

quote of the day

EDITORIAL

Check teenage pregnancy to control high population

Uganda joined the rest of world to commemorate World Population Day on Tuesday, July 11. The national celebrations were held at Madibira Primary School in Busia District. With the population now standing at 37 million, according to the National Population Council Secretariat, Uganda's population is one the fastest growing in the world - with a growth rate of 3.3 per cent.

Of this population, 78 per cent are under 30. It is no wonder, therefore, that the chosen theme for this year's celebration is 'Strengthen youth competitiveness for sustainable development.'

In his speech, President Museveni emphasised that the large population is an asset and the youth's potential will continue to be harnessed through agriculture, industries, services and ICTs.

One major issue that Uganda continues to suffer was mentioned in passing. The high teenage pregnancy rate that stands at 25 per cent, according to the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey 2016.

Busia District has the highest pregnancy rate in the country at 27 per cent - the reason it was a perfect venue for the celebrations. Broken down further, this means for every four girls in Busia, one will have had a child before 19 years of age.

The issue:
High population

Our view:
We should also heighten the level of awareness of communities about the dangers of early marriages.

We can no longer gloss over the fast growing rate of our population as the pressure on the limited resources are already visible in society.

Teen pregnancy is responsible for the spread of fistula and high maternal mortality rate in the country. The country has been struggling over the years to reduce the deaths of women as a result of pregnancy-related complications.

Teenage pregnancy should not be put at the bottom of the priority list. It is critical that Uganda puts in place measures to fight this.

In his speech, President Museveni wondered whether the alarming rates are caused by bad parenting, poverty or moral degeneration. But at this point, we shouldn't just be speculating. There should be clear statistics on the causes so that focus is put on the actual cause. Education has been fronted as a way to reduce child marriages.

With systems such as Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) in place, one could argue that the problem will be overcome sooner or later. However, we should keep girls longer in school. We should also heighten the level of awareness of communities about the dangers of early marriages.

We can no longer gloss over the fast growing rate of our population as the pressure on the limited resources are already visible in society.

Our commitment to you

We pledge:

- To be accurate and fair in all we do.
 - To be respectful to all in our pursuit of the truth.
 - To refuse to accept any compensation beyond that provided by Monitor Publications Ltd. for what we do in our news gathering and decision-making.
- Further, we ask that we be informed whenever you feel that we have fallen short in our attempt to keep these commitments.

editorial@ug.nationmedia.com