

Floods ruin gardens in Luuka district

LUUKA

By Vision Reporter

Heavy rains that lasted over six hours on Monday left numerous gardens flooded in Luuka district.

When *New Vision* visited Butimba village and neighbouring Namadope area, floodwaters had submerged young maize plants and sugarcane.

The potato, watermelon and pumpkin gardens were also submerged. Farmers could be spotted in the vicinity trying to assess the extent of the damage.

Justine Nabirye, a farmer, expressed concern that her three-acre maize garden was submerged. She said the floods might lead to a hunger crisis.

Jimmy Ngobi, the LCI chairperson of Butimba, said the scenario had been caused by the rising water levels in the adjacent Lumbuye swampy stretch.

"The streams going through the wetland brought in large volumes of water from Bulamagi sub-county in Iganga district. This made it very difficult for the flow to be



A farmer looks at his partially flooded garden at Butimba village in Luuka. Photo by George Luuka

contained," Ngobi said.

Abdul Samanya, the Iganga district natural resources officer, said encroachment on wetlands had greatly compromised their flood control function, leading to the current problem.

"The rising water was usually contained by wetland vegetation. However, that is no longer possible because swamp vegetation like papyrus have been destroyed," Samanya said.

Sarah Ntumba, the Luuka district council secretary for social affairs, urged farmers to avoid the flooded gardens until

the waters subside, so as not to contract waterborne diseases.

"If we are not extra careful, there is a possibility of getting infected with bilharzia, cholera or dysentery. Once our gardens dry up, we will be able to plant fresh crops," Ntumba said.

Baker Luwangula, the Luuka LC5 chairman, said most of the flooded gardens were those in places occupied by natural wetlands.

"Nature is simply trying to reclaim what rightfully belongs to it. Some farmers buy swampy vegetation to grow sugarcane and maize, which is not good," Luwangula said.

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