

# Unpredictable rains, landslides, droughts in Uganda: New normal requiring new thinking

**D**aily news reports on the impact of yet another disruptive flood in Kampala, or the rising cost of matooke due to droughts, raise public concern and frustration.

Yet the effects of climate change such as severe floods, droughts, landslides, and cyclones are a reality in countries across eastern Africa, and Uganda is no exception.

The recently launched Uganda Country Climate and Development Report (CCDR), prepared by the World Bank Group in concert with the Government and other actors on climate, explores the implications of climate change for Uganda's development and suggests some solutions.

According to the CCDR, 80% of the poorest households that have experienced floods or droughts have incurred income losses.

Increasingly, unpredictable rains are making it difficult to know how much a farmer will harvest because yields change on average by 12%.

Floods and landslides have disrupted school attendance, forcing some families to move and pull their children out of school. With less than 5% of Uganda's road network paved, widespread disruptions are hampering access to services and affecting business.

It is, therefore, time for new thinking and a new call to action as we heard at the Second Africa Climate Summit that took place in Ethiopia in September and from the UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) that just took place in Brazil.

Fortunately, Uganda is already thinking hard about addressing climate change to contribute to inclusive, resilient development, create better jobs, and sustain greener growth. And more can always be done.

## CLIMATE-INFORMED DEVELOPMENT

In Uganda, the priority is two-fold: ensuring that people, agriculture, roads, schools, hospitals, businesses and cities are resilient enough to withstand climate shocks; and helping people adapt to the new realities created by climate change.

Investing in resilience and adaptation goes together with investing in better development. For example, as Uganda supports its labour force to engage in manufacturing and service sector jobs, it could prioritise skilling or reskilling those working outdoors in the agriculture and construction sectors.

Lowering the exposure of this labour force to working conditions that create heat stress from increasing temperatures would help avoid an average decline of 2.3% in labour productivity.

Similarly, as Uganda builds more roads, ensuring that they can withstand floods will prevent significant transport disruptions and save the Government from spending an additional \$13.6–\$26m per year in repairs in the 2040s.

The Uganda Government has embraced new thinking by embedding climate action in its National Development Plan IV. This approach is also reflected in specific sectors. For example, the World Bank is supporting the Government to improve climate-resilient agricultural productivity by strengthening research and



seed systems that lower farmers' risks due to climate change, making climate information readily available to farmers, and restoring degraded lands.

Incentives such as matching grants are enabling farmers to adopt climate-resilient and productive crop and livestock production practices.

In education, the World Bank is supporting development of a national primary school construction strategy that promotes building schools that are climate resilient, energy efficient, and easy to maintain.

## PRIVATE SECTOR IS KEY

The private sector is critical to developing and rolling out climate solutions.

The private sector is already developing drought-tolerant seeds, promoting solar-powered irrigation systems, and helping lower greenhouse gas emissions. It is also investing in innovations for affordable and climate-resilient housing. Crucially, private sector involvement in climate action means more and better jobs. For example, expanding demand for nature-based tourism services by 10% could lead to nearly 50,000 new jobs.

The Government's Green Growth Development Strategy seeks to create an additional four million green jobs in high potential sectors such as transport, energy, and agriculture. This is not possible without the active participation of the private sector.

Through strategic partnerships and support in agricultural systems, practices and technology, nature-based tourism, green construction, e-mobility, green entrepreneurship, and more, we can collectively work to move away from business-as-usual development to find opportunities from addressing climate change.

We can engage jointly – communities, private sector, local and national governments, academia, civil society organisations, youth, women and development partners – to get Uganda on a low-carbon, inclusive, and climate-resilient growth path. The World Bank Group commits to continue being Uganda's trusted partner in these efforts.

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