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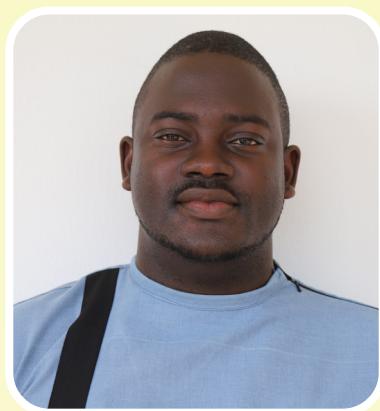
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## **TUSIIME CHRISTOPHER**

*Chief Editor*

*Dear Reader.* 

Welcome to this week's edition of the Rwenzori Times. Our commitment remains to bring you stories that reflect the heartbeat of our communities, stories of resilience, innovation, and transformation across the Rwenzori region and beyond.

In this edition, we highlight government investments in health and agriculture, community-led environmental restoration, youth empowerment initiatives, and the growing role of

technology in local governance. Each story is a reminder that progress is possible when people, leaders, and partners work together.

We thank you for making time to read the Rwenzori Times. Your feedback continues to inspire us to dig deeper and tell the stories that matter most.

Warm regards,

***The News Editor***  
***Rwenzori Times***

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*Editor*



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*Editor*



# GOV'T GIVES SOLAR POWERED IRRIGATION SCHEMES TO BUNYAGABU FARMERS

*By Christopher Tusiime, Communication Officer, Bunyagabu District*



A team comprising of technical staff and political leaders monitoring the irrigation system of Mr Bella Katooro last week.

**A** quiet transformation is taking place in Bunyangabu District, where the Micro-scale Irrigation Project is beginning to bear visible fruits. Farmers who once struggled with prolonged dry spells and low yields now say the intervention is rewriting their story of survival and production.

In the financial year 2024/2025 alone, 16 farmers were selected to benefit from the UglFT program, funded by the World Bank at a cost of Shs 405 million.

The Uganda Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers (UglFT) Program is a government-led initiative, supported by the World Bank, aimed at improving the fairness and effectiveness of public services in Uganda.

Through enhanced fiscal transfers and stronger local governance, it seeks to deliver better services in areas like education, health, water, and agriculture

for local communities, especially those previously underserved. The program also includes micro-irrigation for farmers and support for refugee-hosting communities

According to the Bunyangabu District Agricultural Engineer, Brenda Oshaba, each farmer received a full irrigation package including solar panels, water tanks, pipes, water pumps, and other accessories. She explains that with these tools, farmers are now irrigating high-value crops like bananas, coffee, and fruits.

Engineer Oshaba noted that beneficiaries were carefully selected based on their ability to co-fund 25% of the scheme's cost, their proximity to a water source, and having at least 2.5 acres of land dedicated to high-value crops.

Robert Kaswarra, a resident of



Bunyangabu RDC, Mr Nicholas Kamukama, handing over an MOU to Mr Robert Kaswarra. This is aimed at showing that the district has handed over the system to the farmer.

Nyakigumbe Town Council, recalls the frustration of watching his crops dry up.

“Here, water is very far, and I had no capacity to bring it closer to my crops. But with the scheme, I now have the water I needed so much, and I have started harvesting my passion fruits,” he says with relief.

In Buheesi Town Council, George Rwabuheesi testifies that irrigation has brought new hope to livestock farmers like him. For years, long dry spells scorched his pasture, leaving cattle hungry. Today, he irrigates several acres of pasture land, ensuring his cows are well-fed throughout the year.

“With more pasture, I have seen my milk production rise to over 200 liters per day. That means more income for my household and the ability to meet financial demands that were once overwhelming,” he says proudly.

Another farmer, Bella Katooro, also from Buheesi, says the difference in crop

yields is striking.

*“When you see the bananas we harvest these days, they are way better than before. And the coffee is doing very well now because there is water all the time,” he explained.*

Last week, the district officially commissioned the 16 irrigation schemes. Speaking at the event, the Chief Administrative Officer, Haji Isa Hood Nsubuga, urged farmers to work closely with extension workers, noting that the district has recruited several to support production.

He emphasized that government’s ultimate goal is to help farmers transition from subsistence to commercial farming in order to boost household incomes.

The RDC, Mr. Nicholas Kamukama, also called on technical staff to be more visible and closer to the farmers, guiding

them through challenges and ensuring the schemes achieve their intended impact.

The Micro-scale Irrigation Project seeks to help smallholder farmers overcome

the unpredictability of climate change by enabling year-round production, improving food security, and opening doors to commercial agriculture.



A monitoring team from Bunyangabu District at the farm of Mr. Rwabuheesi Gorge who benefited from irrigation scheme to grow pastures for his cattle

## GOVERNMENT TO COMPENSATE 190 WILDLIFE-AFFECTED HOUSEHOLDS IN KAMWENGE

*By Joy Kiiza Senior IT Officer Kamwenge District*

The government has pledged to compensate 190 households in Kamwenge District whose crops and livelihoods have been devastated by wild animals straying from Katonga Game Reserve and Kibale Forest National Park.



Minister Frank Tumwebaze addressing the area leaders and residents

The announcement was made by the State Minister for Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Martin Mugarra, during a visit to Biguli and Kabuye sub-counties following persistent outcries from farmers.

Minister Mugarra assured residents that government will not only compensate crop losses but also install a wire barrier along park boundaries to minimize wildlife encroachment.

***“The government is committed to ensuring that conservation efforts go hand in hand with improving the livelihoods of the people living around these protected areas,” Mugarra said.***

He was accompanied by the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries and area MP, Frank Tumwebaze, the Resident District Commissioner, Aharikundira Africano, and District Chairperson, Karungi Joseph.

The delegation met with local leaders and households in Rwebishahi and Lyakahungu villages to discuss long-term solutions to human-wildlife conflicts.

Farmers reported devastating losses, with elephants and other wild animals repeatedly destroying crops such as coffee, beans, maize, bananas, and cassava.

Presenting community concerns, District Chairperson Karungi Joseph highlighted four key issues including crop damage from vermin and wildlife, delays in compensation, the spread of podoconiosis in Busiriba Sub-county, and the need for improved tourism road infrastructure linking Kamwenge, Rwebishahi, and Kaazo.

Residents welcomed the government's pledge but urged for swift action, warning that continued delays threaten food security and household incomes.



# GOV'T BUILDS SHS600MILLION GENERAL WARD AT KICWAMBA H/CIII

*By Ainganiza Stephen -Communication Officer Kabarole*



Residents of Kicwamba Sub-county in Kabarole District can now access improved medical care closer to home following the commissioning of a newly constructed general ward at Kicwamba H/CIII built by the government.

The Shs600 million facility, funded by the World Bank under the Uganda Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers (UGIFT) program, is equipped with a general ward, pediatric and maternity wards, a laboratory, outpatient department, and a staff house.

Speaking at the commissioning, the Assistant RDC, Frank Asaba, urged women to embrace professional healthcare services and abandon reliance on traditional birth attendants.

He also appealed to men to play a supportive role in family health, condemning cases of fathers neglecting their responsibilities.

Kabarole District Chairperson, Dr. Richard Rwabuhinga encouraged

residents to seek early diagnosis and adopt preventive measures. He notes that most diseases are preventable, and early intervention saves lives.

Health workers at the facility say the new structure has eased congestion, which had long strained service delivery.

Rusoke Rugaju, the In-charge of Kicwamba HCIII said they had been operating in a limited space with a growing number of patients but now the new structure will provide a spacious room to deliver effective services.

Catherine Kemigabo, the district Senior health educator, called on Village Health Teams (VHTs) and local leaders to mobilize communities for antenatal care and immunization, stressing that community-level sensitization remains critical.

Local residents expressed gratitude for the new facility, saying it has spared them the burden of traveling long distances to Fort Portal town or Bukuuku HCIV.



District, Sub county leaders and residents at the official commissioning of the facility



Kicwamba HCIII Maternity Wing

*“We’re grateful for this support. We no longer have to trek far to access medical care,” said Rose Kansiime, a resident of Kicwamba.*

The facility is expected to significantly improve maternal and child health outcomes in the sub-county and reduce the patient load on other health centers in the district.

# COMMUNITY RADIO POWERS FLOOD PREPAREDNESS IN KASESE DISTRICT

By Kabugho Sharon, Communications Officer, Kasese District.



Kivengenye-Karusandara Village Disaster Management committee engagement with ECHO mission team

**K**arusandara Subcounty, tucked in the lowlands of Busongora south Kasese District, has turned the tide on disaster risk by harnessing a community radio system for early warning and mobilization. But residents here are proving that danger does not have to mean disaster.

With a community radio system donated by the Uganda Red Cross Society and supported by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Karusandara is transforming how it prepares for floods. The radio does more than share weather alerts—it mobilizes neighbors to take action before waters rise.

“When we anticipate floods, we use the community radio to send early warning

messages so people can respond in time,” explains Ibrahim Kahyana, a Red Cross volunteer and member of the Village Disaster Management Committee. “Since we started using it, the impact of floods has greatly reduced.”

Instead of waiting for emergencies, residents rally to prevent them. Before each rainy season, teams desilt clogged drainage channels so water can flow freely, reducing the chance of overflow. These community clean-ups have become routine preparedness activities.

Serugyendo Everest, the LC I chairperson of Kivengenya, calls the radio a lifesaver. “This radio is saving lives,” he said during a recent visit by an ECHO mission team. “We only appeal



DDMC kasese recieving Mega Phones and Whistles from WFP

for support to expand coverage to reach more villages.”

Kasese District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) reinforces local efforts by distributing Uganda National Meteorological Authority forecasts through local and community radios, WhatsApp groups, and coordination meetings.

“When communities receive early warning information, they can take actions like desilting water channels,” noted Singoma Joseph, the district’s Senior Planner and Disaster Focal Person. “Karusandara shows what proactive preparedness can achieve.”

To scale up early warning in other flood-prone areas, the World Food Programme, in partnership with ECHO, has supplied additional megaphones and whistles. Partners such as FAO and Uganda Redcross Society are also strengthening local disaster-management structures.

The Chairperosn Kasese District Disaster

Management Committee Mr. Kikusa Mustafa credits these partnerships for improving readiness: “With the capacities the DDMC has attained, we can do more to increase preparedness, reduce impacts, and support a resilient recovery. Key anticipatory actions make all the difference for people in the path of hazards.”

While some communities still wait for disasters to occur, Karusandara stands out for its active participation. From clearing channels to spreading messages, residents have embraced the idea that preparedness is everyone’s responsibility.

As Ibrahim Kahyana puts it, “We no longer sit and watch. The radio alerts us—and we act.”

Karusandara’s example shows that with the right tools and community commitment, even the most flood-prone areas can build resilience and safeguard lives.

# KITAGWENDA AUTHORITY DIRECTS PARENTS ON 3RD TERM EARLY SCHOOL REPORTING

*By Ainomuhangi Justus Kitagwenda District IT Officer*

The authorities in Kitagwenda District have directed parents to ensure that learners report to school on time in order to boost academic performance during the third term that opened on Monday, September 15, 2025.

Moses Dalili, the Kitagwenda District Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) issued the directive to all parents and guardians to ensure that children report to school promptly in the first weeks of third term.

He emphasized that the first weeks of the term are crucial for learning and assessment.

"Third term is the period used to assess pupils before they are promoted to the next level. If learners report late, it denies them and their teachers enough time to cover the syllabus thoroughly," Dalili explained

The CAO noted with concern that government-aided primary schools in the district often experience low learner turnout within the first two to three weeks of the term, a trend that hampers syllabus completion and affects performance.

Speaking at a press briefing held at the district headquarters, the CAO emphasized



Mr. Dalili R.K Moses CAO Kitagwenda



Mr. Asiimwe Sedas DEO Kitagwenda

the importance of timely school reporting in maintaining academic continuity and discipline among learners.

"Early reporting is not just a matter of formality. It is a crucial step in ensuring that our children do not fall behind in their studies, especially as we approach the end of the academic year," the CAO said.

He noted that late reporting has, in previous terms, disrupted classroom learning, slowed down curriculum coverage, and negatively affected both learners' performance and the overall school routine.

The CAO further urged parents to prepare adequately by ensuring their children are equipped with the necessary scholastic materials and return to school in good time, preferably on the official opening date as stipulated by the Ministry of Education.

"As a district, we are committed to improving education standards, but this can only be achieved if there is a collective responsibility. I call upon all parents and guardians to take this message seriously and prioritize their children's education by adhering to school opening schedules," he added.

School authorities have also been directed to closely monitor student reporting and submit timely updates to the District Education Office. Head teachers are encouraged to engage parents and local leaders in mobilizing for early reporting and full-term attendance.

The third term, being the final and often most critical in the academic

year especially for candidates requires maximum participation from all stakeholders to ensure a successful conclusion.

The CAO reaffirmed the district's commitment to supporting schools through supervision, provision of resources, and community sensitization.

Highlighting last year's Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) results, Dalili revealed that only 200 pupils passed in Division One across the entire district, a figure he described as "too low."

"We have already engaged the education department to ensure we improve these results. But this can only be achieved if pupils report to school at the very start of the term," he said.

CAO further disclosed that he had instructed parish chiefs to monitor schools weekly, focusing on both learner and teacher attendance. The chiefs will be required to submit weekly reports to ensure accountability and timely interventions.



Maria Junior School Pupils and Staff

"Let's work together to give our children the best possible chance to succeed. Education is a shared responsibility," CAO concluded.

DEO Asiimwe Sedas said third term is a critical period, especially for candidates preparing for final examinations, and any delays in reporting could negatively impact syllabus completion.

***"Parents should prioritize timely reporting because this term is shorter and requires learners to maximize classroom time," the DEO said.***

Head teachers in attendance raised concerns over increasing absenteeism and late coming, noting that some learners are kept at home to support household chores or small businesses, particularly in rural areas.

Authorities cautioned parents against such practices, saying they deny children their right to education.

"We have observed that students who report late often struggle to catch up with their peers, especially in key subjects. Early reporting allows for a smooth start to the term and enables teachers to cover the syllabus effectively," Sedas said.

Sedas also mentioned that schools have been instructed to prepare adequately for the new term and to be ready to receive learners as third term begins.

"We are working closely with school head teachers and community leaders to ensure parents understand the importance of punctuality. Every day in school counts especially in third term," Sedas added.

According to the official calendar from the Ministry of Education and Sports, the third term of the 2025 academic year will run for 82 days, ending on Friday, December 5, 2025.

This applies to all primary, secondary, technical, and farm schools across Uganda.

 **MEDIA REVIEW** 

**NEW VISION ▷ PAGE 05**

**GOVERNMENT TO CHANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS**

 **GCICUganda**

 **MEDIA REVIEW** 

**NEW VISION ▷ PAGE 02**

**UEDCL MAKE 640,00 NEW CONNECTIONS**

 **GCICUganda**

# SHS1.3 TRILLION CLIMATE-SMART PROJECT SET TO TRANSFORM AGRICULTURE IN UGANDA

By Stephen Ainganiza -Communications Officer Kabarole



Participants in the training workshop at Fort Breeze Hotel

Uganda has embarked on one of its most ambitious agricultural reforms yet, the Uganda Climate Smart Agricultural Transformation Project (UCSATP), a six-year, \$350 million (approx. Shs1.3 trillion) initiative designed to reshape the country's farming systems in the face of climate change.

Speaking during the closure of a three-day Rwenzori regional training on

environmental and social safeguards at Fort Breeze Hotel in Fort Portal, Dr. Alfred Kamanyire, the District Production Officer for Kamwenge, called for a united front in implementing the Uganda Climate Smart Agricultural Transformation Project (UCSATP).

He urged district technocrats to unite in ensuring the project succeeds, noting that UCSATP supports both the Presidential Vision 2040 and the NRM manifesto.



Mr Frank Asaba, the Assistant RDC Kabarole, giving closing remarks

Dr. Kamanyire says the drive aims to reshape the nation's economic narrative by focusing on adaptation and resilience in the face of climate change.

"This initiative is improving farmer institutions, promoting sustainable agricultural practices and technologies, increasing market access through improved infrastructure and supply chains, and strengthening resilience to climate shocks," Dr. Kamanyire said.

The World Bank–funded project targets 69 districts, including seven refugee-hosting areas, and is expected to directly benefit 3.9 million Ugandans while indirectly impacting 9.5 million more. Its focus is on enhancing productivity, building resilience, and boosting market access for selected value chains. It's focusing on women, youth, and refugee-hosting districts, through promoting climate-smart practices, providing access to inputs and machinery via matching grants, and improving seed and breed quality.

The project supports Value Chains include Coffee, Cocoa, Mango, Citrus, Hass Avocado, Cashew Nuts, Cassava, Soybeans, Sorghum, Maize and livestock including Dairy and Beef, Fish capture and Aquaculture and beneficial Insects like Bees and Black Soldier Fly (Larvae).

Special attention is being given to women, youth, and refugee-hosting communities through climate-smart practices, matching grants for inputs and machinery, and the promotion of improved seed and breed quality.

Officials stressed that the success of UCSATP depends on grassroots participation.

Okwera James, a climate change officer from the Ministry of Water and Environment, emphasized that community needs must shape implementation to ensure "climate-sensitive outcomes."

Asaba Frank, the Assistant RDC for Kabarole, urged technocrats to guard against wetland encroachment and intensify environmental conservation campaigns.

*"All heads of departments are the implementers of government programs. You need to be patriotic to implement the NRM manifesto. Failure to perform fails government," he said.*

Dr. Dean Kusiimakwe, the Kabarole District Veterinary Officer and Project Focal Person tasked district teams to gather data directly from communities and align it with the project's technical requirements, ensuring UCSATP's objectives translate into tangible results at the grassroots.

The government's significant investment in UCSATP signals a shift from broad, general development programs to a laser-focused climate-resilient agricultural model.

By integrating climate-smart technologies, value addition, and market linkages, UCSATP aims not only to boost household incomes but also to shield Uganda's farming sector where 70% of the population derives its livelihood from the worsening impacts of climate change.

# RIPPLE EFFECT UGANDA, KAMWENGE DISTRICT PARTNER TO PROMOTE YOUTH DAIRY PROJECT

*By Joy Kiiza, Senior IT Officer, Kamwenge District*



Monitoring team meeting kabuye B youth tukore group in Biguli

**R**ipple Effect Uganda has partnered with Kamwenge District Local Government to implement the Youth Inclusive Dairy and Market Systems Project (YIDaMS), an initiative aimed at empowering young people through skills development and enterprise in the dairy sector.

A recent two-day technical monitoring exercise, jointly conducted by Ripple Effect and district officials, reviewed the project's progress in Nkoma, Bwizi, and Biguli sub-counties, as well as Biguli Town Council.

The exercise was led by the Chief Administrative Officer's representative, Kasheija John, alongside Assistant RDC Brian Karongo, District Internal Security Officer Nkwasiibwe John Okoth, and other district leaders.

The project, funded by the MasterCard

Foundation, equips youth with dairy skills, infrastructure, and market linkages.

Since its inception in 2023, YIDaMS has established three milk collection centers including Nkoma Youth Dairy, Biguli Youth Dairy, and Bwizi Youth Dairy – along with a refugee-focused hub, Hope for the Refugee Milk Centre.

The facilities are equipped with coolers of up to 2,000 litres, deep freezers, standby generators, motorcycles, a tricycle, and milk cans.

During the monitoring, district staff and sub-county leaders toured the dairy groups and collection centers before convening at Cape Hotel for a feedback session.

The report highlighted progress since 2023, initially in Nkoma, Biguli, and Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement, later expanding to Biguli Town Council and

Bwizi Sub County.

At Mabale in Nkoma Sub County, the Namirembe Youth Dairy Farmers Group praised the project for training them in yoghurt production and providing essential equipment.

"Our children are now going to school, and through our savings we have bought a plot of land," said group chairperson Nzeyimana Charles.

Despite the successes, youth groups raised concerns over lack of UNBS certification, limited milk cooling capacity, poor transport to distant markets, and weak financial management skills. Ripple Effect pledged to support the groups through the Innovation Challenge Fund.

District Secretary for Social Services, Mbonigaba Fred, encouraged youth to improve packaging and branding for market competitiveness and called for expansion of the project to other sub-counties.

Assistant RDC Brian Karongo praised the initiative for increasing household incomes while urging Ripple Effect to identify youth for advanced dairy processing training.

YIDaMS also trains youth in soap-making, ghee production, confectionery, and agro-inputs, covering training fees, accommodation, meals, and certification to enable the establishment of small-scale enterprises.



# KITAGWENDA TOWN COUNCILS TO MIGRATE TO IRAS FOR IMPROVED REVENUE COLLECTION

**K**itagwenda District local authorities have announced plans to migrate from the eLogRev platform to the more advanced Integrated Revenue Administration System (IRAS) in a bid to enhance transparency and efficiency in local revenue collection.

The decision was reached during a high-level meeting held at the district headquarters, attended by the Commissioner in Charge of Revenue Administration, the Information Systems Officer from the Ministry of Local Government, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) representatives, town clerks, accountants, and ward agents.

The new IRAS platform, developed by the government, is designed to streamline revenue collection processes across all local governments. It integrates registration, assessment, billing, and payment, while also enabling taxpayer awareness and stronger connections between residents and local governments.

Speaking at the meeting, CAO's representative, Tumwiine David, emphasized the importance of



Commissioner MoLG in charge of revenue administration

collaboration among all stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition. "We must work together to ensure a successful migration," he said.

Assistant Commissioner for Revenue Administration, Silva Tindizarwa, outlined the benefits of IRAS, including improved revenue collection, enhanced financial management, and real-time data visibility. He noted that while eLogRev had played a key role in digitization at the initial stage, it was no longer sufficient to meet the evolving demands of local revenue administration.

"The move to IRAS is not just about changing software it's about transforming how we manage, track, and utilize public funds at the local level. IRAS offers real-time data visibility, improved accountability, and seamless integration with other national systems," the Assistant Commissioner said.

During a live demonstration, Ministry IT Officer Emetu Micheal Emudu showcased IRAS features such as property tax management, market dues collection, business licensing, mobile money integration, and automated reporting tools.

He also highlighted the system's ability to improve audit trails and flag anomalies for decision-makers.

Town Clerk of Kitagwenda Town Council, Kakuhikie Enock, welcomed the upgrade but raised concerns about staff readiness and infrastructure, particularly computers and internet connectivity. Ministry officials responded by pledging targeted training sessions for accountants and revenue officers, alongside provision of ICT support and phased system testing before full rollout. Stakeholders also discussed challenges

such as digital literacy gaps and potential system resistance, agreeing on strategies including early sensitization, provision of ICT equipment, and creation of a technical helpdesk.

The meeting ended with a joint commitment to ensure a smooth and transparent migration. The Assistant Commissioner praised Kitagwenda's openness, urging leaders to take full ownership of the project. "This transition is a long-term investment in good governance and improved service delivery," he said.



CAO's Representative Mr. Tumwiine David addressing the meeting

# RIVER MPANGA REGAINS LIFE AS COMMUNITIES, PARTNERS DRIVE RESTORATION

*By Ainomuhangi Justus Information Technology Officer Kitagwenda District*



Team Leader Albert Water Management, Dr Emmanuel Brian Guma



*Dermacation  
of the buffer  
zones*

**R**iver Mpanga, once choked by human encroachment and environmental degradation, is slowly regenerating following joint restoration efforts led by local communities, government, and conservation partners.

The campaign, led by the Joint Efforts to Save the Environment (JESE) and the Natural Resources Defence Initiatives (NRDI), in partnership with the Ministry of Water and Environment and supported by Join for Water,

is being implemented under the Integrated Water Resource Management programme.

The initiative seeks to protect water sources, improve access to safe water, and promote sustainable livelihoods in the Mpanga and Semliki catchments. Activities include opening 100-metre buffer zones along the riverbanks, tree planting, sensitization drives, and promoting environment-friendly income-generating ventures across Kabarole, Kamwenge, and Kitagwenda districts.

James Butcher, a resident of Kekubo

Parish in Kanara Sub-County, Kitagwenda, said before JESE's intervention, the riverbanks had been heavily degraded due to cultivation.

"The area had lost its thickness because of human activities, but now it is steadily regenerating," he said.

*"We have also been supported with alternative income activities like apiary and fruit farming, which allow us to earn without encroaching on the river." Musinguzi Richard a resident said.*

Dr. Emmanuel Guma, Team Leader at the Albertine Water Management Zone under the Ministry of Water and Environment, observed that unsustainable human activities remain a major challenge to the interventions of our partners.

Doreen Nankunda, secretary for production and natural resources in Kitagwenda, said before the demarcation exercise, residents were sensitized on the need to protect the buffer zones.

"They have actively embraced the interventions, and we are grateful to JESE and other partners for their contribution," Nankunda said.

NRDI is also working directly with farmers to encourage participation. Benon Twijukye, a field extension officer with the organization, explained:

"We have trained farmers to raise and propagate tree species, including fruit trees, and partnered with institutions to plant them. We provide trees to communities free of charge to encourage participation."

One beneficiary, Abdhu Kanyarwanda, confirmed: "NRDI supported me with trees to plant on my land, which has helped me contribute to the restoration."

At the district level, structures have been put in place to ensure sustainability.

Program managers agree that raising awareness is key to long-term success.

George Bwambale, of Join for Water, stressed that continuous sensitization from the lowest levels to the district level is essential if people are to appreciate the importance of restoring and conserving water resources.

NRDI is also making progress in Fort Portal City. Benon Bwalhuma, the organization's program manager, said they have demarcated over 60 kilometres of encroached land and supported more than 200 households with ecological sanitation.

"But challenges remain, including political interference and people who undervalue these initiatives. We are addressing this through multi-stakeholder engagement," he added.

River Mpanga, which originates from the Rwenzori Mountains and flows through Kabarole, Kyenjojo, Kamwenge, and Kitagwenda districts before draining into Lake George, plays a vital role in supporting communities, agriculture, and the Mpanga Power Station.

Despite the challenges, conservationists believe that with joint action from communities, government, and partners, the river can be restored to secure water resources and livelihoods for future generations.

# PRESIDENT MUSEVENI CALLS FOR PEACEFUL DIALOGUE AS IPOD SUMMIT CHARTS PATH FOR UNITY AHEAD OF 2026 ELECTIONS



President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni has once again called on Uganda's political actors to embrace peaceful dialogue and reject violence as the country prepares for the 2026 general elections.

Addressing leaders of six political parties during the Inter-Party Organisation for Dialogue (IPOD) Summit at Kololo Ceremonial Grounds on September 18, 2025, President Museveni said Uganda's progress depends on leaders diagnosing societal challenges correctly and applying peaceful solutions rather than resorting to subversion, violence, and divisive politics.

The summit, convened under the theme "Together for a Peaceful and Sustainable Uganda," brought together Presidents and Secretary Generals of the National Resistance Movement (NRM),

Democratic Party (DP), Uganda People's Congress (UPC), Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), Justice Forum (JEEMA), and the People's Progressive Party (PPP).

In his keynote address, President Museveni, speaking in his dual capacity as NRM National Chairman and IPOD Summit Chair, urged opposition leaders to adopt peaceful methods of engagement, emphasizing that mistakes in governance can be corrected over time if the country remains stable.

"As we have seen in the last 40 years, the NRM has revived Uganda's economy. Although we still face challenges, we are much stronger than ever before. Even if one has a wrong understanding, as long as they are not violent, the country will remain stable, and in the future, mistakes can be corrected," H.E. Museveni said.

He argued that Africa's biggest tragedy stems from both wrong diagnoses of societal problems and the use of violent methods.

"That is how chaos arises in many African countries. Even when you make mistakes, if there is peace, there is room for correction. But when you combine wrong ideas with violence, you get a total breakdown," he added.

Reflecting on his long political career, President Museveni reminded party leaders that he had been involved in politics for 65 years, beginning as a Democratic Party youth leader in 1960 before joining UPC briefly in 1970.

"Politics must be like medicine. A political leader should be like a doctor—able to correctly diagnose the problems of society. If the diagnosis and prescription are wrong, the patient dies. If leaders misdiagnose societal issues, their countries collapse," he explained.

He reiterated the NRM's four principles—patriotism, Pan-Africanism, socio-economic transformation, and democracy—urging that these values remain key to securing Uganda's future.

President Museveni also weighed in on the recent teachers' strike, which UPC President Jimmy Akena had raised during discussions. He stressed the importance of prioritizing limited national resources, citing the case of Soroti Flying School, where pilots and engineers were prioritized over other staff to prevent the school's collapse.

"In Soroti flying school, we needed most pilots and engineers of the aircraft, but they didn't have the money to pay all of them well. They were not prioritizing, saying, we must all get equal, either we all get or nobody gets, that logic is not correct. We, freedom fighters, always prioritize. I advised them, and they agreed to pay the pilots well," President Museveni explained.

At the same ceremony, President Museveni handed over the IPOD Chairmanship to the Democratic Party's Chairman, Hon. Norbert Mao.

"Thank you for having trusted us, NRM, for the last five years with the leadership I now peacefully hand over," H.E. Museveni said.



NRM Secretary General, Rt. Hon. Richard Todwong, also Chair of the IPOD Council of Secretaries General, applauded President Museveni for sustaining IPOD after international donors withdrew funding.

*“We were orphaned as IPOD when donors left, but as a father, you picked us up and have nurtured IPOD. You have shown that homegrown solutions can address African challenges,”*  
Rt. Hon. Todwong said.

He urged all political parties to continue promoting unity, dialogue, and democratic values, adding, “Together, we can build a stronger, more inclusive, and accountable political system that serves all Ugandans.”

Hon. Mao takes over IPOD leadership: The summit also marked a leadership transition, with Democratic Party President General, Hon. Mao, assuming the chairmanship of IPOD from President Museveni.

In his remarks, Hon. Mao emphasized

consensus-building as the foundation of national unity, further committing to a peaceful election in 2026.

“So today, I, on behalf of the DP, take the leadership of IPOD. I want to announce that we shall leave the door of IPOD open. Our agenda will be to ensure that we have a peaceful election, a free and fair process, and that we shall continue to talk honestly about the problems we face, that we shall attack the problems that face Uganda, rather than attacking each other for God and my country,” he said.

“We cannot have a country where there is no consensus about anything. We may disagree on some things, but we must find common ground. IPOD is about finding common ground, because the unity of Uganda is paramount. I'm delighted that the IPOD summit members are the 20% who want to offer at least 80% of the solution,” Hon. Mao added, commending President Museveni for ordering the release of nearly 70 political detainees earlier this year following discussions between DP and NRM.

“Sometimes small gestures like this are



not appreciated, but they are significant steps towards reconciliation,” he said.

On the other hand, UPC President Jimmy Akena reaffirmed his party’s commitment to dialogue, describing it as essential for building unity during the upcoming election season.

“As Ugandans, we may not agree on every policy, but we must focus on the greater good. UPC will always choose dialogue to overcome difficulties,” Hon. Akena said.

“Even in a tough election season, our goal is to emerge stronger and more united.”

Forum for Democratic Change President Patrick Oboi Amuriat underscored FDC’s long-standing support for IPOD but warned that dialogue must be meaningful and lead to tangible results.

“Our country is fractured along tribal, religious, and political lines. We must emphasize reconciliation,” Mr. Amuriat said. He called on President Museveni to exercise clemency and pardon political prisoners, including those awaiting delayed justice.

“Progress requires leaving the past behind. Clemency will demonstrate goodwill and help this country move forward,” he urged.

JEEMA President Asuman Basalirwa echoed similar sentiments, stressing that Uganda’s problems can only be addressed through dialogue and consensus.

Mr. Saddam Gayira, President of the People’s Progressive Party (PPP), highlighted the success of non-confrontational politics.

“In 30 years of politics, I have never been summoned by the police. Even in the last election, none of our members were arrested. Why? Because we preach peaceful engagement,” Mr. Gayira said.

He urged fellow leaders to treat each other with respect, regardless of party differences.

Dr. Lawrence Sserwambala, IPOD’s Executive Director, acknowledged the platform’s milestones but warned that challenges such as electoral violence, weak enforcement of the code of conduct, and youth vulnerability remain pressing.

“Uganda’s youthful population, particularly in urban ghettos, is vulnerable to manipulation into violence. IPOD must nurture them as champions of peace,” he said.

Dr. Sserwambala urged that the 2026 elections provide a critical opportunity to strengthen consensus, fairness, and inclusivity.

“Uganda is watching us. History will judge us by the choices we make. Let us choose peace, let us dialogue, let us put Uganda first,” he noted.

The summit was also attended by top leaders, including Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Anita Among, Electoral Commission Chairperson, Justice Simon Byabakama, NRM’s Central Executive Committee members, and delegations from all IPOD member parties. Their presence symbolized the broad-based support for dialogue as a central tool for conflict resolution and democratic progress.



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