

Janet tasks teachers on personal hygiene, values

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Lauded. Education minister Janet Museveni meets the global best teacher, Mr Peter Tabichi from Kenya, during the teachers' symposium in Kampala yesterday. Photo BY KELVIN ATUHAIRE

In Summary

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By Damali Mukhaye

The Minister of Education, Ms Janet Museveni, has tasked teaching colleges to train teachers on personal hygiene to become exemplary to learners.

Speaking during the 2nd teachers' education symposium in Kampala yesterday, Ms Museveni said previously teachers used to check the nails, hair, clothes and pants of all learners but they no longer do that because they do not know what to do.

“You have to ensure that the teachers you train learn some values such as honesty, kindness, humility, patience and self-control,” Ms Museveni said.

“When you train the teachers to keep clean bodies, teeth, tongue, hair, feet, socks and armpits, then you have a well-groomed, alert and astute teachers. Thereafter, you can go to what we would like to see happen in the classroom,” she added.

Focus

Ms Museveni said her ministry was now focused on producing teachers who are innovative and problem solvers so that they effectively transfer knowledge through various media.

She urged teachers to make learning more practical, meaningful, and authentic, saying she was optimistic that the new curriculum will be embraced.

“I call upon teacher educators to ensure that the curriculum is delivered according to its aspirations. This curriculum is competence-based, and it builds on from the primary school curriculum that was revised a few years ago,” Ms Museveni said.

“We have taken long to agree on and implement this curriculum, but I am convinced that it now describes exactly the type of Ugandan we wish to have in this country.

Teachers and learners must be prepared for the dynamics and demands of the 21st

century and the necessary skills needed to be developed to match the times and challenges,” she added.

The minister also warned teachers against sexually abusing their learners, saying they are supposed to protect them.

At the same function, educationists called for motivation of teachers to improve the quality of education.

Dr Margo O’Sullivan, the director of education and development solutions in West of Ireland, said Uganda was one of the countries with best systems for inspection and monitoring but cited poor pay.

“Teacher motivation is very significant in improving the quality of education in the country. Some developed countries have quality education because their teachers are highly paid, hence much as government has put in place a number of systems, salaries of teachers are crucial,” Ms O’Sullivan, said.

She also said Uganda is among the top countries with high teacher absenteeism due to poor remuneration and welfare.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Mr Alex Kakooza, acknowledged the challenge, but added that other aspects such as accommodation and resources contribute to quality education.

Mr Kakooza said government was currently constructing teachers’ houses at new seeds schools and would also build houses at schools they are renovating.

He asked schools that did not receive text books from the new curriculum to download them from the internet, adding that all schools will have received the books by June.