



# PRESS REVIEW

John Paul II Justice and Peace Centre

*"Faith Doing Justice"*

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## THEMATIC AREAS

- Christian Reflection
- Education
- Environment
- Health
- Economy
- Religion and Society
- Politics
- Youth

## CHRISTIAN REFLECTION

### Drought and Famine

*What have we done with Laudato Si?*

Among the many issues reported and discussed about in the January newspapers, I would like to invite ourselves to reflect more on the issue of the drought and famine that has seriously affected our country in particular and the neighbouring countries in general. Kenya and South Sudan have declared it a national disaster calling for aid to counter the situation which is posing a major risk to people, livestock and wildlife. Many Ugandans were expecting our government to do the same but it did not consider it necessary!

It is encouraging that many Ugandans are now becoming more aware that we human beings are to a large extent responsible for this drought and famine by especially destroying natural forests and wetlands. This awareness is very positive although not enough. Action has to follow in order to prevent further destructions and violation of our Mother Earth.

The expectation of the Ugandans to see that our government comes out with a clear and serious strategic plan to deal with this alarming situation is justifiable. It is its duty to do so and not an option or a favour. However, experience warns us not to expect miracles from our government on this issue. It needs not only to be helped but also pressured if anything serious is to be expected.

Two years ago, Pope Francis wrote an encyclical entitled "*Laudato Si*" in which he warned us on "our irresponsible use and abuse" of our Mother Earth and invited all

people “to enter into dialogue about our common home” (#3). At this critical moment, we have to ask ourselves some of the following questions: Where have we reached in this dialogue? If we have not yet started it, isn't this the opportune time to do so? How can we save this very important document from being added to the shelves of 'our best kept secret' of the Catholic Social Teaching?

Uganda has been lucky to host the author of this precious document. How happy will he hear that part of our memory of his historic visit in our country is our effort to translate into reality his teachings from *Laudato Si!*

## EDUCATION

**Pre-internship examination for medics useless, says Prof Buga.** The government's plan to subject final year medical students to mandatory pre-internship examination is "disruptive and unnecessary" and will be counterproductive.

**Over 3,000 schools have no first grade.** A total of 3,154 primary schools have for the last three years failed to get any pupil passing in division one. State minister for higher education, Dr John Muyingo says needs to end immediately.

**Minister condemns exams malpractice.** Minister of education and sports Janet Museveni has condemned examinations malpractice acts, which she said are a shame to the country. The first lady urged youth to work harder and engage in vocational skills in order to fight unemployment.

**Tight security at first lady's maiden examination release.** Education minister Janet Museveni released her first national exams since her appointment to the Ministry of Education docket last year. Protocol and security officials ensured television stations left their equipment in the main auditorium and only went with their cameras to the smaller room.

**Ministry drops 10 subjects.** The government has dropped teaching 10 secondary school subjects, including Kiswahili and others mainly in the practical areas.

**EAC to ban schools from expelling pregnant students.** A new law by the East African legislative Assembly (EALA) is set to come to the rescue of girls who drop out of school on account of pregnancy.

**Minister directs DEOs to close illegal schools.** The State Minister for Primary Education, Ms Rosemary Seninde, has directed district education officials to close schools operating illegally before the start of the new term.

**Butaleja registers 50% school dropout rate.** At least 50 per cent of children who enrol for Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme in Butaleja district drop out of school. The district education officer, Mr Phillip Kalyebbi, attributed the poor performance in the 2016 primary leaving examinations (PLE) in the district on absenteeism among both teachers and pupils.

**Govt halts transfer of teachers.** The Ministry of Education and Sports has postponed the transfer of teachers to a later date. The Commissioner for Secondary Education, Benson Kule, announced the decision during the start of the national selection exercise for candidates joining senior one.

## ENVIRONMENT

**Luwero authorities call for water price regulation.** Authorities in Luwero district called for the regulation of water tariffs by National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) to save the public from hiked charges at the public stand pipes. The minister said NWSC is selling water at shs35, so the person selling the water at any public stand pipe should only add shs15 to make it shs50.

**Drought hits tea growing.** Tea growing is quickly picking up in Kamwenge district although severe drought and bad weather are big threats to the crop. The Kamwenge district LC5 chairman, Mr Aggrey Natuhamyia, said that the district is currently facing a serious drought that threatens many agricultural programmes, including the tea industry.

**Govt wants shs700b to tackle climate change.** Government is looking for \$200m (about shs713.7b) to implement a plan to avert the negative effects of climate change and hunger in the next three years.

**Civil society calls for increased govt funding to fight drought.** Activists under their umbrella body Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) have called upon government to allocate a specialised budget to rejuvenate irrigation valley dams and national food stores. The CSBAG coordinator, warned that domestic borrowing is likely to be very difficult in the fiscal year given that budget support has greatly reduced from 962.6b to 33.8b registering a 96 per cent decline.

**Museveni warns wetland encroachers.** President Museveni gave wetland encroachers in the country one month to leave or be forced out by the police. Finance Minister Matia Kasaija, said that on-going drought in several parts of the country is the largest threat to the projected growth in the economy of 5 per cent.

**Mpigi boss faults NFA on deforestation.** Mpigi district chairperson, Mr Peter Claver Mutuluza, has accused National Forestry Authority (NFA) officials in the district of steering the continued depletion of forests in the area. However, Mr Milton Nyeko, the NFA sector manager in charge of Mpanga forest reserve denied allegations that NFA staff is engaging in illegal tree-felling.

## HEALTH

**Blood shortage hits health facilities.** Arua regional referral hospital and other health facilities in the district are facing a shortage of blood after the regional blood bank failed to collect enough blood. The Acting Regional Director of Arua regional blood bank, Mr Gilbert Anguyo, confirmed the crisis and explained that they did not have enough blood to supply the health centres.

**Cervical cancer high in HIV-positive females-report.** According to new revelations from the reproductive health clinic at Baylor-Uganda. The Baylor executive director, Dr Adeodata Kekitiinwa, said it is true that HIV predisposes or increases the risk of getting certain cancers because it affects the immunity of individuals.

**Govt issues red eye disease alert.** The ministry of health has issued a countrywide warning on the outbreak of red eye disease (conjunctivitis). The acting director general of health services, Dr Anthony Mbonye, issued a statement showing that red eye cases in Gulu district stood at 798 people.

**Government to introduce new, stronger ARVs.** The government is set to introduce a new set of stronger, more effective antiretroviral (ARVs) drugs for persons living with HIV. The acting director general of health services, Prof. Anthony Mbonye, said the changes would speed up Ugandans efforts to achieve the 90:90:90 global targets.

**Teenagers with HIV shunning treatment.** Many teenagers and youth living with HIV in Uganda are not taking their medication as prescribed, which is threatening to reverse the gains in the fight against the scourge. Dr Sabrina Kitaka, the head of the paediatrics department at Mulago hospital, said abandoning medicine affects its effectiveness.

**Meningitis immunisation campaign to cover 39 districts.** The government is set to conduct a mass meningitis immunisation campaign in 39 high-risk districts across the country. According to Prof. Anthony Mbonye, the Acting Director General of health services at the health ministry

## ECONOMY

**Coffee farmers to be registered for proper planning.** The Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) is set to embark on registering coffee farmers across the country in a bid to document the activity for proper planning. The UCDA managing director said this exercise will start as a pilot project at the end of this month in Mukono district and later be rolled out to the entire country.

**Promote food security, govt tells tobacco companies.** Government has launched the tobacco season 2017, with a call on the industry players to exercise self-regulation as well as integrate food security initiatives.

**Museveni admits economic growth has not been inclusive.** President Museveni has admitted that high economic growth Uganda has registered over the years has not been inclusive and that access to and use of finance remains a problem to government.

**Govt willing to fund private businesses-Kasaija.** Finance minister Matia Kasaija urged the private sector and Ugandans to design economically viable proposals and ideas which government can fund.

**Manufacturers boost output to tap local content benefits.** Manufacturers of construction materials have pledged to step up their production so as to benefit from the on-going infrastructural projects in the country. Mr Oliver Lalani, the executive director Roofing's limited, said with the help of government, the appetite to consume locally produced goods has increased.

**Museveni calls for more milk processing plants.** President Yoweri Museveni has urged the proprietors of Amos Dairies Limited, a Kiruhura district-based milk-processing factory to establish more milk processing plants in the country. The president observed that: "milk production has increased and it is envisaged to increase even further with the introduction of irrigation.

**Farmers petition president over cooperatives.** Farmers in greater Kibaale region under Kakumiro grower's cooperatives union have petitioned President Museveni, asking him to intervene and save their cooperative which is at the verge of collapsing. The cooperatives board chairperson, Mr George Isingoma, said they have unsolved problems like the constant break down of the machines which are almost obsolete.

**Uganda registered higher inflation in 2016-Ubos.** Prices of goods and services were much higher in 2016 compared to 2015 resulting into an increase in both the annual headline and annual core inflation.

## RELIGION AND SOCIETY

**Bishop warns Christians on breakaway.** Rwenzori diocese Bishop Reuben Kitembo has criticised Christians of Bumadu Archdeaconry in Bundibugyo district and warned that they can't get a diocese through a rebellion. Bishop Kitembo observed that the Christians in Bundibugyo had used an illegal process to demand a break away from Rwenzori diocese.

**Archbishop Ntagali forgives his detractors.** Archbishop Stanley Ntagali has said he holds no grudge against the 11 canons and lay Christians who dragged him to court protesting his takeover of West Ankole diocese.

**Bishop warns against deforestation.** The Bishop of Masaka diocese, Rt. Rev. John Baptist Kagwa, has warned Ugandans against the destruction of forests, saying the consequences are tragic.

**Archbishop tasks educationists to promote culture.** Gulu Archbishop John Baptist Odama has advised educationists and the elite in Acholi, arguing that modernisation "may eat it away". Archbishop Odama tasked parents to emphasise the culture of reading so that written literature about the culture is read and practiced.

**Muhoozi lauds Kisubi brothers for morality.** Maj. Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, has praised the Catholic Church brothers of Christians instruction for their unrivalled commitment to the practical Christians education of children and youth.

**Church faults social media for divorce.** As the saying goes, every good thing comes with its implication, which could be either positive or negative. According to PR Samuel Kajoba, the bishop of the SDA church, social media has become a major challenge to marriage.

**Cultural, religious leaders vow to end child marriage.** Cultural and religious leaders from Kamuli district have vowed to end child abuse by upholding socially acceptable practices that are instrumental in raising today's highly respectable leaders. The speaker of the Busoga Lukiiko, George Mutwabule, observed that keeping children in school will help in minimising defilement.

**Clergy warns against domestic violence.** The dean of St. Pauls Cathedral in Kabarole district Matte has advised married couples to avoid behaviours that might lead to marriage break-ups and always seek counselling from the elderly.

## POLITICS

**Term limits not necessary-Kidega.** Harmonisation on presidential term limits for the six East African presidents will have to wait until political federation is realised by the six sovereign states.

**Parliament is not God-Museveni.** A tough-talking president Museveni failed to shield the 42 top government officials who shared the sh6b oil handshake from his parliamentary scrutiny. Mr Ssekikubo reportedly informed the president that the 42 government officials raided the treasury without following the appropriate procedures and without parliamentary approval.

**Kadaga vows to defend parliament's independence.** The Speaker of parliament has vowed to protect the Legislatures independence. Kadaga adjourned Parliament since the day after Deputy Chief Justice Steven Kavuma issued an order blocking parliament or any other person from inquiring into the sh6b oil bonus.

**Recognise the govt, SDA cleric tells opposition.** The opposition has been asked to recognise the government if they are to have a meaningful dialogue. The bishop of the Central Uganda conference Seventh day Adventist church (SDA), Pastor Samuel Kajoba, said it is hard to have dialogue with a person you do not recognise as your leader.

**FDC announces elections roadmap.** The Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) has announced its roadmap for the election of the new party president. According to Harold Kaija, the party's deputy secretary general, FDC has set November 2, as the date for the election of the new party president.

**Parliament probe into Kasese killings collapses.** Parliaments defence and internal affairs committee has called off the investigations into the violence that consumed Rwenzori area and civilians and security personnel. Ms Nabakooza later confirmed that they would not be submitting the probe report about Kasese clashes to parliament, but refused the claim that she had been stopped by the president from investigating the violence.

**Kadaga asks govt to scrap taxes on medical equipment.** The Speaker of parliament, Ms Rebecca Kadaga, has said government should reduce or even scrap taxes on imported health equipment. Kalangala district chairperson Wily Lugoloobi, appealed to the speaker to ensure that parliament allocates resources for the purchase of a marine ambulance to assist patients in the islands.



## YOUTH

**Ntagali advises youth to shun demonstrations.** The Archbishop of the church of Uganda, the Rt, Rev, Stanley Ntagali, has advised the youth to shun activists who incite them to participate in demonstrations. He called on the youth to stop wasting their energies and resources on non-productive things.

**Govt to support jobless youth.** Government will support hundreds of jobless youth from Lango sub-region through Lango Youth Cooperation Union. The state minister for youth and children affairs, Ms Florence Nakiwala Kiyingi, said government is looking forward to supporting young people under a partnership with private sector foundation.

**Over 200 youth flagged off for jobs in the Middle East.** A total of 218 youth, were flagged off by officials from the Gender ministry to go and work in different countries in the Middle East, on two-year contracts.

**Kyabazinga urges youth to engage in farming.** The Basoga especially youth, have been urged to practice modern commercial agriculture and agro-businesses, to boost food security in Busoga. He called on his subjects to engage in dairy farming, adding that with zero-grazing, a dairy farmer is able to reap the benefits within a short period of time.