



FEATURE STORY | PG. 16

BISHOP KISEMBO URGES UGANDAN YOUTH TO PRIORITIZE EDUCATION AMID RISING TEEN PREGNANCIES AND HIV IN UGANDA

HIGHLIGHTS

• Bundibugyo Leaders Tasked to Boost Awareness on Affordable Financing in Bundibugyo... **Page 5**

• Kabarole Steps Up HIV Prevention with Focus

• on Parenting and Awareness...**Page 7**

• Bunyangabu Marks Water and Sanitation Day with Renewed Call for Clean Water Practices...**Page 10**

• Fort Portal City Council Approves Shs38 Billion Budget for 2026/2027 Financial Year...**Page 13**

• Bishop Kiseambo Urges Ugandan Youth to Prioritize Education Amid

Rising Teen Pregnancies
and HIV in Uganda...**Page 16**

Female Students Lead
Shs30M Maternity Ward
Renovation in Kicwamba
Technical College ...**Page 19**

Kyegegwa District Team
Taps Into Isingiro's
Climate-Smart Farming
Expertise...**Page 21**

KABAROLE: Leaders
Renew Commitment to
Service Delivery, Call for
Unity and Accountability...
Page 23

Kasese Marks Women's
Day with Call for Unity &
Equal Access to Justice...
Page 27

Busiita Primary School:
A Beacon of Innovation
and Community

Empowerment in
Bunyangabu...**Page 30**

Great Lakes International
Hospital Launches Free
Medical Camp to Promote
Early Health Screening...
Page 34

AI-Powered Agriculture:
MMU Team Wins Big at
Huawei ICT Competition,
Advance to Global Finals...
Page 37

Rwenzori Times Contributors

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TUSIIME CHRISTOPHER

CHIEF EDITOR

Dear Reader,

Happy and blessed Easter season!
Welcome to the 32nd edition of the
Rwenzori Times Weekly Newsletter!

First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed readers for always securing your time to read this weekly newsletter! My appreciation also goes to the Communication Officers in our region for their unwavering efforts and dedication to ensuring the sustainability of this newsletter. It is no easy task, but their commitment and passion shine through. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the ISO department, as well as our editorial and graphic designers, for the outstanding work they are doing for our nation.

As you enjoy this Easter season with your loved ones, we present a collection of insightful articles that we believe will educate, inspire, and entertain you and your community.

This week, one of the significant discussions focuses on Fort Portal Tourism City's approval of a budget of Shs38 billion for the Financial Year 2026/2027, aimed at enhancing

service delivery. Discover how the Fort Portal City Council was inspired by the speaker of Mbarara City to improve revenue collection, ensuring that our population receives better services.

In another important development, Ruwenzori Bishop has issued a stern warning to young girls in schools, urging them to prioritize their education in light of the troubling rise in teenage pregnancies, early marriages, and HIV prevalence.

Kabarole leaders and stakeholders are intensifying their efforts to combat the rising rate of HIV infections, calling for coordinated action among communities. The district's HIV prevalence rate stands at 9.4 percent, significantly higher than the national average of 5.1 percent.

We also highlight the insightful story of Bunyanga district leaders, who are calling for renewed efforts to mobilize and sensitize

communities on best practices for protecting water sources and improving hygiene and sanitation, as they commemorate International Water Day.

In Bundibugyo, district leaders are facing pressure from officials at the Bank of Uganda to enhance community awareness about financial opportunities available through regulated financial institutions, emphasizing their potential to improve livelihoods and combat household poverty.

Additionally, Isingiro district leaders have inspired their counterparts in Kyegegwa during a benchmark mission focused on strengthening capacities in climate-smart agricultural practices to combat the effects of climate change and increase production.

The Kasese Women’s Day celebrations centered on calls for a

more inclusive approach to gender issues, urging stakeholders not to overlook the roles of men and boys in these discussions.

Don’t miss the remarkable milestone achieved by MMU, as its AgriChain Team (Uganda Innovation Team) clinched victory in the Regional Innovation Track of the Huawei ICT Competition 2025–2026, showcasing our commitment to technology and innovation.

As we delve into these and many more captivating stories, we hope you find them enlightening and inspiring. The Rwenzori Times editorial team wishes you joyous Easter holiday reading and encourages you to engage with the content. Together, we can foster a brighter future for our communities.

Happy Easter Season!

KABUGHO SHARON

Editor



AINGANIZA STEPHEN

Editor

Rwenzori Times

BUNDIBUGYO LEADERS TASKED TO BOOST AWARENESS ON AFFORDABLE FINANCING IN BUNDIBUGYO



Invited participants during the engagement meeting.

Mbabazi Sylvia, Communications Officer, Bundibugyo

Authorities from the Bank of Uganda have urged local leaders in Bundibugyo District to step up efforts in sensitizing communities about financial opportunities available through regulated financial institutions, emphasizing their potential to improve livelihoods.

The call was made during a one-day

sensitization and awareness meeting held at Comfort Hotel. The meeting was organized by Kamwenge Initiative for Development Organization in partnership with the Bank of Uganda. It brought together leaders of selected SACCOs and farmers' cooperatives, representatives from Centenary Bank and Stanbic Bank (Bundibugyo branches), Sub-county Community Development Officers,



Team of facilitators during the meeting

and agricultural extension workers. The focus was on promoting awareness of Agricultural Credit Facilities and the Small Business Recovery Fund (SBRF).

The engagement emphasized financial literacy, highlighting seven key areas of personal financial management: savings, loans, investment, insurance, retirement planning, financial service providers, payment systems, and customer protection. Participants were advised to plan carefully before borrowing, avoid taking loans to start businesses without preparation, exercise caution when acting as guarantors, beware of aggressive lenders, and avoid borrowing to repay existing loans.

A representative from the Bank of Uganda's administered funds

department, Augustus Muchunguzi, noted that many farmers and small business operators remain unaware of the Agricultural Credit Facility and the Small Business Recovery Fund. He explained that the Agricultural Credit Facility offers low-interest financing to support investments in modern farming equipment, irrigation, and post-harvest handling. Meanwhile, the SBRF was introduced to help micro, small, and medium enterprises recover from the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He outlined that eligibility for the SBRF includes businesses operated by individuals, groups, partnerships, or companies employing between 2 and 49 people, with an annual turnover ranging from UGX 10 million to UGX 300 million, and

a demonstrated capacity for recovery.

Participants were also trained on Treasury Bills, short-term government debt instruments with maturities of one year or less. They were encouraged to open Central Security Depository (CSD) accounts through commercial banks to participate in Treasury Bill auctions. These are issued in multiples of UGX 100,000, with a minimum

investment of UGX 100,000.

The District Senior Commercial Officer, John Musinguzi, encouraged individuals and businesses to take advantage of the Agricultural Credit Facility and SBRF. He urged them to engage commercial banks for access to these services and emphasized the importance of using such funds responsibly to achieve their intended objectives.

KABAROLE STEPS UP HIV PREVENTION WITH FOCUS ON PARENTING AND AWARENESS

Mpamizo Evalist, Ag District Communications Officer, Kabarole

Authorities in Kabarole District have intensified efforts to combat the rising rate of HIV infections, calling for coordinated action among stakeholders and communities.

During a stakeholders' engagement held on Tuesday at New Fort View Hotel in Fort Portal, leaders expressed concern over the district's HIV prevalence rate, which stands at 9.4 percent—significantly higher than the

national average of 5.1 percent.

Speaking at the meeting, Wycliff Muhumuza, a Project Officer with the AIDS Control Program, noted that despite the implementation of key interventions such as Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) clinics, Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), infection rates remain high.

He attributed the trend to persistent barriers that hinder effective prevention and treatment efforts and called for more



Mr. Mike Mukiibi addressing participants on Tuesday, Photo by Mpamizo Evalist

coordinated and targeted strategies to address the challenge.

Participants at the engagement identified several behavioral and social factors driving the spread of HIV, including commercial sex work, widespread myths and misconceptions about sex, moral decline, and poor parenting.

Kabarole District Chairperson, Dr Richard Rwabuhinga, emphasized the need to scale up viral suppression efforts by ensuring that people living with HIV adhere consistently to their medication. He also cautioned some religious leaders against

spreading misleading information that discourages patients from continuing treatment.

“We must ensure that communities receive accurate information and that those on treatment remain committed to their medication for effective viral suppression,” Dr Rwabuhinga said.

He further called for improved communication and packaging of messages around preventive services such as PrEP and PEP to ensure that they are well understood and accessible to



Dr. Richard Rwabuhinga speaking at the meeting on Tuesday, Photo by Mpamizo Evalist

communities at the grassroots level.

Assistant Resident District Commissioner (ARDC), Mike Mukiibi stressed the importance of parental involvement in the fight against HIV. He urged parents to take an active role in guiding their children through open and honest discussions about HIV/AIDS.

“Parents must step up and engage their children openly about HIV and related risks. Proper parenting is key in shaping responsible behavior among young people,” Mukiibi said.

During the same meeting, stakeholders resolved that the district will work closely with all Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the fight against HIV/AIDS to strengthen community outreach and service delivery.

They also agreed to develop clear and consistent key talking points on HIV prevention, while placing greater emphasis on parenting as a critical pillar in reducing new infections.

BUNYANGABU MARKS WATER AND SANITATION DAY WITH RENEWED CALL FOR CLEAN WATER PRACTICES



Best performers in the annual sanitation campaign were rewarded with basins, jerrycans and water tanks.

Christopher Tusiime, Communications Officer, Bunyangabu

Bunyangabu District joined the rest of the world to commemorate International Water and Sanitation Day 2026 with a strong appeal to communities to protect water sources from contamination.

The district celebrations, held

at Kibiito Sub-county grounds, attracted local leaders, residents, and schoolchildren. A highlight of the event was an engaging skit by pupils from Kabale Muslim Primary School, which vividly illustrated how everyday human activities contribute to water pollution.

Through their performance, the pupils demonstrated how

practices such as washing, bathing, and open defecation near water sources contaminate streams and rivers, creating a dangerous cycle that exposes communities to diseases. They further showed how consumption of unsafe water leads to illnesses such as typhoid,

have clearly shown the dangers of consuming contaminated water, including severe illness and even death. We must all take responsibility to protect our water sources from practices like open defecation,” he said.

He also acknowledged government

efforts to improve water access, noting that interventions under the National Resistance Movement (NRM) manifesto and national development

plans are aimed at strengthening service delivery



Pupils demonstrating how water contamination happens at rivers and streams.

dysentery, and cholera, often worsened when affected individuals seek help from traditional healers instead of health facilities.

Speaking at the event, the Assistant Resident District Commissioner, Baluku Alfred, commended the pupils for delivering a powerful and educative message. He warned that continued degradation of wetlands and water sources poses serious health risks. “The pupils

at the grassroots. He added that development partners such as IRC-WASH, JESE, and HEWASA have been instrumental in supporting sanitation and water initiatives in the district.

The Acting District Water Officer, Robert Aheebwa, revealed that access to clean and safe water in Bunyangabu currently stands at 72 percent, with ongoing efforts to achieve full coverage.

He emphasized the need to revitalize Water User Committees, particularly in Kibiito Sub-county, where many exist but remain inactive.

“These committees must become functional. Communities need to contribute towards the maintenance of water sources because government alone cannot manage everything,” he said.

He also noted that shallow wells are being phased out in favour of safer piped water systems, urging residents to promptly report any faults in water infrastructure.

Aheebwa stressed that poor sanitation and the use of unsafe water continue to drive disease and poverty. “When people fall sick, they spend money on treatment instead of investing in their livelihoods,” he said.

Local leaders echoed similar concerns. LC1 Chairperson of Kabale Trading Centre, Kasaija Bruhan, said water contamination remains a reality in many homes, often worsened by the lack of latrines and reliance on traditional healers. “These are real issues in our communities. People lose money and even livestock seeking

treatment that could be accessed at health centres,” he noted.

The District Assistant Water Officer in charge of Sanitation, Sarah Kobusinge, said the district has been implementing a door-to-door sanitation campaign in Kibiito Sub-county since August last year. She emphasized that every household must have its own latrine and maintain proper hygiene standards. “Sharing latrines is not acceptable, and practices like having domestic animals in bedrooms must stop. These are serious public health risks,” she said.

The Water and Sanitation Day 2026 runs under the national theme, “Accelerating safely managed sanitation for a better living,” underscores the urgency of adopting improved sanitation facilities, including toilets that can be safely emptied.

Representing the LCV Chairperson, District Secretary for Health Hon. Jesca Masika called on families, especially men, to take responsibility for improving sanitation at home. “Leadership begins at home. Fathers must take charge and ensure their households meet basic sanitation standards,” she urged.

The event concluded with the

recognition of households that excelled in sanitation practices during the campaign. Winners received items such as basins,

water tanks, soap, and jerrycans as incentives to encourage continued good hygiene.

FORT PORTAL CITY COUNCIL APPROVES SHS38 BILLION BUDGET FOR 2026/2027 FINANCIAL YEAR



Fort Portal City Technocrats and Political Wing at Mbarara City Headquarters on Wednesday.

Stephen Ainganiza, Senior Communication Officer, Fort Portal City

Fort Portal City Council has officially approved a budget of Shs38 billion for the 2026/2027 financial year, marking a significant increase of Shs7.2 billion from the Shs30.8 billion budgeted for the previous financial year, 2025/2026.

The budget estimates were presented to the council on Wednesday by Deputy Mayor Mujungu Betty during a council meeting held at the Mbarara City headquarters in Kimukuzi Hill. This meeting was part of a benchmarking exercise focused on enhancing revenue generation.



Fort Portal Leadership During Council Sitting in Mbarara City

The motion to approve the budget, along with a recruitment plan, procurement plan, and charging policy, was moved by Councilor representing elderly Hon. Balisanga Tadeo and received overwhelming support, with only a few amendments made.

Mujungu indicated that the city plans to generate funds through local revenue and transfers from the central government. “We anticipate raising Shs3.4 billion from locally generated revenues, Shs6.5 billion from discretionary government transfers, Shs27.5 billion from conditional government transfers, Shs332 million from other government transfers, and Shs62 million from external financing,” she said.

She emphasized that these funds will be crucial for improving

service delivery across key sectors, including health, education, production, and technical services. As she prepares to leave her position in May, Mujungu expressed her commitment to continue collaborating with leaders to foster socio-economic transformation through community engagement. Speaker Aheebwa Albert urged both technical staff and politicians to unite in their efforts to enhance service delivery. “It is our duty as elected officials and technocrats to work diligently to meet the needs of our constituents. Much has been accomplished in the past year through teamwork, discipline, and hard work. With this budget now approved, I encourage you all to remain steadfast in advancing Fort Portal City’s agenda for improved service delivery,” he stated.



The Speaker Mbarara City Mr. Tashobya Bonny speaking during council meeting.

Speakers in Uganda, challenged Fort Portal City’s leadership to significantly enhance their revenue collection efforts. He pointed out that Mbarara City generates Shs11 billion in revenue, while Fort Portal only collects Shs3 billion, which is insufficient for effective service delivery.

Mayor Asaba Edison Ruyonga highlighted the achievements of the current administration, noting the construction of eight bridges compared to just four in the previous term. He also announced that the council has secured 21 land titles to protect council land from potential encroachment and has allocated Shs1.2 billion for the construction of new council chambers, which are already underway

To boost revenue collection, Tashobya recommended that Fort Portal City gazette



Mr. Aheebwa Albert Fort Portal City Speaker chairing the council meeting in Mbarara City.

Ruyonga cautioned councillors against conflicts that could hinder the city’s growth and development, urging them to prioritize unity and collaboration. Mr Tashobya Bonny, Speaker of Mbarara City and President of

land for a container village to centralize services and develop a comprehensive database for all traders, ensuring that all motorcycle (boda boda riders) stages are registered. He also

encouraged the city leadership to establish a Think Tank to harness the insights of visionary leaders like Ruyonga and Aheebwa Albert for developmental purposes.

Tashobya urged Fort Portal's leadership to steer clear of conflicts and corruption that could impede progress, emphasizing the importance of focusing on revenue generation to provide

better services to the community. He cited Mbarara's growth from Shs2 billion to Shs11.3 billion in revenue as a testament to what is achievable.

Councilor Balisanga Tadeo commended the Speaker of Mbarara City for his valuable guidance on strategies for enhancing revenue collection.

BISHOP KISEMBO URGES UGANDAN YOUTH TO PRIORITIZE EDUCATION AMID RISING TEEN PREGNANCIES AND HIV IN UGANDA

Nyakojo William, Kabarole Journalist

The Rt Rev Reuben Kisembo, Bishop of the Ruwenzori Diocese, has issued a passionate appeal to the youth of Uganda to prioritize their education in light of the troubling rise in teenage pregnancies, early marriages, and HIV prevalence.

Speaking at the Kyebambe Girls Secondary School Thanksgiving ceremony held at the school chapel on Palm Sunday, Bishop Kisembo

urged young girls to uphold sexual purity and focus on their academic pursuits.

Statistics reveal a concerning trend: approximately 25% of girls aged 15-19 have experienced pregnancy, according to the 2016 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS). Additionally, nearly 40% of girls in this age group are married before they turn 18. The situation is further exacerbated by the prevalence of HIV among



Bishop Kisembo poses for a photo with students at the chapel.

adolescents, with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) reporting that young women aged 15-24 account for a staggering 25% of new HIV infections in Uganda.

Recent reports indicate that in 2024, out of approximately 13,763 new HIV infections among young people aged 15-24, nearly 10,822 were among young women, representing over 75% of new infections in this demographic.

Key drivers of this crisis include early marriages, teenage pregnancies, gender-based violence, and limited educational opportunities. Alarming, adolescent girls and young women are roughly four times more likely

to be affected by HIV than their male counterparts, with around 15,000 new infections occurring annually in this group.

While the overall national HIV prevalence has declined, the rapid rate of new infections among young women remains a critical concern for the Uganda AIDS Commission and its partners.

Bishop Kisembo emphasized the importance of self-discipline and academic excellence, urging students to “befriend books and avoid distractions such as boyfriends.” He highlighted the need for young people to make the most of their time in school.

Quoting Daniel 1:19-20, the Bishop called on Christians to turn away



Dr Richard Rwabuhinga Kabarole District Chairperson and Bishop Kisembo Pose in a photo with Staff.

from negative behaviors, respect authority, and guard against homosexual activities that have been reported in some single-sex schools. He commended the government for revising the national curriculum and encouraged students to engage in practical activities, such as tree planting, to combat the effects of global warming.

Mrs. Namanya Ruth Kwesiga, head teacher of Kyebambe Girls Secondary School, expressed gratitude for the school's achievements, including improved academic performance, a reliable

water source, an increase in teachers on payroll, and rising student enrollment. She also outlined future plans, such as the construction of a perimeter wall to enhance school security.

Dr. Richard Rwabuhinga, Vice Chairperson of the Board of Governors, congratulated the school on its accomplishments and encouraged students to remain focused on their goals. He stressed the importance of open communication with trusted parents and teachers to address rising concerns about youth suicide. He cited a tragic case in which a

Senior Six student took her own life after failing to achieve the required 20 points in the previous year's Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) examinations. "This girl could have excelled in another field; failure is not the end of one's future," he noted.

As Uganda grapples with these pressing social issues, Bishop Kisembo's message serves as a clarion call for the youth to prioritize education and make informed choices that will positively shape their futures. The community's collective efforts are essential in addressing the

challenges of teenage pregnancies, early marriages, and the HIV epidemic, ensuring a healthier and more empowered generation.

As of 2023-2025, HIV prevalence among adults in Uganda stands at approximately 5.1% to 5.4%, with about 1.49 million people living with HIV. Prevalence is notably higher among women (roughly 6.5–7.2%) compared to men (3.6–4.3%). Although new infections are on the decline, around 37,000 to 38,000 new cases were reported in 2023-2024, with young women disproportionately affected.

FEMALE STUDENTS LEAD SHS30M MATERNITY WARD RENOVATION IN KICWAMBA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Nyakojo William, Kabarole Journalist

Uganda Technical College-Kicwamba has officially inaugurated the renovated maternity ward at Kicwamba Health Center. This initiative aims to prioritize women's health, family planning, and maternal and child healthcare, ultimately working

to reduce mortality rates in the region.

The renovation, undertaken by the female students of Kicwamba Technical College, is estimated to have cost Shs30 million and coincides with the celebration of a belated International Women's Day.



The student engineers install a water tank at the facility.

at this facility each month, and 118 come for antenatal services,” Rusoke stated. Harriet Tushabe, the Public Relations Officer, and Milton Mumbogwe, the Principal of Kicwamba Technical College,

William Rusoke Rugaju, the facility in charge, praised the students for their hard work, which included installing tiles, painting the building, and fixing doors.

He expressed gratitude for the college's commitment to the community, noting that their efforts significantly enhance the quality of maternal services provided at the health center. “On average, over 70 women deliver

emphasized the institution's long-standing history since its establishment in the 1940s as a government institution equipped with necessary structures and equipment. However, they expressed concern over the low



Kicwamba Students renovating the maternity ward at Kicwamba Health Center III in Kabarole.

enrollment of Batooro students in technical courses at the college.

Edinah Mukarwiza, Chairperson of the Education and Health Committee in Kabarole and Councilor for Kicwamba, commended the female students for their dedication to improving hygiene and creating a conducive environment for mothers during childbirth. She urged the college to consider providing scholarships for local students interested in pursuing technical courses.

The Chief Guest, Rt Hon. Nyakake Harriet, Deputy Prime Minister of the Tooro Kingdom, encouraged the community to enroll their children, especially girls, in the college to gain essential vocational training in fields such as civil engineering and electrical work.

This renovation project not only enhances the maternity ward but also serves as an inspiring example of how educational institutions can actively contribute to the health and well-being of their communities.

KYEGEGWA DISTRICT TEAM TAPS INTO ISINGIRO'S CLIMATE-SMART FARMING EXPERTISE

Baingana Samuel, Communications Officer, Kyegegwa

A delegation of leaders, technocrats, and farmers from Kyegegwa District conducted a learning and benchmarking visit to Isingiro District to strengthen their capacity in climate-smart agriculture practices.

The visit was organized to provide an opportunity for the team to learn and exchange experiences

on the implementation and adoption of technologies under the Uganda Climate Smart Agricultural Transformation Project (UCSATP). The initiative is aimed at improving agricultural productivity, resilience to climate change, and sustainable livelihoods.

During the visit on Wednesday, 1st April 2nd, 2026, the delegation engaged in a series of field-based learning activities, with a focus



on practical demonstrations of climate-smart agricultural production methods. Key areas of interest included value addition and agro-processing, water conservation techniques, farmer institutional development, and irrigation practices supporting both refugee and host communities. The team also reviewed performance indicators and management approaches that have contributed to Isingiro District's progress under the project.

The Kyegegwa District team was officially received in Isingiro by District LC V Chairperson, Mr Turahi Alone Tuhairwe, who extended a warm welcome to the delegation. He noted that although many districts face pressures associated with hosting refugees, they have continued to foster cordial and cooperative relationships that support stability and development.

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of Isingiro District, Mr Ahimbisibwe Leonard, commended Kyegegwa's leadership for selecting Isingiro as a benchmarking partner. He emphasized that such exchanges are vital for

promoting knowledge-sharing and driving agricultural transformation across districts.

Speaking during the visit, the Chief Administrative Officer of Kyegegwa District, Mr. Balaba Swaibu, noted that the choice of Isingiro was deliberate and strategic.



“We have not made a mistake in choosing Isingiro District, we have chosen from the best. Our objective is to learn how to increase productivity, improve market access, and strengthen our responsiveness as leaders, especially given that both districts



host refugee populations,” he said.

Dr. Kahunde Ann, the Principal Veterinary Officer and UCSATP focal person for Kyegegwa District, emphasized the value of the exposure visit in fostering collaboration and practical learning.

“This engagement has provided a unique opportunity for our farmers, extension staff, and leaders to interact with their counterparts in Isingiro, exchange ideas, and

gain hands-on experience. The knowledge acquired will support technology adoption, enhance productivity, and build resilience to climate change within our communities,” she said.

She added that the learning visit is expected to significantly strengthen the implementation of UCSATP interventions in Kyegegwa District while promoting inter-district collaboration in advancing sustainable agricultural development.

The visit underscores the growing importance of peer learning and knowledge exchange in scaling up climate-smart agricultural practices across Uganda, particularly in districts facing similar development challenges.

KABAROLE: LEADERS RENEW COMMITMENT TO SERVICE DELIVERY, CALL FOR UNITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Mpamizo Evalist, Ag District Communications Officer, Kabarole

Leaders in Kabarole District have renewed their commitment to improving service delivery, issuing a strong

call for unity, accountability, and community-centered action as key drivers of sustainable development.



Participants posing for a group photo shortly after the meeting on Monday, Photo by Mpamizo Evalist

The renewed pledge was made during a high-level engagement held on Monday at the district headquarters in Fort Portal. The meeting brought together technical staff, political leaders, security personnel, and representatives of special interest groups. It was led by the Deputy Head of the RDC Secretariat, Sr. Mary Grace Akiror, who emphasized the critical role of effective service delivery in transforming communities and advancing national development. Addressing the gathering, Akiror explained the importance of leaders remaining focused on their responsibilities and ensuring that government programs directly impact the lives of ordinary citizens. She noted that service delivery is

not merely an administrative obligation but a moral duty that requires dedication, integrity, and responsiveness to the needs of the population. Akiror also raised concern over the rising cases of HIV/AIDS in the district, calling

for urgent and coordinated action to reverse the trend. She tasked leaders at all levels to intensify community sensitization efforts using cultural institutions, religious platforms, and business networks as channels for spreading awareness and promoting preventive measures.

According to her, fighting HIV/AIDS requires a collective effort, urging stakeholders to break the silence, address stigma, and promote responsible behavior among communities, especially the youth who remain the most vulnerable. "Our communities need consistent and clear information. Let us use every available platform to educate our people and protect

future generations,” Akiror added. The Resident District Commissioner (RDC), Mr Joseph Sekabiito Kitayimbwa, reassured participants that Kabarole District remains peaceful and secure, providing a conducive environment for development and service delivery. He commended the cooperation among leaders and security agencies, noting that stability is a key pillar for the successful implementation of government programs.

Ssekabiito pledged continued support from his office in ensuring that government initiatives are effectively rolled out and monitored. He encouraged leaders to work in harmony, setting aside personal differences in favour of collective progress. “We must focus on building a positive legacy for our people. Let us serve with commitment, transparency, and a shared vision for development,” he said.

LCV Chairperson, Richard Rwabuhinga, highlighted notable achievements registered across key sectors in the district. He pointed to improvements in health services, expansion of educational



RDC Mr. Joseph Sekabiito Kitayimbwa speaking during the engagement on Monday

infrastructure, and ongoing road and infrastructure development projects as indicators of steady progress.

Despite these gains, Rwabuhinga acknowledged that challenges remain and called for increased investment in strategic projects that can drive economic transformation. He specifically emphasized the need for the construction of Buhinga Stadium and the establishment of an



Sr. Mary Grace Akiror speaking during the engagement on Monday, Photo by Mpamizo Evalist

industrial park in the district.

According to him, such projects would not only boost local revenue but also create employment opportunities, particularly for the growing youth population. “We have made progress, but there is still more to be done. Strategic investments will help us unlock the economic potential of our district and improve livelihoods,” he noted.

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Stephen Rubaihayo, provided an update on the implementation of government programs, revealing that the district has so far received 18.7 billion

shillings under various initiatives.

He explained that a significant portion of these funds has been channeled through parish-based SACCOs, benefiting thousands of residents.

Rubaihayo highlighted the Parish Development Model (PDM) as a key intervention in improving household incomes and promoting financial inclusion. He added that other programs, such as the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) and youth livelihood initiatives, are also playing a vital role in transforming communities. “These programs



Participants during the engagement meeting on Monday, Photo by Mpamizo Evalist

coordination and accountability, noting that effective service delivery requires joint efforts from all stakeholders.

Leaders also agreed on the need to strengthen feedback mechanisms to ensure that citizens' concerns are heard and addressed promptly. They called for continuous engagements of this nature to review progress, share experiences, and identify solutions to emerging challenges.

are making a real difference in people's lives. However, we must ensure proper accountability and monitoring to maximize their impact," he said.

Participants at the meeting echoed the call for strengthened

KASESE MARKS WOMEN'S DAY WITH CALL FOR UNITY & EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Kabugho Sharon, Communications Officer, Kasese

The air was filled with energy, colour, and determination as Kasese District marked Women's Day on March 31st, 2026, at Ngaiga

Primary School playground in Maliba Town Council. But beyond the celebrations, a powerful and unified message rang out from leaders and community members

alike the time for talking is over; the time for action is now.

Held under the theme, “Scaling up investment to accelerate access to justice for all women and girls in Uganda,” the event brought together political leaders, security officials, technical teams, and hundreds of residents, all focused on advancing the rights and welfare of women and girls.

At the center of the call to action was the chief guest, Kabyanga Godfrey Kime, who delivered a candid and direct message to leaders across the district.

Kabyanga challenged elected officials to go beyond speeches and ensure that government programs translate into real benefits for ordinary women. He specifically tasked leaders especially women Members of Parliament to actively lobby for resources and ensure that women in Kasese access government funds meant to uplift them.

“You were elected to serve the people. Women must benefit from the programs we talk about every day. This requires commitment, follow-up, and unity among leaders,” he said.

He stressed that political divisions

must not stand in the way of service delivery, reminding leaders that they share a common responsibility under the NRM manifesto to improve livelihoods. According to him, unity is not optional it is essential for meaningful development.

In a notable shift from traditional Women’s Day messaging, Kabyanga also called for a more inclusive approach to gender issues, urging stakeholders not to overlook men and boys.

“As we empower women, let us not forget the men and boys. Development must be inclusive. We need everyone on board to build strong families and communities,” he added.

The realities facing women in the district were laid bare by keynote speaker Aidoloi Syauswa, who painted a vivid picture of the daily struggles many women endure. She highlighted emotional, physical, and economic violence as widespread challenges, emphasizing that economic control remains a major barrier to true empowerment.

“In many homes, women work hard to support their families, but they have little or no say over finances. This is economic violence, and it

must be addressed,” she said.

Syauswa further pointed out that limited property ownership rights continue to disadvantage women, calling for stronger enforcement of laws and greater awareness within communities. She emphasized that investing in girls’ education is one of the most effective ways to break cycles of inequality.

“When you educate a girl, you empower a nation. Education gives women the voice, confidence, and power to demand their rights,” she noted.

Adding her voice to the discussion, the District Women Council Chairperson, Burungi Angella, acknowledged government efforts to empower women through initiatives such as UWEP and PDM. However, she raised a critical concern—many women in Kasese are still being left out of key funding opportunities, particularly the GROW fund.

“These programs are good, but access remains a challenge. We need deliberate efforts to ensure that women at the grassroots can benefit,” she said.

Burungi’s message carried a personal touch that resonated deeply with the audience. She

shared her own journey of returning to school and completing Senior Four at the age of 35, a testament to resilience and the transformative power of education.

“I stand here as an example that it is never too late. Parents, give your daughters a chance. Let them go to school, stay in school, and complete,” she urged.

She also called on mothers to take a leading role in safeguarding their children’s education, emphasizing that families are the first line of support in shaping a child’s future.

Meanwhile, District Chairperson Muhindi Bukombi Eliphaz delivered a strong warning on the growing threat of child abuse, particularly sexual exploitation. He described it as a serious concern that undermines not only individual lives but also the district’s development.

“This is not just a family issue—it is a community and national issue. We must report cases of abuse and ensure they are followed through to the end,” he said firmly.

Muhindi called on parents, leaders, and law enforcement agencies to work together to protect children and create safer communities. He emphasized that silence and inaction only embolden perpetrators. “Let us

stand together to protect our children and support our women. Development begins with safety and dignity,” he added.

Beyond the speeches, the event also showcased practical efforts to empower young girls and promote positive choices. A highlight of the day was a football match between SHE Kasese popularly known as “The Snow Queens”

and Maliba Secondary School.

The match served as a platform to encourage girls to engage in sports, build confidence, and avoid risky behaviours.

The celebrations were marked by vibrant cultural dances, performances from schools, and community sensitization messages that blended entertainment with education.

BUSIITA PRIMARY SCHOOL: A BEACON OF INNOVATION AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT IN BUNYANGABU

Kajumba Gorretti, Fort Portal Journalist

Nestled in Nyakigumba Town Council, Bunyangabu District, Busiita Primary School stands as a testament to the transformative power of community-driven education. Since its inception in 1970 as a sub-grade institution under the Church of Uganda, the school has evolved into a fully government-aided establishment, boasting an impressive enrollment of 903 learners and a

dedicated team of 17 teachers.

Under the leadership of head teacher Abesiga Felix, Busiita Primary School has distinguished itself through innovative, parent-supported initiatives that prioritize the well-being and development of its pupils. The school provides both breakfast and lunch, ensuring that no child learns on an empty stomach. This commitment to nourishment is complemented by a focus on practical skills, which



Brick Laying Class Pose in a Photo

are integrated into the daily curriculum.

Parents and school administrators collaborate closely to design programs that foster shared responsibility and transparency. One notable initiative is the construction of a modern staff house, funded by parents to enhance time management and improve staff welfare.

Embracing technology, Busiita Primary School has installed CCTV cameras and a public address system, further enhancing the learning environment. The school also offers a variety of skills-based activities, including soap making, brick laying, and innovative

recycling projects that transform plastic waste into handbags, ropes, and shopping bags. Additionally, children engage in rabbit rearing and art and craft projects using banana fibers, providing them with valuable hands-on experience.

To ensure the health of its pupils, the school has implemented measures to provide safe and clean drinking water, effectively reducing the risk of waterborne diseases.

Academically, Busiita Primary School has made significant strides. In the latest examinations, pupils achieved 78 first grades and 14 second grades, reflecting the school's commitment to excellence. The school also



The Pupils Engaged in Art and Craft Classes

excels in extracurricular activities, particularly in debating, and has made a mark through its involvement in the Rwenzori Peer Educators Club.

Abesiga attributes the school's ongoing success to strong parental support, accountability, and effective collaboration among teachers. This year, in alignment with the new lower secondary curriculum, the school introduced practical skills training, a move that has been positively received by both students and educators.

Mwiru Vincent, a pupil in the brick-making class, expressed

enthusiasm about the skills he is acquiring, stating that they will enable him to earn money during his P7 vacation while awaiting his exam results. Similarly, teacher Abesiga Amon, who oversees the

rabbit project, explained how pupils bring rabbits from home to care for as part of their school projects, with proceeds helping them purchase essential scholastic materials.

Komukama Trinhah, a pupil involved



The Water Source that provide clean and safe water to children.



The Liquid and Bar Soap made by Busiita Children

in the rabbit class, shared her excitement about learning to rear rabbits, manage their health, and understand their commercial value. Meanwhile, art teacher Kababwiju Maureen guides the children in transforming banana fibers into various products, including shoes, bags, and caps.

Head girl Karungi Desire praised the school for its nurturing environment, highlighting the supportive nature of the teachers and the inclusive decision-making process that values input from students, parents, and educators alike.

Despite its many achievements, Busiita Primary School faces

challenges that threaten its progress. Classroom congestion due to a lack of desks, inadequate government funding, and frequent pupils absenteeism—particularly on Fridays when pupils prepare for the Nyakigumba market—pose significant hurdles. Additionally, some parents struggle to meet their agreed-upon contributions for development projects, slowing progress.

A pressing concern raised by both teachers and senior woman Komuhendo Ritah is the alarming increase in cases of sexual harassment and abuse by boda boda riders who transport children. They urge parents to

closely monitor their children’s movements, avoid over-reliance on riders, and remain actively engaged in their children’s daily activities, especially on weekends when exploitation is most likely to occur. Busiita Primary School exemplifies the potential of community

collaboration and innovation in education, serving as a beacon of hope and progress in Bunyangabu District. With continued support and vigilance, the school can overcome its challenges and further its mission of empowering the next generation.

GREAT LAKES INTERNATIONAL HOSPITAL LAUNCHES FREE MEDICAL CAMP TO PROMOTE EARLY HEALTH SCREENING

Kajumba Gorretti, Fort Portal Journalist

Great Lakes International Hospital in Kahungabunyonyi, Central Division, Fort Portal Tourism City, has successfully launched a one-day medical camp that has attracted a remarkable turnout from residents across the region.

Held on the hospital's premises, the camp aims to provide accessible and affordable medical services, an initiative that hospital officials deem both timely and essential for the Tooro community.

Dr Amwime Eugeni, the Senior Medical Officer, explained that the camp is designed to address a wide array of health issues while encouraging residents to



A Doctor Attending to a Patient



Patients Being Screened

incorporate routine health check-ups into their lifestyles. “This camp is intended to manage various illnesses and promote the importance of regular health screenings,” he stated.

To make healthcare more affordable, the hospital has reduced testing fees by 50 percent, and malaria tests are offered completely free of charge, a significant relief in a region where malaria remains a prevalent concern.

Dr Amwime highlighted that specialized doctors and health experts are available throughout the camp to provide quality medical care and guidance. “We emphasize the importance of

regular screenings, particularly for prostate cancer in men and cervical cancer in women,” he noted.

Although the camp initially aimed to serve 500 patients, nearly 200 individuals had already received care by midday on the first day, underscoring the community's urgent need for such services. Hospital officials indicated that depending on the overall turnout, the camp could be extended for an additional two to three days.

Atuhairwe Prossy, who traveled from Kasenda Sub-County in Kabarole District, expressed her eagerness to participate as soon as she heard about the camp. “I came quickly for checkups. The services



Patients on Waiting List

are excellent, and the health workers are very welcoming,” she said.

Her caretaker echoed her sentiments, commending the hospital staff for their kindness and professionalism.

Another resident, Kabahuma Maureen, arrived with her daughter, who has been experiencing persistent heart-related pain. After visiting multiple hospitals without finding answers, she expressed renewed hope. “I believe this camp will finally help us get the proper medical attention for my child,” she added.

These stories highlight the reality

that many residents struggle to afford specialized care, making free and subsidized services invaluable.

Beyond providing treatment, Great Lakes International Hospital is using this camp to emphasize a crucial message: prevention is better than cure. Early detection of diseases, especially cancers, lifestyle-related conditions, and infectious diseases can significantly improve health outcomes and reduce medical expenses.

As the camp progresses, the hospital encourages the public to seek medical attention proactively rather than waiting until they are unwell.

AI-POWERED AGRICULTURE: MMU TEAM WINS BIG AT HUAWEI ICT COMPETITION, ADVANCE TO GLOBAL FINALS

Stephen Ainganiza, Senior Communications Officer, Fort Portal City

Mountains of the Moon University (MMU) has reached a remarkable milestone in the realm of technology and innovation, as its AgriChain Team (Uganda Innovation Team) clinched victory in the Regional Innovation Track of the Huawei ICT Competition 2025–2026. This achievement secures their place as Uganda's representatives at the Global Finals, set to take place in Shenzhen from June 2 to June 5, 2026.

The winning team, composed of Okoo Elvis, Wasswa Atibu, and Masendi Aaron, under the guidance of instructor Alinaitwe Mukonyezi, captivated judges with their ground-breaking

project, AgriChain. This artificial intelligence-driven solution, developed using MindSpore, aims to revolutionize agriculture across Africa by improving efficiency,



Students of the Mountains of the Moon University (MMU) pose for a photo after their win.

transparency, and productivity within agricultural value chains.

The path to this achievement was marked by intense competition. The students progressed from preliminary rounds in December 2025, excelled in the National Finals in January 2026, and ultimately triumphed over teams from 21 Sub-Saharan African countries during the Regional Finals held in Kampala on March 5, 2026.

Arinda Ronnie Akantorana, Public Relations Manager at Huawei Technologies (Uganda) Co., Ltd, praised MMU for its outstanding performance. “The success of these students on such a competitive platform reflects the high standards of education, mentorship, and technical training offered by Mountains of the Moon University. Their achievements not only bring pride to the academic community but also serve as an inspiration to their peers. We are excited to support them as they prepare for the global stage,” he stated.

Prof Pius Coxwell Achanga, Vice Chancellor of Mountains of the Moon University, also commended the team’s accomplishments. “I extend my heartfelt congratulations to our Innovations Team for winning at the regional level and

qualifying for the global finals.

This initiative serves as a crucial platform for nurturing talent, allowing our students to enhance their digital skills and compete internationally. We are proud to represent MMU and Uganda on the global stage,” he remarked.

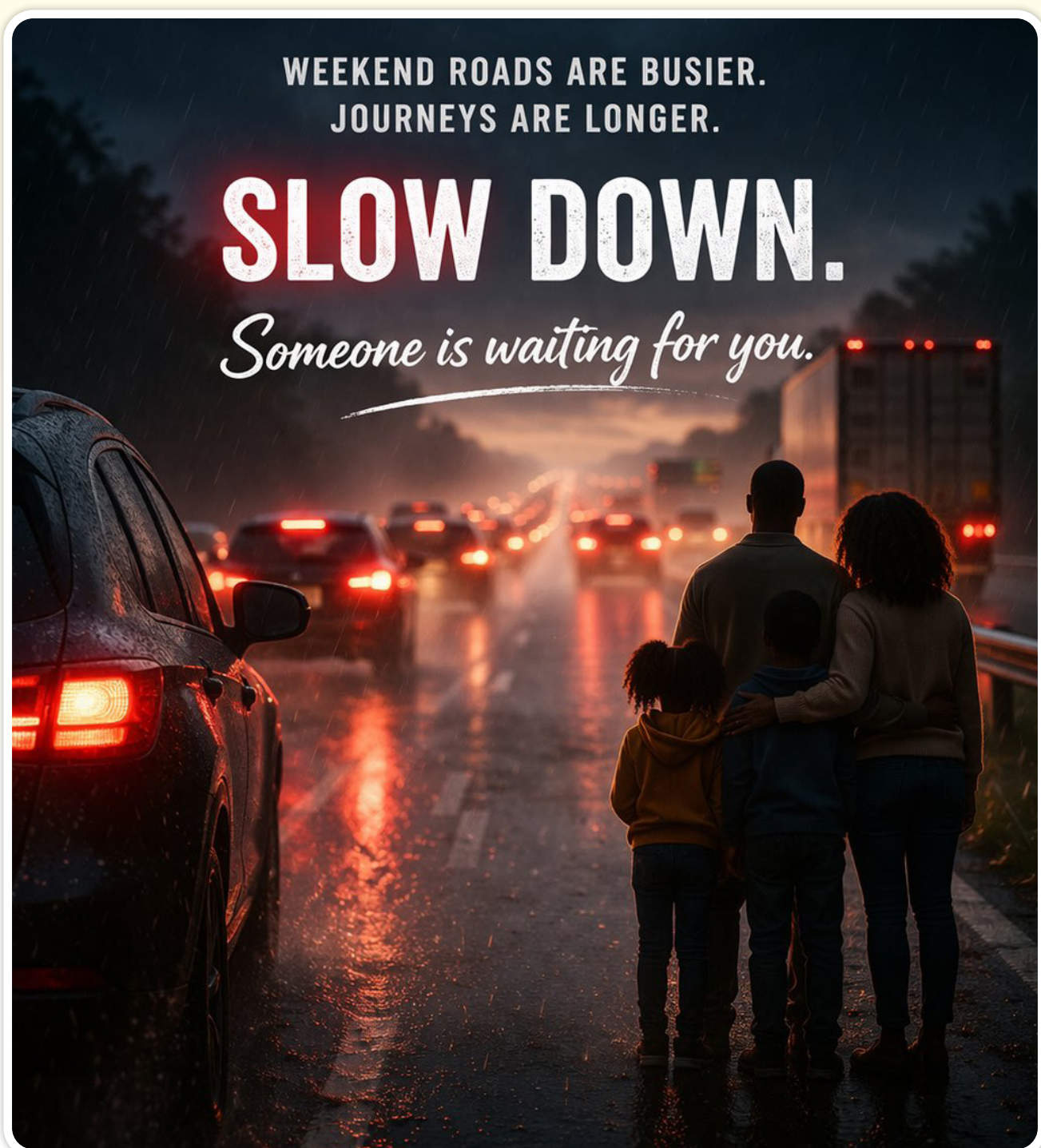
Aaron Masendi, a Computer Science student and one of the team members, expressed gratitude for the opportunity and emphasized the broader implications of their experience.

“We are incredibly thankful for the chance to participate in this competition. It has provided us with a powerful platform to advance agricultural technology innovation while highlighting the role of youth and education in addressing real-world challenges. Competing at this level has not only sharpened our technical skills but also reinforced our commitment to developing transformative solutions for agriculture in Africa,” Masendi said.

The Huawei ICT Competition is a prestigious global platform that unites students and educators from over 2,000 universities across more than 100 countries. Since its inception in 2015, the competition

has played a vital role in cultivating ICT talent, enhancing practical skills, and fostering innovation in fields such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and networking. It is also recognized as a flagship program partner of the UNESCO Global Skills Academy.

The success of the AgriChain team highlights the increasing influence of African universities in driving innovation and positions Uganda as an emerging hub for technology-driven agricultural solutions. Further details regarding the awarding ceremony and the roadmap to the global stage.





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