



Dear Colleagues,

Do you know how earthquakes occur?

The simple answer is that most of the earthquakes occur at points of weakness in the earth's crust. In Uganda we have the East African Rift System and the major faults are in western Uganda, across Lake Victoria and Aswa shear zone in Northern Uganda and a nearby triple junction of faults in the East. When accumulated stress within the Earth at a point of weakness which is a fault is released, the fault is displaced and earthquakes occur. Major earthquakes occur at plate boundaries of continents. See the world map at the link below. You will note that everyday, earthquakes occur across the globe <http://ds.iris.edu/seismon/>.

An earthquake becomes a disaster when it causes destruction, disruption, loss of life and property (socio-economic losses) to an economy. For example in Uganda the biggest economic loss was caused by Kisomoro Earthquake of 05th February 1994. The economic loss by the earthquake was 60 million United States Dollars in 1994. The economy was very small at the time with the Country under economic recovery but the loss was 2.4% of GDP. Today the situation would be different and the damage greater by the same magnitude of earthquake.

For this reason, its imperative that we give due consideration to earthquake risks as we implement infrastructure projects such as the Oil Pipeline, Refinery, the Dams, the Nuclear Power Plant among others. We need to evaluate our urban plans for all the cites and towns of Uganda.

Every day I see new developments of high-rise buildings. Are we safe?

<http://ds.iris.edu/seismon/>

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