

DOHO RICE SCHEME

Farmers have testified that they can now harvest 1,500kg of shelled rice per acre, up from 700kg per acre

By Daniel Edyegu and Paul Watala

President Yoweri Museveni has urged farmers to use wetlands sustainably so as to mitigate the effects of climate change and boost the Government's current campaign on irrigation.

Speaking during the 37th Tarehe Sita celebrations at Boma grounds in Butaleja district, in eastern Uganda Museveni yesterday said rather than cultivate to the middle of the wetland, which subsequently leads them to dry up, farmers should opt for sustainable alternatives such as fish farming.

"Many swamps are being invaded for rice growing. Farmers cultivate up to the centre of the swamp, meaning the waters have dried up. We need to see how to use the swamps in a good way. Fish farming is one of the lucrative ventures," Museveni said.

"With fish farming, a pond is set at the periphery of the wetland and water is channelled to it. You do not get to the centre of the wetland and the waters and vegetation on the riverbank thrive. As we use the water from the wetland for irrigation, the vegetation will be used for mulching," he added.

The celebrations, that also marked the first East African Community (EAC) armed forces day, were held under the theme: *Reaffirming the contribution of armed forces towards regional integration for our strategic security, development and prosperity.*

Museveni said being located along the equator, Uganda faces two dry seasons that include a short dry spell from January to February and a long one from May to mid August.

Successes

Citing the case of Doho Rice Scheme where the Government is making heavy investments to bolster the irrigation process, Museveni said the



Museveni (centre) with family members of freedom fighters of Motepuez, Mozambique and the 1976/8 cadres who included Lt. General Ivan Koreta (left) and Col. Mule Muwanga (right) at the Tarehe Sita celebrations in Butaleja district yesterday

Museveni advises on wetland conservation

only way of lulling the effect of dry spells is through irrigation.

"Basing on the developments at Doho Rice Scheme, the farmers have testified that they can now harvest 1,500kg of shelled rice per acre, up from 700kg per acre. To irrigate, however, we need water," Museveni explained.

"The water for irrigation at Doho Rice Scheme is derived from River Manafwa. This goes to show that if we use our waters well, we can improve yields and household wealth," he said.

"Therefore, we are saying, no more drought. We want to expand the example of Doho Rice Scheme

INFRASTRUCTURE

Tarmacking of roads had been done in Tororo-Mbale-Soroti, then Tirinyi route

to many other places in Uganda," Museveni added.

Responding to the remarks by Sheikh Hussein Mukama, the Butaleja district Kadhi, on tarmacking of Nabumali-Butaleja-

Namutumba route that has been on the political 'pledge card' since 2006, Museveni said he had not forgotten about it.

"Butaleja district is now like an island. Tarmacking of roads is taking place in all the surrounding districts. There was Tororo-Mbale-Soroti, then Tirinyi route. Now there is Tirinyi-Pallisa-Kumi; then Tororo-Nagongera under plan," Museveni said.

"I remember it well. God took six days to create the world. He did not create it on Monday and finished. I can assure you these roads are in plan. Don't be like the biblical doubting Thomas," he added.

ELECTRICITY

The Government is making heavy investment to increase electricity production, according to the President

Museveni said the Government is currently making heavy investment to increase electricity production and access to all districts in the country.

He said except for Kaabong and Kotido where electricity has not reached, electricity has got to all the district headquarters countrywide.

He added that at present, the focus is to get electricity to the entire local government sub-county headquarters in the country.

Museveni said adequate electricity would stir the already budding industrialisation and the mining industry in the country.

He cited the thriving cement industry in Tororo, the vermiculite in Manafwa and the marble and limestone in Moroto district.

Professional army

Gen. David Muhoozi, the Uganda People's Defence Forces chief of defence forces, said due to the professional growth in the army, it could now contribute to peace processes in the continent such as in Somalia.

A contingent of armies from Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, South Sudan and Tanzania participated in the celebrations.

From January 31 to February 6, a total of 205 army engineers and medical personnel from the EAC regional block participated in various activities throughout Bukedi region as part of the Tarehe Sita week.

These included repair of health units, dental and eye services, HIV/AIDS testing and counselling and safe male circumcision.

"By having the EAC militaries working together, strategic security, which has been Africa's greatest failure, is steadily being addressed.

Africa will be in a great position to deter more threat, both internally and externally," Muhoozi said.