

# Sensitise masses on wetland conservation — President

BY VISION REPORTER

President Yoweri Museveni has tasked leaders, legislators and all stakeholders in the environment sector with sensitising the *wananchi* on the importance of environmental conservation.

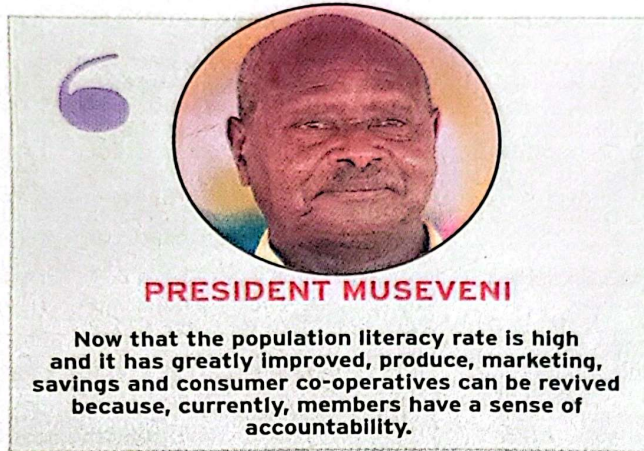
The President made the remarks on Wednesday evening while meeting Members of Parliament from Bukedi sub-region in eastern Uganda at State House, Entebbe. The area encompasses a total of 18 constituencies in the districts of Busia, Tororo, Butaleja, Budaka, Kibuku, Pallisa and Butebo.

Museveni emphasised the importance of conserving the environment, saying *wananchi* should be guided by their leaders at all levels to desist from activities that degrade the environment.

He said activities like fish farming along the outer borders of wetlands are beneficial to both the farmer and the environment.

He explained that a person can reap Sh64m from half an acre of land per season while preserving the wetland in its original form. He noted that fish farming is more beneficial than growing crops like rice that can only give between Sh2m to Sh3m per season from the same acreage of land.

The President said people who have a high propensity of degrading wetlands are not educated enough to appreciate the negativity



of their activities to Mother Nature. To this, he called upon leaders to guide farmers to stop spoiling the environment and only pursue better ways of living.

Museveni commended the strategy of promoting illustrations to the masses about the proper methods of conserving wetlands saying it provides a viable and sustainable measure that benefits all in the country.

"This measure solves a number of problems in society as it creates room for more and increased source of income, avails more water volume in the low lands for irrigation, sustains continuous growth of grass for mulching gardens and addresses risks of environmental degradation," he said.

Museveni asked the legislators and government

officials in the meeting to identify 2 to 3 peasants in their localities to open up a pilot project of fish ponds for others. He said the government would offer excavators to open up fish ponds at the edge of the swamps.

Among other things, the meeting also looked into other issues, like roads and restocking of cattle lost during the past insecurity episodes, complete revival of co-operative societies and necessity of establishing a construction unit in the Ministry of Education and Sports. Museveni said the co-operative societies had collapsed because of the low level of education among the members and the lack of serious accountability.

"Now that the population literacy rate is high and it has

greatly improved, produce, marketing, savings and consumer co-operatives can be revived because, currently, members have a sense of

accountability," he said. The Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Vincent Sempijja, assured the President that

leaders are committed to learning from the President's model farms by extending a similar idea to all areas countrywide.

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