

Ecweru orders for desilting of Teso dams to fight floods

SOROTI

By Agnes Nantambi

Disaster and preparedness state minister Musa Ecweru has called for desilting of all the dams in Teso sub-region as a measure to mitigate floods and other climatic challenges.

Ecweru attacked the Teso region elites over leading in the destruction of the environment.

Officiating at the launch of the Enhancing Resilience of Communities to Climate Change through Catchment-based Integrated Management of water and related resources in Uganda (EURECCA) project for Awoja and Aswa catchments, Ecweru said during the colonial times, the British found problems of floods in Teso where water from Karamoja and Mt Elgon drained in Soroti, forcing them to dig dams to arrest the water.

The project implemented under the water resources directorate is the first of its kind in Uganda to benefit from the adaptation fund.

It is aimed at increasing resilience of communities to the risk of floods and landslides.

The sh27.5b project is funded by Sahar and Sahel Observatory, an implementing agency of adaptation fund under the ongoing global climate change financing.

Global climate change financing is aimed at implementing adaptation and mitigation interventions for a better and sustainable utilisation of natural resources.

According to Ecweru, the colonialists dug the dams to reduce the speed of the running water.

Unfortunately, all silted because after independence, "everybody said they are British dams."

"This planet earth has

been patient. We have harmed our motherland, injured her in many different ways, we have silted the wetlands and cut the trees.

"Mt. Elgon, which was characterised by tree cover, is now bare. Teso, which was characterised by swamps, are no more and natural trees are all gone. We have to plant trees, leave the wetlands to rejuvenate and this can only be done during our generation," he said.

The commissioner water resources, Dr Calist Tindimugaya, said the project will help increase resilience of eco systems by supporting management of forests, wetlands and river banks.

BETWEEN THE LINES:

■ The sh27.5b project is funded by Sahar and Sahel Observatory, an implementing agency.

He noted that it will also help increase flexibility of other community livelihood systems by supporting income-generating activities with credit and market access.

"We shall work with the communities to help them carry out activities which will not destroy the environment and water catchment areas," Tindimugaya said.

We shall also encourage people living along the river banks to relocate by giving them revolving funds and help them start businesses which are linked to natural resources," he added.

The resident district commissioner, Isaac Kawooya, said: "People are dying from landslides. We are committed to implementing the presidential directive on cultivation in wetlands which calls on all people to vacate."

