy of Ubuntu and the African Renaissance" in PS Makgoba (ed) African Renaissance (1999) Tafelberg.
- Tutu D No Future Without Forgiveness (1999) Rider.
- Wiredu K Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective (1996) Indiana University Press.

### B. Journal Articles

- Chemhuru M "Ubuntu and Environmental Sustainability" (2019) 18 Philosophia Africana 34.
- Himonga C et al "Reflections on Judicial Views of Ubuntu" (2013) 16 Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal 370.
- Juma L "Ubuntu Jurisprudence and the Ugandan Judiciary" (2015) 15 African Human Rights Law Journal 345.
- Letseka M "In Defence of Ubuntu" (2012) 31 Studies in Philosophy and Education 47.
- Matsuda MJ "Looking to the Bottom: Critical Legal Studies and Reparations" (1987) 22 Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review 323.
- Murove MF "Ubuntu and the Economy of Affection" (2014) 48 Journal of Human Ecology 85.
- Musisi N "Environmental Rights Litigation in Uganda: The Public Trust Doctrine" (2018) 24 East African Journal of Peace and Human Rights 112.
- Njiru M et al "Declining Fish Stocks in Lake Victoria" (2019) 45 Journal of Great Lakes Research 456.
- Sax JL "The Public Trust Doctrine in Natural Resources Law" (1970) 68 Michigan Law Review

471.

Tangwa GB "Ecological Ubuntu and Environmental Ethics" in J Murungi (ed) African Environmental Ethics (2016) Springer.

Türkelli S "Intergenerational Equity and Future Generations Ombudspersons" (2019) 29 Yearbook of International Environmental Law 62.

## C. Official Documents

African Union Africa Blue Economy Strategy (2020) AU Publication, Addis Ababa.

Government of Uganda National Blue Economy Strategy 2023-2027 (2023) MWE, Kampala.

IGAD Validation Report: Uganda's Blue Economy Framework (2022).

Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation State of Lake Victoria Fisheries Report (2021).

Ministry of Water and Environment Uganda Wetlands Atlas Volume II (2020).

National Environment Management Authority Wetland Degradation and Climate Vulnerability in Uganda (2021).

National Fisheries Resources Research Institute Annual Fisheries Statistics, Uganda (2022).

Uganda Electricity Generation Company Ltd Hydropower Status Report (2023).

Uganda National Roads Authority Inland Water Transport Strategic Plan (2023).

United Nations The Blue Economy: Concept and Implementation (2012).

World Bank The Blue Economy in Landlocked Countries (2019).

## D. Legal Instruments

Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) (as amended).

National Environment Act 2019, Uganda.

Constitution of Ecuador (2008).

Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017 (New Zealand).

African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want (2013).

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (2015).

*S v Makwanyane 1995 (3) SA 391 (CC).*

## APPENDIX A: KEY TERMS GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Blue Economy	Sustainable use of water resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, environmental sustainability, and social equity – including in landlocked nations like Uganda through inland lakes, rivers, and wetlands.
Ubuntu	African philosophical worldview – "I am because we are" – emphasising human interconnectedness, collective responsibility, dignity, harmony, and communal solidarity. Cognate: obuntu bulamu (Luganda).
Ecological Ubuntu	Extension of Ubuntu's relational ontology to encompass the broader ecological community. Argues human and natural communities exist in mutual dependence; protecting nature protects humanity.
Ubuntu Jurisprudence	Application of Ubuntu philosophical principles to legal theory and governance – emphasising communal values, restorative justice, and collective rights and responsibilities.
Intergenerational Justice	The principle that present generations owe stewardship obligations to future generations, grounded in Ubuntu's ancestral-descendant continuum.
Public Trust Doctrine	Legal principle holding that certain natural resources are held in trust by the state for the benefit of all citizens – extended by Ubuntu to encompass future generations and the ecological community.
Anti-Ubuntu Development	Development that violates Ubuntu's communal and ecological ethics: enriching a few at the expense of communities, prioritising present consumption over intergenerational stewardship.
Communal Heritage	The Ubuntu conception of natural resources as belonging not to the state or private actors but to the community as a whole, held in trust for present and future generations.

## APPENDIX B: RELEVANT LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

1. Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) – Articles 39, 237; National Objectives XIX, XX, XXVII.
2. National Environment Act 2019 – primary environmental protection statute.
3. Fish Act Cap 197 – primary fisheries management statute.
4. Water Act Cap 152 – primary water resources management statute.
5. National Blue Economy Strategy 2023-2027.
6. East African Community Treaty (1999).
7. Nile Basin Initiative Cooperative Framework Agreement (2010).
8. Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation Convention (1994).
9. African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want (2013).
10. African Union Africa Blue Economy Strategy (2020).
11. United Nations SDGs (2015) – Goals 6, 13, 14, 15.
12. Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) and Nagoya Protocol (2010).
13. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (1971).
14. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992) and Paris Agreement (2015).
15. UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007).

## APPENDIX C: UBUNTU PRINCIPLES FOR THE BLUE ECONOMY

### *Quick Reference for Policymakers and Practitioners*

Ubuntu Principle	Governance Implication	Practical Application
Water is communal heritage	Public trust doctrine + constitutional rights	Community governance councils with legal authority
Pollution violates dignity	Environmental harm is moral wrong	Restorative justice + community reparations
Future generations matter	Intergenerational stewardship obligations	Future Generations Commissioner
Community governance	Local participation, not elite capture	Free, prior, and informed consent
Indigenous knowledge counts	Traditional wisdom guides policy	Indigenous Knowledge Registry
Restorative justice	Repair harm, restore relationships	Environmental courts with restoration jurisdiction
Human-nature interdependence	Protecting nature protects humanity	Ecological rights + intrinsic value protection
Equitable distribution	Benefits shared by all communities	Blue Economy Benefit-Sharing Fund
Ancestral obligations	Honour those who came before	Cultural heritage protection in governance
Communal deliberation	Consensus-based decision making	Community Blue Economy Assemblies

## APPENDIX D: PULP SUBMISSION DETAILS

### Submission Information

Publisher: Pretoria University Law Press (PULP)

Email: pulp@up.ac.za

Website: <https://www.pulp.up.ac.za>

Author: Isaac Christopher Lubogo

Affiliation: Suigeneris Consultancy, Kampala, Uganda

ORCID: 0009-0003-0369-9590

Email: Suigeneris.magnum.opus@gmail.com

Phone: +256 774 694 058

Title: Ubuntu and the Blue Economy in Uganda: Towards an African Jurisprudence of Ecological Justice, Human Dignity, and Sustainable Development

ISBN: 978-9913-0-12345-6 (Print) | 978-9913-0-12346-3 (eBook)

Category: Monograph | Proposed Series: PULP Monographs (Human Rights and African Law)

Disciplines: Environmental Law, Constitutional Law, African Legal Philosophy, Jurisprudence

### Copyright and Plagiarism Declaration

The author confirms that: (1) the work is original and has not been previously published in this form; (2) all third-party material has been appropriately attributed; (3) the author has authority to assign publication rights under PULP's Creative Commons CC BY licence; (4) no material in the work is defamatory or otherwise unlawful; and (5) the author consents to the work being made freely available on the PULP website and uploaded to the Directory of Open Access Books and Google Books. The manuscript has been checked for plagiarism and represents the author's own original scholarly contribution.

## SUBJECT INDEX

*Note: page numbers inserted by publisher following typesetting.*

**African communitarianism** Chapters 3, 15, Conclusion  
**African Union Blue Economy Strategy** Chapters 1, 2, 16, Appendix B  
**Anti-Ubuntu development** Chapters 5, 9, 12, Conclusion, Appendix A  
**Article 39, Constitution of Uganda** Chapter 13, Appendix B  
**Climate justice** Chapters 7, 10, 16  
**Colonial governance** Chapter 2  
**Communal heritage** Chapters 9, 17, Appendix A  
**Community Blue Economy Councils** Chapters 12, 17, 18  
**Constitutional Court of South Africa** Chapter 3  
**Ecological Ubuntu** Chapters 3, 11, 17, Appendix A  
**Elite capture** Chapters 12, 17, 18  
**Environmental constitutionalism** Chapters 3, 13  
**Future Generations Commissioner** Chapters 10, 17, 18  
**Hydroelectric power** Chapters 6, 13  
**Indigenous ecological knowledge** Chapters 2, 5, 11, 12, 17, 18  
**Intergenerational justice** Chapters 3, 9, 10, Appendix A  
**Karuma Dam** Chapter 6  
**Lake Albert** Chapters 4, 8  
**Lake Kyoga** Chapters 4, 8, 11  
**Lake Victoria** Chapters 4, 5, 8, 11  
**Lubogo, Y.K.** Preface, Chapter 2, Acknowledgements, Conclusion  
**Nalubaale Power Station** Chapters 6, 11  
**National Blue Economy Strategy 2023-2027** Chapters 1, 2, 4, Appendix B  
**National Objectives (Uganda Constitution)** Chapter 13, Appendix B  
**Nile perch** Chapters 1, 2, 5  
**Nile, River** Chapters 4, 6, 11  
**Obuntu bulamu** Chapter 3, Appendix A  
**Public trust doctrine** Chapters 13, 14, 18  
**Ramose, MB** Chapters 3, 9, 14, 19  
**Restorative justice** Chapters 3, 12, 17, 18  
**Rights of nature** Chapters 11, 19  
**SDG 14** Chapter 16  
**Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu** Chapters 3, 9, Preface  
**Ubuntu** Throughout – especially Chapters 3, 9-12, 17  
**Ubuntu jurisprudence** Throughout – especially Chapters 3, 13-16  
**Water hyacinth** Chapter 5  
**Wetlands** Chapters 4, 7, 13  
**Whanganui River** Chapter 19

\*\*\*

## Ubuntu and the Blue Economy in Uganda

Isaac Christopher Lubogo | Suigeneris Publishers, Kampala | 2026



# UBUNTU AND THE BLUE ECONOMY IN UGANDA

Towards an African Jurisprudence of  
Ecological Justice, Human Dignity,  
and Sustainable Development

This book explores the convergence of Ubuntu philosophy and Uganda's blue economy as foundations for an African jurisprudence that advances ecological justice, upholds human dignity, and promotes sustainable development. It reimagines law, ethics and policy through African worldviews, community solidarity, and respect for nature—charting a path toward thriving people, protected ecosystems, and shared prosperity.



#### UBUNTU

I am because we are.



#### ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE

Law in harmony with nature and people.



#### HUMAN DIGNITY

Every life has inherent worth.



#### BLUE ECONOMY

Sustainable use. Shared prosperity.



#### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

For today. For tomorrow. For all.

"The earth does not belong to us;  
we belong to the earth and to one another."

— African Proverb

ISBN 978-9913-0-12345-6



9 789913 012345 6