



## **WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2018 NATIONAL CELEBRATIONS**

### **Press Statement:**

May 18, 2018

Uganda will join the rest of the world to celebrate World Environment Day (WED), on June 5, 2018. The national celebrations will be hosted by **Mbale district on June 5<sup>th</sup>** at the **Mbale Cricket Grounds**, after a series of activities to mark the Environment Week.

WED is the United Nations' principal vehicle for encouraging worldwide awareness and action for the environment through the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), and will be celebrated under the theme ***Beat Plastic Pollution***.

In line with this year's theme, the national celebrations will specifically focus on exploring alternatives to avoidable single use polythene carrier bags commonly known as *kaveera*, which have become a menace to our environment. These polythene bags take hundreds of years to decompose and as such pollute our soils, becoming a threat to agriculture which is the backbone of Uganda's economy.

*Kaveera* also pollute our lakes & rivers, is a threat to marine life, have caused loss of livestock, both domestic and wild and as such hinder a number of economic activities that are a source of livelihood to many communities. The unsafe use and indiscriminate disposal of polythene bags has been well documented to be toxic and harmful to human health, as such practices have been listed among causes of non-communicable diseases such as respiratory infections, High Blood Pressure and cancer.

Mbale district once enjoyed the status of the cleanest town in East Africa. Also referred to as the 'Jewel of East Africa' at the time, Mbale had one of the most efficient waste management systems, but not anymore. Currently the sustainable garbage disposal systems and practices are deficient, partially as a result of the increasing population and the indiscriminate litter of plastics especially the plastic carrier bags.

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Since its inception in 1974, WED has developed into a global platform to raise awareness and prioritize the need for immediate personal, institutional, national and international interventions to protect the environment from the realities of Climate Change.

NEMA has organized a number of activities to mark WED; including a tree planting campaign, city/town clean ups across the country, public dialogues and environment awareness marathons in the districts of Mbale, Gulu and Mbarara among others.

All Ugandans are key stakeholders in environment conservation and management. NEMA therefore invites the general public to take part in WED activities and be a part of the biggest celebration for the cause of environment and natural resources. It is only with consolidated efforts that we shall realise exponential results.

**Hon. Sam Cheptoris**  
**Minister of Water and Environment**