

German expert advises Ugandans on saving water

BUSHENYI

By Chris Mugasha

A water expert from Germany has advised Ugandans to take issues of water and environment seriously by looking at water as a resource that needs to be saved.

Dr Uta Ulrich, from the Institute of Natural Resources at Christian Albrechts University in Germany, said saving water can only be done through the promotion of rainwater harvesting technologies at household level. She said: "Families have so much possibilities of harvesting water during rainy seasons." She observed that such harvested water would be stored for the dry seasons.

"Why build an expensive house and fail to construct a tank to harvest water?" Uta wondered.

Uta was last week speaking during a consultative meeting with officials of Rukararwe Partnership Workshop for Rural Development and National Water and Sewerage Corporation at Rukararwe in Bushenyi district. Rukararwe is an initiative of former MP

and Uganda ambassador to Germany, the late Samson Nyine Bitahwa, who spearheaded the campaign for environmental conservation through tree planting.

During the meeting, they discussed a variety of strategies of starting a campaign dubbed save water to improve water situation through schools and other public places.

BETWEEN THE LINES:

■ Saving water can only be done through promotion of rainwater harvesting technologies at every household level.

Uta said the schools need to educate students about water sustainability. She also highlighted women as good ambassadors on issues of water.

Dr Klaus Onnasch, a development partner with Rukararwe, also warned that people must be sensitised about the dangers of eucalyptus trees.

"Through our eco-travel, we have seen that eucalyptus is

dominating and it is dangerous for our water," she noted.

The co-ordinator of Rukararwe, Robert Rwabubare, said since the 1980s, Rukararwe has been at the helm of the campaign to save the environment through planting of different species of environmentally friendly trees.

He, however, said the majority of the trees have reached the stage of getting harvested, adding that people look at the old trees as a source of income.

"We are now seeking funds so that whoever cuts a tree can plant another," Rwabubare said.

He said in spite of the prolonged dry spell and other effects of climate change which have devastated some regions, Bushenyi has not been hit, which he attributed to the campaign of greening the region through tree planting.

The Bushenyi district chief administrative officer, Elius Byamungu, hailed the Germany-Rukararwe partnership, saying it has helped in the economic transformation of the rural communities.