

12 years left to save the world – scientists warn

At risk. Environment Alert says Uganda is one of the most vulnerable countries to effects of changing weather such as drought, floods, and high temperatures.

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KAMPALA. Global scientists have issued a damning report, warning that only a few years are left to save mother earth from disasters resulting from climate change.

The report by UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released on Monday, says should countries fail to stick to the demands in the Paris Agreement of keeping global temperatures below 1.5°C in the next 12 years, then the world is doomed.

“We are already seeing the consequences of 1°C of global warming through more extreme weather, rising sea levels and diminishing Arctic sea ice, among other changes,” said Panmao Zhai, the co-chair of IPCC Working Group I.

“Every extra bit of warming matters, especially since warming of 1.5°C or higher increases the risk associated with long-lasting or irreversible changes, such as the loss of some ecosystems,” said Hans-Otto Pörtner, also a co-chair of IPCC Working Group II.

Reacting to the findings, Dr Joshua Zaake, the executive director of Environment Alert, a local non-government organisation, said it was a timely wake up call for policy makers to act immediately.

“We should shift and plant drought-resistant crop varieties, government should provide



Drought. A pastoralist moves with his cattle in search of water in Moroto District on March 13, 2015. FILE PHOTO

ABOUT THE REPORT

A total of 91 authors and review editors from 40 countries prepared the IPCC report in response to an invitation from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) when it adopted the Paris Agreement in 2015

water for irrigation...,” Dr Zaake said by telephone on Monday.

“The problem is that we are move slowly to mitigate climate change. I hope this report acts as a wakeup call for us to act,” he added.

Uganda is one of the countries with limited industries thus emitting less dangerous gases into the atmosphere, but is one of the most vulnerable to effects of changing weather such as drought, floods, and high temperatures.

In an earlier interview last year, Mr Chebet Maikut, the

commissioner in charge of climate change, attributed the 2015-2016 drought that left millions of Ugandans without food, to drought induced by climate change. But he said the disasters happened despite Uganda honouring her commitment to reducing dangerous gaseous emissions.

He listed transport, agriculture, forestry, energy, wetland and waste management as areas the country is investing in.

“When we invest in these sectors, we will be able to reduce our emissions by 22 per cent by 2025,” Mr Maikut said at the sidelines of Post COP23 feedback meeting in Kampala. But he was quick to note that developed countries will have to honour their part too, by availing \$100 billion (Shs342.8 trillion) by 2020 to finance mitigation of and adaptation to climate change in developing countries.

However, the US, one of the top backers of Paris Agreement, later pulled out of the pact with

President Donald Trump saying climate change is a hoax, thus negatively impacting on the \$100 billion pledge.

Mr Apollos Nwafor, the Pan Africa Director of Oxfam International, while responding to UN warning said climate change has set the planet on fire, and has left millions of people, especially in Africa, poor and hungry.

“A hotter Africa is a hungrier Africa. Today at only 1.1°C of warming globally, crops and livestock across the region are being hit and hunger is rising, with poor small-scale women farmers, living in rural areas suffering the most. It only gets worse from here,” Mr Nwafor, said in a statement.

Scientists say maintaining healthy wetlands, maintain forests and planting more trees, adopting renewable energy sources such as solar and biogas, and reducing emission of gases into the atmosphere are of the ways of combating climate change.