

OPINION: Change the name 'Uganda'

SIR - In view of the ground-work presently being laid by the Constitutional Commission for the formulation of a new constitution through nationwide participation, I am obliged to air a view which many have never focussed attention on.

In line with formulating a new Constitution, I wonder how many countrymen have ever thought deeply about the name of our country, "Uganda". What does it mean? What are its origins? viability? Is it the most appropriate name for our country? Must we carry on with the same name, or should we adopt another which is more appropriate and more representative of the ethnic groups in this country?

Personally, I do attach a lot of importance and consideration to these and other related issues concerning the name of our country so much so that I am compelled to urge for a debate on the topic.

We ought to know that names are very important and carry meaning. Names are often given to individuals, tribes, places, mountains, companies, associations, political parties, name it. All these are not given arbitrarily, but carry meaning and serve a purpose.

cultural or religious background to which meanings are attached.

From my point of view, the name "Uganda" should be discarded because it is irrelevant for us. It was merely handed over to us by the colonial masters in a hurry, due to their prejudiced ideas regarding our cultures and ethnicity. Such a name, therefore, has no proper origin and carries little meaning for us all who are enclosed within its boundaries.

I have given such a brief background about the origins of the name of our country, in order that those who know more about the subject may come out and help to put the anomalies right instead of us taking things for granted.

In my opinion, this country should take on a new name which is more representative of the ethnic groups found here. I suggest the name "Banteluya".

The origin of this name suggests that the country is composed of bantu speaking peoples to the south and western parts and the luo speakers in the northern and eastern parts of its territorial boundaries. At least, these two groups give a more generalized outlook on the major ethnic groups in the country.

sent one because it strives to unite all people in the country. Other issues like the question of a national language or languages, I believe can best be debated under such a unifying factor like the name of the country.

Last, but not least, I'm inclined to feel that such a meaningful change can, to a certain extent, help to lift the psychological burden in the minds of the people about the

dark past of our country. Hence, it could be easier to forget about the evil past of "Uganda", and instead concentrate on building a new country "Banteluya", a country with new morals, security and unity. And, with concerted efforts, it could turn out to be one where each and every person will be happy.

Akabwii Stephen
Kitintale