

Comment

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Bishop Grace Lubaale
Politics is when citizens are forced to give space to parties that should be given space to participate.

EDITORIAL

Clerics should spearhead environment campaign

The nature of clerics' jobs that entail them interacting with many people makes them suitable promoters of environmental conservation. These Christian and Muslim religious leaders are respected members of their communities whose teachings and advice many people follow. They are opinion leaders who command the attention of multitudes. So for the ongoing war against environmental degradation to succeed, the authorities must seek the help of these esteemed members of the society.

Over the years, the environment has suffered a relentless onslaught, with rampant deforestation, wetland degradation, and pollution of water bodies occurring countrywide.

According to the National Forestry Authority, the country's forest cover shrunk from 24 percent in 1990 to 12.7 percent in 2025. Uganda currently loses an estimated 122,000 hectares of forest cover annually.

The trees are felled to provide cooking fuel and timber. Forests are also destroyed by those seeking land for agriculture and human settlement.

The country's heavy reliance on wood and charcoal for cooking is a key driver of deforestation. Vast tracts of wetlands have been degraded through agriculture activities, sand mining and illegal settlements.

Clerics interact with many people, making them viable advocates of environmental conservation.

Some religious denominations and individual clerics have already taken the initiative to include environmental conservation in their spiritual duties.

A case in point is the Church of Uganda Madi West Nile Diocese that has embarked on a campaign to plant 7.5 million trees by the end of 2027.

The initiative is part of preparations for the Church of Uganda's 150th anniversary scheduled for next year.

We applaud the Church of Uganda for this noble act that, if effectively implemented, will contribute immensely to the country's efforts to curb negative effects of climate change.

Because of destructive human activities that have devastated the environment, the country has experienced flooding, drought and heat waves. These climate change effects have displaced thousands of people, destroyed properties and crops, causing a shortage of food.

Trees and wetlands are important weapons in the war against climate change. We commend the government for what it has done so far to restore degraded wetlands and forests. However, the government should step up its efforts to conserve the environment by incorporating clerics in the campaign.

They should be encouraged and motivated to include environmental conservation messages in their interactions with those they lead. Many religious denominations and churches have TVs, radios, websites and social media accounts that can be used to spread the environmental conservation messages.

These platforms have a big, loyal audience, meaning that these messages would reach many people. Clerics also have personal social media accounts that can be used to sensitise the public.

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