Fish stocks, size reduce due to climate change - expert

Indigenous fish species in Uganda's water bodies have shrank in size due to fluctuating water levels and climate change, according to Dr Jackson Efitre of the Makerere University College of Nature Sciences.

Dr Efitre was presenting a research paper titled, "Effects of change on inland aquatic systems, fisheries and livelihoods of riparian communities in Africa," at a round-table talk on climate change for East Africa held last week in Kampala.

The talk, themed: "Climate change and rural livelihoods," will be followed by two other round-table discussions also in Kampala, ahead of the United Nations Framework on climate Change conference in France next year.

"The fish catch per unit is reducing due to fluctuating water levels. Lake Victoria's water levels have not been stable in recent years," said Dr Efitre, adding small fish (Mukene) was dominating much of Uganda's water bodies. "Lake Wamala has dried twice and also reduced in size due to climate change," he added.

The threat on fisheries resources, according to Dr Efitre, is attributed to many stressors including deforestation, overexploitation, pollution, habitat degradation and introduction of invasive species.

Speaking on behalf of civil society organisations, the deputy director of the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment Mr Onesmus Mugyenyi, said there should be policy formulation, institutional reforms and

programmes that provide developing countries with financial incentives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Unpredictable

Recently, the International Panel on Climate Change, released a report highlighting that the first decade of this century [2001 2010) was the warmest since 1850. The report also indicated that rain patterns in Uganda have become increasingly unpredictable.

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