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NATIONAL SDG CONFERENCE: UN RECOMMITS TO SUPPORTING UGANDA'S JOURNEY TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

By Monicah Aturinda, United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO)



UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Susan Namondo, delivering remarks at the Second Uganda Annual SDG Conference ©UN Uganda

The Second Uganda Annual SDG Conference was held on 22nd and 23rd June 2023. The conference was jointly organised by the Government of Uganda and the United Nations System in Uganda; coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister through the SDG Secretariat and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office.

The conference was opened by the Vice President of Uganda, H.E. Jessica Alupo representing the President and was attended by the Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja, Minister for General Duties responsible for SDGs Rt. Hon. Justine Kasule Lumumba, Ministers, Members of Parliaments, Heads of the Government Department and Agencies. UN participants included the UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Susan Namondo, UN Heads of Agencies and representatives. Other participants were Development Partners, Religious Leaders, representatives from Civil Society and the Private Sector, and academia.

In her remarks Rt. Hon. Nabbanja noted that "due to the significant milestone of the first National SDG Conference, the Cabinet passed a directive that SDG Conference is organised annually as a platform where all stakeholders will continuously reflect on SDG progress, identify and showcase catalytic innovations as well as make policy recommendations for accelerating SDG implementation and achievement."

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Minister for General Duties responsible for SDG Rt. Hon. Justine Kasule Lumumba delivering remarks at the Second Uganda Annual SDGs Conference ©UN Uganda

In her remarks, the UN Resident Coordinator noted that “the timing of this conference could not have been more opportune. It coincides with the upcoming SDGs Summit, slated for September 18-19, 2023, as part of the United Nations General Assembly. This global gathering will witness Heads of State and Government conducting a comprehensive review of the SDGs’ progress at the midway point of their implementation. The aim is to provide high-level political guidance for transformative actions, ensuring the realization of the 2030 targets.”

She emphasized the crucial need for accelerated efforts to achieve the SDGs in light of the varied progress and the uncertainties that lay ahead. She highlighted the significance of public sector effectiveness, the power of decentralization, and the vital role of the private sector as a key partner in development. Additionally, she highlighted the importance of financing, harnessing the data dividend, and renewing efforts to protect the environment.

While presenting the key messages and outcomes at the end of the conference, the Minister responsible for SDGs, Rt. Hon. Lumumba noted that “The Parish Development Model has emerged as a promising strategy for reducing vulnerability and driving inclusiveness at the local level and development partners have a vital role to play in supporting the localization of the SDGs in Uganda and effective partnerships between the government, civil society, and development partners are essential for mobilizing resources, sharing expertise, and aligning efforts towards the SDGs”



The outcomes of this conference will be shared with the Cabinet for information and guidance. They will also be shared at the upcoming SDGs High Level Political Forum in July 2023 and the SDG Summit in September 2023 under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly,” said Rt. Hon. Lumumba.🌍



Vice President H.E. Jessica Alupo received on arrival ©UN Uganda



Cultural performance ©UN Uganda



Religious Leader praying ©UN Uganda



Panel Discussion ©UN Uganda



UNDP CREATES 16,000 JOBS THROUGH ITS SUPPORT TO YOUTH INNOVATIONS

By Michael Mubangizi, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



Collage showcasing some of the works of the beneficiaries of the Youth4Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship Facility ©UNDP Uganda

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has created approximately 16,286 job opportunities through its support to youth innovations and enterprises under the Youth4Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship Facility (Y4BF), a performance assessment report by PricewaterhouseCoopers Ltd shows.

“We noted that approximately 16,286 job opportunities had been created for the youth by the enterprises as a result of the interventions, leading to a reduction in unemployment levels in the communities,” reads the report. The assessment was conducted between August and December 2022, featuring 40 enterprises supported under the initiative.

At 76% (12,339), the Information and Technology sector accounted for most of the jobs created, followed by the agriculture and agribusiness and tourism sectors that accounted for 13% (2,155) and 9% (1,386) of the jobs created respectively.

Besides the jobs, the programme had other profound impacts including the empowerment of youth and women in entrepreneurship skills, development of online marketing platforms for various products and services, and increased access to capital for smallholder farmers through creation of savings groups and Village Savings and Loan Schemes. Others are remarkable improvements in solid waste disposal and management practices and reduction in harmful practices such as poaching and deforestation by creating alternative sources of livelihoods such as apiculture and making of commercial tourist products from stones.



Duncan Bwengye - Founder OcTien tech @UNDP Uganda

There has also been creation of online tour guide platforms in areas that were underserved such as Karamoja sub-region, development of alternative sources of livelihood, empowerment of women with entrepreneurial and financial literacy skills, and creation of new business partnerships.

Formally launched by President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni in August 2020, the Youth4Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship Facility (Y4BF) is an initiative of UNDP and Stanbic Bank designed to tackle youth unemployment through impact-driven innovation and entrepreneurship in sectors with a high multiplier effect on creation of jobs and livelihood opportunities.

UNDP Supports 92 more Youth Innovators

As part of continued efforts to support youth entrepreneurship and business startups, UNDP through Y4BF has supported another set of 92 youth innovators to pilot various innovations and business models with a commercial imperative, the capacity to create jobs at larger scale and solve complex development challenges. The beneficiaries are implementing innovations and business models in 24 districts across the country with the majority based in the greater Kampala areas of Mukono, Wakiso, Mpigi and Kampala. This latest cohort brings the number of beneficiaries from the Y4BF since 2020 to about 10,000 youth.

To enable youth to unearth, nurture creative early-stage ideas and form start-ups and identify beneficiaries, UNDP implemented a Youth IDEathon which allowed participants to ideate, co-create and collaborate on possible solutions to real economic and social challenges. The 92 recipients were selected following a highly competitive rigorous process undertaken by a team of expert judges in various fields. The 92 start-ups have received grants and business incubation support.

Early results

Godfrey Sengonzi, 35, is a proprietor of Segoo Industries Ltd dealing in production of tiles in Wakiso district. With the support of UNDP, Sengonzi is investing in research to improve the quality of his tiles to spur demand for his products.

Duncan Bwengye, the founder of OcTien tech – a hardware technology start up offering innovative and better alternative technologies to improve technology adoption in urban and rural Africa says, “We are starting to see a change in the lifestyle of the people we work with as they have become more empowered and self-reliant. We are creating a more sustainable future for the communities we serve.”



Bwengye adds that they have reached out to local artisans who are building local solutions such as welding machines and battery chargers, “We are seeing a significant shift in the way young people perceive technology. They are now more optimistic about their prospects and see a future in which they can make a meaningful contribution to society.”

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL OF REFUGEE AND HOST COMMUNITIES IN THE SESAME VALUE CHAIN

By Bernah Namatovu, International Labour Organization (ILO)



Ag-Ploutos Staff member supporting the bulking of sesame at Ocea Market in West Nile ©ILO Uganda

access challenges for refugee and host community farmers in Madi-Okollo and Terego districts.

“The interventions are bearing results as Dawa confirms. “I am grateful that Ag-Ploutos can buy my sesame at UGX 3,700 per kilogram [about USD 1 dollar] close to home. I used to carry it all the way to Sipi Trading Centre and the highest I ever got was UGX 3,200 (USD 0.8),” she says.

A secure sesame market linkage with Ag-Ploutos motivated Betty to increase her production to 3 acres in the 2022 season and she prides in her capacity to continue paying school fees and provide food for her children. She also hopes that as a group the farmers, they will continue to cooperate and sale collectively. With increased income, Betty bought a she goat that reproduced 7 more goats that are a source of milk for her children and has diversified her income sources to cater for her children’s fees. She also bought 3 acres of land on which she increased her simsim production. Betty’s financial status has enabled her send 2 of her children to a Technical Institute for a mechanics course after completing Ordinary Level Education in addition to the 5 in primary school and one in secondary school.

Betty has diversified her agribusiness to include maize, sorghum, soyabean each on an acre of land while waiting for a favorable weather condition to facilitate the production of sesame in the second season of the year starting July. Her home is now food secure and sales from the agricultural produce have improved her financial stability to ably cater for the family’s basic needs. 🌍

Betty Dawa is a 43-year-old refugee living in Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement in Terego District. A single mother of eight children, fled to Uganda from the political insurgency that erupted in South Sudan in 2016. Like many other residents of West Nile, she started growing sesame both for home consumption and sale to earn income.

However, she had difficulty accessing a good market for her produce and the few traders who could reach her village would underpay her. “I used to carry sesame on my head and walk for two kilometers to Siripi Trading Centre because I didn’t want to add the cost of ‘boda boda’ [motorcycle taxi] to take me and my produce to the market,” she explains.

She did not give up. Instead, she joined a farmer group, learned about bulking the produce to raise high volumes and negotiate for better prices. Betty and other refugee sesame farmers in Rhino Camp, Imvepi Refugee Settlement and their host communities are being supported by the partnership for improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and hosts communities (PROSPECTS) programme to access better markets and increase their incomes. 3,530 sesame farmers, including 1,599 refugees, have been supported to access the new sesame variety and better markets under the PROSPECTS Programme.

PROSPECTS is a multi-year programme, funded by the Netherlands, that brings together five agencies; namely International Finance Cooperation (IFC), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Bank to devise collaborative and innovative approaches for inclusive job creation, education and protection in contexts characterized by forced displacement.

The ILO is using an “Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS)” to implement market-based approaches to support livelihoods in refugee and host communities. Working with 10 local private companies in West Nile, coordinated by Ag-Ploutos Company Limited, the ILO is facilitating the upgrade of sesame value chain to increase production and address market



FAO STRENGTHENS SUPPORT TO UGANDA'S DAIRY SECTOR ON WORLD MILK DAY

Focus on export competitiveness is latest push to boost dairy sector growth under the country's Dairy Policy Action Plan

By Agatha Ayebazibwe, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)



FAO Uganda's Martin Maugustin, AgrInvest Uganda Project Coordinator and Nkuingoua Nana Jules, Policy Analyst (center) inspect a milk collection center at Abesigana Kashari Dairy Farmers Cooperative in Western Uganda ©FAO Uganda

On World Milk Day, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) announced a new collaboration with the Dairy Development Authority (DDA) to boost exports of Ugandan milk and dairy products and assess potential new markets, as part of the country's ongoing efforts to strengthen the dairy sector.

Under Uganda's new Dairy Policy Action Plan – a multi-year framework to consolidate and grow the dairy sector – one of the objectives set by DDA is to increase demand for Ugandan milk both at home and abroad. In that regard, the new export competitiveness study will analyse trade flows in the dairy sector over recent years, identify dairy products and dairy by-products with export potential, and assess Uganda's comparative advantage relative to its competitors.

This comprehensive assessment, led by the FAO Monitoring and Analysing Food and Agricultural Policies (MAFAP) programme, FAO AgrInvest, and the International Growth Centre (IGC) in Uganda and in collaboration with DDA, will also identify the most dynamic export markets and recommended policy interventions and investments to position Uganda as a competitive milk and dairy supplier.

"On World Milk Day we are pleased to announce our latest FAO support to Uganda, this time on milk exports. Knowing how competitive Ugandan milk is for international markets is the first

step to boosting dairy exports, which is needed more so than ever. With that, and the measures and investments in the Dairy Policy Action Plan, the dairy sector is set up for transformation for better production and better nutrition, leaving no one behind," said Marco V. Sánchez, Deputy Director of Agri-food Economics at FAO.

DDA's Dairy Policy Action Plan, which came into effect last year, outlines a number of measures to be taken to boost consumption, incentivize production, improve quality and tap into export potential. These include enhancing infrastructure, curbing waste and loss along the supply chain, enhancing operations at milk collection centres and processing facilities across the country, improving the overall quality and shelf-life of milk and meeting food-safety standards for exports. A growing demand for milk can also help incentivize investment throughout the dairy value chain – from production, to upstream and downstream operations, which would also bring higher productivity gains, year-round supplies, and better quality.

"Milk plays a very important role in Uganda, not just economically for the millions of households, but also provides a core foundation for proper childhood growth and health. As DDA we are putting a major emphasis on increasing milk consumption domestically through the School Milk Programme, and also expanding our export market portfolio for increased foreign exchange that translates to more earnings for our farmers. The dairy export competitiveness study is timely to re-enforce our quest for additional export markets for our milk. We are grateful for the efforts and collaboration with FAO in ensuring the growth of our

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ROUTINE YELLOW FEVER VACCINATION FOR CHILDREN TAKING SHAPE IN UGANDA

By Anthony Bugembe, World Health Organization (WHO)



A child receiving the Yellow Fever vaccine at Bukakata Health Centre III ©WHO Uganda

Two hundred kilometers from Uganda's capital Kampala lies Bukakata Sub-county in Masaka District. Located along the shores of Lake Victoria, the sub-county is one of the areas that reported a case of yellow fever in 2022 through the sentinel surveillance system.

The laboratory confirmed case scared community members, fearing the disease would spread among the largely mobile fishing community. It took the joint effort of local leaders, village health teams (VHTs), and health workers to contain the situation. The efforts included promoting health seeking behaviour and addressing the myths and misconceptions about the disease.

"Many people in the community attribute diseases like yellow fever to witchcraft," says Edward Mayanja, the public health officer for Bukakata sub-county, adding that this complicates supportive interventions.

Yellow fever is transmitted to humans, from monkeys, by the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito mainly in forested areas. It is then spread from human to human. Like other viral diseases, yellow fever has no specific treatment but is managed symptomatically (treatment of symptoms). Depending on the clinical manifestations, patients are treated for dehydration, liver and kidney failure, and fever among others. Associated bacterial infections can be treated with antibiotics.

Vaccination remains the most important means of preventing yellow fever. The yellow fever vaccine is safe, and affordable. A single vaccine dose provides life-long protection against yellow fever disease. The vaccine provides effective immunity within 10 days for 80–100% of people vaccinated, and within 30 days for more than 95% of people vaccinated. The yellow fever vaccine can be safely given to infants aged 9–12 months at the same time as the measles vaccine in yellow fever-endemic countries through the routine immunization programme. (continues on page 8)

FAO strengthens support to Uganda's dairy sector on World Milk Day

dairy sector,' said Samson Akankiza, the Acting Executive Director at Dairy Development Authority.

These efforts to further strengthen the dairy sector come at a time when raw milk production has surged from 1.9 billion litres in 2014 to 3.2 billion litres in 2022. Whereas exports have increased in recent years, Uganda remains overly dependent on demand from key East Africa export markets, including neighbouring Kenya.

Moreover, the DDA estimates that domestic household consumption of milk stands at just over a half litre (550 millilitres) a day. This is 68% less than the dietary intake recommended by FAO and WHO, meaning Ugandans consume their recommended milk intake for about 2 out of the 7 days in a week.

FAO Representative in Uganda Antonio Querido said, "We are proud to announce our collaboration with the Dairy Development Authority (DDA) to boost exports of Ugandan milk and dairy products, which will contribute to the ongoing efforts to strengthen Uganda's dairy sector."



As we celebrate World Milk Day, FAO is committed to supporting Uganda in its efforts to improve the livelihoods of dairy farmers and traders, and boost exports of high-quality Ugandan milk and dairy products", Querido added.

To help achieve this target and transformation, Querido pledged FAO's continued support to the DDA, to build on the successes of previous efforts while at the same time contributing to the development of the country's dairy sector. 🌐

Uganda is a high-risk country for yellow fever transmission due to less than 10 percent of the population being immunized against it, with sporadic outbreaks occurring every three to five years. Since 2010, Uganda has had several yellow fever cases reported. In 2022, there were two confirmed cases of yellow fever reported in Wakiso and Masaka districts.

With support from the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and Gavi, Uganda’s Ministry of Health is expected to immunize over 1.9 million children in 2023 with both yellow fever and measles-rubella vaccines. This is part of Uganda’s commitment to the multi-stakeholder Eliminate Yellow Fever Epidemics (EYE) Strategy (2017-2026). Yellow fever vaccine is now available in all health facilities as part of the routine immunization programme and provided for free to children aged nine months of age.

“In line with the EYE recommendations, I would like to commend the Government of Uganda for successfully introducing the yellow fever vaccine into routine immunization since October 2022. This will boost the prevention and management of yellow fever in the country,” said Dr Yonas Tegegn Woldemariam, WHO Representative in Uganda.

In response to the yellow fever vaccine routine immunization rollout, parents in Bukakata sub-county are increasingly visiting Bukakata Health Centre III to have their children immunized. Immunization at the facility is done every weekday. An average of 15 children are immunized on the peak day (Wednesday). The immunization exercise involves administration of different vaccines, including yellow fever.

“We are convinced that in not more than five years, we shall have very few or no cases of yellow fever especially among children because all the past patients have been aged above 20 years,” explains Mayanja.

Initially, parents in areas around Bukakata Health Centre III were scared about taking their children to the health facility to be immunized because of misinformation, myths, misconception, and conservativeness. These have been addressed by raising public awareness.



More parents are now bringing their children for immunization according to the routine schedule. When the parents come, we tell them about the yellow fever vaccine and its benefits. This has increased the numbers,” says Ritah Namanda, a nurse at Bukakata Health Centre III.

Josephine Nakavuma whose nine-month-old son received the yellow fever vaccine at Bukakata Health Centre III explains, “I am grateful to the VHTs and health workers



A Health worker sensitizing mothers at Bukakata Health Centre III on the benefits of Yellow Fever vaccination ©WHO Uganda



A mother receives her child’s immunization card from a nurse at Bukakata Health Centre III after yellow fever vaccination ©WHO Uganda

for explaining to the community the benefits of immunizing our children against yellow fever. I also share this information with fellow parents I meet.”

WHO supports the training and deployment of Ministry of Health teams to manage yellow fever and conduct further investigations in affected districts to assess the risk and respond to future outbreaks.

Starting this year, Uganda is conducting a nationwide yellow fever preventive mass vaccination campaign targeting people aged nine months to 60 years in three phases to increase population immunity and eliminate yellow fever epidemics in Uganda. In the first phase (9-13 June 2023), 13.4 million doses of the yellow fever vaccine were administered in six regions (Kabale, Kabarole, Lira, Arua, Gulu and Hoima) covering 51 districts. The goal is to eliminate Yellow Fever outbreaks in Uganda by 2026. 🌍

ENGAGING MEN THROUGH SPORTS TO END AIDS BY 2030

By Caroline Magambo, The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)



Tseday Almeseged giving remarks on behalf of the UNAIDS Country Director at the launch of the Masaza Cup at Bulange, Mengo ©UNAIDS Uganda



Masaza Cup - Some of the branded jerseys for the different clans that are participating in the Masaza Cup ©UNAIDS Uganda

As part of its partnership with Buganda Kingdom, UNAIDS attended the launch of the 19th edition of the Buganda Masaza Cup on 21st June 2023.

Just like the past 3 editions, this year's Masaza Cup is anchored on engaging men to end AIDS by 2030 with 18 counties participating in the planned games.

The Buganda Masaza Cup is among the key social events organized by the Buganda Kingdom and brings young people together. It remains an important championship not only in Buganda, but also, in the entire country. Irrespective of

heritage and background, the Buganda Masaza cup accommodates all.

Representing the UNAIDS Country Director, Tseday Almeseged said seeing the campaign focusing on men is very important. "Over the past decade, it has become increasingly clear that men and boys are less likely to test for HIV, to initiate on antiretroviral therapy or remain engaged in care and are therefore dying of AIDS-related illnesses and many other diseases at disproportionately higher rates than their female counterparts" she added.

The Buganda Kingdom Prime Minister Owek. Charles Peter Mayiga in his message emphasized the role of men in ending AIDS by 2030 calling on the players to remain disciplined. He further highlighted four key aspects if one is to be victorious. Notably, discipline for players, discipline for managers, discipline for officials and discipline for the fans. The Prime Minister also confirmed that the King His Majesty Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II would grace the official opening ceremony for this year's tournament.

The King is UNAIDS Good Will Ambassador for the African Region for engaging men to end AIDS by 2030. For the past six years (2017- 2023) he has offered his leadership in championing a social mobilization campaign that has been successful towards improving men and boys health regarding access to HIV services. 🌈

HOPE AWAY FROM HOME: ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AMONG REFUGEES

By Allen Ankunda, UN Women



Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) group members engage in a relaxation exercise during one of their therapy sessions ©TPO

At every stage of their displacement journey, refugees experience high levels of trauma and stress. Forced from their homes, at high risk of violence, and faced with separation from family, loss of livelihood and deep uncertainty about the future, the severe mental distress caused by displacement often long outlasts the journey itself.

According to a 2021 World Bank study amongst refugees in Uganda, refugees are ten times more prone to experience depression symptoms compared to native Ugandans, with incidence much higher among female refugees and the elderly.

On 20 June 2023, the global community marks World Refugee Day under the theme “Hope away from home.” As they rebuild their lives, improving the mental well-being of refugees is crucial to helping them work towards a better future. In line with this goal, UN Women works with implementing partners to support women’s access to mental health and psychosocial support services.

Josephine, a South Sudanese refugee living in Bidi Bidi Settlement

in Yumbe District was on the verge of committing suicide because of the trauma caused by the war experiences back in South Sudan that included the death of both her parents. Even when Josephine arrived in Uganda and was resettled in Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, she did not see any reason for living: “I could not bear the trauma anymore,” she says.

Without family, she felt she had nowhere to turn for support. Then, she recounts, “my neighbour invited me for a training session that was being conducted by Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation (TPO).” After she attended two days of training, Josephine was enrolled in therapy sessions, which gradually helped her get better. “I now believe there is more to life,” she says.

Since 2018, TPO and UN Women have been partnering to provide mental health and psychosocial support services to refugees in settlements across Uganda. Aimed at addressing the diverse and gendered mental health and psychosocial problems faced by people of all ages and genders, the partnership is active in the refugee settlements and host communities of Adjumani, Yumbe, Terego, Kyegegwa and Kiryandongo refugee hosting districts.

TPO utilises the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) modality, where participants receive counselling, therapy and training on positive coping mechanisms and life skills. After the screening process that examines their mental health condition, those with severe symptoms are enrolled into a CBT group.



Molly Ajonye demonstrates her English literacy skills after completing the English for Adult Programme ©UN Women Uganda

Molly Ajonye, who has lived in Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement in Yumbe district since July 2016, says TPO’s support system helped get her the treatment she needed. “When I arrived here as a refugee I suffered from depression and mental health issues. I was identified by TPO and received psychosocial support. After the sessions my mental health improved, and I was enrolled into the English for Adult (EFA) programme and leadership trainings conducted by Refugee Law Project” says Molly.

Provision of mental health and psychosocial support services has enabled refugees like Josephine and Molly to adopt new coping strategies and to live better quality lives. Since 2020, a total of 36,174 people (28,225 women and girls, 7,949 men and boys) have

received mental health and psychosocial support services through UN Women. Of these, 83.8 percent reported a significant reduction in depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms as well as an increase in life satisfaction levels.

According to Rose Night, the Refugee Welfare Committee II Chairperson in Bidi Bidi Settlement’s Zone 2, cases of suicide and violence in villages where refugees have access to psychosocial support have fallen.



As leaders we used to register many cases of GBV, suicide and child battering, but these have reduced as refugees get mental health services and are able to adopt better coping mechanisms.”

Through the sessions, participants also gain livelihood and entrepreneurship skills and receive start-up capital upon completion. “The money that they receive after graduating from the CBT sessions helps them to start income generating activities,” says Rose.

Today, Molly’s literacy skills and her fluency in English have enabled her to secure job opportunities within the settlement: “I now act as a translator for most humanitarian organisations because I can translate from English to Arabic, the language that most refugees understand,” says Molly. She also serves on the Refugee Welfare Committee in her Zone, a position that she has utilised to advocate for issues that affect refugee women and girls in her community. 🌍

UNODC HOSTS WORLD DRUG DAY EVENT WITH CALL TO END STIGMA

By Henry Nsubuga Mukasa, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC)



Mr. Rogers Kasirye, the UYDEL Executive Director delivering his speech during World Drug Day commemoration. He is flanked by Ms. Sharon Nyambe, the UNODC Head of Office ©UNODC Uganda

The series of activities intended to highlight the day and the dangers of drug-use, included a Youth Crime Prevention Sports Gala, a live television talk show and a stakeholders engagement event. They were organized in partnership with the Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL).

The theme for this year’s World Drug Day, also known as the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is, “People First: Stop Stigma and Discrimination, Strengthen Prevention.”

Speaking at the events, Ms. Sharon Nyambe, the UNODC Head of Office in Uganda, urged communities to stop stigma and discrimination against people with drug use disor-

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) hosted activities to mark the World Drug Day with a call on communities in Uganda to raise their voices against stigma and discrimination against people with drug abuse disorders.



Ms. Sharon Nyambe, UNODC Head of Office, delivering her speech during World Drug Day commemoration ©UNODC Uganda



Participants enjoy a light moment during World Drug Day commemoration ©UNODC Uganda

ders to enable them to reach out for help, treatment and eventually to recover quickly.

“Addiction to drugs is not a choice,” Ms. Nyambe stated. “We can combat stigma and discrimination by promoting language and attitudes that are respectful and non-judgmental,” she added.

UNODC is seeking to raise awareness about the importance of treating people who use drugs with respect and empathy. The UN agency calls for the provision of evidence and science-based treatment, voluntary services, alternatives to punishment and prioritizing prevention.

The campaign involves sending out messages to communities, education institutions and places of work, that emphasize the risks of drug addiction and illegal trafficking of drugs. This scourge is affecting especially the well-being of the youth, in particular those in vulnerable communities.

Consequently, this undermines socio-economic stability and achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“UNODC recognizes the importance of taking a people-centered approach to drug policies, with a focus on human rights, compassion, and evidence-based practices,” Ms. Nyambe emphasised.

UNODC, with funding from the Embassy of the Netherlands in Uganda, is implementing the, “Strengthening Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Uganda” Programme. Some of the interventions under the Programme

aim at strengthening the overall response to crime

prevention, address the growing young prison population and enhance knowledge and youth resilience to crime and substance abuse.

Other interventions are targeting development of life skills of the youth through partnerships with government, sports organizations and civil society.

Representing the Government of Uganda at the event, the Commissioner for Physical Education and Sports in the Ministry of Education and Sports, Rev. Can. Duncan Mugumya commended UNODC and UYDEL for supporting the youth through sports and skills development.

“When the youth avoid drug abuse, get proper guidance and skills, they will have a bright future,” Rev. Can. Mugumya commented.

On his part, Mr. Rogers Kasirye, the UYDEL Executive Director pointed out that embracing the power of sports helps to reduce the vulnerabilities of youth to crime, as well as developing their talents and healthy lifestyles. He said a family with a person using drugs is never at peace and called for intensification of prevention activities.

Over 1500 youth from the five divisions of Kampala assembled at Masooli, 7 kilometres outside Kampala and competed in football and netball games. It was a double celebration for another 45 (20males and 25 Female) who had undergone rehabilitation and graduated after receiving vocational skills in motor cycle mechanics, hair-dressing, catering, tailoring, electronics, welding and building and construction.

About World Drug Day:

The International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, or World Drug Day, is marked on 26 June every year, since 1989, to strengthen action and cooperation in achieving a world free of drug abuse.

The UN General Assembly in Resolution 42/112 of 7th December 1987, decided to observe 26 June as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, an expression of its determination to strengthen action to achieve the goal of a world free of drug abuse.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is the United Nations agency charged with the mandate of supporting countries in the implementation of three UN conventions on drugs:

- Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1954, as amended by the 1972 protocol
- Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971
- Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988

The world drug problem is a complex issue that affects millions of people worldwide.. 🌍

EBOLA RESPONSE: UGANDA GOVERNMENT, HEALTH PARTNERS GIVE POSITIVE APPRAISAL OF IOM'S WORK

By Richard Kavuma, International Organization for Migration (IOM)



Participants pose after the opening session in Entebbe. Seated with hat is the IOM Chief of Mission, Mr Sanusi Tejan Savage ©IOM Uganda

Uganda Government officials and partners from 16 districts and 21 border posts concluded a workshop to share experiences and lessons from the response to the country's recent Ebola outbreak.

The three-day stakeholder workshop in Entebbe was organized by the Ministry of Health with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM). It was part of a project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through World Health Organization (WHO).

Among other segments, more than 80 participants got an unprecedented opportunity to evaluate IOM's Health, Border, and Mobility Management (HBMM) framework, deployed in response to Uganda's eighth Ebola outbreak.

In September 2022, Uganda declared an outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in the central district of Mubende, which quickly spread to neighbouring Kassanda. The country was declared free of Ebola in four months later, after 143 confirmed cases and 55 deaths.

IOM, funded by USAID through WHO, supported the EVD response, targeting mobile populations and ports of entry (POEs). After the end of the outbreak, IOM worked with the Ministry of Health and local authorities on a post-EVD recovery project, targeting affected communities as well as border posts and districts. Using HBMM as a guiding tool, IOM worked with the Ministry and other partners

to contain the epidemic and prevent it from becoming a nationwide or even international crisis.

The HBMM framework was developed by IOM in 2014, to improve prevention, detection, and response to the spread of diseases along mobility continuums. Although it has since been used in several international health emergencies, it had not been subjected to a systematic appraisal by Government partners. Participants evaluated the activities implemented in the response and on all the strategic objectives under HBMM, they scored above average.

Participants also reviewed the findings of a recent assessment of the capacities at the various POEs to respond to public health emergencies, as per the International Health Regulations (IHR). The assessment aims to help the country prepare herself for the IHR Joint External Evaluation, scheduled for this September.

Opening the workshop in Entebbe, IOM Chief of Mission Sanusi Tejan Savage said: "This meeting serves as an opportunity for us to reflect on our collective journey thus far, assess the impact of the post-EVD recovery project, and chart a course for the future."

Dr. Michael Mwanga, the Ministry of Health Assistant Commissioner for Surveillance, Information and Knowledge Management, closed the workshop by noting that IOM's work on Ebola had exceeded that of many other partners.

"With most other partners we did nice plans, but implementation has been disappointing" Dr. Mwanga said. "So, continue giving us that support; it is highly appreciated, and top management of Ministry of Health is aware of the efforts you are putting into border health." 🌍



UNESCO'S O3 PLUS PROJECT FOSTERING POSITIVE HEALTH AND GENDER EQUALITY IN UNIVERSITIES

By Vincent Ogal, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)



Participants who turned up for the O3 Plus Collaborative Learning and Adaptation Meeting pose for a group photo at the climax of the 2-day workshop ©UNESCO

In an inspiring initiative aimed at fostering positive health and gender equality outcomes among young people, through the implementation of the Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future (O3 Plus) project is taking root in Uganda, a Collaborative Learning and Adaptation Session (CLAS) for all participating universities was organized and held from 23 to 24 May 2023 in Kampala. This event brought together other key stakeholders from within the Ministries of Education, Health and Gender, as well as Civil Society Organizations.

The programme focuses on young people in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs), and the intervention is set to bring about sustained reductions in new HIV infections, unintended pregnancies, and sexual and gender-based violence, while empowering students to realize their full potential and contribute to their communities as future leaders.

The over-all objectives of the CLAS were to facilitate experience sharing, and cross learning among O3Plus project participating universities in Uganda. The event also set out to generate knowledge base on good practices and lessons learnt during O3Plus project implementation for adaptation and scale up during the next phase of implementation.

The 3-day engagement provided a platform for sharing on the implementation status of the O3 Plus Project in Uganda where each of the pilot universities presented insights of implementation experience highlighting achievements, challenges, lessons learnt as well as recommendations.

University teams also demonstrated several innovations and success stories generated along the process of implementation of the O3 Plus Project aimed at improving access to information and services on sexual reproductive health. Ndejje University, one of the pilot universities showcased the 'Kyooto' innovation and the Life skills App on Health Education developed by students from the institutions.

Kampala International University demonstrated the use of class-to-class sensitization model to increase access to SRH and life skills messages. Makerere University Main Campus showcased the engagement of students with disabilities to access life skills and health education while Makerere University Jinja Campus demonstrated the 'Girl Talk', and Parents-Students-Lecturers engagement as some of their innovations.

"UNESCO through the O3 Plus Project is helping students to address the realities and challenges of life that we often find ourselves faced with especially in the higher and tertiary institutions of learning," said Shallon Atuhaire, Directorate of Education Standards.

"Through our peer education program and peer counselling session at the university, we have learned to be inclusive when undertaking the healthy talk sessions with our clients who are also our fellow students," said Priscila Nambatya, Student Makerere University.

To date, a total of 8512 tertiary and university students have been reached with sexuality education and the capacity of over 24 health workers affiliated to the health centers from the O3 Plus pilot universities built to offer young people friendly SRHR services.

Additionally, over 200 peer educators have been oriented under the programme and reached with sexual reproductive rights information, a move that is expected to increase access to information and services among the student communities.

Other key interventions realized include orientation of over 30 medical students in Uganda under their association of Federation of Uganda Medical Students Association, as well as development of score cards and whistleblower mechanisms which is expected to provide a pathway to aide reporting and response to sexual harassment, violence and bullying at Higher Tertiary Education Institutions. 🌍



SOLAR-POWERED WATER SYSTEM TRANSFORMS LIVES FOR SOUTH SUDANESE REFUGEES IN PALABEK SETTLEMENT

By Frank Walusimbi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)



Nyadong fetching water near her home ©UNHCR Uganda

Nyadong Kur is a South Sudanese single mother of five, for whom accessing clean water for her family used to be a daily struggle. But now, with a water tap just steps away from her home, Nyadong can fetch 200 liters of water each day.

With a skip in her step, and a smile on her face she makes her way to the nearby water tap, a lifeline for her community.

"The heat in this region demands an ample supply of refreshing drinking water, essential not only for quenching our thirst but also for cooking and maintaining cleanliness," Nyadong said.

It wasn't always this way for Nyadong and her fellow refugees in Zone 9, Block 2 of Palabek Settlement. Just over a year ago, refugees and host community residents had to trek over three kilometers in search of clean water, enduring long queues and uncertainty.

However, in August 2022, everything changed. Thanks to the collaboration between the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and generous funding from the South Korean Government. A groundbreaking solar-powered motorized water system was implemented, bringing a remarkable transformation to the community.

The water stand near Nyadong's home has four drawing points. This allows residents to access water without enduring long queues, which was a common sight in Zone 9, Block 2, Palabek Refugee Settlement just over a year ago.

In August 2022, Nyadong and thousands of other South Sudanese refugees were relocated to Zone 9 in Palabek Refugee Settlement. Previously, refugees and residents in host communities had to walk over three kilometers in search of clean water.

Currently, Palabek hosts approximately 75,630 refugees and asylum seekers, predominantly South Sudanese, with women and children constituting 85 percent of the refugee population, facing the greatest challenges related to water scarcity.



Now, with a tap stand right beside my home, my family and fellow refugees in Zone 9 have unlimited access to water. We can even enjoy bathing twice a day, a luxury we never had when water was scarce," expressed Nyadong.

The solarized water system was originally designed to serve 5,000 new arrivals from South Sudan but has since been expanded to serve more than 10,000 refugees across four blocks of the settlement. This includes providing water to a community market in Zone 9 and a primary school in Ajaugaula village.

The solar-powered water system pumps water using solar energy to an elevated steel reservoir tank with a capacity of 65,000 liters. The water is then supplied to users by gravity through a piped network. The system is not just about convenience; it represents hope and resilience in the face of challenges encountered by refugees and residents of the host community.

On average, each individual in the settlement zones served by the water system can now obtain 29 liters of portable water daily, a significant increase from 8 liters per-person-per-day before the establishment of the solarized water system. 🌍

UNICEF'S WATER SYSTEM TRANSFORMS LIVES IN LONGAROE SUB-COUNTY, KOTIDO DISTRICT

By Edmond Mwebembezi, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)



Daniel's mother irrigates her crops in the garden that she set up as a result of the UNICEF Multi-Use Water System. The community is able boost their nutrition due to the farming done as a result of the MUWS presence ©UNICEF Uganda

Longaroe Sub-county in Kotido District, Uganda, grapples with recurring droughts that severely impact the local population and their livelihoods.

These can go on for months, without a single drop of rain; however, thanks to the innovative efforts of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and its partners, a transformative change has taken place in this arid region, bringing hope and resilience to the community.

At the heart of this transformation is the Multiple Use Water System (MUWS) constructed in the village of Nacuuma, Longaroe Sub-county, Kotido District, with funding from UNICEF for strengthening climate resilience intervention for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).

The MUWS serves a population of around 4,400 people living in six villages, and provides water to Lopuyo Health Centre II, Kanawar Primary School, and a nearby Catholic church.

The system was installed at a cost of US\$250,000 and financed through UNICEF's set-aside funds meant to combat climate change. It includes a total of 1,500 metres of transmission pipeline, 740 metres of distribution pipelines covering six villages, a pumping station, 60,000 litre water reservoir tank and 40,000 litre water-reservoir tanks for livestock, four micro irrigation systems, six animal troughs and 15 community tap stands. Three existing community boreholes were installed with solar powered pumps, and together now serve as the main water source for the entire system.

The system has impacted the lives of the community and among the many lives touched by this remarkable initiative is Daniel, a 17-year-old cattle herder who has experienced first-hand, the profound impact of the water system on his daily life and future aspirations.

Previously, every day, Daniel would embark on a challenging journey of herding animals over 10 kilometres in search of water. It was a

laborious task that consumed much of his time and often left the animals and his family struggling to access enough water and feed.

"In the past, due to the water source being far, the animals were not feeding sufficiently because we had to move at a time when it is safe to move and also leave early due to insecurity," Daniel shares.

However, everything changed when Daniel learned that UNICEF would be bringing a watering system to their community.

"The moment I saw construction taking place for the water system, I ran and asked, and they said it was a watering system that will provide water for home use, gardening and animal-watering," Daniel recalls with a smile. "I was so happy. It's made a difference in our lives."

With the installation of the MUWS, water became readily available near their homes. The animals no longer had to travel long distances to quench their thirst, enabling them to graze and feed more comfortably. The water system not only improved the health of the animals but also increased milk production, ensuring a steady supply of nourishment for the entire household.

"We all have enough milk in the household now," Daniel explains. "Adults, children, and herdsman alike, we have enough to consume."

The positive impact of the water system extended beyond the immediate needs of the community. The newfound abundance of milk allowed Daniel's family to produce butter, both for sale and for their own consumption, especially for the children. "I see people growing healthier, and we're also able to make butter for sale," he proudly shares.

"The presence of water throughout the year has not only made herding and gardening simpler but has also enhanced the community's resilience during the dry season when rain is scarce. "Life has become much simpler due to adequate water that has not only made the feeding of animals much easier but also growing crops," Daniel explains.

"The convenience in feeding the animals and growing food for home consumption cannot be overstated, the lives of the community especially their nutrition have been improved and this is strongly linked to the MUWS. Moreover, the community Health Centre II also depends on this MUWS," Kotido District Water Officer, Mr John Paul Kedi shares.

While the MUWS has brought significant improvements to their lives, challenges remain. The community still grapples with tick infestations due to a lack of acaricides. Moreover, insecurity and the scarcity of food have led to temptations for young people to raid neighbouring communities. However, Daniel remains hopeful that through dialogue and peaceful resolutions, conflicts

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AIRTEL MONEY & UNCDF LAUNCH OPEN APIS TO SUPPORT INNOVATORS ACCELERATE DIGITAL FINANCIAL INCLUSION

By Rachael Kentenyengi, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)



Staff of Airtel and UNCDF during the launch of an open application programming interface (API) initiative that will grant innovators easy and secure online access to integrate their businesses with Airtel Money services ©UNCDF Uganda

Airtel Mobile Commerce Uganda Limited (AMCUL) and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) recently announced the launch of an open application programming interface (API) initiative that will grant innovators easy and secure online access to integrate their businesses with Airtel Money services, making it easier for them to offer payment services to various value chains.

The launch of this open APIs initiative is part of AMCUL's mandate aimed at driving financial inclusion through the provision of digital financial services, without differentiation. It is part Airtel's Africa's commitment to Transforming Lives.

An API enables different systems to communicate to one another effectively, easing business processes and service delivery. In Uganda today, the vast majority of APIs are private and only available to third parties at exorbitant costs. By opening their APIs to third party innovators, AMCUL will offer services that can enable merchants to transact with respective customers in a safe, instant, and secure way.

AMCUL Managing Director Japhet Aritho, said: "In a bid to deliver competent solutions that are customized to our customer's needs, we endeavour to partner with a number of entities to ensure digital financial inclusion for all. We thrive on continuous research, inno-

vation and introduction of products/ services that securely remove barriers. As such, AMCUL has partnered with key players in the digital financial space to empower and connect our low-income customers with access to and utilization of digital services that leverage innovation and technology to promote financial inclusion. This will be achieved through the open API initiative that we have launched today."

He added that the success of such developments which accelerate the integration of merchants with Airtel Money across the country are hinged on impactful strategies as exhibited today.

UNCDF's partnership with AMCUL is part of its flagship program to drive the growth of inclusive digital economies. Fostering inclusive innovation to deliver affordable services to low-income communities in Uganda, such as smallholder farmers, women, refugees, youth, and MSMEs, is an integral element of this digital agenda. Since 2017, UNCDF has been convening the country's digital financial services industry players to promote lowering the barriers to accessing key APIs and open the innovation space for new solutions to benefit everyone, particularly underserved customers.

UNCDF Digital Regional Manager, East and Southern Africa, Mike McCaffrey said: "Over the last ten years, Uganda's digital financial services ecosystem has grown exponentially, majorly driven by mobile money. The next wave of growth in Uganda's digital economy will require more innovation beyond payments. Third-party innovators are looking for the opportunity to integrate directly and easily into existing digital systems and infrastructure. By opening their APIs to third-party innovators, financial services providers like Airtel Money foster the growth of new solutions customized to the needs of the population, especially the rural and low-income populations." 🌍

UNIDO PIONEERS INNOVATIVE VIRTUAL REALITY-BASED SIMULATOR TRAINING FOR ROAD CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT OPERATORS ACROSS ALL DISTRICTS IN UGANDA

By Stefan Windberger, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)



Operator using the new VR simulator ©UNIDO Uganda

To address the industrial skills gap in Uganda, the Government of Japan, the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT), and UNIDO, with technical support from Japanese partner Komatsu Ltd., are building the first dedicated training centre for road construction equipment operators in Uganda, METRAC (Mechanical Engineering Training and Advisory Centre – Luwero).

In recent years, the Government of Uganda has procured road construction and maintenance equipment such as motor graders, wheel loaders, excavators, bulldozers and backhoes and distributed them to District Local Governments across the country. METRAC will allow to match this investment in road machinery with an equivalent investment in human resources, by training over 500 Ugandan road construction equipment trainers, operators and youth seeking employment.

As part of the training, UNIDO and Komatsu Ltd. handed over four dedicated virtual reality (VR) simulators to the Ministry of Works & Transport, and so far trained over 100 wheel loader and excavator operators from all over Uganda on these VR simulators.

The VR simulators are based on a computer with dedicated software, VR goggles, and additional equipment such as a steering wheel for the wheel loader simulator or a joystick for the excavator simulator. Once an operator puts the virtual reality goggles on, they will feel as

if they are sitting in the cabin of their machine. Compared to 'classical' training on actual machines, these simulators provide a safe and controlled training environment for operators to learn and practice their skills, without the risk of injury or damage to their equipment. In addition, simulator training reduces the high fuel costs for training on actual equipment, and thereby also contributes to a greener environment.

From a skills development perspective, simulator-based training allows the Government of Uganda to easily assess basic knowledge and skill levels before onboarding a new operator, while operators can develop, practice and test their skills as they work through tasks that progressively build on knowledge and skill proficiency in machine operation.

Albert Atuhura, in charge of the simulators on behalf of MoWT, states that "this simulator training will help reduce the number of breakdowns of the machines that are deployed in each Ugandan district, and increase the effectiveness of machine usage for all our staff at the MoWT, the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), and other entities using road construction equipment in Uganda."

Due to high demand, the simulator training will continue in the next months, and by the end of the year, over 500 road construction equipment operators will be trained in total. 🌍

UNICEF's water system transforms lives in Longaroe Sub-county, Kotido District

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"The moment I saw construction taking place for the water system, I ran and asked, and they said it was a watering system that will provide water for home use, gardening and animal-watering," Daniel recalls with a smile. "I was so happy. It's made a difference in our lives." ©UNICEF Uganda



The Nacuuma Multi-Use Water System by UNICEF to improve water access in the Nacuuma Village. The system was installed at a cost of US\$250,000 and financed through UNICEF's set-aside funds meant to combat climate change. ©UNICEF Uganda

can be overcome, and peace can prevail.

"We identified the dire need for the MUWS in improving the lives of the community in Nacuuma. While they grapple with many challenges, including tick infestation, the construction of this system by UNICEF has impacted the community positively," notes John-Bosco Sempala, the UNICEF WASH Specialist based in the Karamoja Region.

The MUWS project has truly been a lifeline of hope for the people of Longaroe Sub-county. It has improved community resilience, provided essential services to schools and health-care facilities. 🌍



UN AIMS TO INCREASE PROCUREMENT FROM UGANDAN SUPPLIERS

By Mark Kaheru, United Nations Regional Service Centre Entebbe (RSCE)



Mr. Paulin Djomo, Director, RSCE stresses the requirements for Ugandan business community required to join the UN Global Market ©RSCE

On 3 May 2023, the United Nations Procurement Division, Global Procurement and Support Section (GPSS) based at the Regional Service Centre Entebbe (RSCE) hosted a UN Business Seminar in Entebbe. One of the objectives was to create awareness of the existing UN business opportunities to the business community and how to register on the United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM).

The UNGM is the procurement portal of the UN System that links the supplier community to the UN USD 14 billion annual budget for goods and services.

Representatives from 70 Ugandan businesses participated in the seminar where they were introduced to the UNGM and given an understanding on how to do business with the UN. On top of presentations from GPSS and RSCE, representatives from peacekeeping missions and funds and programmes

briefed the business community on topics ranging from Sustainable Procurement and Ethics in Procurement to Business Opportunities in UNISFA (UN Interim Security Force in Abyei) and Mission Procurement in MONUSCO (UN Stabilization Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo).

Over 6,486 Uganda companies are registered with the UNGM. According to the UN procurement statistics published in 2021, the total procurement volume from Uganda was in the amount of \$186.62 million making Uganda the 37 ranked supplier country.



"We would like to see an increase of Ugandan vendors doing business with the United Nations," said Paulin Djomo, Director Regional Service Centre Entebbe (RSCE).

GPSS procures services and commodities globally which gives Ugandan businesses access to a global market and not just Entebbe or Uganda. This also means that the companies are competing internationally and must ensure they are structured, financially sound and they have proper records and accounts. They



A cross section of the Ugandan business community that attended the UN GPSS Business Seminar ©RSCE

also need to show their ability to supply and compete in the global arena and with companies already supplying to the United Nations.

“By registering your business on the UN global marketplace, you will introduce your products and services to many UN organizations, countries, and regions. I urge you to seize this opportunity and use it to connect with the likeminded businesspeople in this room.” he added.

Hon. Francis Mwebesa, Uganda Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives encouraged the business community to enhance their potential to successfully do business with the UN.



The combined purchasing power of UN organizations holds significant potential to influence the market in favor of sustainable development. Sustainable procurement practices indeed integrate requirements, specifications and criteria that are compatible and in favor of the protection of the environment, of social progress and in support of economic development, namely by seeking resource efficiency, improving the quality of products and services, and ultimately optimizing costs.” He said.

The top procurement requirements in the UN Secretariat include items in areas of security, transport and storage, industry, industrial cleaning, building & construction among others.

“It is important for businesses to register first with the UNGM and then to regularly check the portal to see what is being procured each year and by which entity in which country and then they target accordingly.” Said Balakrishnan Amirthalingam, Chief, GPSS.

In response to a question on what UN principles of procurement should Ugandan business community follow, Mr. Amirthalingam pointed out that procurement activities of the UN system, from sourcing to execution are based on the principles of best value for money, fairness, integrity and transparency, effective international competition, and the needs of the UN.

To enhance the experience at the seminar, the participants were taken through a live UNGM registration session at the end of the day. 🌍

ABOUT RSCE:

The RSCE is the flagship Service Centre for the UN Secretariat and provides administrative, logistics and ICT services to 17 UN missions in Africa. The RSCE manages more than \$5bn of UN Secretariat resources, and processes nearly 66,000 commercial vendors’ invoices.

UN COUNTRY TEAM HOLDS RETREAT TO CHART WAY FORWARD



UN Country Team members with some invited development partners, and representatives from Government and academia, during their retreat on 9 June 2023 ©UN Uganda

On 8 -9 June 2023, the UN Country Team held their annual retreat. The retreat participants were UN Heads of Agencies in Uganda and their deputies.

The retreat provided an opportunity for partners to contribute their knowledge and provide feedback through panel discussions.

During the retreat, the UN Country Team agreed on key actions to work together going forward.

These actions included leveraging the UN's convening power to engage various stakeholders, collaborating with the government to address broader financing and tax governance issues, and enhancing the country's appeal for funding and financing. The UN Country Team also explored the idea of implementing pooled financing for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by drawing inspiration from successful examples in other countries. Additionally, the team recognized the need to improve their joint communication by among others crafting a more compelling narrative about the UN's work. They also agreed on the importance of identifying areas for joint resource mobilization. Lastly, the team emphasized the need for enhanced coordination, mutual accountability, and tracking of their collective efforts.

UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR MEETS FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER

On 23rd June 2023, the UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Susan Namondo met the Foreign Affairs Minister, Hon Gen. Jeje Odongo. With a mutual understanding of the importance of international collaboration, the two discussed pressing global challenges, ranging from peacekeeping and humanitarian aid to sustainable development.



Ms. Susan Namondo, UN Resident Coordinator meets Hon Gen. Jeje Odongo Minister of Foreign Affairs ©MOFA Uganda

UN COUNTRY TEAM MEETS PRESIDENT MUSEVENI, EMPHASIZING SUPPORT FOR UGANDA'S ECONOMIC TRANSITION

On 28 June 2023, members of the UN Country Team, led by the UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Susan Namondo, visited H. E. Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda at State House Entebbe. The president appreciated their willingness to support Uganda's initiative aimed at transitioning the remaining 38% of the population from subsistence farming to a thriving money economy. The group discussed a wide range of crucial topics, including the forthcoming Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit, the refugee situation in Uganda, the security challenges faced in Eastern Congo, and the ongoing implementation of the Parish Development Model (PDM). It was an enlightening exchange of ideas and strategies.



H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni meeting the UN delegation led by Ms. Susan Namondo, UN Resident Coordinator at State house Entebbe ©State House Entebbe

