

Hoima, Nwoya soils losing fertility - study

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KAMPALA. Soils in Hoima, Nwoya and Rakai districts are fast losing their fertility, which is necessary to support crop production, thus exposing many to food insecurity, a study by International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (Ciat) has revealed.

Ms Caroline Mwongera, the farming systems and climate change scientist at Ciat, said the sampled soils lacked carbon, potassium and nitrogen necessary for healthy crop growth.

"Soil quality is very poor and yet that is the basis of soil productivity," Ms Mwongera said yesterday in Kampala at the dissemination of the results of the four-year study.

"Soils in Nwoya overall were below the critical level that are required for good production," she added.

Nwoya is part of the

bigger northern Uganda region whose soils remained uncultivated due to two-decade insurgency by the Lord's Resistance Army.

"There is a lot of bush burning [that kills soil organisms], deforestation that causes soil erosion which washes away top fertile soils," Ms Mwongera said.

The regions, just like the rest of Uganda, according to the study, continue to face climate vulnerability in terms of long dry spell, pests and diseases.

Planning

Mr Muhammed Ssemambo, a climate change adaptation officer, said the findings are important for districts to plan, but also come up with policy formulations.

The findings also show that in areas that were regarded as infertile, farmers used manure, mulching, carried out inter-cropping and crop rotation, to get high yields.