

Climate change threatens coffee farming globally

Much as it is no longer shocking news to be informed about any evils that climate change has come along with, your columnist who is actually a coffee farmer in Lwengo District landed on some bad news concerning the effect of climate change on coffee farming.

The chilling news was published in the *Guardian* on Wednesday, February 18 in an article titled: *Coffee-growing countries becoming too hot to cultivate beans, analysis finds* and authored by Damien Gayle. Coffee is our country's most important export crop and one of the biggest foreign exchange earners.



Michael J. Ssali

Farmer's Say

Damien wrote, "The top five coffee-growing countries, responsible for 75 percent of the world's supply, experienced an average 57 additional days of coffee-harming heat annually because of the climate crisis, according to the findings of Climate Central, which researches and reports on the crisis."

It is mentioned that the countries where coffee beans are grown are becoming too hot to cultivate them because of climate breakdown.

"In Ethiopia, the birthplace of coffee, more than four million households rely on coffee as their primary source of income," reads the article. "It contributes almost a third of the country's export earnings, but for how much longer is uncertain."

It quotes Dejene Dadi, general manager of Oromia Coffee Farmers Cooperatives Union as saying that coffee farmers in Ethiopia are already seeing the impact of extreme heat.

The article goes on to state that coffee beans are primarily sourced from an area known as the "bean belt" between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, and need specific temperature and rainfall conditions to flourish.

It further says the plants, especially the most prized Arabica variety, struggle in temperatures above 30C.

"The worst affected coffee producing country is El Salvador, which has 99 additional days with coffee-harming heat."

Brazil, the world's most important coffee producer accounting for 37 percent of global production, has 70 additional days above 30C. Ethiopia, which accounts for 6.4 percent of coffee production, has 34 days of coffee-harming heat."

Uganda, which is today Africa's leading coffee exporter, is not mentioned in the list, but we have to remember that climate change is a global problem that is not yet about to go away.

Already we are hosts to coffee diseases and pests that researchers say have come with the arrival of climate change. They include coffee wilt disease and the black coffee twig borer.

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