



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**SPEECH FOR THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AT THE EAST
AND SOUTHERN AFRICA AT THE CONFERENCE ON
UNCLOGGING BLOCKAGES IN SANITATION**

ON

18th February 2014

**HON RUHAKANA RUGUNDA (Dr)
MINISTER OF HEALTH
REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

Hon. Ministers,
Members of Parliament
Development partners
Permanent Secretaries,
Directors
Commissioners
Assistant commissioners
Invited guests
Participants
Ladies and gentlemen

It is a pleasure for me to officiate at this conference of **“unclogging blockages in Sanitation for Eastern and Southern Africa”**

I would like to thank Water For People, IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, Water, Sanitation Urban Programme enterprises and PSI for organizing such a great conference.

It is estimated that 2.6 billion people in the world lack adequate sanitation and safe disposal of human excreta. Among these are our own Ugandans. Uganda is still lagging behind regarding the achievement of water and sanitation Millennium Development Goals. 30% of the population in this country has no adequate sanitation facility while 71% do not wash their hands during the 3 critical times; after using the latrine, before eating and after cleaning the baby's bottom.

Studies have shown that washing hands with soap at critical times reduces incidence of diarrhoea by 47% and Acute Respiratory Infections by 30%. Hand-washing is a better option for disease prevention than any single vaccine. Poor sanitation is a factor in child malnutrition, causing stunting and poor cognitive development of children which later affects their academic performance. Lack of

sanitation contributes to about 10% of the global disease burden, caused by diarrheal diseases.

Improved sanitation has significant impacts not only on health, but on social and economic development, particularly in some of our developing countries. Proper sanitation is therefore a concern for health and human dignity.

The health sector has a strong role to play in improving sanitation in developing countries through policy development and the implementation of sanitation programmes. We cannot however, walk alone, we need stakeholders like you to be part of the conversation.

We need partnerships amongst Non- Government Organisations (NGOs), Private sector, government, finance institutions, development partners and individual households. We need to keep reminding

all concerned people, at all levels, that sanitation is a responsibility for us all.

In the past, the Government of Uganda together with development partners have built sanitation infrastructure in schools and health centres. But sanitation professionals are now concentrating on helping people to improve their own sanitation and to change their behavior through use of approaches like Community Led Total Sanitation. (CLTS).

With support from the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, we are proud of the Uganda Sanitation Fund programme's achievements, of which my Ministry is the Executing Agency. The programme is operational in 15 districts; our partner has approved expansion of the programme to

another 15 districts that will come on board in the next financial year.

In the programme, one of the key challenges is improving the supply chain, developing businesses that target improving sanitation and hygiene facilities, moving households up the sanitation ladder. There are organisations here which have excelled in income generation and small business sectors and specifically in sanitation business development that we can partner with and learn from.

Sustainability is a crucial issue and more emphasis should be based on achieving permanent service delivery. We need to move away from projects based interventions towards a sustainable sanitation systems approach.

I hope by the end of the conference we can identify the barriers to scaling up success stories and interventions and come up with solutions and ways to collaborate to accelerate progress of sanitation services. It is my hope that in the next 3 days you will explore and examine elements of successful strategies and methodologies around demand creation, supply chain and sanitation and hygiene business models.

Together we can ensure that all households, all schools and all health facilities have access to a sanitation service forever,

Together we can change the world and stop the preventable diseases!

It is now my pleasure once again to welcome you to this conference and to officially open it.

“For God and My Country”