

## Uganda's wetland restoration project offers global lessons

The impact of climate change, coupled with other human and environmental stressors, is increasing degradation of wetlands and their associated ecosystem services in Uganda. Over 80% of the people living adjacent to wetland areas in Uganda directly use wetland resources for their household food security needs. Given that wetlands are highly vulnerable to changes in the quantity and quality of their water supply, climate change will most likely substantially alter ecologically important attributes of wetlands and will exacerbate the impacts from human activity.

Building Resilient Communities, Wetland Ecosystems and Associated Catchments in Uganda project will offer a myriad of lessons for possible replication across the globe, UNDP's Chief of Portfolio Management Office, says. The Presidential Initiative seeks to impact on 4million lives affected by climate change. It will also restore 64,370 hectares of wetlands and 11,630 hectares of catchments in 20 districts of Eastern and Western Uganda. The Green Climate Fund (GCF), Government Uganda (GoU) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) are funding the project. Frot, believes the restoration project is the biggest yet, the world has seen and offers unique lessons from which global wetland restoration efforts could be informed.

Speaking at the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing training for the Project Implementers held at Premier Best Western Hotel, Entebbe early this month, Frot said UNDP was excited to be part of the initiative changing lives and will ensure the project objectives are achieved.

While representing Ms. Elsie Attafua, the Resident Representative UNDP Uganda, Ms Sheila Ngatia, the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative commended the Government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Water and Environment, for spearheading the implementation of the Project, which supports the government's efforts to address the increasing wetland degradation and its effects.

"This project significantly contributes to the achievement of Uganda's Vision 2040, the country's commitments under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I wish to emphasize that, environment sustainability and our ability to reverse the impact of climate change are key to achieving SDGs. The project is also part of UNDP's contribution towards the President's Initiative on Wetlands," she said.

The GIS training organised by UNDP and Ministry of Water and Environment aimed at equipping more than 25 Project Implementation Technical Staff from various institutions, — (Ministry of Water and Environment, National Environment Management Authority, National Forest Authority, Uganda National Metrological Authority, Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries, Uganda Bureau of Statistics ),with specialised skills in applying digital technologies such as QGIS and Google Earth Engine to monitor the restoration efforts. The training is part of the implementation of the project.

The Ministry of Water and Environment on its part is committed to using the outcome of the training to improve results. Speaking at the same training, the National Project Coordinator, Mr. Paul Mafabi said the project demonstrates government commitment to recovering 40% of the wetland cover lost to unwise use. GIS technologies will be critical in monitoring the impact and evaluation of the wetland restoration efforts.

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