The Rwandan government will invest 300 billion Rwandan francs in a six-year project aimed at tackling climate change in the Eastern Province, particularly in Kayonza District, which is often affected by intense sunlight. The initiative is part of the government's long-term plan to address drought.

Uwitonze Theogene, the project manager of KIWIMP, which is responsible for the project, said the government is committed to ensuring widespread access to water, with the goal of making drought a thing of the past.

"We will focus on irrigation projects, especially in Ndego, where the government plans to irrigate 4,000 hectares using modern irrigation equipment," Uwitonze said. "This system will be able to circulate water efficiently."

The project is already well underway, with contracts for its implementation having been awarded, Uwitonze added.

"The studies are complete, and we've awarded the contract to develop 2,400 hectares, with another 2,000 hectares still under study. Once completed, these 4,000 hectares will permanently address hunger issues," he said.

The project will be carried out in areas most affected by drought, with completion expected by 2031.

"The project has a budget of $205 million (300 billion Rwandan francs)," Uwitonze said. "We plan to start construction in January and February, and we're prepared to begin planting in September of next year in the available areas."

The project will focus on areas near lakes but also includes plans to extract water from Lake Nasho, Lake Kibare, and Lake Ihema. Water will be stored in newly constructed dams and distributed to farmers' fields.

"We'll store the water in reservoirs on hills, and it will flow down to irrigate the crops," Uwitonze said.

Solar-powered irrigation systems will be used to pump the water, allowing irrigation even in hilly regions.

The project also includes the construction of 50 greenhouses and will create jobs for 400 young people. Irrigation efforts will extend to the Kabarondo and Ruramira sectors.

In addition, the project will include the planting of edible crops and trees, as well as anti-erosion measures to further address climate change.

Residents Express Concern Over Drought’s Impact on Crops

In the sectors of Rwinkwavu and Ndego in Kayonza District, crops are turning yellow instead of remaining green due to intense sunlight.

Mukankusi Marie, a local resident, told reporters that, despite planting and fertilizing maize and beans, the crops dried up during harvest time due to the excessive sun.

Mutiyimana Callixte, another resident, said the people in these sectors work hard to grow crops to feed their families, but the crops wither before they can be harvested.

“We have the strength to work, but everything dries up before we can harvest,” he said.

Residents are calling for modern machinery to help with irrigation and improve their crop yields.