

UN urges countries to adopt Uganda SDG model

By David Lumu

If the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the National Development Plan II is implemented by the Government, the United Nations (UN) says Uganda will be one of the first countries to achieve the global targets.

Calling upon countries to adopt the Uganda model on SDGs, the UN resident co-ordinator in Uganda, Rosa Malango, said: "Uganda was one of the first countries to integrate SDGs in the National Development Plan. A total of 69% of the SDG targets are now integrated in the National Development Plan. This is a big achievement. I think there are only five countries that have achieved this. Other countries should emulate Uganda."

Malango was speaking at Imperial Royale Hotel in Kampala during the 71st anniversary of the UN, which was formed in 1945. Yesterday's commemoration also coincided with the first anniversary of the SDGs, which world leaders pledged to achieve by 2030.

Under the diplomatic midwifery of foreign affairs minister. Sam Kutesa, who was the 69th president of the UN General Assembly, world leaders rolled out 17 SDGs in September last year and urged governments, civil society and other actors to start the implementation in October.

According to Malango, the challenges that Uganda faces in its quest to implement the SDGs will be overcome if the Government taps into the swelling youth population, the vibrant private sector in the country and also ensure gender equality, especially by providing opportunities to women and girls.

For the youth, the UN is rooting for quality education, which is laced with vocational training, so that the untapped talents of youth can be explored. The 2014 population census revealed that 78% of Uganda's 34.6 million people comprises youth below 35 years.

"There is also need to tackle poverty, climate change effects and inequality. Social accountability is also key to the implementation of the SDGs. The UN has documented all wetlands in Uganda and we call upon everyone to respect the wetlands," Malango said. She praised Uganda, which she described as an "island of peace" in a turbulent region, for its open policy to refugees.

Speaking on behalf of the Government, the Prime Minister, Dr Ruhakana Rugunda, said Uganda has laid down a foundation, which will enable the country to harness the demographic dividend.

Rugunda added that Uganda has taken ownership of the ambitious, but relevant SDGs,



Catherine Lopuka (left) and Kitui (right) from Karamoja adorning Malango with traditional Karimojong earrings at the 71-17 Goals United Nations Day 2016 at Imperial Royale Hotel yesterday. Photo by Miriam Namutebi

"The SDGs can truly transform our world, but we must avoid the pitfalls that faced the MDGs." Kutesa

pledging to enhance means of implementation, including making the execution of the SDGs one of the core targets for ministers during the review period.

"We also need to enhance domestic revenue, expand investment, rally the private sector, reform procurement laws, enrich the public-private-partnership, empower the local governments and increase monitoring and evaluation processes," he said.

On the other hand, Kutesa said: "The task we have now is to ensure

that the SDGs are implemented in a timely manner."

Kutesa, however, singled out the need to mobilise resources, especially from the private sector. This multi-sector approach, Kutesa said, will enable the UN mobilise \$1.8 trillion, which is needed to oil the implementation of the SDGs.

"The SDGs can truly transform our world, but we must avoid the pitfalls that faced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)," he said, underscoring that the integration of SDGs in Uganda's

National Development Plan is now at 76%.

However, Gideon Badagawa, the executive director of Private Sector Foundation Uganda, said although the integration is at 76%, the main challenge facing the Government is linking the implementation to evaluation on one hand and the execution of institutional reforms on the other.

One of the participants from Karamoja, Mwatum Kitui, who is HIV-positive, called on the UN and the Government to ensure that women in Karamoja sub-region are supported and empowered to start businesses so that they can support their families.

"We have been left behind as women from Karamoja. We need more support so that we can also own land, educate our children and live a meaningful life," she said.

THE 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- **Goal 1:** End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- **Goal 2:** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- **Goal 3:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- **Goal 4:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- **Goal 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- **Goal 6:** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation
- **Goal 7:** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- **Goal 8:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- **Goal 9:** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation
- **Goal 10:** Reduce inequality within and among countries
- **Goal 11:** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- **Goal 12:** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- **Goal 13:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
- **Goal 14:** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- **Goal 15:** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- **Goal 16:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- **Goal 17:** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

Batwa community ask govt for land, threaten to reoccupy forest

By Hope Mafaranga, Job Namanya and Kate Atuzarirwe

The Batwa communities living in Kisoro district have asked the Government to give them land for settlement.

The Kisoro Batwa community chairman, Francis Sembagari, said when the Government evicted them from their natural habitat in the forests of Mgahinga, Echuya and Bwindi in 1990, they were left homeless.

Sembagari said they depended on honey, medicine and game meat from forests and since they were evicted "life has become hell; we are starving and dying of diseases".

He was speaking during a graduation ceremony of Batwa community at Mayor's Garden in Kisoro district yesterday. Over 346 Batwa got certificates in Functional Adult Literacy after two years of training.

The graduands were supported by Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), a non-government organisation working with vulnerable communities.

BETWEEN THE LINES: Grievances

■ Sembagari accused the Government of treasuring the gorillas living in forests more than the Batwa. He said due to lack of land for settlement, they have been left out on the Government programmes such as Operation Wealth Creation.

"If the Government cannot give us land, then they should take us back to the forests so that we live the normal lives as we did before eviction," he said.

The ADRA programmes officer, James Bisheko, said they have been working with Batwa to improve the quality and enrolment of education of the little people.

"When they were evicted from the forests, they did not know the value of education, but now over 1,200 Batwa children have access to education today," he said.

Bisheko also presented Alice Nyamihanda, the first Mutwa to get a degree. He requested the Government and NGOs to employ them, so that they can transform their society and sustain themselves.

ADRA's acting country director, Solomon Kateregga, said they will continue to advocate the rights of people living in poverty and uplift the standards of living of Batwa.

The Kisoro Municipality MP, Sam Byibesho, decried the number of Batwa dying of HIV and malnutrition-related complications.

However, Kisoro LC5 chairperson Abel Bizimana said the district will ensure that Batwa are settled and benefit from all the development programmes of the Government like any other community.



Kateregga (holding a microphone) handing over a certificate to one of the graduands. Photo by Miriam Namutebi