

QUOTE OF THE DAY

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EDITORIAL

More must be done to improve sanitation

Poor hygiene and sanitation in Uganda is still a major problem, despite efforts by the government and its development partners. The sanitation challenges expose millions of Ugandans to diseases such as Cholera, dysentery, and diarrhoea.

Diarrhoea is a leading cause of death among children under the age of five in Uganda. Other sanitation-related diseases are also deadly. These diseases can easily be prevented by observing proper hygiene and sanitation.

The places most affected by poor hygiene and sanitation are located in rural areas and slums inhabited by the urban poor. These areas also experience a shortage of water, further compounding their dire situation. With a shortage of water, residents find it difficult to observe proper hygiene, such as washing hands after visiting the toilet.

Some have no access to clean drinking water, forcing them to take contaminated water, and they contract easily avoidable diseases.

The issue:

Sanitation.

Our view:

Access to safe and clean water is a right that every citizen is entitled to and, therefore, the government must ensure that this is not infringed upon.

Collection and disposal of garbage in urban areas across the country is also a major challenge, with uncollected waste left lying about for lengthy periods in public places. This uncollected garbage attracts flies that carry contamination from the waste to others, spreading diseases.

There is also a shortage of public toilets in cities and towns across the country, compelling some people to resort to easing themselves by the roadside and in alleyways. Open defecation is a major challenge, with seven percent of the population engaged in the vice, according to the 2024 National Population and Housing Census.

Karamoja Sub-region leads in open defecation, with more than 60 percent of households without pit-latrines. This vice is perpetuated in the sub-region by negative cultural practices that frown upon in-laws easing themselves in the same place, and the misconception that using toilets can cause women to miscarry, among others.

Furthermore, due to the poor sanitation facilities in some schools, girls are forced to stay at home during their monthly periods. This hinders their quest for education in order to attain a right future and contribute more towards the development of the nation.

We call upon the authorities to do more to improve sanitation in the country. Urban authorities must build more public toilets and ensure that they are kept clean and are affordable to all. They must also ensure that garbage is collected on time and safely disposed of. This will protect urban areas against outbreak of diseases such as cholera.

Furthermore, the authorities must ensure that schools have proper sanitation to enable pupils and students to learn in a safe environment. Access to safe and clean water is a right that every citizen is entitled to and, therefore, the government must ensure that this is not infringed upon.

We also urge the authorities to step up sensitisation about the importance of using toilets. Those who insist on open defecation must be prosecuted.

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