

Climate change uganda

A young girl draws water from a flooded river in western Uganda. Uganda has experienced increased adverse weather patterns which have contributed to flooding in many parts of the country.

KAMPALA, May 31, 2019 -Seven months ago, residents of Kasese District in Western Uganda woke up to floods that wreaked havoc on livestock, crops and human life. Local media reported that the October 2018 floods killed one person and displaced another 8,000 others from the nine affected sub-counties.

The rate of forest cover loss in Uganda stands at 2.6% annually, one of the highest in the world. According to the 2016/17 Uganda National Household Survey, more than 80% of Uganda's rural households use firewood for cooking. The high demand for wood fuel and limited access to energy saving alternatives means that forest cover is at risk of continued degradation.

In Mbale, residents have encroached on mountainous areas which they consider more fertile, and cleared its vegetation cover for agriculture and even settlement.

Mr. Joseph Opusi, the Natural Resources Officer for Mbale District Local Government, said the destruction of forests explains the climate variability that the district is facing, evidenced by prolonged periods of drought, heavy rains, irregular rain and dry season patterns.

"Climate variability which is becoming rampant has led to low productivity of crops, rampant drought," Opusi said. "In some areas, there are floods, and in mountainous areas, there are rolling stones, but when you go beyond Mbale, there are landslides in mountainous areas."

In northern Uganda, Lira District officials have embarked on tree and grass planting to trap emissions from growing municipal motor traffic and from their compost site where municipal garbage is incinerated.

The district has also embarked on sustainable soil and land management by constructing trenches, particularly in hilly areas, to reduce the speed of run-offs whenever it rains.

"Our homestead solar system coverage is now at 28.9%," he said. "In 2012, we were at 3%. I think we have made strides. Equally, for the improved energy saving cook stoves, we are at around 26.7%."

Uganda was the first country in Africa to develop and endorse its Nationally Determined Contribution Partnership Plan (NDC-PP) in June 2018. It made key commitments in this regard, including, reducing national greenhouse gas emissions by 22% by 2030, reducing climate vulnerability of climate sensitive sectors since the economy is natural resource based, and building climate resilience of key sectors and managing disaster risks.

Compared to other countries, Uganda ranks high in its number of commitments regarding climate change mitigation and environmental protection. The country has launched its National Climate Change Policy 2015, submitted Nationally Determined Contributions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2018, has a Green Growth Strategy in place and has signed up to meet the Bonn Challenge.

Recently, local government officials participated in a training workshop supported by the World Bank, Uganda Country Office, in collaboration with the Climate Change Department in the Ministry of Water and Environment, Ministry of Finance and National Planning Authority.

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