

SANITATION

Poor garbage disposal

A garbage-strewn section of Nyendo, a Masaka Municipality suburb, recently. Poor garbage disposal is still a big challenge in Masaka Town. PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER KISEKKA

Buvuma residents don't want pit-latrines - report

Crisis. Situation has exposed many locals to hygiene-related diseases such as cholera, typhoid and dysentery.

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BUVUMA. About 55,180 (62 per cent) of the population in Buvuma Islands do not have pit-latrines at their homes, a new survey by Buvuma District authorities has revealed.

A total of 56,960 (64 per cent) of residents lack access to safe water.

Dr Baker Kanyike, the district health officer, says the problem has been exacerbated by carelessness of islanders who consider visiting pit-latrines as a taboo and many view the island as an open defection area.

This situation has exposed many locals to hygiene-related diseases such as cholera, typhoid and dysentery.

"We have done sensitisation but there is still a problematic mindset among many of the residents in the district and that is why the area is always attacked by diseases like cholera," Mr Kanyike says

He continues: "We try to sensitise people on what to do but we always face interference from politicians who always order for the release of residents whom we take to police over poor hygiene in their homes."

The Public Health Act (2000) stipulates that every homestead should have at least a pit-latrine.

Rocky terrain

Mr Alex Mabirizi, the Buvuma District chairperson, admits that low pit-latrine coverage is a big challenge to the district and blames it on the rocky terrain which makes it hard to dig pit- latrines in the area

"So this requires a lot of money for a local person to construct pit-latrines in some part of the island, which many people claim they don't have. The only option available is to construct temporary toilets and we ask government to help us on that," Mr Mabirizi he says.

REPORT

A World Bank Water Sanitation programme report released in 2012 indicates that poor sanitation is costs the country at least Shs389b annually.

The money lost in three years can meet the cost of building the pit- latrines the country needs, which stands at Shs1.3 trillion.

Buvama District comprises 52 islands, eight sub- counties and one town council.

Healthcare problem

Mr Mabirizi says healthcare provision on the islands is wanting, adding that most health centres go for months without drugs. He says health workers lack proper accommodation.

He cited Lwajje Healthy Centre II where health workers reside in wooden structures and sometimes their household items get socked in water when it rains.

"Many health facilities are in a sorry state and they are very far and some patients have to cross from one island to another to access treatment. In most cases, patients who need emergencies die because we do not have an ambulance to take them to the main land, Mr Mabirizi says.

Buvuma District has eight health

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briefly

Hospital offers services

MASAKA. Masaka Regional Referral Hospital has started offering postnatal family planning which prevents unintended pregnancy and closely spaced pregnancies through the first 12 months after childbirth. Dr Senyondo Gonzaga, the head of the gynecology department at the hospital, revealed last week that this kind of family planning has not been available at the hospital and shall be given to women to help them space their children. Recently, Masaka health authorities decried low family planning practices, saying it has seen a rise in stunted children because their parents cannot feed them well. **[Moses Muwulya]**

District gets new speaker

RAKAI. Mr Charles Ssegirinya, a councillor representing persons with disabilities in Rakai District Council, has been elected the district speaker. Mr Charles Ssegirinya got 13 votes out of the 24 cast by district councillors. Mr Stanley Sseguya, the acting speaker, garnered 11 votes. The Masaka Chief Magistrate, Mr Samuel Munobe, presided over the exercise last week. The post of Rakai District speaker has been vacant since the district was split to form Kyotera on July 1. Mr Charles Lubega, who was speaker, chose to contest for the same post in the new district, but lost to Mr Patrick Kisekulo. **[Ivan Kimbowa]**

CamScanner

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Voices

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BAKER KANYIKE, DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICER

centres, seven of which are health centre IIs and only one is a health centre IV.

Absence of proper lavatory facilities on several islands on Lake Victoria is forcing residents to defecate in the lake, posing numerous health risks to islanders.

Recently, authorities in the neighboring Kalangala Islands revealed that Mazinga Sub-county alone, which is a home to more than 10,000 islanders, lacks a single pit- latrine and all residents combined produce five tonnes of human waste daily, which is released directly into the lake.

Sanitation problem

Sanitation remains one of the key health issues in Uganda. Many people lack access to adequate sanitation facilities.

Reports indicate that the national average toilet coverage stands at only 68 per cent.

This means that almost seven homes out of every 10 lack pit-latrines.

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Depending on depth and usage, each latrine takes not less than five years to fill, experts from Water Aid say.

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SAFE WATER

A 2010 UN habitat brochure on the water and sanitation initiative on landing sites on Lake Victoria found that 76 per cent of the population lacks access to sustainable supplies of safe drinking water; 72 lacks access to improved sanitation