

Protect forests, don't mortgage our future

IN a welcome move, President Yoweri Museveni has ordered the cancellation of land titles issued to developers in Kitubulu Central Forest Reserve, a 200-acre green lung in Entebbe municipality, Wakiso district. The President's move to cancel the land titles is a commendable step, showing that our natural resources are not for sale and together, we can protect them from the encroachers.

The National Forestry Authority (NFA), established in 2004 to protect Uganda's forests, has failed spectacularly. Under their watch, 1.1 million hectares of natural forest cover have been lost to illegal activities, corruption and collusion. This is not just a failure; it is a crime against our environment and the future generations.

Kitubulu forest is more than just a patch of trees. It is a vital filter for Lake Victoria, shielding the lake basin from pollutants and silt. It is a natural barrier against erosive winds from the Kalangala islands, Buvuma and beyond. Its destruction would have far-reaching consequences for



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our ecosystem, agriculture and survival.

But Kitubulu is just one example. Uganda is facing a climate crisis, with rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns and increased frequency of extreme weather

events. Our forests are our best defence against these impacts, yet they are being decimated.

NFA's failure is not just about Kitubulu. It is a symptom of a broader problem hinged on the lack of accountability, corruption and prioritisation of short-term gains over long-term sustainability. Who will be held accountable for this destruction? Who will pay for the loss of our forests?

The President's intervention is a step in the right direction, but it is not enough. We need systemic change that underscores a commitment to transparency, accountability and sustainability. We need to protect our forests, lakes and people from the greed of a few.

Some heads must roll, indeed. The NFA's leadership must be held accountable for their failure to protect our forests. We demand a thorough investigation and action against those responsible for this destruction. Let Kitubulu be a turning point. We must act now to protect our natural heritage and ensure a liveable future for all.