

Climate change to cost sh21 trillion annually

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A study has predicted tough times ahead and ruled that Uganda will forfeit up to between sh11 trillion and sh21 trillion annually by 2025 if the country does not take steps to protect fragile ecosystems and avert climate change.

The study, which first modelled how the climate is going to change in the next 50 years (should nothing be done to reverse the trend), offers projections for key sectors, markedly agriculture and infrastructure vis-à-vis the projected climate status.

It says the losses will arise because of infrastructural and other losses in key sectors. It presages loss of agricultural productivity, increased floods and spread of diseases, which accumulate the economic loss.

"By 2050, it is going to be increasingly scary if current laxities in climate adaptation are continued," Revocatus Twinomuhangi, of the department of geography and geo-informatics at Makerere University, said at the report's launch at Hotel Africana in Kampala yesterday.

The Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) study sought to examine the economics

BETWEEN THE LINES:

■ The study indicates impacts of floods on roads and buildings in urban areas would result in damages of between \$69m and \$429m by 2025.

of climate change — the way climate change will affect Uganda's economy.

Researchers used modelled projections to forecast what Uganda's environment will likely present in the next 50 years, going by the current standards and environment policies and interventions. They later designed correlation coefficients, drawing the country's key economic sectors against the projected climate status.

For agriculture, the study shows significant impact on the Arabica coffee, mainly grown in Mbale highlands. It predicts that production of Arabica and Robusta coffee may fall by 50% by 2050; an illustrative estimate of the cost of these losses is around \$1,235m.

"Because of changing patterns, we are likely to see a fall in production of Arabica coffee, we shall experience impact on livestock because of drought and then there is this loss of property that comes with flooding," Twinomuhangi

said. Estimates on impacts on tea growing areas indicate significant loss of value, while some potential loss of cotton production is also projected.

Together, these results indicate that if no action is taken to enhance the citizens' adaptation to climate change, Uganda's agricultural exports and their value may be strongly affected by climate change in the period to 2050. The total costs are in the range of \$134m – \$196m by 2025 and \$641–\$938m by 2050.

Between now and 2050, the demand for water is expected to increase almost tenfold, from 408 million cubic metres per year to 3,963 million cubic metres per year.

Under current investment plans, demand will not be met. The study estimated the economic loss reflected by the unmet demand at \$5.5b per year.

Claire Monkhouse from the CDKN said the country needed to embrace better water management systems and to cut on emissions into the air to realise some positive change.

A recent study by the National Forestry Authority indicates the country loses 90,000 hectares of forest cover annually, one of the highest cases of environmental degradation in Africa.