

Thank you for recognising our scientists

EDITOR: As a scientist, science advocate and believer in science, I support the Government's decision to increase salaries for civil servants with a science-based background.

In more specific terms, I support prioritisation of scientists because a country that does not recognise its scientists is doomed. The US, Israel and China among others, are superpowers of the world because they valued their scientists.

It is, therefore, visionary of the President to recognise scientists, and over the years, he has remained the lone voice in Government over the importance of scientists. I urge other leaders and policy makers to join him in this revolution.

It is the scientists and innovators that will lead to the transformation

of our country and wean it from the importation of sub-standard goods from Asia, and reverse the hemorrhage of our resources, in effect improving the value of our currency and terms of trade. We should envision a time when Uganda is a net exporter of goods and services and this we shall not achieve without harnessing science and technology, the bottom line of which is recognising, motivating and celebrating our scientists.

It is my considered view, therefore, that the Government prioritizes first things, first. However, priority should not only be put on the salaries alone, but also on the enabling environment and tools for the scientists to do their job better.

As such, funding for the sectors should be treated as a priority and

tools and laboratory reagents must be available at all times. What motivates scientists is not solely take home salaries. As medical workers put it recently, they need tools. Uganda produces some of the best scientists, but due to lack of tools, we have lost them to countries with more advanced facilities.

World over, scientists are known to be motivated and highly patriotic people. That is why in most of their professions, they swear oaths. This is why non-scientists wonder what motivates scientists and the belief that "scientists are detached from realities of the public because they are always busy in their labs". Where else would one expect them to be?

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