



Women not liberated — Janet

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Mrs. Museveni speaks to delegates at Ntare School in Mbarara

By Vision Reporter

Despite the Government's efforts to empower women through education and legislature, women still have a long way to go to be fully liberated.

This was the gist of an address by the First Lady and Minister for Karamoja Affairs, Janet Museveni, at Ntare School in Mbarara on Monday.

Speaking at the Life Ministry annual conference, Mrs. Museveni noted that women form more than 70% of the farmers, yet they still face a lot of disadvantages.

"Think about the woman who has a baby every year, or every other year, until her family is so big that she cannot feed or clothe them," the First Lady said.

"She has never heard of family planning or, if she has, it has been presented to her negatively and she has a distorted perception of the whole concept."

She decried the high number of women who still die in childbirth, 500 in every 100,000 births, because they have not been informed or supported to go to hospital.

She also condemned the increase in domestic violence which she attributes to the breakdown of the extended family culture.

"Women are being battered and maimed and often killed within the very environment where they should feel safe and loved — their homes — and by the very people who should nurture and value them — their husbands."

The role fathers, mothers, uncles and aunts played in the past is now regarded as interference, she noted.

"Have you ever asked yourselves, as leaders, what has taken the place of the extended African family system? Must every disagreement end in death, or the courts of law and divorce?"

Unlike in developed countries, she observed, no organised social services, with professional counsellors, have been put in place to intervene and protect the vulnerable in the community, such as abused women and neglected children.

"And so we end up with prisons that are filled with people who could have been helped to resolve their differences if there had been a system in place."

As a result, she concluded, many women cannot make a meaningful contribution to the nation's economy and are a drain and a burden to the economy.

"Just imagine how strong and healthy our economy would be if women, who form more than 55% of the population, were unshackled and equipped adequately to contribute to the development of the economy."

She urged women in leadership positions to address the disadvantages of the majority of Ugandan women, especially those living in the rural areas.

This article can be found on-line at: <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/706219>

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