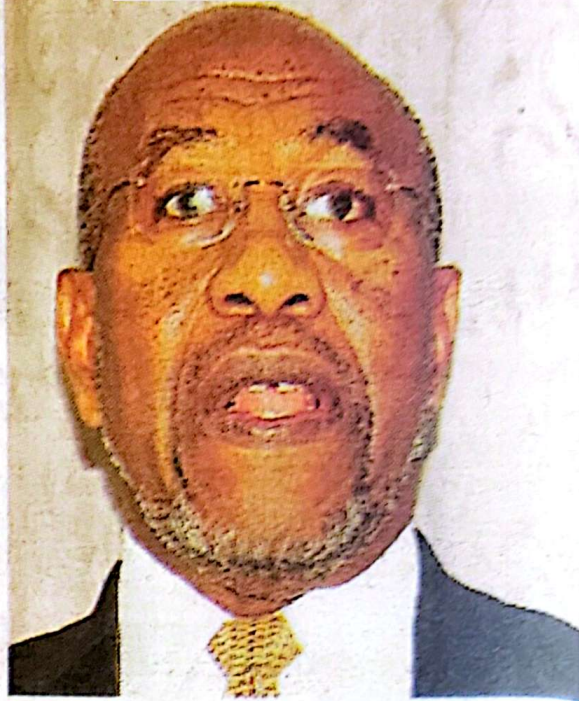




Frustrated. Nema executive director Tom Okurut



Summoned. Premier Ruhakana Rugunda

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PARLIAMENT. The Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources on Wednesday resolved to summon the Prime Minister, Dr Ruhakana Rugunda, and other key stakeholders to explain the delay by government to enforce the ban on polythene bags (*kaveera*) since 1992.

The move came after officials from the National Environment Management Authority (Nema), accused Cabinet of frustrating the implementation of the ban on polythene bags.

Dr Tom Okurut, the Nema executive director, and Mr Mike Nsereko, the director of policy, planning and information, told the MPs that all efforts to ban the manufacture and use of the polythene bags have been frustrated by political interference.

The Nema officials cited the March 13, 2017 directive by President Museveni restraining them from enforcing the ban in a bid to protect investors in the polythene trade.

"The current policy (legal provision) on the ban of plastic carrier bags should be reviewed to save the investments by the private sector and to promote the waste management practices," read part of the directive.

Dr Okurut told the committee that because of several such interventions, Nema has been constrained from enforcing the ban.

He also said there was duplication of roles by government agencies, which makes it hard for the environment authority to perform its duties.

Dr Okurut then urged Parliament to prevail over the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives as well as the Uganda Manufacturers Association (UMA) whom he accused of abetting non-compliance from manufacturers.

"UMA has sent messages to its members that the law enforcing the ban was repealed," he said.

Daily Monitor could not get a comment from officials from both the Trade ministry and UMA by press time, as they were reported to be locked up in a strategic meeting.

“There is crowding at the implementation stage and we are sending mixed messages to the public, which is dangerous.”

DR TOM OKURUT, NEMA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Although Cabinet in August 2015, passed a resolution to keep the ban on plastic carrier bags as was already being implemented by Nema, Mr Nsereko told the MPs that the same Cabinet created a vacuum by limiting the microns to only 30.

"The mention of microns in the Cabinet resolution became a window for the manufacturers to derail enforcement of the ban alleging that the same was not clear," Mr Musoke said.

"It is during this time that allegations of compromise were made with the aim of sabotaging the enforcement," he added.