



International Day of the Girl Child 2013

On Friday October 11th 2013, the International Day of the Girl Child was celebrated at Imperial Royale hotel. The International Day of the Girl Child was introduced in 2011 by the United Nations General Assembly. The Government, Civil Society Organisation, teachers, pupils and parents among other stakeholders utilised this day to address girls' issues.

The theme for this year's International Day of the Girl Child was "Innovating for Girls' education." The activities included book launches, panel discussions, exhibitions and children's petitions throughout the day.

UNICEF launched "The adolescent girls' vulnerability index" which emphasised the need to focus on girls as they are more vulnerable than their male counterparts. The book also pointed out the need to focus attention and resources to make sure girls rights are prioritised. PLAN international launched "Because I am a girl" report. The State Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Hon. Ronald Kibuule, informed attendants that the Government promises to take action on girls' issues.

Issues discussed

- Some of the caretakers and protectors in schools are the ones who end up defiling young girls. This needs urgent action. .
- It is crucial to increase the awareness of girls' needs and potential.
- Girls' education is the single most powerful investment. A girl who is educated builds a nation that is educated, so more investments should be put into innovations to help girls be more assertive.
- Mentoring and counselling helps girls to confront some of the challenges affecting them. All stakeholders should take it upon themselves to mentor all young girls in their reach.
- Family as an entity should be strengthened as it is important in strengthening the girl child.
- Gender inequalities should be tackled. There should be investigation into factors that lead to girls staying home to care for siblings while boys attend school in some families.
- The men and boys should also be targeted so as to achieve gender equity. The boys and men should be brought on board as their cooperation is important in achieving girls' education.
- Members of Parliament and other policy makers should endeavour to acquire more information so that they can make policies that will help the girl child.

At the International Day of the Girl Child children also presented problems that girls face and how these problems can be solved. Some of the problems and solutions presented by the children are below;

Problems

- Lack of motivation
- Peer pressure

- Lack of parental love
- Indecent dressing
- Rape and defilement

Solutions

- Dressing code for girls should be emphasised
- Security lights should be installed
- Men who rape and defile girls should be castrated
- Laws should be tightened
- Accountability to the students should be done.
- Reduce taxes on sanitary pads

Appreciation goes to all stakeholders who parted with finances, time, and expertise to support the success of the celebrations of the International Day of the Girl Child.