

Water defaulters to get free meters

By Lisa Nsaba

Ugandans with illegal connections to the National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) network have been called upon to report themselves so that they are reconnected rightfully without charges within a six month amnesty period.

The 'Come We Talk' campaign, which was launched at the corporation's head office in Nakasero, Kampala also aims at allowing customers who have been disconnected for over one year to get reconnected through flexible payment options.

Silver Mugisha, the NWSC managing director said whoever reports themselves for illegal connections during the six-month amnesty will even be given a free meter as their water is being reconnected.

"The six months start now (yesterday), and we are giving them an opportunity to come and discuss within this period to avoid any consequences like paying fines," Mugisha said.

He appealed to those who were disconnected because of outstanding bills for over a year to go to the NWSC offices to discuss flexible payment options through which they can clear their bills and have their supply reconnected without extra charges.

"Over 300,000 customers in Kampala are still disconnected for over a year because they have not been able to clear their bills," Mugisha said.

Illegal water connections is a widespread vice across major urban centres. Last year, the water agency said the problem was hampering their plans to extend safe piped water to all towns in the country.

In 2014, the Mulago

Hospital executive director, Dr Baterana Byaruhanga, said they discovered over 200 households near the hospital were illegally connected to the hospital water supply.

This was discovered after NWSC had cut off Mulago water supply over unpaid bills amounting to over sh6b.

Addressing the media, Mugisha said the new campaign is in line with the corporation's strategic direction of 2016/2020, which is to provide all Ugandans with safe clean water.

"We aim to supply well treated water that meets the standards of drinking water, but the objective of more healthy water cannot be achieved when people do not have safe and clean water," he said.

Mugisha also cautioned Ugandans against thinking that the availability of water in their homes is a guarantee against cholera.

"Cholera is an issue of hygiene not water, you have to use the water that is available to you to practise proper hygiene and sanitation to avoid cholera," he said.

He said NWSC is working together with Kampala Capital City Authority to ensure that the water being supplied and consumed by the public is enough and safe.

Mugisha added that the corporation has already set up a packaged sewage treatment plan, which aims to solve the sewage problem at Kiruddu Hospital.

He also pointed out some losses, which may occur due to factors, like broken pipes caused by the current road construction and appealed to the public to report to offices about them so that they are immediately fixed.

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