WELCOME TO KASESE

LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES: Kasese district is located in the extreme western part of Uganda. It is neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the west, Bundibungyo district to the northeast, Kabarole district to the southeast, Kamwenge to the south, Rubiirizi District to the west.

Image of Map of Uganda showing the location of Kasese district

Kasese District is located along the equator. The coordinates of Kasese are 0°11'12.0"N, 30°05'17.0"E (Latitude:0.186667; Longitude:30.088050)

PHYSICAL FEATURES: The general relief of the district is characterized by raised Rwenzori mountain block in the west, while the northern, eastern and southern parts are part of the western arm of the Great Rift Valley with very gentle slopes. Based on its topography, the town is endowed with several physical scenic features which make it one of the tourist destinations in Uganda

Among the scenic physical features include: Mountain Rwenzori also known as the mountains of the moon, from which rivers that contribute a big percentage of the river water system of the district originate; The Kazinga channel that connects Lake George and Edward, one of Africa's great lakes; The Kitagata water and Lake Katwe crater which were both formed as a result of volcanic eruption explosions;

Image of the gentle slopes of Mountain Rwenzori

Image of River Nyamwamba water originating from the melting glaciers on top of Mt Rwenzori

Mount Rwenzori

Rwenzori Mountain forms about 80km of the border between Uganda (Kasese District) and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The equatorial snow peaks that is Margherita (5,113 meters) and Alexandra (5,094 meters) form the third highest points in Africa. Within the mountain contains the National park. Rwenzori Mountains National park protects the highest parts of the 120km-long and 65km-wide Rwenzori mountain range. The national park hosts 70 mammals and 217 bird species including 19 Albertine Rift endemics, as well as some of the world's rarest vegetation.

A spectacular scenic view of the Rwenzori mountains on a rainy evening. Both images were taken on the same spot. The second image on the left down, is Dan posing next to the background view of one of the great mountains in Africa

High class mountain hiking is the main tourist activity carried out in the Rwenzori. It's a nine to twelve day trek to the summit of Margherita- the highest peak with skilled climbers. Though shorter non- technical treks are possible to scale the surrounding peaks.

The Kazinga Channel

The Kazinga channel is a wide, 32-kilometr (20mi) long natural channel connecting the two lakes: Lake George (which is to the East) and Lake Edward (which is to the west). It is the most important features in Queen Elizabeth National Park. The channel has the wonderful view of the most important wildlife ventures within Queen Elizabeth National Park. (http://www.queenelizabethnationalpark.com/kazinga-channel.html)

Two images of the Kazinga channel taken at different view points.

The boat cruise along the channel is a very popular activity done by many tourists who are interested in doing a lot of wildlife sightseeing. It gives good sightings of the elephants, Hippos and crocodiles and many various birds species.

Lake George and Edward

Lake George and Edward are two lakes that are connected by the Kazinga channel. They are part of Africa's great lakes system. Lake George also known as Dweru covers a total surface area of 250 square kilometers (97 sq. mi). Most of the river system from the mountain pour their water into this lake thus contributing to its volume of water. It further drains its water to the southwest into lake Edward through the Kazinga channel. The lake was named after a member of the British member of the Loyal family. (Prince George). Lake Edward on the other hand also known as Rwitanzige is located in the Albertine rift on the boarder between Uganda (Kasese) and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Its northern shore is a few kilometers south of the equator as you drive through Queen Elizabeth National Park at Katwe

A photo view of Lake Edward from the northern shore line spot at Katwe Kabatooro

A photo showing Hippos resting in the waters of Lake Edward as the sun sets off

Queen Elizabeth National Park

Queen Elizabeth National park is understandably Uganda's most popular tourist destination. The park's diverse ecosystems, which include sprawling savanna, shady, humid forests, sparkling lakes and fertile wetlands, make it ideal habitat for classic big game, ten primate species including chimpanzees and over 600 species of birds. http://www.ugandawildlife.org/explore-our-parks/parks-by-name-a-z/queen-elizabeth-national-park#sthash.LNXWg9EJ.dpuf

An Image of the Buffaloes grazing on the savannah grasslands in Q. Elizabeth National park

An Image of the Elephants grazing on the savannah grasslands in Q. Elizabeth National park

Set against the backdrop of the jagged Rwenzori Mountains, the park's magnificent vistas include dozens of enormous craters carved dramatically into rolling green hills, panoramic views of the Kazinga channel with its banks lined with Hippos, Buffalo and elephants, and the endless Ishasha plains, whose fig trees hide lions ready to pounce on herds of unsuspecting Uganda Kob.

An Ariel scenic view of Queen Elizabeth with the panoramic background view of the Kazinga channel

Image of the savannah grassland in Queen Elizabeth National park with Lake George in the background

Lake Katwe Explosion Crater

Lake Katwe crater situated just north of the impressive Mweya Peninsula at the highest elevation of Queen Elizabeth National park , was formed as a result of violent volcanic explosion about 8,000 to 10,000 years back. The eruptions were extremely violent and instead of pulling debris just about their vents, similar to a number of other volcanoes, they discharged ash in addition to rock over a far as well as a wide area thus forming an enclosed wide depression through which the lake was formed. Salt mining is the main activity carried out by people who stay next to the lake.

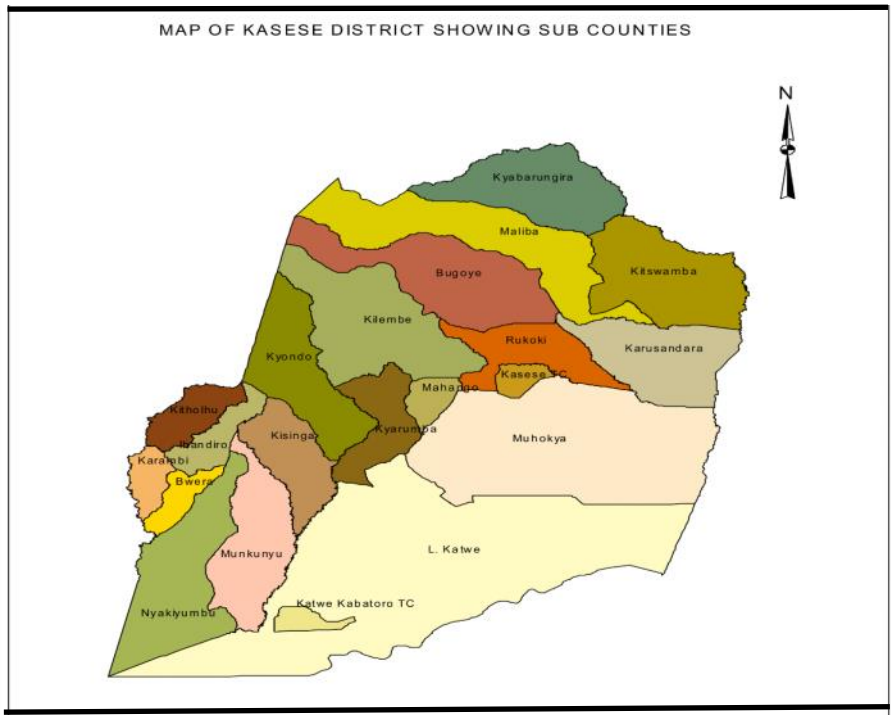
An evening Ariel view of lake Katwe Explosion crater with salt mining activity at its shores

While on lake Katwe, visitors enjoy the spectacular crater drive that runs 27km which present distant sights of stunning crater lakes while on the way. There is plenty of wildlife to see along the drive.

Image of the other crater lake in Queen Elizabeth National Park with the background of Mt Rwenzori

LAND AREA AND POPULATION DENSITY: Kasese covers a total land area of 3,389.8 square kilometers of which 2911.3 square kilometers is dry land, 407.7 square kilometers is open water, 68.8 square kilometers swamp and wetlands, Nature and wildlife conservation covering a land space of 1834.6 square kilometers

Image of the Map of Kasese showing the different sub-counties



The district consists of 2 counties and one municipal council with 19 sub-counties and four town councils. It has a total population of 702,029 people of which 63% of the people have access to safe water and the rest don't. About 75.5% of the population lives in the rural and the rest the urban area. The main water problem experienced is community's lack of access to safe and clean water from a good water supply source point.

Image showing the main busy street of Kasese Town council

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY: Agriculture is the main economic activity that is carried out by the big population. Eighty five percent of the people are peasant farmers highly depending on subsistence agriculture as their source of livelihood. Other economic activities mainly carried out are fishing, mining and tourism. The district also has industrial potential with two operational mining operations currently mining sulphur, copper and cobalt at Kilembe.

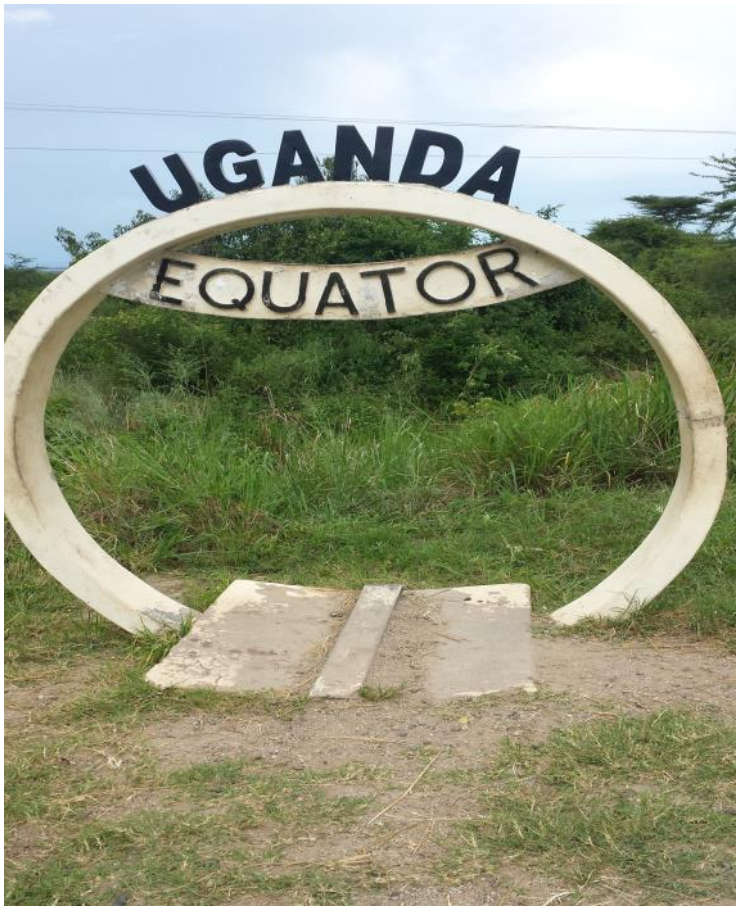
Images of some of the economic activities in Kasese District

Above, a man prepares to go fishing on the Kazinga channel, bottom left is a man gathering salt stones raw material from lake Katwe for refinery and bottom right is a man weeding a Ground nuts and Maize garden.

CLIMATE: Kasese is one of the districts in Uganda that is crossed by the equator line. Temperatures normally range between 23°C to 30°C on a daily basis. Sometimes temperatures in the town rise above 30°C especially when the sun is overhead the equator making the area extremely hot. The rainfall season is experienced two times in the year that is in the months of May and August to November. Heavy rains are often experienced in the mountainous areas thus causing flooding in most of the river system.

Image of the landmark from which the equator line passes.

Photos taken showing different view points of the Equator line landmarks along the main road to Kasese town.



PEOPLE AND CULTURE: Kasese is a multi-ethnic district with many people of different ethnic backgrounds. The main languages and ethnic groups that dominate the area are the Lukonzo and Lutooro of the Bakonjo and Batooro people respectively. However, there are other ethnic groups in the district who include the Banyankole, the Basongora and the Bakiga. There is also common use of English, Swahili and Luganda.

SUMMARY: The above is the brief description about Kasese District. This is the site where the Great lakes to Great lakes water project will be implemented in partnership with FOCUSED. If you need any further information or have questions feel free to get back to me or read more about Kasese District. In case you need more of the pictures with description about Kasese, I will be more than glad to share them because we have so many. The next write up will be describing the communities selected for the water project and the water challenges they experience.