

Ministry rolls out plan to plant 500 Million trees by 2021

As climate change devastates several parts of the country, the Ministry of Water and Environment will soon launch the plan to plant 500 million tree initiative, in schools across the country.

The ambitious scheme aims at fighting climate change in the next five years. Announcing the plan, the State Minister for Water and Environment, Hon. Maria Gorreti Kitutu, said tree planting will target schools, universities and colleges.

“We need students and pupils to act as change agents, in the fight against climate change,” she noted, adding that, tree planting is a significant tool in the fight against climate change.

Kitutu said the planting of trees marks government commitment to fight climate change, asking the

stakeholders to ensure the programme succeeds.

“Government also visualizes not only re-afforestation but also ensuring institutions are kept under forest cover,” she said at the commemoration of the Global Hand Washing Day, held at Matany Primary School play-ground, Matany sub county in Napak district.

Hon. Kitutu was particularly alarmed with the alarming environmental degradation, making it one of the most deforested country in Africa.

“I am optimistic that the 500 million trees, when planted, will contribute to a reduction in deforestation as a result of uncontrolled cutting of trees,” she expressed hope.

Hon. Kitutu said, “the government has decided to engage schools, colleges and universities saying it will change the mindset,”



Hon. Kitutu plants a tree to mark the Global-hand-washing day in Napak district.



Ministers Byabagambi, Kitutu after planting trees in Napak district.

“When our learners understand the significance of tree planting and protection, this will create a positive impact amongst households and the community at large,” she further said, adding that trees help in getting rid of carbon-dioxide.

Hpn. Kitutu urged districts in Karamoja region to embrace tree planting, saying Karamoja is arid but can be changed once there is commitment.

“Karamoja is at the same altitude with Northern Uganda. Why is it that areas of Acholi receive a lot of rain,” she wondered.

However, Hon. Kitutu said Northern Uganda receives rains because of the thick forest in DR Congo and the marshy swamps in the South Sudan.

She pledged to work with the line ministries to ensure the tree planting programme is a success.

“If we do not plant trees, then climate change will devastate us,” Hon. Kitutu observed, adding that, if we do not plant trees, the winds, the landslides and floods, will be stronger.

The Minister commended Napak district for the good performance, exhibited in the

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hygiene and sanitation drive, asking the local leaders to ensure they uplift the latrine coverage.

Speaking earlier, the district chairperson, Napak, Joseph Lomonyang said planting trees should redefine the education system in institutions of learning.

“Over the years, the thinking in our school system has been that, tree planting is not conducive, but where we are, we need to ensure continuous engagement,” he noted.

Lomonyang encouraged the Ministry to break the continental record of planting trees, currently held by India.

“Let’s commit ourselves to increase forest coverage before 2030 to combat climate change,” he said.

Lomonyang added that tree planting will help mitigate the current climate changes, hence the efforts of reducing green-house gas emissions,” he noted.

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