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OVERVIEW

- Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda launched the National Food Security Assessment Report on 28th February. The report reveals that one in every three Ugandans is facing acute food insecurity.
- The total number of refugees and asylum seekers from South Sudan in Uganda is 779,622; while the total number of refugees and asylum seekers is 1,026,043 according to the UNHCR Flash Update on the South Sudan Emergency Response of 6th March 2017.
- The Kabaka (King) of the Buganda, HRH Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, embarked on a partnership with UNAIDS as National Goodwill Ambassador to mobilize men in the kingdom to test for HIV and access treatment when necessary, as part of activities to mark Buganda Health Week on 4th March 2017 at Buvuma Island.
- End to FGM: A former cutter says she will never go back to performing Female Genital Mutilation.
- Community and Religious Leaders Spearhead campaign against FGM
- The second outreach course for women UN peace keepers, under auspices of the United Nations Signals Academy (UNSA), commenced on 6th March 2017 at UN Regional Service Centre (RSCE), Entebbe.
- A Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Seminar for Parliamentarians from Sub-Saharan Africa was held in Kampala from 6th-7th March with support from UNDP.
- Climate smart agriculture technologies availed to farmers by UNDP save them from the effects of severe drought



SDG 2 – ZERO HUNGER

11 MILLION UGANDANS FACE ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY

The Prime Minister Ruhakana Rugunda launched the National Food Security Assessment Report on 28th February at Kampala Serena Hotel.

The report indicates that at least 10.9 million Ugandans are facing acute food insecurity with the country risking real disaster should the first planting season rains fail. The report reveals that one in every three Ugandans is facing acute food insecurity.

The reports compiled by an Inter-ministerial team, says the number of food-insecure Ugandans may rise to 11.4 million by the end this month. The report indicates that the food insecurity that afflicted 1.3 million people in November 2016, had ravaged 10.9 million people by January 2017, with at least 1.6 million Ugandans already suffering food crisis. The new report cites most food-insecure sub-regions as Teso, Karamoja, Bukedi, the cattle corridor, parts of Busoga, Lango, Acholi, West Nile and parts of central Buganda.



H.E. Zheng Zhou Qiang, Ambassador of China (extreme left), handing over to Prime Minister Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda (second from left) relief aid worth Shs22 billion worth 5,983 metric tons of Rice from China. Looking on is Ms. Rosa Malango, UN Resident Coordinator (extreme right).

Dr. Rugunda attributed the acute food insecurity on the prolonged drought that affected the country in 2015 and part of 2016, but assured Ugandans that government is responding to the challenge. "And in November 2016, government sent a team of ministers and technical staff to carry out an assessment of the deteriorating food security situation across the country and the national food security assessment report, what I am launching is a product of fact-finding mission by political leaders and inter-agency technical assessment," Dr. Rugunda said.

Dr. Rugunda said with assistance from a joint team of experts, government ministries, the World Bank, UNDP, Food Agriculture Organisation, World Food Programme, UNICEF and 85 district local governments, government has also worked out a five-year Food Eradication Action plan scaling up irrigation, construction of more valley tanks and large dams. He said government has also committed Shs25 billion for relief food and is in the process of procuring 1,600 metric tonnes of maize flour and 1,400 metric tonnes of beans.

Dr. Rugunda warned that there will be frequent droughts resulting in crop failures and the loss of pasture grazing land for livestock, increased flooding, water logging, erosion and declining soil fertility due to climate change. He urged the people to adopt irrigation and modern ways of farming.

Ms. Rosa Malango, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative said, 'the Sustainable Development Goals recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including achieving food security, improving health outcomes, strengthening social protection, and creating job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection.

'Building on Uganda's commitment to the SDGs, the United Nations in Uganda remains committed to work with the Government and partners to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture and achieve risk-informed development,' she said. During her intervention she provided an overview of actions being taken by 5 UN agencies WFP, FAO, UNICEF, UNDP and UNHCR in improving food security in different parts of the country particularly the worst affected districts including Karamoja Sub-region, the cattle corridor and the refugee hosting districts.

At the same occasion, H.E. Zheng Zhou Qiang Ambassador of China, handed over relief aid worth Shs22 billion worth 5,983 metric tons of rice from China.



SDG 3 – GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

KABAKA TO CHAMPION CAMPAIGN TO MOBILIZE MEN TO TEST FOR HIV AND ACCESS TREATMENT

By Natalie Chifamba, UNAIDS

The Kabaka (King) of the Buganda, Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, embarked on a partnership with UNAIDS to mobilise men in the kingdom to test for HIV and access treatment when

necessary, as part of activities to mark Buganda Health Week on 4th March 2017 at Buvuma Island.

UNAIDS recognizes that cultural leaders such as the King of Buganda can influence norms, beliefs and customs that impact on men's access to HIV services.



The Kabaka of the Buganda, Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II (centre) receiving an award from UNAIDS Director for the Regional Support Team for Eastern and Southern Africa, Professor Sheila Tlou (right). Looking on is Ms. Ama Sande UNAIDS Country Director (left)

In the Central 1 and 2 regions, in which the Buganda Kingdom is situated, HIV prevalence stands at 10.6% and 9.0% respectively above the national prevalence of 7.3%. Estimates for 2014 indicate that Central 1 and 2 regions account for almost half (42 000) of Uganda's annual estimate of 83,000 new infections.

UNAIDS and the Buganda Kingdom have launched the "Gwanga Mujje: One million men" campaign to mobilize one million men to access HIV Counselling and Testing as an entry-point into HIV treatment and care. Their leadership is expected to facilitate access by entire families.

At the launch of the campaign, UNAIDS Director for the Regional Support Team for Eastern and Southern Africa, Professor Sheila Tlou, conferred upon the King the title of National

UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador for Male Engagement to End AIDS in the Buganda Kingdom. The Queen of Buganda, was also identified as an important influence in the HIV and AIDS response in the Buganda Kingdom

In the Eastern and Southern African region, men are being left behind in the AIDS response. Evidence shows that men are testing for HIV in far fewer numbers, fewer are on treatment and as a result, the majority of AIDS-related deaths occur among men. Health systems, which often prioritise women's health, can be inaccessible or unfriendly to men and boys. Deeply-held beliefs about what it means to be a man often prevent men from seeking healthcare services before they fall seriously ill.

FORMER CUTTER SAYS SHE WILL NEVER GO BACK TO PERFORMING FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

By Evelyn Matsamura Kiapi – United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Bukwo – For decades, Turutea Chelangat, 77, was one of the most well-known circumcisers among the Sebei people in Kaworyo, a village in the Bukwo hills of Eastern Uganda. That was until the day she decided to stop the harmful practice. Ms. Chelangat cannot remember the number of girls she would cut every season. "They were very many," she says.

At the time, she believed she had a calling to protect the Sebei culture by performing female genital mutilation (FGM) because for generations, her family were circumcisers. "At first I was trained as a mentor, guiding young girls and preparing for cutting the night before and encouraging them to be strong and ready. I was told I had to keep our culture alive," she says. This all changed when she attended a UNFPA-supported seminars raising awareness of the harms of FGM.

FGM is typically carried out without anesthesia and using crude instruments. It is often performed without the consent of the person being cut. It is internationally recognized as a violation of women's and girls' rights. Consequences can include haemorrhage, infection, infertility, chronic pain, complications during childbirth and even death. Yet, the practice persists.

FGM is practiced by approximately 1 per cent of the Ugandan population. Yet among the Sabiny, Pokot and Tepeth communities, in Uganda's east and north-east, the prevalence is more than 90 per cent. The UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, which is funded in part by the European Commission, works with communities to help end FGM, raising awareness about its dangers among community leaders, religious leaders, women and the elderly. It has also helped countries strengthen the laws and policies prohibiting the practice.



Chelangat, the converted former FCM cutter

Giving up the knife

say no," she said. As an alternative, she has gone into farming and spends most of her time tilling and weeding her garden. For her, circumcision is a thing of the past. "Long ago they used to tell us uncircumcised girls cannot smear the house or fetch grain from the granary. But now I see that this is not true. Even without circumcision, women can get married and can cook," she says.

In 2010, the Uganda Government passed the Prohibition of FGM Act, which criminalized the practice. Ms. Chelangat learned that FGM hurts women and girls during an awareness-raising exercise by UNFPA after the law was passed. "When I heard the news that they were arresting people for cutting, I had to abandon it because I was told that I would be arrested," she said.

"I threw my cutting tools into the Kapterit stream," she said, indicating that she would never go back to the old ways. "I do not cut girls anymore."

She has remained determined, despite the financial incentive to return to cutting. "When I would circumcise, I would get paid 20,000 shillings [about \$6] and a hen as a reward. I still get invited to cut girls, but

COMMUNITY AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS SPEARHEAD CAMPAIGN AGAINST FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

By Proscovia Nakibuuka Mbonye, UNICEF

On a hot and sunny morning, a group of elders, religious leaders, kraal leaders, also known as role models from Akariwon village, Tapac sub-county, Moroto District meet and the topic of discussion is Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting. These are members of St. Bakita Community Group that has since 1992 led the UNICEF supported campaign to end Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), which begun in 1992.

The meeting is chaired by Lomiat Elia, a 67 year old, highly respected local leader and role model for the campaign. Among the issues to be discussed are avenues through which their village can influence other villages to stop cutting girls, like they did. They also talk about ways in which they can maintain the behaviour of keeping girls uncut in their community.



Theresa Chepotumeghie, former FGM cutter from Ausikiyoyon village, leads the public declaration against FGM her community, prior to the International Day of Zero Tolerance to FGM national celebrations held in Amudat District. UNICEF Uganda/2017/Proscovia Nakibuuka

Lomiat joined the campaign after four of his daughters experienced prolonged bleeding after cutting as well as major complications during child birth. "When I joined the campaign, I made sure I saved my six younger daughters from the knife. Instead I sent them to school and I know they will become responsible people in the community after their education," he adds. Lomiat who has seen changes in his community laments that before the campaign started, an average of 100 girls were cut in just one day. But today, you hardly hear of any girl being cut in our village. He attributes the success of the campaign to the unique strategy of involving key opinion leaders e.g. religious leaders, Kraal leaders, and local leaders, in the fight against FGM/C. The approach has been very successful and today they boast of more girls uncut and more girls attending school.



Teenage girls from Ausikiyoyon Village, dance and celebrate at the public declaration against FGM in their community. UNICEF Uganda/2017/Proscovia Nakibuuka

Akariwon village is one of the villages in Tapac sub-county that used to practice FGM especially among the Tepeth community. The sub county has over 60 villages and to date, 15 villages have publicly declared abandonment of the practice.

Speaking proudly with a smile, Lomiat says the members of St. Bakita are now role models in the community and among the things they do to keep the momentum of the campaign, is conduct door-to-door, home to home sensitisation drives, community dialogues, utilise the pulpit through religious leaders to disseminate anti FGM/C messages, use catechism classes as an avenue to pass on messages to young girls and boys, as well as visit other communities where the practice still prevails, urging them to stop the practice. "Our community is now a safe place for the girls because there is no cutting. However, we still need to work hard to ensure the practice is wiped out in all villages," he asserts.

Maria Napakol, a 70 year old former cutter also attends the meeting. She mentions that she joined the campaign after a number of girls that she mutilated, died due to prolonged bleeding. "I thank the Parish Priest who continuously visited me, and enlightened me about the dangers of FGM before urging me to drop the practice," she narrated. "I am now a role model and sensitise people especially the cutters in the villages where we go, to leave girls intact." She also notes that the practice is a borrowed one that was imposed on them. The

group meets weekly to take stock of their achievements as well as discuss new strategies of supporting other communities abandon the gruesome practice that leaves victims scarred for life.

According to Moses King Loru, the Community Development Officer of Moroto District, all the villages in this sub-county used to practice FGM but because of the increased sensitization led by the communities themselves, more villages continue to publicly drop the practice. The achievements from all the communities have been a result of the intensified efforts supported under the UNICEF/UNFPA Female Genital Mutilation Joint Programme to accelerate FGM/C abandonment.

On the same day, another public declaration took place in Ausikiyoyon village in Amudat District, another district in the Karamoja region where FGM is still practiced. The girls and women through songs, mention how their village has dropped FGM, a practice that was common. "We are here to publicly declare in front of everyone that our village is FGM free." At this declaration, religious leaders, local leaders and the community members themselves take lead in pronouncing the practice. Rev. Canon Jane Chore, the Parish Priest confirms that for five years now, they have not had any girl being cut.

UNICEF Child Protection Specialist, Marianna Garofalo, said, the community meetings, and the public declaration ceremonies were some of the activities organised to mark the International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation in the Karamoja region. Additional powerful testimonies from men, women, girls, were also heard during the national commemoration of the International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation in Amudat District. At the event, the guest of Honour, Hon. Peace Mutuuzo, Minister of State for Gender and Culture Affairs reminded the communities that FGM was harmful to girls and women and it traumatises the victims and the cutters too. "All the components of culture that take us backwards should be stopped and ended today, she stressed. She pledged government's support in supporting the communities' efforts of working with elders, religious leaders, kraal leaders until the practice is completely wiped out. In Uganda, the prevalence rate of FGM/C is at 1.4 per cent and is practiced in six districts - Kapchorwa, Kween, Bukwo in the Sebei region and Moroto, Nakapiripirit and Amudat Districts in the Karamoja region.



SDG 16 – PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

WOMEN PEACE KEEPERS TRAIN AT UN REGIONAL SERVICE CENTRE ENTEBBE



Ms. Safia Boly, Chief of the UN Regional Service Centre Entebbe (RSCE) – with Ugandan Women Peace Keepers at the UN Signals Academy opening ceremony 6th March 2017

Entebbe – As the world celebrated International Women’s Day, United Nations kicked off two weeks training for uniformed women peace keepers at UN Regional Service Centre (RSCE), Entebbe. According to United Nations Signals Academy (UNSA), programme manager, Mr. Sam Leal, the second training aims at equipping women with skills for equal employment opportunities as a fulfillment to UN Secretary General’s global call.

“Uganda to host the training is a significant achievement for the country. It is manifestation of the confidence that UN Missions around the world have in the information communication technology facilities. It is a demonstration that RCSE Entebbe growing stature as training centre of global repute,” Mr. Leal said.

Chief RSCE Ms. Safia Boly said the centre now supports 20 peace keeping missions mostly in Africa that has steadily grown from three a couple of years ago.

Speaking at the official opening of the training in Entebbe Monday 6th 2017, Mr. Leal said the uniformed women peace keepers two weeks ICT induction training has attracted 39 females from various member states.

The participants are from Bangladesh, Ecuador, Ghana, Jordan, Kenya, Mongolia, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Romania and Sierra. Others are Leone, Spain, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The event is mainly sponsored by Japan. The first event was held in November 2016 with women military and police officers from 27 countries.”

Chief Guest at the meeting Japan Deputy Ambassador to Uganda Mr. Yutaka Naakamura said, “Today, the international community faces a number of new challenges to be addressed, such as increasing number of regional and ethnic conflicts, poverty, sustainable development, climate change, and human rights issues.”

Adding, “These global challenges should be addressed by the United Nations with its universal character. For nearly three decades, Japan has been the second largest contributor to the UN’s finances after the United States, and Japan is an indispensable partner in the management of the UN,” he said. Mr. Nakamura further explained that Japan made a funding of \$2.55 million for the training.

“UN has procured equipment in order to strengthening the project team and conducting training,” he said.



SDG 17 – PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

REGIONAL SEMINAR ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR PARLIAMENTS FROM THE SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Members of Parliament from 49 Sub-Saharan African Countries have committed to monitor the implementation of the 2030 Global Agenda, and report on the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals. They have pledged to localize and use the Self-Assessment Toolkit produced by Inter parliamentary Union and United Nations Development Programme. The toolkit aims at assessing parliaments’ preparedness to engage with the SDGs; and identify additional strategies, mechanisms and partnerships to support implementation of the SDGs more effectively.

The commitment was made while at the Regional seminar which was organized by the Inter Parliamentary Union and Parliament of Uganda with support from United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP). This event lasted for 3 days from 1st to 3rd March 2017 at Hotel Africana Kampala, Uganda.



The seminar focused on five main themes: (1) the role of parliaments in achieving the SDGs; (2) effective governance as a critical element of sustainable development; (3) ensuring health and well-being for all; (4) tackling climate change; and (5) identifying and mobilizing national resources to implement the SDGs.

Among the key roles for parliamentarians that were aired out included the following; -

- Scrutinizing the budget framework papers to ensure resource allocation for SDGs
- Legislating policies and laws that are SDGs acquiescent
- Oversight role by monitoring the implementation and reporting on the progress of the achievement of SDGs
- Mobilizing resources for implementing SDGs
- Advocating for the Sustainable Development Goals in their constituencies to make sure that no one is left behind.

Speaking at the inauguration of the Seminar, the host and Speaker of Parliament of Uganda Rt.Hon. Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga appreciated IPU for choosing Uganda to host the regional

seminar and committed to ensuring that Parliament executes its duties for effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Vice President for Inter Parliamentary Union and President of the Senate House of Kenya Rt. Hon Ekwee Ethuro said that parliaments must insist to governments to draft a national plan for the SDGs, to identify country-specific goals and the policies required toward their implementation. He also added that Parliaments must insist on an annual progress report from governments on the implementation of the national plan for the SDGs.

While the United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative Ms. Rosa Malango who was the keynote address speaker highlighted that effective institutions such as Parliament are instrumental for the appropriate management of natural resources, human and economic development, thereby fostering tangible wealth for ordinary people.



SDG 15 – LIFE ON LAND

CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGIES SAVE FARMERS FROM THE EFFECTS OF SEVERE DROUGHT

By Simon Peter Amunau Weredwong, UNDP

Over the years, Uganda's cattle corridor has been characterized by several climatic challenges resulting from overgrazing and unsustainable utilization of the land. These result into low productivity which is made worse by frequent prolonged droughts in most parts of the country. Challenges of crop failure, famine and inability to access gainful income has been reported among many households.

Since 2014 UNDP has supported the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development to implement the four-year project code named "Green Charcoal Project", in the districts of Kiboga, Kiryandongo, Mubende and Nakaseke also found within the cattle corridor. The project aims at improving land productivity using integrated approaches that include promoting improved charcoal production technologies to reduce deforestation; and promoting sustainable land and forestry management practices. As such, Climate Smart Agriculture, tree planting and briquetting are promoted through the respective district local government structures.



The Chairperson Tulina Essubi Group showing board members the water dam constructed and water pump bought using part of the grant Photo by Simon Peter Amunau Weredwong UNDP

Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) worldwide has been practiced for purposes of enhancing agricultural productivity and income amidst harsh climate situations. According to FAO (2013), CSA is an agricultural system that sustainably increases productivity, enhances adaptation/mitigation to climate change impacts, as well as enhances achievement of national food security and development goals. Key CSA practices include building structures that enhance trapping and retention of water in the soil to benefit the crops during the dry season. The project employs the technologies so that the locals get enough food/income and do not put pressure on forests for charcoal production as an alternative source of livelihood.

Since 2015, the project has enrolled 32 Community Farmer Groups (close to 640 members, 50% are women) in the four districts. All the 32 groups were trained in Climate Smart Agriculture technologies by specialists from the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries. Sixteen of the groups were each awarded a small grant of UGX 33 million shillings to support acquisition of tools, implements and inputs necessary to pilot climate smart agriculture practices. The grant recipients were given the task of first implementing the technologies within their households and thereafter using the lessons to mobilize other nonmembers to adopt the technologies. This strategy would also help the project managers to track changes in household food harvests and incomes easier.

The prolonged drought made 2016 a difficult year for farmers throughout the country. The district production department of Kiboga District estimates that the overall maize production per acre was generally reduced to 720kgs and beans 440kgs (a percentage reduction of 40% and 45% respectively) compared to the previous years. In Nakaseke District, maize and beans harvest reduced by 60% due to the drought according to the District Production Officer of the district.

However, the majority of the farmers practicing Climate Smart Agriculture in the districts were all smiles as they realized a considerable harvest at the end of the season despite the harsh weather. For example, members of Kapeke Youth Development Association in Kiboga District, which received UGX 33 million shillings as grant, realized a harvest of 1,800kgs/acre of maize and 580kgs/acre of beans, which was closer to twice the district average per acre harvested in a more favorable season in the area. Similarly, members of Kagobe Development Association in Kiboga District harvested close to 10 tons of maize from 6 acres (about 1600kg/acre), compared to the usual 1,200kg/acre in the same area in a good season. This is roughly 1,600kgs per acre. In Nakaseke, despite the harsh weather, farmers who practiced Climate Smart Agriculture registered between 2,500 – 3,000 kgs per acre of maize and beans between 800 – 1,000kgs per acre.

Mr. Steven Musisi the chairperson of Kyasaga Farmers Group, one of the grant recipients, in Nakaseke Sub-county said “the weather was very bad last season, most of the farmers did not harvest anything. When I applied the climate smart agriculture technologies, my garden was green throughout the drought and the harvest was not affected. The village members have been asking me what I did to realize this harvest amidst the hard season”. Ms. Nalumansi Embrace, a widow of 69 years from Manywa Village, Kapeka Sub-county in Nakaseke District praised the introduction of the technologies in her community. She said “these technologies helped me produce enough food to feed my 6 orphaned grandchildren through the tough time of famine.”

The benefits from the technologies are evident as many households are realizing better harvest from their crops even amidst a grand failure of crops countrywide. The households are therefore able to cope easily with the problem of food insecurity that is eminent in most parts of the country. Many neighboring households to the model groups are now adopting the technologies as one of the ways to develop resilience against the weather vagaries presented by climate change. By end of 2016, the total numbers implementing the technologies had nearly doubled.



The Chairperson Kyasaaga Farmers Group in Nakaseke District, Mr. Steven Musisi showing board members his garden with fairly good yields in December 2016. Photo by Simon Peter Amunau Weredwong UNDP

During the recent monitoring visit to the beneficiaries by the project board members where four Local Council Five Chairpersons from the pilot districts participated, the leaders appreciated the benefits from Climate Smart Agriculture technologies. Hon Israel Iga, the Local Council Five Chairman of Kiboga District said “I have seen that where the technology was applied, the crops were not affected. I am confident this practice can help our people in time when the weather is not good.” The leaders called on the local communities to replicate these low-cost technologies as a strategy for ensuring food security among the households amidst the growing climate change problems. They also pledged to raise more awareness about the technologies and strengthen support for local extension. The leaders also pledged to link the project beneficiaries with government programs like Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) to leverage the efforts.

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