

## Family planning key to Uganda's development

EDITOR: The *New Vision* of June 26, carried a very disturbing story of Mustafa Magambo Mutone of Kyaterekera, Kagadi district that has sired 176 children with six of his wives currently pregnant.

The story follows another one of a Mukono-based 39-year-old lady that has so far produced 38 children. The list can go on and on!

I have been left speechless, especially following apparent pride that is exuded by Ugandans that produce children that they can never be able to look after effectively.

Indeed, as seen from the *New Vision* story, Mutone was calling upon the Government to sponsor 30 of the children!

My take on child bearing is simple. Sire those that you can afford to

look after no matter your faith. Gone are the days when children were looked at as a source of labour and, therefore, the more you sired, the better was the likelihood of your success.

It is unacceptable to have Ugandans that still pride in sleeping around in this era when the country is grappling with bringing down HIV/AIDS infections.

Most disturbing is that Mutone confessed that his youngest wife was 25 and the oldest 50 and that he had had 10 girlfriends before settling down for marriage! With this degree of irresponsible behaviour, how on earth can someone be sure that the entire Mutone sex chain is safe?

As a country, we need to confront the issue of family planning more broadly. The subject should encompass

not only planning for one's family, but also reducing the social-economic burden that other Ugandans suffer from just because there are irresponsible Ugandans that end up siring unplanned for children.

Lastly, I know that some faiths in Uganda fear to talk about family planning and especially birth control. However, with the emerging facts, time is about now for us to create a much desired national consensus on birth control and especially the methodologies that can be largely acceptable across the spectrum.

Otherwise, all the gains we have had in terms of development are threatened by population explosion

**Richard Mubiru  
Lufunve, Kyetume  
Kyaggwe, Mukono**

PICTURE BY WILFRED SANYA

LETTER OF THE DAY

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