

## Varsity starts courses to stop climate change

economic conditions in Africa highlight Nature-based Solutions as optimal to mitigate climate change and provide job opportunities to rural people," Dr Katusime said.

"To be effective, NBS needs to be implemented properly. Trained professionals on NBS are needed, and they are currently lacking in Uganda and the surrounding region."

He added that the new courses will build a cadre of experts capable of conserving ecosystems while supporting local economies.

"The trained MSc specialists on NBS will not only help improve climate change adaptation but also conserve natural ecosystem services and provide incomes for rural populations," he said.

Under the project, six new or revised graduate level courses on Nature-based Solutions will be introduced at Unik and Kyambogo University. The courses will target female students, university staff and young people from rural areas who have limited access to specialised environmental training.

"The NBS-Network will promote links between education, research, business and communities," Dr Katusime said. "Business incorporation in the courses will highlight the graduates' needed skills on new technologies to increase their employability."

He added that the programme will deepen collaboration between Ugan-



Bro Dr Denis Katusime (2nd left), a senior researcher at University of Kisubi and Kyambogo University team lead Assoc Prof Bernard Barasa (right) and team mates in charge of Nature-based Solutions for Climate project. PHOTO/PAUL ADUDE.

dan institutions and European partners, notably Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, to strengthen innovation in the NBS.

The researcher added that courses will be offered through interactive, blended learning and will incorporate modern teaching approaches such as flexible learning paths, social-net-

work-based engagement and real problem-based scenarios.

"Offering courses through blended learning in English on a virtual platform will be an innovation for the region and beneficial to educate rural populations," he said.

Kyambogo University team leader, Associate Prof Bernard Barasa, highlight-

ed progress made since the partners' initial meeting in Drama, Greece. He said the collaboration includes establishing a regional network linking universities, research centres, businesses and local communities on NBS.

"Partners visited a litter trap installed in the Agia Varvara Park of Drama," he said. "It is a unique, well-maintained natural riparian ecosystem. Litter trap technologies are cost-effective devices that stop the diffusion of plastic litter in waterways at its source, retrieving plastic from rivers, ports, harbours and canals before it enters seas and oceans."

Barasa noted that the programme will also broaden access to international cooperation in higher education and help build the capacity of less experienced universities.

"It will serve as a tool for these institutions to reach people with fewer opportunities and reduce the internationalisation gap among HEIs in the region," he said.

Grassroots Ministry executive director, Mr Grace Julius Ssenabanya, said the collaboration brings valuable expertise to Uganda.

"Through the international partnership, specialists will work towards bridging the knowledge gap between traditional knowledge and the scientific basis of these solutions' climate impact potential," he said. "This will combine local wisdom with global best practices in NBS implementation." Partners expect the new courses to strengthen climate resilience, boost employability and support community-driven environmental solutions across Uganda and the region.

A new EU-funded partnership led by the University of Kisubi (Unik) will introduce nature-based solutions courses to tackle climate change.

BY PAUL ADUDE

Uganda and the wider region continue to face extreme weather—from destructive floods to prolonged heat, the University of Kisubi (Unik) and its international partners have announced new innovative courses designed to strengthen climate change adaptation through nature-based solutions (NBS).

The initiative, known as the NBS-4 project, is funded by the European Union and delivered in partnership with Democritus University of Thrace in Greece, Grassroots Ministry, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Spain and Kyambogo University. The programme aims to train specialists who can transfer and apply knowledge on nature-based solutions across sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr Denis Katusime, a senior researcher at Unik, said Uganda like many low-income African countries—already experiencing severe effects of climate change, threatening its biodiversity and the livelihoods of millions. He said this makes the adoption of nature-based interventions essential.

"The environmental and socio-eco-