

# High Population Piles Pressure on Water Catchments

**A** surge in population means that the inelastic land resources have to be utilized well to feed more people, which translates into pressure to the water catchments like wetlands, forests, mountains, and river banks.

“If you have to feed more people, you need more land for cultivation but changes in climate mean that we have to adopt irrigation in order to have mass agricultural production since rainfall is no longer predictable.

Once the rain is not reliable, the people tend to encroach on the wetlands and the river banks for cultivation in dry season,” Mr. Maximo Twinomuhangi, Team Leader, Kyoga Water Management Zone says.

He adds, “River banks and Wetlands have been degraded for years because of the increasing pressure by the growing population.

When Kyoga Water Management Zone was created in 2011, they sensitized the population to address the increasing pressure through wise use but also on the protection to ensure that the people can implement soil conservation

structures in higher areas to conserve water from rain-fall for the agricultural production.

“We believe this would ensure increased agricultural productivity in higher areas but also ensure riverbanks are not encroached on,” Mr. Twinomuhangi says.

Kyoga Water Management Zone has been operating through a joint partnership with the Development Partners explaining that most of the catchment management plans have been developed through funded projects like EURECCA.

“Development Partners have continued to support implementation measures like the Sahel and Sahel Observatory through the Adaptation Fund and World Bank, GIZ, EU among others,” Mr. Twinomuhangi explains.

These development partners are doing very well in supporting the implementation measure for all the catchment management plans together with the government of Uganda.



Trees planted as part of the environmental restoration and conservation initiative in Tipet



KWMZ team and environmental police team inspecting a wetland



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The KWMZ continues to face challenges of degradation of slopes through soil loss due to landslides in a number of districts, causing fatalities, environmental consequences, and food shortages.

Farmlands and infrastructure such as bridges and roads are destroyed in addition to leaving many people homeless.

Since landslides are associated with heavy and prolonged rains which exceed the field capacity of the soil, the need for management of this challenge is evident.

This, therefore, calls for catchment management practices and interventions that can manage this issue that has seen many being displaced.

In regard to Operation challenges, the water quality team of the KWMZ faces a few operational challenges in undertaking their work, mainly related to hardware equipment;

Old equipment is outdated and complicated to fix in case of failure.

Intermittent power affects the machine which sometimes has to run for about 5 days uninterrupted.

The need to procure equipment with new technology that enables one to do analysis of multiple parameters at a go as opposed to the old technology.

While discharge measurements are supposed to be done once every quarter for all river gauging stations, this has not been realised in the recent years due to a number of operational challenges. Most of these stations are operational while some are not.

*BY COMMUNICATIONS UNIT*

