



UNITED NATIONS  
UGANDA



# UN UGANDA BULLETIN

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## NEW UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR PRESENTS CREDENTIALS

By Michael Wangusa, UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO)



New United Nations Resident Coordinator in Uganda, Mr. Leonard Zulu (far right) presents his letters of credence to President Yoweri Museveni (far left) at State House Entebbe on 14 November 2024 ©PPU

**The new UN Resident Coordinator in Uganda, Mr. Leonard Zulu officially presented his credentials to the President of the Republic of Uganda at State House Entebbe, on 14 November 2024. The ceremony was also attended by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hon. Okello Henry Oryem.**

As the representative of the UN Secretary-General and the highest-ranking official of the UN Development System in Uganda, Mr. Zulu will lead and coordinate the UN's operational activities for development, fostering partnerships and driving progress for a better future for all.

Mr. Zulu, who is Zimbabwean, has more than 20 years of experience in humanitarian action, development, peacebuilding, human rights, and the protection of refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons. Prior to his appointment in Uganda, Mr. Zulu served as the UNHCR Representative in Afghanistan, where he led and coordinated the agency's operations.

Prior to that, he worked as UNHCR Representative for the South Africa Multi-Country Office (2020-2022) and Deputy Director of the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa (2019-2020). He also served in Kenya, Hungary, Serbia and Zimbabwe, as well as at UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva. Mr. Zulu has a master's degree in international law from Lund University and a Bachelor of Laws Honours Degree from the University of Zimbabwe.

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**DECADE  
OF  
ACTION**





New UN Resident Coordinator in Uganda, Mr. Leonard Zulu (4th from left) with President Yoweri Museveni (4th from right) after he received Mr. Zulu's credentials at State House, Entebbe on 14 November 2024. The UN Delegation comprised Mr. Sanusi Savage, IOM Chief of Mission (3rd from left); Ms. Gift Malunga, UNFPA Representative (2nd of Right); and Head of UN Resident Coordinator's Office, Mr. Issa Conteh ©PPU

The functions of the Resident Coordinator, as the delegated authority and representative of the Secretary-General, are outlined in paragraph 34 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977, relating to the coordination of operational activities for development by the United Nations system at the country level, and in paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018, concerning the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

In accordance with these provisions, Mr. Zulu, on behalf of the United Nations system, has overall responsibility and exercises team leadership for the coordination of operational activities for development in Uganda. Mr. Zulu is responsible for discharging these functions in conformity with the national developments priorities as outlined in Uganda's Vision 2040 and the third National Development Plan (NDP III).

As the Head of the United Nations System in Uganda he oversees the development work and humanitarian response involving 29 UN Entities and about 3000 UN personnel based at different stations all over the country. In conjunction with his duties as Resident Coordinator, Mr. Zulu is also Designated Official for Security, with responsibility for the safety and security of personnel employed by the organizations of the United Nations system and their recognized dependants throughout Uganda.

The United Nations Uganda Vision 2030 is 'A Transformed inclusive Ugandan Society where People have Improved Quality of Life and Resilience for Sustainable Development. This vision is attained through implementation of the United Nations Sustainable

Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2021-2025), in support of NDP III, focusing on three Strategic Priorities: 1) Transformative and Inclusive Governance, 2) Shared Prosperity in a Healthy Environment, and 3) Human Well-being and Resilience.

The UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) supports the UN Resident Coordinator and the UN Country Team (UNCT) to ensure the strategic, coherent and efficient functioning of the UN System in Uganda in the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and other related frameworks.

RCO supports the RC/UNCT within the context of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021 – 2025 including providing technical support, tracking and reporting progress, operations, advocacy, communications and information management to achieve agreed UNCT results annually, aimed at contributing to the achievement of national development priorities outlined in Uganda's National Vision 2040, the third National Development Plan (NDP III), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The RCO's coordination role is extended to the sub-national level through the United Nations Area Coordinators (UNAC), in the areas where the UN has a strong presence on the ground. There are currently UNACs for West Nile sub-region based in Arua City; Northern Uganda sub-region based in Gulu City; Karamoja Sub-region based in Moroto Town; and for Southwestern Uganda based in Mbarara City. The UNACs lead the committee of heads of UN field offices in all aspects of UN Delivering as One (DaO) in their area including joint annual work planning, joint field monitoring and evaluation, maximizing impact of visits of high-level UN officials to their areas, and knowledge management. 🌍



# INNOVATIVE LIVELIHOOD PATHWAYS FOR YOUTH IN UGANDA: THE ONLINE GIG WORK PROGRAMME

By Beatrice Cinco, International Labour Organization (ILO)



Jean Munguzo, a Congolese refugee and an Online Gig Work trainer, explains proper photo alignment on websites during a practical activity in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Isingiro District © ILO Uganda

## In Uganda's refugee-hosting areas, the ILO's Online Gig Work Programme empowers youth to thrive in this emerging economy as a step towards economic inclusion.

A pilot initiative by the International Labour Organization (ILO) is opening new pathways to self-reliance for young people in Uganda. Launched in January 2024, the Online Gig Work Programme equips youth with essential work skills and job linkages, enabling them to kickstart their careers by gaining experience through the growing gig economy.

Uganda, Africa's largest refugee-hosting country, faces high rates of youth unemployment and limited traditional job opportunities. An ILO rapid assessment revealed that online freelancing and gig work present potential livelihood options, particularly due to low entry barriers and flexible work arrangements that can be beneficial for groups like refugees who often face exclusion from labour markets.

Despite this, barriers persist. "To unlock the potential of digital work, we must first address issues like unreliable internet, lack of connected devices, limited access to training and insufficient transversal skills for work," notes Evans Lwanga, Chief Technical Advisor of ILO PROSPECTS in Uganda. "Ensuring decent wages

and labour and social protections for online workers also remains crucial. To bridge the gaps, the Online Gig Work Programme, implemented with StartHub Africa and Kolaborate, aims to enhance youth access to income-generating activities in the digital economy," he explains.

### Overcoming infrastructural barriers

Access to digital infrastructure is a major barrier for many young people aspiring to enter the digital economy. To overcome this, connected workspaces were set up in Nakivale Refugee Settlement and Kampala, through partnerships with Unleashed, Her Dreams Count and the Kampala City Council Authority. These hubs provide access to computers, reliable internet and electricity, and a conducive environment for learning. Collaboration with UNICEF and UNHCR further facilitated the acquisition of connected devices and mobilized digitally skilled youth.

### Boosting employability and labour rights awareness

The pilot was designed to onboard 200 young people with skills in graphic design, web development, data processing, content writing, and social media management. However, the overwhelming response saw nearly 1,800 applicants from Kampala and Isingiro districts. After screening, only 600 met the criteria, and 197 successfully completed a 10-day intensive training with one-on-one coaching sessions.



Participants during one of the information sessions conducted wherein trainers and trainees share their expectations for the programme in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Isingiro District ©ILO Uganda

More recently, 21 youth from UNICEF's digital skilling programme have also gone through the ILO programme, bringing the total number of youth trained by the ILO to 218.

"Freelancing is not as easy as it seems. Most jobs require several years of experience and positive reviews from past clients, making it difficult for newcomers to break in," shares Zulum Avila, ILO Specialist for Employment Strategies in the Digital Economy. "The program responds to this specific challenge through a training package to develop core work skills that help young people meet client expectations," she adds.

The training covers personal branding, professional communication, customer relations, technical and financial proposal writing, and the use of AI and other digital tools to boost productivity. To ensure sustainability, eight Master Trainers—including refugees—were trained to cascade the methodology to future cohorts.

Another critical aspect of the training is the awareness-raising sessions conducted by the National Organization of Trade Unions (NOTU) on labour rights for online workers, offering practical advice on navigating the challenges of online work.

**Facilitating job linkages and paving the way to bigger opportunities**

After training, participants complete a test project which allows trainers to assess their readiness for job placements or recommend further upskilling if needed. Youth deemed ready are now being connected with clients seeking freelancing services via the Kolaborate platform.

For some participants, online gigs serves as a gateway to bigger opportunities, enabling them to hone their digital skills and earn an income while working toward their goals and aspirations. For instance, Eddy Marumbi, a primary school teacher, joined the program to improve and apply his own digital skills in real-life

projects before passing it on to his students.

**Overcoming challenges and looking ahead**

Throughout implementation, some hurdles arose, including participant dropouts due to transportation difficulties and balancing training with other responsibilities. To mitigate these, the ILO introduced transport refunds, created WhatsApp support groups, and offered flexible training schedules. Offline learning materials were also provided for participants with unreliable internet access.



Looking ahead, the ILO is building on the lessons learned from this pilot to explore scaling the programme to other refugee-hosting communities across Uganda, including West Nile, with the goal of creating a more inclusive digital economy for all. We are also looking at ways to ensure the sustainability of this initiative, notably through leveraging public-private partnerships," added Melissa Kyeyune, National Project Coordinator on Digital Skills and Microwork. 🌍

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*The Online Gig Work Programme is a joint effort of ILO PROSPECTS Uganda and the Opportunity Fund project on the Promotion, inclusion and protection of refugees and host communities in the gig economy, funded by the Kingdom of the Netherlands.*



## BOLSTERING PUBLIC AWARENESS TO HELP CURB MPOX SPREAD IN UGANDA

By Anthony Bugembe, World Health Organization (WHO)



Dr. Kenneth Kabali, WHO Field Coordinator for Busoga Sub-region sensitizes the community in Mayuge District on Mpox ©WHO Uganda

### Uganda is witnessing an upsurge in Mpox cases, with laboratory-confirmed cases increasing from 24 as of 21 September to 649 cases and two deaths in 45 districts as of 22 November 2024.

Among the key measures to curb the spread of mpox, health authorities, with support from World Health Organization (WHO) and partners, are working closely with communities to raise awareness about the dangers of the disease, how to stay safe, address misinformation and stigma to ensure that affected communities are confident in seeking medical assistance to help halt the spread of the virus. Cases have been confirmed in 37 districts since 24 July 2024 when the first case was reported.

WHO supports Ministry of Health to strengthen other crucial outbreak control measures including disease surveillance, testing and case management. More than 2000 health workers in the Kampala metropolitan area have been trained so far and WHO is actively reinforcing laboratory systems to accelerate sample collection and analysis.

“By engaging the community, we ensure that they understand the causes of mpox, where to report when they have the disease, the signs and symptoms and how to manage it,” says Simon Menya, a community health extension worker in Mayuge District. “That way we also support other pillars like surveillance and contact tracing.”

Community health extension workers like Menya provide a critical

connection to communities in the most-affected districts, providing accurate health information and prevention messages to people who are most at risk of contracting the virus.

Nakasongola District lies on the shores of Lake Kyoga, where a large portion of the population make their living from fishing. The highly mobile nature of the fisherfolk here, coupled with close contact interactions within the community, has resulted in high levels of transmission. The district accounts for nearly 20% of Uganda’s mpox cases.

“The increase in the number of cases is largely driven by high transmission among sex workers, truck drivers, fishing communities and other informal occupations. The level of interaction among these groups is high, thereby increasing the likelihood of local mpox transmission in the communities,” says Dr Charles Okot, WHO Uganda’s mpox incident manager.

Working alongside Ministry of Health, WHO is providing technical guidance, logistical support and human resources to strengthen the response in Nakasongola.

WHO is also helping to raise awareness among local communities of the risks posed by the mpox virus and preventive measures needed to stay safe.

The risk communication and community engagement team in Nakasongola has so far reached more than 100 fishmongers, fisherfolk, boda boda riders, 8000 school children and 30 sex workers. In addition, 500 teachers in the district have been oriented on mpox.

### 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

WHO has deployed two anthropologists, one to Nakasongola and another to Kampala. The experts are helping health authorities understand the cultural beliefs, practices and social norms that may influence people's attitudes towards mpox and their willingness to seek healthcare.

In Nakasongola, Dr. Chris Olesen has conducted more than 10 social and cultural group dialogues, helping to inform surveillance and risk communication strategies.

In the Kampala metropolitan area, the anthropologist has reached about 1200 people, with emphasis on students and other high-risk groups.

The Kibira dance, a weekly event in Nakasongola drawing large numbers of bartenders, sex workers, fisherfolk and other groups from the surrounding areas, was identified as a significant transmission point due to high levels of close physical interaction.

"We have emphasized to the community to practice safe behaviours and to report all people with mpox signs and symptoms to the nearest health facility or village health team," says Dr. Olesen.

According to Dr. Olesen, many people initially self-medicated for an extended period, but as a result of engagement with WHO and health authorities, reported to health facilities for appropriate treatment and care. "The subsequent cases are now to the isolation or treatment centre in Nakasongola," he adds.

Much of the stigma and discrimination faced by people infected with mpox stems from misinformation about the virus. Some people think that the disease is only transmitted by sexual contact, particularly among high-risk groups such as men who have sex with men and sex workers.

This misconception leads some people to avoid seeking medical care, fearing stigma and discrimination. This has contributed to the cases of sporadic community transmissions and threatens the public health response.



Some of the causes of the high number of mpox cases include lack of information and it is the reason why the risk communication team is on ground to see that we can sensitize people," says Lydia Aliyenka, a Ministry of Health behaviour change communication officer in Nakasongola District.

In addition to engaging communities, WHO is using mass media to expand the reach of mpox response communication.

With funding from United States Agency for International Development (USAID), WHO has contracted 10 regional radio stations and two national TV stations to raise awareness and promote preventative behaviour.



A risk communication team engages the community in Nakasongola District on mpox prevention ©WHO Uganda



Simon Menya, a community extension worker in Mayuge District, sensitizes the community on Mpox ©WHO Uganda

In addition, more than 173,000 posters and around 217,000 flyers in English and local languages have been printed and distributed by field teams to enhance awareness and behaviour change in 18 districts across Uganda.

"I now wash my hands more often, I don't shake hands with strangers, am careful with suspicious animals and seek medical attention immediately if I feel unwell," says Godwin Asimwe a survivor.

By using different modes of risk communication, WHO and Ministry of Health officials are able to expand the reach of important preventative messages and tackle the stigma associated with mpox.

"With support from partners, we are doing our best to prevent and manage mpox infections in vulnerable populations, such as children, pregnant women and immunocompromised people, as well as to avert outbreaks in institutional settings like schools and refugee settlements," says Dr. Charles Njuguna, Acting WHO Representative in Uganda. 🌍

## IOM SUPPORTS UGANDA'S RESPONSE TO MPOX

By Joyce Nakato, International Organization for Migration (IOM)



An IOM Uganda staff member facilitates the integrated surveillance training for the Village Health Teams from around Kyanika Border Post ©IOM Uganda

### As Mpox rages in Sub-Saharan Africa, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is stepping up support to the Ugandan Government to contain the latest outbreak of the viral disease.

According to the Migration Health Programme Officer Caroline Akullo Ogwok, IOM Uganda has so far collaborated with the Ministry of Health to boost surveillance capacities at 21 border posts. IOM has handed over Infection Prevention and Control supplies (IPCs) including Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) amounting to \$25,000 to support Uganda's response to the Mpox outbreak.

IOM's interventions are guided by the Organization's Health, Border and Mobility Management (HBMM) framework, which aims to improve prevention, detection and response to health threats.

During a Cross-Border Meeting on Mpox Outbreak in Africa on 28 October 2024, IOM Uganda Chief of Mission Sanusi Tejan Savage reiterated IOM's commitment to supporting the country's response to public health threats. He said IOM's Mpox preparedness and response plan specifically targets migrants, IDPs, highly mobile populations, and cross-border and host communities.

"IOM, as a lead Agency for Ports of Entry (PoEs), has established the PoE sub-pillar Technical Working Group (TWG) in partnership with Africa CDC and WHO, to support Member States in strengthening capacities at PoEs in terms of preparedness and response," Mr. Savage said in a speech read for him by Dr. Risatul Islam, IOM Uganda's Chief Migration Health Officer.

IOM has also supported the integrated training of 182 border stakeholders, including health workers, as well as security, Uganda

Revenue Authority, and immigration officials. The training at the border posts of Busanza, Bunagana, Kyanika and Elegu, covered disease surveillance, infection prevention, and case management.

Additionally, 825 Village Health Teams in the border communities of Kisoro and Elegu have also been trained on Community Event-Based Surveillance (CEBS) to aid in early detection and reporting of suspected Mpox cases.

To support risk communication, IOM has produced at least 2,500 posters and banners in seven languages, which are being distributed to the most vulnerable communities. Earlier, in July, IOM had donated 21 Television screens to various border posts. These are now being used to broadcast audio-visual messages on Mpox, targeting travelers going through the border posts.

IOM is further supporting the screening of Mpox through the already existing thermal scanners procured during the Ebola Virus Disease response. To date, some 30,000 people have been screened and reached through the dissemination of risk communication messages.

Since August 2024, IOM has been responding to the recent Mpox outbreak in Africa and the number of confirmed cases has risen sharply from over 2,800 in 12 countries to more than 9,300 in 34 countries as of 20 October 2024. In Uganda, by 31 October, 222 cumulative cases and one death had been confirmed.

In response to the escalating numbers, IOM is appealing for US\$ 27.8 million to protect and support migrants, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and mobile populations in Africa. 🌍

## SWEDEN'S FLEXIBLE FUNDING SAVING LIVES OF MOTHERS AND BABIES IN WEST NILE

### Maternal, new-born health, nutrition and WASH indicators improve since 2017 long term investments

By Catherine Ntabadde, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)



Dr. Samuel Hakiranuye attends to an underweight baby admitted in the neonatal intensive care unit at the nutrition clinic, Arua Regional Referral Hospital ©UNICEF Uganda

### Before 2017, health, nutrition, water and sanitation indicators in West Nile sub-region, Northern Uganda were alarming.

With long term investments by UNICEF, funded by the Swedish Government, these indicators have improved. Less women are dying before, during and after delivery. Neonatal mortality rates have gone down. More mothers, fathers and community members have picked interest in the nutritional status of their children to prevent malnutrition. In terms of access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services at health facilities, this has tremendously improved.

Thanks to continuous collaboration between UNICEF, district local government leadership, Ministry of Health, leadership of regional referral hospitals, district general hospitals, health centre IV, III and II and partners like AVSI, CUAMM.

During a recent media field visit to West Nile, authorities at Arua Regional Referral Hospital reported the following:

- Maternity admissions are now at 7,500 (26 per cent are referrals to maternity) from 3,485 in 2019/2020.

- Institutional deliveries are at 82 per cent from 42 per cent in 2019/2020.
- Total deliveries are 6,794 from 3,073 in 2019/2020.
- Live births are at 96 per cent.
- Out of the 6,519 live births in 2023/2024, the hospital recorded 435 babies (7 per cent) with asphyxia. Of these, 98 babies were successfully resuscitated.
- Maternal mortality rate is 279.7 per 100,000 live births compared to 520.7 per 100,000 live births in 2019/2020.
- Maternal death was reported at 19 from 22 in 2022/23, 30 in 2021/22 and 31 in 2020/21.
- Total surgical operations were 2,785 of which 87 per cent are caesarean section rates.

“UNICEF has done a great job to support this hospital across many sectors. We are grateful for this support and hope it will continue. UNICEF has bridged the gap that Ministry of Health cannot handle. We thank everyone that is behind this including the donor, Sweden,” Dr. Alex Andema, Director Arua Regional Referral Hospital.

### 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Dr. Gilbert Aniku, a pediatrician while presenting the impact of UNICEF-Sweden investments to the media noted tremendous progress in the areas of maternity, gyn theatre, high dependency unit, neo-natal intensive care unit, nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene services.

When it comes to the neo-natal intensive unit at the regional referral hospital, 1,350 babies were admitted this financial year 2023/2024. Despite all the interventions, 161 babies died in the acute care unit in the same year. Doctors attribute this to several factors including late referrals, limitations in respiratory system in terms of oxygen supply, which is affected by power surge, infections among others.

The survival rate of premature babies is at 83 per cent of the 329 premature baby cases recorded at the hospital.

In the area of nutrition, a total of 254 severe acute malnutrition cases were reported in the out-patient therapeutic centre. 87.1 per cent of malnourished children were successfully treated at the hospital's intensive therapeutic centre.

At Bondo Health Centre IV in Arua District, the water system provided in 2018 is still operational and communities enjoy safe and clean water.

"We have been using this water since 2018. The taps installed for the community are managed by a committee which collects UGX1,000 per month from 300 households. It is this money that we use to maintain the taps. This water is only used for domestic use. We open the taps 6 a.m. and close at 7 a.m. when most of the learners have collected water," Lematia Tom, Secretary of the water user committee explained.

At Bondo, UNICEF installed a solar powered water motorized system providing water to the health centre and maternity wards, staff quarters and community, constructed toilets, bathing shelters for men and women, placenta pit, incinerator.

"There used to be many infections related diseases. The situation has improved, and the communities have access to safe and clean water in addition to accessing health services," Dr. Peace Eyotaru, the In-Charge Medical Officer Bondo Health Centre IV mentioned.

UNICEF's Chief of Field Office, Arua, Mystica Aceng, hailed district authorities for the long-term collaboration which has seen the transformation of lives of vulnerable communities, hence contributing to their well-being.

In Koboko, the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Herman Ejoku revealed that their health services are targeting South Sudanese and Congolese refugees, and nationals. He mentioned that the district is very grateful to UNICEF for the support in health, WASH and nutrition noting that need to scale up the service intervention to other villages especially those in rural areas.

"What would we have done without these interventions. In our work, we plan for 23,000 people including urban refugees who are not living in the settlements but live within the community," Ejoku mentioned.

UNICEF with funding from the Government of Sweden recruited 29 health workers including medical doctors, nutritionist, laboratory technician, enrolled midwives, neo-natal nurses,



Brender Never, a lead mother, showcases how to read and code mid-upper arm circumference findings to identify severe and moderate malnutrition in infants during a demonstration of Family led MUAC (mid-upper arm circumference) in Dranya County, Koboko District ©UNICEF Uganda



Marion Namubiru, a nursing assistant, attends to a child admitted with severe acute malnutrition in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Arua Regional Referral Hospital ©UNICEF Uganda

enrolled nurses for Koboko Local Government between 2019-2021. All these health workers have been absorbed into the local government system.

Koboko General Hospital, strategically located near the West Nile border, serves patients from Uganda, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), including refugees from nearby resettlement camps. Dr. Denis Oloya, the district health officer, explains that healthcare facilities in DRC and South Sudan are situated far inland, making Koboko General Hospital essential for border communities. UNICEF Nutrition Officer for Arua Field Office Hilda Kawuki highlights the organisation's support for the district, providing nutrition and sanitation services. "UNICEF covers everyone in need based on our resources; we work to address the unique challenges faced by Koboko," she states, emphasizing their commitment to integrated child health care based on local needs.

In Adjumani at Dzaipi Health Centre III, UNICEF is working with the district authorities and health officials to implement a programme where young people educate their peers about basic healthcare, particularly the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, seeking antenatal care in time which has significantly reduced maternal death rates in the West Nile sub-region. Harriet Bitimwine, the UNICEF Arua Field Office Health Officer, noted that early pregnancies have been a major factor in high maternal mortality hence UNICEF's initiative of introducing adolescent clinics at specific health facilities to allow young mothers seek health services freely. 🌍

## MAISHA: AN INDIGENOUS MALARIA MEDICATION DEVELOPED BY MAKERERE STUDENTS

By Joel Akena, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



Young ladies holding the Maisha syrup at a local health care facility ©UNDP Uganda

### According to the 2022 Global Malarial Report by the World Health Organization (WHO), Uganda was reported with the world's highest malaria incidence rate of 478 cases per 1,000 population per year

It is also the leading cause of sickness and death in Uganda and is responsible for up to 40 percent of all outpatient visits, 25 percent of hospital admissions, and 14 percent of all hospital deaths. Malaria is caused by a parasite belonging to the Plasmodium family. The parasite can be spread to humans through the bites of infected mosquitoes. The Plasmodium Falciparum type is mainly found in Africa and is a common cause of complicated and fatal malaria worldwide.

Joel Felix Ochom a third-year pharmacy student at Makerere University, narrowly survived becoming a malaria-death statistic at the age of 14. This experience sparked his passion to finding a permanent cure for the malaria disease. After joining Makerere University to pursue a Bachelor of Pharmacy, Joel convinced his friends, Valentine Muhoozi, Jimmy Kabuna, Robert Zziwa and Rita Ainembabazi formed a team to research on the different options of drugs for treating malaria.

### The Malaria Drug Research

The team, led by Joel Felix Ochom, discovered that one of the reasons for increased Malaria death cases in Uganda was the multi-drug resistance to malaria pathogens, this is in addition to poor diagnosis and late treatment of patients.



I shared with my team that when I was younger, I got sick with malaria, my parents would administer a bitter local herb to me, and it cured me.” Joel narrated, inspired by this, the team decided to research more on this local herb and explore options of making it a syrup, more palatable for human use but most importantly, a cure to the malaria disease.

While making the medicine mix, the pharmacy lab lacked some of the necessary equipment, so they visited the Makerere University Innovation Pod (Mak-UniPod) where they had access to equipment like the industrial mixer and were able to successfully make their syrup concoctions.

### 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The team then conducted preclinical tests of the syrup on animals at the Central Laboratory Animal Research Facility at the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB) Makerere University. They are further conducting tests from the Clinical Trial of Natural Therapeutics Uganda (CoNAT) to check for any side effects caused by the drug.

The team then sought permission to administer the Maisha malaria drug in the paediatrics ward of the Mulago National Referral Hospital. When they administered the drug to a child, he got cured of malaria. This inspired them to name their drug Maisha. The name of the drug is a Kiswahili word Maisha which means “alive” or “prosperous life.” Indeed, this was confirmed by more testimonials from people who got healed after taking the drug.

#### Maisha malaria drug commercialization

After successfully completing the tests, the team needed guidance on how to have their innovation scaled to commercialization. They utilized the Mak-UniPod Knowledge Transfer office to have the Maisha malaria drug patented and are currently in the process of registering a pharmaceutical company named ProPhyto Pharma Uganda Ltd by the Uganda Registration Services Bureau as a herbal drug. The team is now in the final steps of acquiring the National Drug Authority certification.

Universities are havens of knowledge and sources of innovations, with the potential to transform nations. As the Accelerator Lab team, supporting such innovators does not only improve their livelihoods but also helps us to learn and map solutions that contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for scaling. This is the reason for establishing a University Innovation Pod (UniPod), to support and nurture such innovations. This innovation was selected by the Hult Prize, an initiative which encourages young people to solve the world’s most pressing issues through social entrepreneurship. Here is the video about this innovation. 🌍



Joel Felix Ochom (centre in white) takes a photo with visiting patients at a local health care facility ©UNDP Uganda



Close up image of the indigenous Maisha syrup medication ©UNDP Uganda



Joel Felix Ochom (second left) and his research team at Makerere University ©UNDP Uganda

## EMPOWERMENT AND LIVELIHOOD CLUBS HELP BOYS TRANSIT FROM ADOLESCENCE TO ADULTHOOD IN KARAMOJA

By Patricia Nangiro, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)



Twenty four year old Etwalameri Lourien Yoahana shares his learning and experience as a member of an all boys ELA club of Loyaraboth village, Tapac sub-county, Moroto District ©UNFPA Uganda

**Adolescents and young people face significant barriers that undermine their sexual reproductive health and rights. During adolescence, a number of changes occur including physical psychological and social changes associated with puberty.**

This was the case of twenty-four-year-old Etwalameri Lourien Yoahana living in the northeastern Uganda district of Moroto who shares his personal experience, shedding light on the challenges faced by many young people like himself in the Karamoja sub-region.

According to Etwalameri, the lack of sexual reproductive health information for his peers at an early age probably contributed to his decision to marry a wife at just nineteen years and another three years later, becoming a father of four children.

Limited by access to sexual reproductive health information and services, young people face a perplexing period of transition from adolescence to adulthood, characterised by vulnerability to

child marriage, teenage pregnancies, exposure to HIV and sexual violence.

“As a teenager, I had no idea what was happening to my body. I would wake up in the morning confused and run and hide behind the hut because I did not understand that erections were a normal and natural part of being male,” he narrates.

“Yes, I knew all about my home chores, like taking care of livestock, but nothing prepared me to understand the changes happening in my body, physically and emotionally.... I even started fancying girls so much and longing to be with them, but I didn't know how to handle such feelings,” he narrates.

It was until October 2023 when he joined the boys Loyaraboth empowerment and livelihood club that he began to understand what was happening to him.

“I participated in a group discussion that was talking about ‘Adolescents and Body Changes’, and then I understood my own and other boys’ journey of growing up to the young adults that we are now.

“It is a decision I could have delayed had I known that the body changes I was experiencing at that time pushed me to marry or engage in early sex,” he says.

Today, Etwalameri is among the 60 members of Loyaraboth empowerment and livelihoods for adolescents boys club who meet three times weekly to learn about adolescents, reproductive health, gender based violence, HIV prevention among other topics.

With funding from the Austrian Development Agency (ADA II Project) UNFPA has supported 42 Empowerment and Livelihoods for Adolescents (ELA) clubs for out-of-school boys and girls aged 10 - 24 years, in six districts of Karamoja sub-region, directly engaging 1,984 young people weekly. These clubs have enabled access to sexual reproductive health and rights education, linkage to adolescent friendly services, life skills training and support to small scale economic activities. With this approach, UNFPA ensures that adolescents and youth flourish on their road to adulthood.

The revised Uganda Adolescent Health Policy 2021 emphasizes the fundamental rights of adolescents and young people to correct health and well being information, and puts in place mechanisms to improve access and availability of adolescent responsive health services and information by addressing the bottlenecks to uptake of services.

Etwalameri as a key participant in the boys club takes this opportunity to learn seriously and he also puts into practice some of the learning. He says,

“

In this very club, we discuss the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse among young people, which is a factor increasing the prevalence of violence against women. I avoid alcohol abuse because I want to have peace in my home and also be able to support my children to go to school, since I did not receive any education,” he says.

“

My appeal is that every young person is enrolled in a club like ours because parents do not give information to struggling adolescents, and there are a lot of taboos and misconceptions.”

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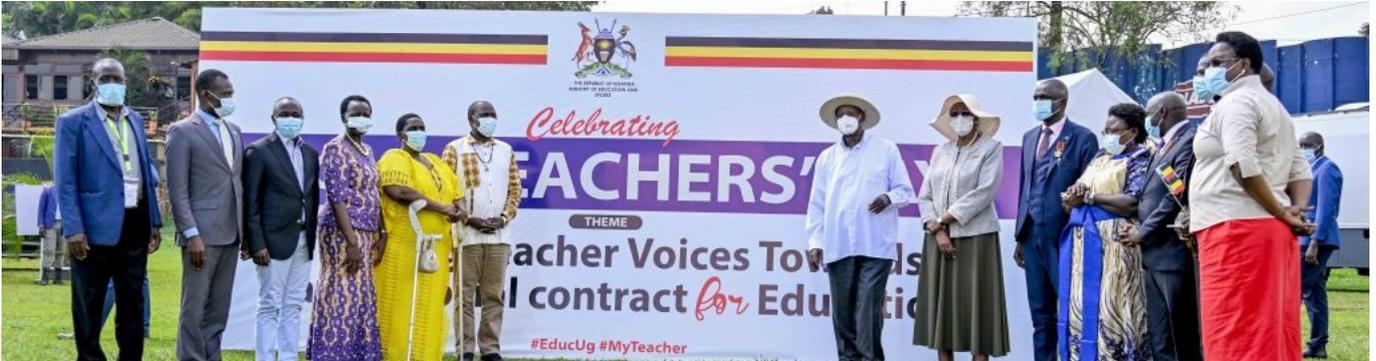


According to the National Population and Housing Census (2024), adolescents and young people including children comprise 73.2 percent of the population. This population could offer enormous socio-economic gains to the country, but only if their adolescence - transition from childhood to adulthood - is effectively managed through an integrated set of policies and programmes that addresses the “whole person” and pays close attention to the context in which young people live. 🌍



## UNESCO URGES GOVERNMENT TO PRIORITIZE TEACHERS' VOICES IN DECISION-MAKING

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



H.E. Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the President of the Republic of Uganda officiated at the World Teachers Day Celebration at Lugogo Cricket Oval in Kampala ©UNESCO Uganda

### President Yoweri Museveni presided over the belated celebration of World Teachers' Day 2024 in Uganda at Lugogo Cricket Oval in Kampala on 19th October 2024 at an event where UNESCO called for teacher voices to be prioritized in policy.

The event highlighted the critical role teachers play in shaping the future of education and underscored the importance of incorporating their voices in decision-making processes, especially policy reforms.

The 2024 celebration was commemorated under theme "Valuing Teachers Voices Towards a New Social Contract for Education." The event was attended by different categories of stakeholders including, teachers, government officials, development partners, Academia, Civil Society Organization, as well as learners.

In his address, the President Yoweri expressed the government's commitment to improving teachers' working conditions, citing the country's growing economy. "Our goal is clear, the economy is expanding, and inflation is low. Our aim is to ensure that all public servants are well compensated while also increasing the number of public servants," he stated. The President further reiterated the need recruit more teachers to balance the pupil-teacher ratio as a tool to improving the overall education outcome.

A joint statement from UNESCO, ILO, UNICEF, and Education International, delivered by Mr. Lamine Sow Mamadou, Chief of Education at UNESCO's Regional Office for Eastern Africa based in Nairobi, called for the empowerment of teachers as transformative intellectuals and community leaders. The statement emphasized the need for resilient and equitable education systems that serve the public good and uplift communities. "Recognizing and respecting their role as professionals is vital to restoring their social standing and improving the quality of education worldwide, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4."

"By acknowledging teachers as creative intellectuals and innovative professionals within a new social contract for education, we can protect their labor rights and harness their insights to shape effective educational practices," said Mr. Lamine.



Teacher Union Representatives @UNESCO Uganda

The First Lady, and Minister of Education and Sports, Mrs. Janet Museveni, in her address during the expressed concerns over the ever-increasing number to teacher absenteeism despite increasing efforts by the government to motivate the teaching profession.

"As Government, we shall do our part by putting in place necessary policies and frameworks to guide and strengthen our education sector," said the Minister.

In the joint presentation delivered by Evans Kaganizo Mutesasira, the president general of the Uganda Liberal Teachers' Union, the teachers called for salary harmonization, opportunities for professional development, improvement of school infrastructure, including staff houses. The teachers also called for professional schemes of service for all teachers ensuring that all those who attained the requirements are promoted and given better pay. The teachers also demanded that the curriculum reforms cover all levels of education, starting with primary.

The objectives of the World Teachers' Day 2024 celebration in Uganda highlighted the event's commitment to uplifting the teaching profession and reinforcing the crucial role of educators in shaping the nation's future. The celebration focused on three core objectives: recognizing and appreciating the invaluable contributions of teachers to education and society, advocating for teachers' rights, status, and professional autonomy, and inspiring educators to continue making a positive societal impact through active advocacy and constructive social dialogue. 🌍



## BATTLING ADVERSITY: A MOTHER'S EIGHT-YEAR STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE AND HOPE IN BUNDIBUGYO

By Samuel Wamuttu, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)



Consolata stands beside her shops that are under construction in Bundibugyo Town Council ©UN Women

### Consolata Kabanyoro, a 38-year-old mother of two, has faced adversity for over eight years as a resident of City Square Cell in Bundibugyo Town Council, Bundibugyo District.

In 2010, she lost her husband, and his death sparked disputes among his four wives over the inheritance of his property. Despite him leaving behind four pieces of land, one of the widows attempted to claim all of them, leaving the others with nothing.

Confronted with the challenge of raising her children alone, Consolata sought help from the police so that she could access justice, but her efforts proved futile. "At first, I went to the police seeking help, but all this was in vain as I was never supported," Consolata recalls.

Her situation changed when she attended a school outreach organised by Compassion International, a Christian charity focusing on child poverty, in Bundibugyo Town Council. The event, aimed at educating parents in the area, introduced Consolata to Justice Centres Uganda (JCU). She shared her discoveries with her two other co-wives who all agreed to visit JCU and get more details on the process.

Justice Centres Uganda intervened in the dispute by summoning all the parties and educating the widows on the importance of equitable distribution of the children's inheritance from their late father. As a result, JCU effectively facilitated the process that ensured a fair and equitable division of the land equally among the widows. Consolata was allocated a plot in Bundibugyo Town Council, where she is currently constructing shops to enhance her income.

"My children are now doing better than before as I can pay their school fees

promptly. The eldest has been able to finish college, while the younger one is in Senior Three," she reveals.

Consolata is full of praise for UN Women and JCU for restoring her faith in accessing justice for vulnerable women like herself.

"I would never have known about my property rights after years of seeking help from the police without success. I urge partners to continue supporting women facing similar challenges in Uganda so that they too can access justice," she says, her face visibly beaming with gratitude.

Consolata's case was handled thanks to a 5-year Joint Programme on Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence (GBV), integrating Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (UNJPGBV). This programme, funded by the Government of Sweden, is a partnership between the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women, in collaboration with the Ugandan Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MGLSD). The UNJPGBV is a national initiative with various interventions at community, institutional, and policy levels in 14 selected districts.

Consolata is a happy woman who can now fully meet her responsibilities as a parent, ensuring her children receive education, medical care, and other necessities in life. 🌟



# KEY ACTORS DISCUSS URGENT SOLUTIONS AGAINST VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN UGANDA

By Michael Kisitu, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)



Panelists from the different government agencies, Civil Society Organizations and Religious leader discussing some of the key findings from the Rapid Threat Assessment Report on Violent Extremism in Uganda ©UNODC Uganda

## With support from the European Union (EU), representatives from the Government of Uganda, Civil Society, the United Nations, and the donor community convened in Kampala for a crucial multi-stakeholder round table discussion.

The event focused on the findings of the Rapid Threat Assessment Report on Violent Extremism in Uganda. This gathering is a critical step toward evaluating the current challenges posed by violent extremism in high-risk communities and purposing actionable recommendations to enhance national efforts in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism (PCVET).

The event, organised in partnership between the Government of Uganda, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), with funding from the EU, brought together over 100 key stakeholders, including representatives from Government ministries, departments, and agencies, civil society organizations, and religious leaders. Discussions centered around the dynamics of violent extremism in Uganda, including the drivers of radicalization, and how coordinated interventions can strengthen resilience in communities at risk.

The key objectives of the round table discussion were: disseminating and analyzing the findings of the Rapid Threat Assessment, which examined patterns, factors, and dynamics of violent extremism and radicalization in Uganda's most vulnerable communities; and Identifying gaps and challenges in current counter-extremism efforts and proposing practical recommendations for the Government, civil society, and international partners to strengthen interventions.

The event commenced with opening remarks from Gen. David Muhoozi, Uganda's Minister of Internal Affairs, who emphasized the importance of peace and security in line with Uganda's Vision 2040. He acknowledged the complexity of the drivers behind extremism and elaborated on the Government's commitment to implementing the PCVET strategy.

Lt. General Joseph Musanyufu, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, affirmed the Government's commitment to address the root causes of radicalization and ensure that personnel are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to respond effectively to threats of violent extremism.

Ms. Ashita Mittal, UNODC Regional Representative for Eastern Africa, praised Uganda for its commitment to addressing the intricate issue of violent extremism. She expressed gratitude for the enduring collaboration with the Government of Uganda, acknowledging the significant advancements the country has achieved in combating terrorism and violent extremism. Furthermore, she expressed satisfaction that this project will enhance and broaden those ongoing initiatives.

Ms. Susan Ngongi Namondo, UN Resident Coordinator in Uganda, reiterated the UN's support for Uganda's efforts to combat violent extremism. She emphasized the UN's focus on promoting peace, human rights, and

*Continued on page 19*



## BORN OUT OF TRAGEDY, A JOURNEY OF HOPE

By Badre Bahaji, United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)



Suzanne Pita stands proudly in front of her new home ©WFP Uganda

### Suzanne Pita stood at the edge of her small plot of land in Uganda, her heart heavy with memories of the past and hopes for the future.

It had been eight years since she had fled South Sudan, where violence had torn her family apart. The day she left was etched in her mind: the flames devouring her home, the screams echoing in the distance, and the haunting loss of her three nephews.

"I saw my own nephews getting killed," she often whispered to herself, trying to drown out the memories that threatened to surface.

She remembered the grueling six-day journey to safety, carrying her youngest child on her back while her two older children clung to her hands. They had left everything behind, from cherished possessions to the comfort of their home, crossing into Uganda with nothing but the clothes on their backs.

In Uganda, the family had found a fragile peace. With the assistance of the World Food Programme, they received food from the very beginning. Suzanne watched her children flourish; they were now in school and spoke English fluently. "I've never been to school myself, so that makes me very proud," she would say, a smile breaking through the weight of her worries.

However, the peace they had found was becoming increasingly tenuous. Over the years, the number of refugees had surged, straining resources. "Life has become more difficult," she confided to her friends. The food rations provided by the WFP had been reduced, and the plots of land available for farming were scarce.

In June 2024, the rains that were supposed to nourish their crops failed to arrive on time, devastating their garden. With no other options, Suzanne's husband made the difficult decision to return to South Sudan to seek work. "I live in fear that something happens to him," she admitted, clutching her phone tightly as she waited for his calls. Every day, she prayed for his safety.



Suzanne Pita prepares to cook a meal at home using the food from her WFP assistance ©WFP Uganda

Despite the challenges, Suzanne refused to succumb to despair. "We can't just wait for help," she said resolutely. "What I would prefer is some training and capital to rent land or open a business." She envisioned a future where her family could stand on their own, free from the uncertainty of humanitarian assistance.

The WFP's support had been a lifeline, providing food assistance to over 1.3 million refugees across Uganda. However, as the situation became more complex, the organization shifted its approach to a needs-based system, prioritizing the most vulnerable families. Suzanne understood the necessity of this system, but it didn't lessen her longing for self-sufficiency.

As she looked out over the small plot of land that had been both a blessing and a burden, she envisioned a garden full of thriving crops. Each seed planted would symbolize hope—a hope that one day her family would have enough to eat, a hope that her children would have a brighter future, and a hope that they could rise above the challenges that had followed them from South Sudan.

With her heart filled with determination, Suzanne vowed to seek out the training she needed to start her own business. She dreamed of creating a small shop that would serve her community, a place where people could gather, share stories, and find a sense of belonging.

As the sun began to set, casting a warm glow over the refugee settlement, Suzanne felt a renewed sense of purpose. The road ahead was fraught with challenges, but with each passing day, she was one step closer to reclaiming her life and securing a better future for her children. And in that moment, she knew that her story, born out of tragedy, would also be one of resilience and hope. 🌈



# RETHINKING GLOBAL COOPERATION FOR A MORE EQUITABLE WORLD

By Enock Wanderema, United Nations Global Pulse (UNGP)



Illustration by Kaliisa Derrick Mugenyi, UN Global Pulse

## As the world grapples with an escalating crisis — conflict, climate change, and technological disruption — global governance stands at a critical juncture.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has warned that these interconnected challenges are straining international cooperation. With the deadline for the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) fast approaching, urgent action is essential. But how can the international community respond effectively and reshape the future to ensure resilience and equity?

The answer lies in shifting from outdated, individualistic approaches to a more collective, collaborative model of governance. The recent approval of the Pact for the Future, a landmark declaration by UN member states, underscores the importance of global solidarity and intergenerational cooperation. The pact recognizes that issues like climate change and digital governance can't be addressed by any single nation or institution alone.

### Young people at the forefront of change

The Pact for the Future centers on youth, a generation poised to lead global change. Despite making up over half of the world's population, young people remain underrepresented in decision-making. Yet, they are already driving movements for climate justice, social equity, and digital rights. Their digital fluency and activism position them as key players in shaping the world today.

The Pact aims to integrate youth into global decision-making, empowering them to create solutions that reflect their needs and values. This approach

ensures policies are inclusive and forward-thinking, addressing the challenges of tomorrow.

### Reimagining global governance

The Pact for the Future aims to transform the United Nations into a more agile, responsive institution. At its core is the Quintet of Change — five key areas: data, innovation, digital advancement, behavioral sciences, and foresight. These tools will help the UN tackle complex global challenges and adapt to the demands of the 21st century.

### Data: A foundation for decision-making

In an age of information overload, the ability to collect and act on reliable data is crucial. Uganda's partnership with UN Global Pulse to develop a national data strategy shows how better data governance can drive progress toward the SDGs. By ensuring data is accurate, timely, and accessible, countries can improve responses to crises like health emergencies and climate disasters.

### Digital transformation: Bridging divides

Digital technologies can democratize access to essential services like healthcare and education. In Uganda, for instance, the introduction of an online driver licensing system has transformed a once

cumbersome, bureaucratic process into an efficient, accessible service. This highlights how digital tools can streamline government operations and improve service delivery, especially in remote areas.

The Global Digital Compact, part of the Pact for the Future, calls for global cooperation to create an open, secure digital infrastructure. By bridging the digital divide and expanding access to reliable internet and digital literacy programmes, we can ensure marginalized communities benefit from digital advancements.

### **Innovation and Behavioral Sciences: Creating effective solutions**

Innovation plays a crucial role in addressing global challenges. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Uganda’s health ministry used real-time data from local radio stations to combat vaccination misinformation through a method called radio mining developed by UN Global Pulse. This allowed officials to identify and correct rumors with targeted, fact-based messaging. Later in Mali, UN peacekeepers used the same tool to make informed decisions that protect civilians and promote stability.

But innovation isn’t just about technology—it also involves understanding human behavior. By applying insights from behavioral sciences, the UN can tailor its interventions to local beliefs, needs, and cultures. Whether in health or peacebuilding, understanding local perceptions is key to building trust and ensuring lasting impact.

### **Foresight: Preparing for the future**

Anticipating future challenges is key to effective global governance. Foresight allows us to look beyond current crises and plan for long-term outcomes. In Uganda, UG Global Pulse’s simulated Scenario Exploration System (SES) helped stakeholders on the country’s Data Strategy development to envision the future, identifying risks and opportunities. This approach to strategic foresight enables governments and international organisations to make better decisions today, shaping a more sustainable and equitable future.



As Secretary-General António Guterres stated, “We can’t build a future for our grandchildren with a system built for our grandparents.” The time is now. The international community must act to create a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable future—one that leverages collective action, innovation, and solidarity to address the challenges ahead. 🌍

## **Key actors discuss urgent solutions against violent extremism in Uganda**

*Continued from page 16*



A Group photo for the key stakeholders that attended the Multi-stakeholder round table discussion to review the findings of the Rapid Threat assessment on Violent extremism in Uganda ©UNODC Uganda

sustainable development, with special attention to vulnerable groups, including women, youth, and marginalized communities.

Mr. Guillaume Chartrain, EU Deputy Head of Delegation to Uganda noted that the EU, like Uganda, recognizes the need to counter extremist ideologies online and empower local actors to build resilient communities. He said the EU is increasing support to cities and civil society organizations on the frontlines of prevention efforts.

The round table also featured a detailed presentation of the Rapid Threat Assessment Report by Professor Abdu Katende, the consultant leading the assessment. The report’s findings highlighted key trends in violent extremism, the vulnerabilities faced by at-risk communities, and recommendations for tailored responses to mitigate these threats.

The discussion concluded with a plenary session, where participants shared insights and proposed practical strategies for strengthening Uganda’s capacity to prevent violent extremism and radicalization.

The outcomes of this round table discussion will guide the next steps in implementing the PCVET strategy and ensuring a coordinated response that includes both Government and civil society. 🌍



# FRANCE'S SUPPORT FUELS REFUGEE-LED ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSFORMATION

By Yonna Tukundane, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)



(Drone shot) - 19 November 2024, An aerial view of the Kigali woodlot in Kigali Village, Base Camp Zone. This refugee-led initiative, under the Nakivale Green Environment project, features four-year-old Senna Siamea trees planted alongside crops, following the Taungya system, funded by France.  
©UNHCR/ Tukundane Yonna

## Shukuru Pedeya, a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo and a mother of three, has been planting in the Kigali woodlot for over four years as part of the Nakivale Green Environment Group.

Through her hard work, Shukuru earns income from her harvests, which she uses to buy scholastic materials for her children. She hopes more woodlots like these will be established, opening up additional farming land and creating more opportunities for her and others in the settlement.

The Nakivale Green Environment Group, a refugee-led initiative founded in 2012, is transforming lives and landscapes within the Nakivale Refugee Settlement. With critical support from France, which donated 1 million euros to UNHCR Uganda toward environmental activities in Uganda's refugee response, the group is making remarkable progress.

Initially focused on cultivating vegetables along the lake shores, this group of 301 refugees from diverse nationalities has transitioned to sustainable practices to protect wetlands, guided by Nsamizi, UNHCR's environmental partner, and the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA).

With funding from France and support from UNHCR, the group received tree seedlings, irrigation tanks, and hoses, enabling them to adopt sustainable agroforestry practices. They now utilize the "Taungya" agroforestry method, planting crops like beans alongside trees. This approach preserves the land, promotes natural regeneration, and provides a reliable income.



(In the garden) - 19 November 2024, Shukuru Pedeya, a Congolese refugee in Uganda, at the Kigali woodlot, Base Camp Zone, Nakivale Refugee Settlement, hand-weeding the beans she planted alongside trees (Senna Siamea) under the Taungya system, funded by France.  
©UNHCR/ Daniel Ssozi

In the first season of 2024, they harvested eight metric tons of beans, generating 16 million UGX. The group has saved over 5 million UGX, ensuring fair distribution among its 301 members.

The Nakivale Green Environment Group exemplifies refugee resilience, bringing sustainable benefits to both their livelihoods and the environment. UNHCR extends its sincere appreciation to France for making this progress possible through their generous 1 million euro contribution. 🌍

## AMBITIOUS PLAN TO RE-GREEN ACHOLI UNVEILED

By Billy Rwothungeyo, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)



Kenneth Omona, Uganda's Minister of State for Northern Uganda (middle) joined by Karolina Hedstrom, the Head of Cooperation of the European Union Delegation to Uganda (left) and FAO Uganda's Leonidas Hitimana plant a tree at the World Tree Planting Day in Gulu.

### The trees disappeared. The name remained. In Patongo Sub-county in Agago District, there is a village named Forest. Yes, Forest.

The village is aptly named after the natural forest whose canopy reigned over the village in the past. Fast forward today, the landscape of Forest is unrecognizable from its glorious, greened past.

What befell the leafy village is far too common in Agago and other parts of Acholi Sub-region. Indiscriminate felling of trees to meet charcoal and wood needs both in Acholi and other parts of the country, is alarming.

To stem this tide, leaders in Acholi, during this year's World Tree Planting Day on September 27th, unveiled an ambitious ten-year strategic plan to re-green the sub-region.

This plan aims to rejuvenate tree cover in Acholi by planting trees on nearly three million hectares of land, which translates to twenty-one percent of land cover in Acholi.

The plan was signed by prominent sons of Acholi - Chief Justice Alfonse Owiny-Dollo and former presidential candidate and diplomat, Olara Otunu.

Commemorated at Sir Samuel Baker School in Gulu, the World Tree Planting Day was organized by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Ministry of Water and Environment and National Forestry Authority (NFA) together with other stakeholders. The European Union, a big advocate of tree planting through its forest partnerships, supported the event.

In its fourth year, the tree planting event saw 150,000 new trees planted. The exercise feeds into the tree planting initiative dubbed 'Running Out Of Trees (ROOTs)' - which aims to scale up tree planting across Ugandan.

'When I was growing up, the tree cover in my village, was such that you would not see houses that were 50 metres from you, because of tree cover...now you can see the town twenty kilometres away from my village because there are no trees,' said Owiny-Dollo who was the chief guest at the tree planting event.

### FAO's commitment to trees

Since 2016, with support from the European Union, FAO Uganda has been on the frontline of rejuvenating Uganda's tree cover by promoting the growing of planted forests and woodlots. These efforts have given birth to over 80,000 hectares of planted forests across

Leonidas Hitimana, who heads FAO Uganda's forestry programme re-affirmed FAO's commitment to realising a greener Uganda.

'Over the last four years, about 5,000 hectares of private forests have either been restored or newly established. These efforts contribute to reducing the rate of deforestation in the country,' he said.

FAO is also at the forefront of reducing the pressure on trees as a source for cooking energy, primarily through charcoal and wood, by promoting the use of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG).

If the current rates of tree loss continue unabated, it is estimated that by 2050, all forests will be wiped from Uganda. 🌍

# UNITED NATIONS DAY 2024 IN UGANDA: CELEBRATING HEALTH, UNITY, AND LEGACY

By Monicah Aturinda, United Nations Resident Coordinators Office (RCO)



UN Day celebration outdoor activities on 24 October 2024 ©UN Uganda

## The 2024 United Nations Day celebrations in Uganda were a lively, joyful, and meaningful gathering that truly brought people together.

This year, the celebration took on a special note, honoring the 79th anniversary of the United Nations and marking 62 years of partnership between the UN and Uganda. It was a two-part event, with a day of fun and wellness on 24th October and an elegant dinner on 31st October, each day carrying its own unique charm.

The celebration on 24th took place at the MTN Omondi Stadium in Lugogo, Kampala. People began arriving early, full of energy, ready for a day of community, wellness, and excitement. From the start, there was a spirited marching procession, led by a vibrant band from Uganda Police, that got everyone in the mood for celebration.

The event was open to all, including UN staff, government and civil society representatives and the public, who joined in the theme of Good Health and Well-being in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 3. It was a beautiful sight—families, friends, and colleagues coming together in an atmosphere that buzzed with positivity.

"May the energy and spirit we share today inspire us all to champion Sustainable Development Goal 3—not only as a goal, but as a promise to every individual, every family, and every community in Uganda," said Susan Namondo, UN Resident Coordinator in Uganda.

The activities were plenty and varied, with something for everyone to enjoy. There were lively Zumba sessions, where people danced and laughed together, and health check-ups offering practical wellness tips for all ages. Football matches brought out the friendly competition, as





UN Day celebration outdoor activities on 24 October 2024 ©UN Uganda

UN staff, KCCA representatives, and Members of Parliament of Uganda formed teams and played in good spirit. Each team made sure to include at least one female player, adding an inclusive touch that made the games even more meaningful.

Laughter, cheers, and excitement filled the stadium as spectators enjoyed watching their friends and colleagues on the field.

The second part of the celebration had a different but equally special feel. On 31st October, an elegant dinner at the Sheraton Kampala Hotel brought together UN officials, government leaders, development partners, civil society representatives and other distinguished guests. The dinner provided a moment to pause and reflect on Uganda's journey with the UN since 1962.

Hon. Hellen Grace Asamo, Minister of State for Disability Affairs, speaking on behalf of the Prime Minister, highlighted the strong partnership between the UN and the Ugandan government. "Ever since Uganda became a member, the UN system has offered unwavering partnership in our journey toward prosperity, peace, and protection of our people and planet," Hon. Asamo emphasized.

In the warm atmosphere and soft lighting, attendees paid tribute to the outgoing UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Susan Namondo, who was completing her service in Uganda. Friends and partners took the podium to bid her a heartfelt farewell, expressing their gratitude for her invaluable contributions to Uganda's development.

These two days of celebration—one filled with public festivities and the other with quiet appreciation—left a lasting impression on all who took part. Together, these gatherings reaffirmed the UN's commitment to promoting social and economic progress for Uganda, aligned with Vision 2040 and the Sustainable Development Goals. 🌍



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