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Farmers in developing countries like Uganda are hard hit by the impact of climate change, yet according to the Global Humanitarian Forum 2009, these countries contribute less than 1% to global warming.

Some of the effects of climate change include erratic, intense or destructive rainfall and droughts. Until recently, the bimodal climatic seasons across Uganda had been relatively stable and predictable, to the benefit of agriculture. Today the seasons are becoming unreliable, with rain being less useful due to its distribution and impact. The rains come early even when it is supposed to be a dry season and stop for long periods. In some instances, they come with strong winds and hailstorms, causing floods, landslides and soil erosion.

However, the big question is: what does climate change mean for poverty alleviation, wealth creation and the wellbeing of the poor farmers? Life for ordinary

Climate change is undermining food security

people, especially women, who constitute 80% of subsistence farmers, is becoming more difficult and unpredictable. Currently, more farmers are increasingly taking more risks. They keep sowing and planting in the hope that the rain will come and when they do not come, they make losses. This, to a great extent, explains the drop in crop yields and plant varieties, leading to food insecurity.

A report on climate change and poverty, produced by Oxfam in 2008, states that climate change does not happen in isolation. It interacts with existing problems and challenges — deforestation, soil degradation and declining food security, making the situation worse.

There is, therefore, a need to scale up efforts to adapt to climate change. Adaptation has to start with adjusting to current climate.

Facilitating poor farmers to access early maturing seed varieties because of the short rains and prolonged droughts, is one of the means of adaptation.

In the wake of World Environmental Day, poor resource farmers must be empowered to adapt to today's climatic variability, or else they will certainly not be able to cope with the greater extremes that global warming is bringing about.

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