

## quote of the day

### EDITORIAL

# People need services, not rules on dressing

The government has issued a dress code for public servants detailing the kind of dresses they are required or not allowed to wear while on duty.

According to the director of human resource at the Ministry of Public Service, Ms Adah Muwanga, the new move is intended to check indecent dressing in public offices. She said some female government officials dress in a provocative manner that amounts to sexual harassment of their male counterparts at work. She added that the dress code decision was a response to public outcry about indecent dressing by public workers.

Whereas the dress code policy is well-intentioned because it aims at fighting indecency in public offices and thus shaping morality there, the question is whether the directive was absolutely necessary at this point in time.

There are far more critical or pressing issues hurting the public today than the dressing style of public servants. Service delivery across all sectors is deplorable. Hundreds of patients and pregnant mothers are dying every day across government hospitals due to lack or shortage of drugs, medical personnel and other basic items.

**The issue:**  
Dress code

**Our view:**

Government should put safeguards to check superiors from framing their subordinates on a mere claim that the other day they were dressed inappropriately...

The quality of education in our schools has diminished due to chronic absenteeism of teachers or lack of teachers plus poor remuneration. People seeking assistance in public offices cannot be served either because the officials lack the required materials to use or just don't

have the morale to serve. Corruption and absenteeism in public offices are as prevalent as climate change. There are many other ills bedeviling the population than to get bothered by the type of dresses the service providers, who are not serving, should wear or not wear at office.

This is not to say that because there are still many bigger unresolved problems in the country, the government should never take action on anything else that is not deemed as big. But the government should show equal or even stronger efforts to address the key things that materially hurt the population most than dwell much on issues of morality and perceived psychological discomfort.

However, the implementation of the dress code might turn contentious and breed persecution. Government should put safeguards to check superiors from framing their subordinates on a mere claim that the other day they were dressed inappropriately and a caution is entered in the file, which then would undermine the affected person's chances of promotion.

The dress code should be followed by more initiatives for improvement in the general public service in terms of service delivery to the people.

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editorial@ug.nation...