

Don't underestimate importance of wetlands

AS WORLD Wetlands Day was commemorated on February 2, it is important that we commit ourselves to protecting and preserving the wetlands in our communities as wetlands are crucial for the wellbeing of humans and other living creatures.

World Wetlands Day is an important day in the environmental calendar as it aims to raise global awareness and enhance people's understanding of the critical importance of wetlands.

This year, World Wetlands Day was celebrated under the theme "Wetlands and Human Well-being", which highlights the interconnectedness of wetlands and human life and well-being.

Healthy wetlands equate to our well-being, whether it is through the provision of clean water, as a source of food, or protecting us from extreme weather events.

Human beings have depended on wetlands for centuries, drawing sustenance, inspiration and resilience from these productive ecosystems.

This theme therefore calls on each of us to value and steward our wetlands. Wetlands provide essential freshwater, contribute to global food production, and act as natural shock absorbers mitigating rainfall impacts and reduce flooding.

Wetlands have numerous important benefits which include increased biodiversity, replenished and filtered water supply, enhanced protection against floods and storms, more local and sustainable livelihoods reducing poverty, increased tourism and higher quality leisure time.

As a water-scarce country, we need all available water resources. We therefore need to play our role in protecting and preserving our wetlands to ensure sustainable supply of quality water for our generation and generations to come.

Despite the numerous important benefits that humans receive from wetlands, human beings are the main causes of damage and destruction of wetlands. Wetlands are being destroyed by unsustainable agricultural practices, pollution, mining practices and human settlements.

As cities grow so does the demand for land, the tendency is to encroach on wetlands which are disappearing fast.

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