

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY  
#Beat Plastic Pollution

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# Environmentalist advises on kaveera ban

**Status.** Across the country, the menace of kaveera is felt. From one street to another, plastics are littered ubiquitously in all forms of bottles, carrier bags, and water or alcohol sachets.

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## PARTNERSHIP

As part of the World Environment Day celebrations, Nema has partnered with Uganda Little Hands Go Green on a kaveera free campaign caravan that started off at Kireka dumping site going through major towns on the eastern route towards Mbale.

In 2009, Ms Syda Bbumba, the then minister for Finance, during her Budget speech, pronounced a ban on polythene bags (kaveera) of less than 30 microns that were used "for conveyance of goods and liquid in order to protect our environment" and an excise duty of 120 per cent was imposed on other plastic materials.

A moratorium of six months was given to the public as a transition period as kaveera manufacturers reduced the import and manufacture of the said bags.

The ban on manufacture of plastic bags, sale and use generated a lot of debate diving environmentalists on one side and the manufacturers on the other.

When the National Environmental Management Authority (Nema) announced the imple-



**School going children at a garbage dumping site in Kireka, last week. Uganda's Little Hands Go Green partnered with National Environmental Management Authority to launch the World Environment Day celebrations with a mini caravan. The caravan is aimed at educating the young people about the dangers of plastic bags (Kaveera) and how they can put an end on plastic pollution.** PHOTO BY DAVID S MUKOOZA

mentation of the ban after years of hesitation, manufacturers opposed the move. Many sought political intervention to halt the move.

Under their umbrella body, the Uganda Plastics Manufacturers and Recyclers Association (UPMRA), they wrote a letter to President Museveni: ".....we

request for your intervention and rescue in order to save and protect our investments in this country by halting the ban..." the letter reads in part.

While implementing the ban in 2015, the Nema executive director Tom Okurut pointed out that the only challenge they faced was the inability to close

businesses that failed to comply with the law.

The failure to implement the ban led to more importation and manufacture of polythene bags.

Ms Scovia Birungi, a supermarket attendant in Kibuli, a Kampala suburb, confesses that initially she abided by the

ban but has since lost track.

"There was fear that Police would arrest you if they find that you are issuing or moving with kaveera. This forced supermarkets to buy paper bags and nylon bags and customers were paying for them," she says.

## Individual efforts

According to Mr Joseph Masembe, the chief executive officer (CEO) of Uganda's Little Hands Go Green, Ugandans should not only look at government, development agencies and global institutions to provide solutions and alternatives to concerns that affect children's future but handle this as individuals and make a few simple strides towards making Uganda a kaveera free country.

"We have become over reliant on single-use or disposable plastic with severe environmental consequences. The Kaveera in Uganda is simply part of the bigger worldwide problem. We need an individual rallying call to action because we owe it to our children and grandchildren to give them a greener healthier planet that they can inherit," Mr Masembe says.