

BY TIWONGE NKHONJERA

MALAWI loses billions of kwachas of its annual earnings every year due to unsustainable use of its natural resources, UN official has said.

UNDP Assistant Resident Representative in Malawi Jan Ripjma made the observation during the launch of the Decentralised Climate Change Guidelines in Lilongwe.

Ripjma said based on a study report titled, 'The Economic Valuation of Sustainable Natural Resources Use in Malawi,' the country loses up to 5.1 percent of income through soil erosion, deforestation, decreased fish catches and diminished energy generation and other issues.

Government loses billions to natural resources depletion

He said poor people are the ones who bear the burden of climate change-related challenges.

"This is typically felt at local level where most of the vulnerable families in Malawi live and whose livelihood depends so much on natural resources," he said.

According to Ripjma, increasing incidence in natural disasters worsens the vulnerability at district level.

"For example, before 2001 only nine districts in Malawi were

classified as flood prone; in 2010 these were 14 districts," he observed.

He said that due to effects of climate change, dry spells are becoming a common occurrence leading to food insecurity in the country like in 2011/12 cropping season when an estimated 2 million people from 15 districts were affected by food shortage.

Ripjma noted better planning of forest resources and its use will help in abating deforestation and thereby

ensuring more and continuous availability of biomass for household energy, better water provision for agriculture and household use, less erosion and impacts of natural disasters.

In his comment, Secretary for Local Government and Rural Development Kester Kaphaizi said Malawi continues to face alarming degradation of the environment which results into significant loss of soil fertility, serious deforestation,

water depletion and degradation, pollution, and loss of biodiversity among other challenges due to unsustainable management of natural resources.

Kaphaizi said it is important that districts should the right information so that they are able to plan against the degradation of the environment and effects of climate change.

He hailed UNDP for the assistance it is rendering to the government in fighting climate change effects.—Mama

...Nong'oneza's penalty, Matco's

...presentation held at College