SPECIAL ISSUE ON UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR’S FIELD MISSION: ADVOCACY FOR GREEN GROWTH AND IDENTIFYING INVESTMENT POTENTIAL IN REFUGEE HOSTING DISTRICTS

OVERVIEW

- This special edition of the UN Uganda Bulletin brings you stories from the UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Rosa Malango’s field mission to West Nile sub-region in North western Uganda, Acholi region in Northern Uganda and Bunyoro sub-region in Western Uganda in her effort to promote green growth and potential tourism investment sites in these districts including those hosting refugees.
- UNDP support to Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary has enabled the return of the once extinct Rhinos to Uganda. In addition to providing a safe haven for the endangered Rhinos, Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary has become increasingly popular with tourists offering tracking of the Shoebill stork, bird watching and nature walks.
- The rich and varied species of wildlife in Murchison Falls National Park, Karuma Game Reserve and the mythical falls, plus the rich history and interactions of the communities in these sites, offer potential for investing in responsible tourism, conservation and culture.
- According to the National Charcoal Survey conducted by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, about 1,017 Metric tonnes of charcoal are supplied to Kampala alone. This puts pressure on the environment. UNDP is working with the government and local communities on environmentally friendly alternatives.
- Women are emerging as entrepreneurs in Arua district and contributing to the economic development of their communities. They are offering inspiring lessons of how they began small in business and have now prospered, giving hope to girls, empowering families and transforming their communities.
- The UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Rosa Malango, Arua District leadership led by the Resident District Commissioner, Mr. Peter Dibele, discussed cooperation in humanitarian and development programmes including the refugees response in the district.
• Ms. Rosa Malango, the UN Resident Coordinator hands over a certificate of transfer of the UN donated a vehicle, a Toyota Prado 4X4 to the Whitaker Foundation-Uganda in Kiryandongo District to support community peacebuilding among the youth.

SDG 8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

UNDP SUPPORT SPURS RHINO SANCTUARY, NEEDS MORE ADVOCACY

By Henry Mukasa and Daniel Omodo McMondo, UN Development Programme (UNDP)

In 1983, Uganda’s last Rhino was killed in Kidepo National Park. Since then, Rhinos became extinct in this country named as the ‘Pearl of Africa’ for her beauty, rich animal and plant species.

Although international trade in rhino horn has been banned since 1977, under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora), demand remains high, fueling poaching. In Asia Rhino horns are a supposed cure for a range of illnesses – from hangovers to fevers and even cancer. Rhino horns are also bought purely as a symbol of wealth, according to the World-Wide Fund (WWF) for nature.

Conservation of endangered species is in line with Sustainable Development Goal 15 which calls for the protection, restoration and promotion of sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainable management of forests, combating desertification, reversing land degradation and halting biodiversity loss. However, poaching and illicit wildlife trafficking continues to thwart conservation efforts. In 2013, elephant ivory and rhino horns comprised over 60 per cent of total wildlife and timber product seizures according to the WWF.

A flicker of hope to re-establish these massive bodied creatures with stumpy legs and coveted-dermal-horns, came in 1997 when a group of Uganda conservationists formed Rhino Fund Uganda (RFU).

The RFU, with support from the UNDP GEF (Global Environmental Finance) Small Grants Programme and other donors, established Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary a 7000-hectares breeding reserve in Western Uganda. In 2005, UNDP provided a grant worth U$ 50,000 which supported translocation of the first four Rhinos and an additional U$ 45,000 was given to the sanctuary in 2014, for inserting micro-chips into the Rhinos to ease their tracking should they be poached.
A Rhino and her calf graze at Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary in Nakasongola District

When the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Ms. Rosa Malango visited the sanctuary on February 6, there was great news of an expected birth of a calf later in the day. From the initial 4 Rhinos, the population at Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary has increased to 21 (11 male and 10 female Rhinos), now roaming the protected area.

“The success is there... we cannot do this without the help of donors. We cannot do this without the help of UNDP remembering Rhino Fund Uganda and the sanctuary when talking about important things happening in Uganda,” Ms. Angie Genade, the Executive Director of Rhino Fund Uganda, said.

Looking back to the journey of 15-years, Ms. Genade recalls the humble, stressful struggle to set up the sanctuary. “Five-years ago we didn’t think we shall reach this point. It was a story,” she explained paying tribute to the donors, rangers and office staff for the commitment and passion for conservation. Apart from tracking
Rhinos, the sanctuary has become increasingly popular with tourists as they can do Shoebill stork tracking, Canoe rides, bird watching and nature walks. Pangolins, bush bucks and other small animals also roam the reserve.

Ssenkumba Amon, who joined the Sanctuary in March 2011 as a ranger is now also a senior tracker. He oozes with passion about his work. “I do Rhino monitoring. Sometimes I work 24-hours so that we don’t give room to infiltration by poachers. I enjoy and love my work. We also have armed rangers who take charge should we spot a poacher to ensure that the Rhinos and staff are not harmed. There’s great work being done here to conserve these unique animals,” Mr Ssenkumba says.

UNDP believes that for a nation to achieve inclusive sustainable economic development it must prioritize sustainable natural resource management. Under its Inclusive Green Growth portfolio, UNDP supports conversation activities.

To keep the Rhinos in the Ziwa Sanctuary safe from poachers, rangers offer a 24-hour surveillance, monitoring their movements day and night. To boost this effort, UNDP supported the microchipping exercise in 2015.

Lieutenant Opio Raymond, the Head of the Sanctuary’s Guiding Department, led the UNDP team to track the Rhinos. As the team stood at a measured distance from a heavily in-calf Rhino, his face lit up and he broke the news:

“We expect her to give birth today. You might be lucky to witness this,” Lieutenant Opio said. He explained that calves at the sanctuary are named after donors who “buy the name in an auction” as a way of fundraising.

“There is no fixed price because we want as much as possible to fund conservation activities here. The amount however varies from companies to individuals,” Lieutenant Opio said.

The Sanctuary however, still needs support to construct a Boma which helps to hold Rhinos during their translocation and treating sick ones.

In partnership with Makerere University, parentage testing of the Rhinos will be conducted. Already, with support from UNDP, Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), ear notching, microchipping and DNA profiling are being conducted.
The chairperson of the UNDP Small Grants programme, Prof. John Kaddu, from Makerere University, pointed out that the sanctuary has lived out the programme’s motto: *Local Action, Global Impact*. “What started as a local thing is growing into a large sanctuary.”

Ms. Malango reaffirmed UNDP’s commitment to support the government of Uganda to ensure that the rhinos are protected and remain a tourist attraction in the country.

“This (sanctuary) is as important as we have seen so far. We are going to lift up the visibility of this place. This is your heritage, this is your country and its gorgeous. So, protect it and nurture it and know that in the UN and UNDP in particular, you will always have a partner,” Ms Malango told staff and rangers at the end of her visit.

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**SDG 15 – LIFE ON LAND**

**UN USING GREEN GROWTH, SUPPORT TO CONSERVATION EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE SDGS IN UGANDA, SAYS RESIDENT COORDINATOR**

By Henry Mukasa and Daniel Omodo McMondo, UN Development Programme (UNDP)

From any of the six gates that you choose to enter Murchison Falls National Park, be sure of savouring some of its 72-animals and 450 bird species roaming the vast park. This treasure, through which Africa’s longest river, the Nile flows, and where the mythical Murchison Falls plunges into the Albertine Rift, is nestled in a corner measuring 3,893 square kilometres in northwest Uganda.

So, our team led by the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Ms. Rosa Malango, chose to start our drive in the game park at Tangi gate, off the Kampala-Pakwach Road. Ms. Malango was on a four-day tour of the region to promote green growth, environment protection and investment in tourism.

Just outside Tangi gate, where the River Nile waters flow under the metallic Pacwach bridge, two huge elephants stood, to welcome us. They moved with a gait of head of family, exuding confidence. As we approached, they flapped their ears and dangled their trunks, their tusks sparkling in the bright sunlight.

In a nearby swamp, adorable birds of different species pecked at seeds and jabbed at tiny insects while others hovered and perched on tree branches and shrubs.
After the formalities at the entrance, we cruised towards the south of the park, using one of the many murram tracks that ease animal tracking: A bushbuck sprints off bouncing its little legs in the grass. It stops in a distance and looks back, as if to challenge us to a race.

Elephant staring back at me at Murchison National Park

Across in a thicket, Kobs interrupt their grazing and glance as we emerge, suspiciously twisting their ears into our direction, their well curved polished horns piercing through the air. The sound of the car engine sends a host of warthogs into cruise-mode as they make a high-pitched squealing noise.

As we drive further to the valley, a herd of buffaloes grazed, some sheltering under canopies, chewing cud: they only afford us a disinterested gaze. At the River Nile and the Lake Albert confluence, a mass of antelopes is watering and just next to them another herd of buffaloes stood, furiously guarding their territory. We are now at the Murchison Falls-Albert Delta wetland system, a Ramsar site, meaning it’s a Wetland of international importance. Our engines ground to a halt: on the right the River Nile flows gently and hippopotamus swim in
the water, letting off tonal whines while on the left, atop tree branches two climbing leopards sprawled. On detecting our presence, they become curious, we drive off.

As we approach Paraa Safari Lodge for a bite, two outlandish giraffes with their long necks fully stretched out pull at tree branches. They saunter as they continue to feed, unbothered by our gaze.

Later while on a cruise to the Murchison Falls, some two hours upstream, more hippos, elephants and crocodiles bask on the banks and in the River Nile.

“This is the nature that Uganda has in just one corner of it,” Ms. Rosa Malango, the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative commented.

UNDP has in the past three years spent between $7.6 - $8 million supporting climate change, environment protection and reforestation projects in Uganda. “We want to make sure that as Uganda goes about economic development, it also preserves its environment,” Ms. Malango explained. “We are translating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by putting the environment, climate and Uganda people at the epicenter of our work.”

SDGs, also known as the Global Goals, call for action to protect the planet, life on land and under water (#SDG13, #SDG14 and #SDG15).

In October last year Uganda, with the support from UNDP, hosted the first Giants Club Conservation and Tourism Investment Forum to pioneer public private sector partnerships in tourism and conservation. The summit was hosted by H.E Yoweri Museveni, the President of the Republic of Uganda.

“Uganda really is unique. The lowest part is 650 metres above sea level. The highest point is 5,000 metres, where there is snow. The terrain between the two is where we have all these wonderful things happening,” President Museveni stated while opening the Summit that attracted major global investors focused on responsible tourism.
Mr Evgeny Lebedev, the Patron of the Giants Club conservation initiative noted that, “Only by getting the private sector to invest in these areas can the revenue be generated to pay for the work required and to create the jobs for local communities that will ensure they want to protect the wildlife too.”

By 2016, tourists arrivals in Uganda had reached 1.3 million.

At Murchison Falls National Park and later Karuma Game reserve, Ms Malango explained the purpose of her visit, pointing out that it’s a follow up to the Giants Club Conservation and Tourism Investment Forum: “We have come here to demonstrate that it is good to invest in Uganda... that you can do green growth, and that eco-tourism should be the fastest growing sector and contributor to Uganda’s economy,” Ms. Malango told the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) rangers who received her.

“I invite Ugandans and international partners alike, to come and invest in Uganda, the Pearl of Africa: Investing in tourism is investing in people and the planet and supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals,” she added.

UNDP’S GREEN CHARCOAL POISED TO REDUCE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND DISASTER RISK

By Henry Mukasa, UN Development Programme (UNDP)

How do you solve the conundrum presented by the heavy reliance on firewood and charcoal for energy by the majority of the population and the need to save forests from depletion? This remains a puzzle for conservationists and development workers to figure out.

According to the 2015 National Charcoal Survey conducted by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, 1,017 Metric tonnes of charcoal are supplied to Kampala in the
rainy season. The limited distribution of hydro-electricity in the country and its high cost to mostly the rural and urban poor, combined with the low uptake of LPG (gas) and solar energy, means biomass remains the main source of energy in Uganda. Statistics from the Ministry of Energy also show that of the total biomass consumed, wood fuel accounts for about 80%, charcoal 10% and crop residues 4%.

Consequently, any measure intended to save the environment and reduce disaster risks needs to be geared at finding a solution to this energy-demand quagmire. Noticing the demand and thriving market for charcoal, some residents of Kiryandongo District in Northwestern Uganda, turned to charcoal production as one of the key income generating activities to support their livelihood.

In Mutunda sub-county, Kiryandongo district for example, residents have long used the traditional method of a mound for charcoal production, threatening forest cover in the area. This formed the basis for UNDP’s green charcoal project which aims to encourage communities to plant trees and if they must produce charcoal, use a more efficient technology lessening the demand for wood.

According to Mr. Daniel Omodo-McMondo, the UNDP Programme Analyst for Energy and Environment, the casmanse method used in the Green Charcoal project increases the charcoal recovery by about 10-15% (the yield going up to 30%) compared to only about 20% recovered if the traditional method is used. “The idea is you use less trees and therefore you conserve the forests,” Mr. Omodo said.

Before the Green Charcoal project started, monitoring of charcoal producers and ascertaining their methods of work was difficult, according to Mr. Fred Kasangaki, the Kiryandongo District Forestry Officer. The beneficiaries of the Green Charcoal project in Kiryandogo District have formed four registered groups: Can Kelo Paro, Kazinabidi, Berobero and Casamance all are involved in green charcoal production and briquetting. The groups have 111 members in all (40 women and 71 men). The Green Charcoal Project provided members with two sets of charcoal briquetting machines, 20 casamances and organized training.

The groups have generated an income of 1.2 million shillings per month from briquettes at a market value of 1,000 – 1,200 shillings per kilogramme. As a result, members have earned money to feed their families, pay school fees for their children, rent land for agriculture and bank in a Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization (SACCO).

However, Mr. Omodo cautioned residents that charcoal burning without tree planting is not sustainable. “We need to plant more trees so that we have raw material to burn.
Otherwise, if we continue burning charcoal without planting trees, we are going to leave our environment bear,” he said.

Ms. Rosa Malango, UN Resident Coordinator inspecting a briquette making machine UNDP donated to the residents at Mutunda Sub-county, Kiryandongo District

According to Mr. Kasangaki, the green charcoal project has given hope to the revival of the forest sector in a district where 90% of the forest cover had been lost to charcoal burning and poor agricultural practices. He said residents now plant trees and use the casamance method to produce charcoal and briquettes.

“The project is a blessing to the district at large and the functionality of the forest sector has been realized. As I speak, we are able to see a bigger part of forest cover being planted
because of the coming in of the green charcoal project that has support from UNDP and the Ministry of Water and Environment,“ Mr. Kasangaki explained.

The UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Ms. Rosa Malango made an on-spot check on the progress of the project and interacted with beneficiaries at Laboke-Kololo Village in Kiryandongo District on February 5th, 2018.

“I have come here because I want to hear from you how our projects are working,” Ms. Malango said. “Last year, 2017, my focus was on helping districts hosting refugees. This year, 2018, my focus has to be industrialization, green growth and conservation,” Ms. Malango told residents.

Women beneficiaries reported a reduction in domestic violence due to a boost in household income. “When we receive money from the sales, as a couple we discuss how money should be utilized before its expended,” said Ms. Jessica Atieno. Another woman who said she had been practicing charcoal burning for more than 14 years before the green charcoal project started in the area, said working as a group has brought more benefits as opposed to when she was toiling alone.

Ms. Malango emphasized that green growth that balances conservation and provides for livelihoods will enable Uganda to meet her aspirations outlined in the National Development Plan and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“You cannot achieve inclusive economic sustainable development without integrated natural resource management, livelihood and employment creation,” she explained.
UGAND’S TOURISM PACKAGE SHOULD TELL HISTORY OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES, SAYS UN UGANDA CHIEF AT KARUMA

By Henry Mukasa and Daniel Omodo McMondo, UN Development Programme (UNDP)

Karuma locally spelt as ‘Karumo’ means the ‘meeting point.’ This place of amazing attractions and interactions, like its name suggests, lies strategically at the junction of the Kampala-Gulu highway and the Pakwach–Nebbi–Arua road, both gateways to the greater Northern Uganda and West Nile region, respectively. Karuma sits lavishly between its the overflowing Karuma Falls, the mythical Murchison Falls and National Park with the legendary River Nile dissecting it into two, and the abundant woodland generously providing it with a sprawling shade.

Legend has it that here, the kings of the ancient Bunyoro-Kitara kingdom, and the chiefs of Acholi, Alur and Lango chiefdoms would meet for consultations in times of famine and disease outbreaks; and to perform rituals. History also has it that early explorers, Sir Samuel Baker, John Speke and James Grant, met and rested here as they followed Africa’s longest river, the Nile, on its journey to the Mediterranean Sea.

Today, Karuma stands at the convergence of four tourist attractions: the legendary Karuma falls, the Karuma Game Reserve, the Murchison Falls National Park and the Chobe Safari Lodge; all nestled in nature with the abundant woodland generously providing a sprawling shade and rocks holding the beauty together. Chobe itself has its name etched in the history of the local Luo communities here, especially the Acholi. When the explorers arrived at this place in 1860s, almost all men were away and only ladies and children were present in the homesteads. So, they inquired from the women, “where are the men?” They promptly answered: “chope” --- meaning, “not here” or “men are away.” The place was hence christened “Chope” – the difference in pronunciation leading to the varied spelling to Chobe by the explorers.

The Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) warden for the Karuma-Chobe Sector, Mr Richard Muhabwe, led the UN Resident Coordinator|UNDP Resident Representative, Ms. Rosa Malango on the tour of the sites. After listening to residents and rangers narrate this history, Ms. Malango recommended that this history, which is a treasure Uganda possesses, should be added to the marketing package of Uganda’s tourism brand.
“That’s the starting point: “When I ask about the history of this place, people tell me 1952 (when Murchison Park was gazetted). That is ridiculous! 1952 is not when the River Nile or the Karuma falls started flowing. Where are the stories of the people who lived here before?”

Mr. Felix Otto, Manager Karumo meeting centre, (blue shirt) briefing Ms. Rosa Malango, UN Resident Coordinator (extreme right) on the history of the Karumo while Mr. Richard Muhebwe UWA warden for Karuma sector (middle) listens attentively

She added: “There were kings, there were kingdoms, ascensions, alliances... where is that story? I am not seeing it. That’s the story you need to see when you come in here, that 200, 500 or 1000 years before, people lived here: what did they do, what are the examples of their life? Let’s hear that story and have tourists experience these stories,” Ms. Malango said.

Apart from the amazing folklore and roaring Karuma falls, this wooded-tourism-sector is teaming with bird and wildlife species: buffaloes, elephants, Uganda Kobs, giraffes, monkeys, the topis, hippos and baboons. Lions and leopards occasionally visit.

According to Mr. Muhabwe, Karuma the tourism sector is still an emerging area for investment whose full potential awaits to be harnessed. The Karuma falls, are below a high-rise ridge which provides a vantage view point of River Nile and associated colonized forest where tourism trail infrastructure for birding will be established. “A tourist will enjoy here. You just need to come with binoculars and enjoy this scenery overlooking the Karuma hydro power project. It’s a good area, a potential for investment,” Mr. Muhabwe explains.
This was the thrust of the Giants Club Conservation and Tourism Investment Forum hosted in Kampala with the support of UNDP in October 2017. The investment summit laid the foundation for pioneering the public private sector partnership in tourism and conservation.

A local investor, with a concession from UWA has set up the Northern Gateway Ecotourism and Education centre by the roadside at Karuma, where Ms. Malango suggests the story of the communities here should be documented, showcased and retold to tourists.

Mr. Felix Oluo Otto, the manager of the centre responded that it is in their plan to furnish the place with a restaurant with local cuisine, internet café and education centre where artifacts of all tribes will be represented to revitalize the “meeting point” name.

“This place is so strategic... it needs to be developed together with UWA for lectures on conservation and a place where the history of the communities can be told. It needs to be supported to be at that level,” commented Mr. Muhabwe, the UWA Warden for the Karuma-Chobe Sector.

A concession for a 40-bed mid-income ecotourism lodge is under negotiation with UWA. This means Chobe Lodge will cater for high end tourists, Karuma for the mid-end and the Northern Gateway Ecotourism and Education centre for budget tourists. The Giants Club Conservation and Tourism Investment Forum, was hosted by President Yoweri Museveni and attracted major global investors focused on responsible tourism. At the forum, Mr. Museveni said Uganda was ready for “smart and compelling investment ideas for appropriate development that allows visitors to enjoy Uganda’s unique natural habitat and support the economy and communities now and in the future.”

Ms. Malango told the forum that the sector is poised to be an accelerator for the achievement of Uganda’s Vision 2040 which envisions the transformation into an upper middle-income status country.
“In Uganda, tourism is an engine for inclusive growth and sustainable development thanks to a focus on conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity, protection of cultural heritage and empowerment of local communities,” Ms. Malango said.

At Karuma, Ms. Malango reiterated that whichever investment is made in the tourism sector, a provision for how local communities will benefit should be made clear either through employment such as guides or by supporting entrepreneurs with stalls where local communities can sell crafts, fruits, music and vegetables. “In Karuma we are looking for potential areas for investment. The idea is, as we promote conservation, we must look for alternative livelihoods, jobs for youth and people who live here,” Ms. Malango said.

Ms. Malango concluded this part of her visit by stating the following, “We have been told by rangers that chiefs used to meet here 100 years ago. So, we invite you to come and invest here and be part of Uganda’s history. Invest in Karuma, invest in creating jobs for the women and youth who are here and invest in preserving some of the world’s important history of the people who lived originally next to the River Nile.”

WOMEN ENTEPRENEURS EMPOWERING ARUA WOMEN AND YOUTH

By Monica Aturinda, UN Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO)

Ms. Grace Eceru has been a member of Arua Women Entrepreneur Association for close to a year now. She specialises in a bakery business which makes cookies, cakes and pizza that she supplies to customers in West Nile region in North Western Uganda and the neighbouring districts.

“I have been a member of this group from when it started and I have never regretted, my business has grown because of the referrals I receive from the group members and this has helped me to get an income to take care of my family. I encourage women to form groups because you benefit more when you work as a team,” said Ms. Eceru.

This and more stories is what the UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Rosa Malango listened to when she met with the emerging Entrepreneurs at their monthly meeting in Arua District.
Ms. Rosa Malango, UN Resident Coordinator (4th left) posing in a photo with Arua Women Entrepreneurs Association and UN Staff

With a total number of 50 women gifted with different skills and expertise, the association is successfully providing services and products to Ugandans and refugees in and out of West Nile region. They are also offering training in different income generating activities to women and youth which has greatly improved the livelihood of the community including that of the refugees.

While speaking at the meeting Ms. Lilly Ocanda, Chairperson of the group said that the association has done a lot to improve the livelihoods of its members and the community at large and are now referred to as role models in their community.

“Given the current economic crisis, it is important that all able members of each family get involved in supporting the family, not only to provide food, but also meet other demands such as health care, clothing and above all school fees and school requirements,” said Ms. Ocanda.

The group is involved in growing its members in various skills, networking and supporting each other’s businesses. They also mentor youth and young mothers through school and
communities’ outreaches. “We hope to acquire land and construct a One Stop Centre with a training centre,” Ms. Ocanda said.

The center will have a conference hall, storage facilities - advance technology granaries for storing climate smart seeds and food for periods of scarcity, production/processing points for value addition, restaurant and supermarket for selling all products of the members. She added that they need support from government and investor to achieve this plan.

“I like the fact that your association is able to give jobs to women and youth both local and refugees,” said Ms. Rosa Malango, UN Resident Coordinator while meeting with the group at Arua District headquarters. She encouraged the group to always document their stories which will help them to get support from investors.

The association was registered as a community based organisation (CBO) with Arua District Community Development Office on 11th May 2017. The member in this group are engaged in various income generating activities individually, which include farming, making crafts, baking, tailoring, soap making, candle making, processing juice, processing wine, processing honey, processing spices, produce buying and selling, retailing, wholesale, education/training, transporting, events management, hotel management, counseling and guidance.

SDG 16 – PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

UNDP TO EXPAND ITS ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT PROJECTS TO WEST NILE REGION AMIDST ENVIRONMENTAL AND FOOD SECURITY CHALLENGES

By Gleh Appleton, UN Resident Coordinator’s Office (RCO)

In addition to the USD$24 million grant received by Arua district to promote Green Growth including ecotourism and wetlands, UNDP will expand its energy and environment projects to West Nile region in North Western Uganda to help address the environmental impact and food security situation in the region. The initiative is also intended to increase household access to alternative energy sources.

This was revealed by the UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Rosa Malango during a meeting with Arua District Local Government leaders where they met to discuss partnership for
development in west Nile region. The meeting which took place at the district headquarters, was attended by the Resident District Commissioner (RDC), Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Local Council V (LC5) and Heads of Sectors including the District Agriculture Officer, District Health Officer and District Gender Officer.

While speaking at the meeting, Mr. Sam Wadri Nyakua, the Local Council Five (LC5) Chairperson said that the high population concentration as a result of the refugees influx in the district is currently exerting pressure on service delivery and negatively impacts the environment which has resulted in poor and unsustainable harvest affecting food security coupled with the limited extension services and access to market for farmers.

In her remarks, Ms. Malango pointed out the need to strengthen public-private-partnerships as part of the sustainability model to address the current district challenges including job creation, and food security within and around refugees hosting districts while boosting the district economic development.

The statement came in the wake of the fact that Uganda now has the largest refugee population in Africa with more than half being children and that Arua district is one of the districts hosting refugees across Uganda.

According to UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR’s) reports for March 2018, Arua district is home to 254,858 refugees (128,249 resident at the Imvepi Refugee Settlement and 123,363 at the Rhino Refugee Settlement). “A quarter of all the people now living in Arua District are refugees bringing incredible pressure on the already stretched local resources,” said Mr. Wadri.

In his remarks, Mr. Peter Debele, the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) welcomed the UN Resident Coordinator and her delegation and thanked her and other development partners for their continued support to the district. He also called for harmony between the local communities and the refugees as a key priority for 2018. Although a lot of progress has been registered, Arua district still faces several challenges with a major one being scarcity of water that could severely impact its economic and social development if not quickly addressed.

“Due to inadequate water supply, currently, water must be trucked to supply refugees,” said Mr. Wadri, adding that the situation has attracted a high cost to service provision and the destruction of road networks across the district.
Mr. Peter Debele Resident District Commissioner Arua district (in a purple shirt) welcoming Ms. Rosa Malango (in Yellow dress) and her team to Arua District

During the meeting, the UN Resident Coordinator reiterated the UN’s commitment to work with the district leadership to update the district investment profiles produced jointly by the Uganda Investment Authority and UNDP so as to include other areas of potential investment in the refugee hosting districts in the region and to share the Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) report with the district leadership.

She also encouraged the district to strengthen its leadership around driving inter-agency coordination for implementation of ReHOPE and the CRRF, to take deliberate actions to increase women’s empowerment and participation in senior leadership roles and she also called for the Planning of a Natural Resources Management Round table to address some of the environmental challenges in the region.

The UN’s current footprint within the Refugee and Host Community Empowerment approach (ReHOPE) in Arua district (4th Quarter 2017 and 1st Quarter 2018) includes: environmental restoration and sustainable natural resource management; Livelihood interventions focusing on improving the self-reliance of people of concern and host communities; training of law enforcement agencies on public freedoms and human rights which include the Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act (PPTA); implementation of the Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act (PPTA) and Community policing programme together with the Uganda Human Rights Commission; implementation of interventions of Gender Based Violence; application
of Human Rights Based Approach-HRBA/Sexual and maternal health and Women Empowerment.

SDG 17 – PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GOALS

UN SYSTEM IN UGANDA HANDS OVER A CERTIFICATE OF TRANSFER OF VEHICLE TO WHITAKER PEACE & DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE FOR YOUTH

By Monicah Aturinda UN Resident Coordinator’s Office

Ms. Rosa Malango, UN Resident Coordinator handed over a certificate of transfer of a Toyota Prado 4X4 Jeep to the Whitaker Foundation-Uganda located in Kiryandongo District to support community peacebuilding initiatives in the region.

She handed over the certificate to Mr. Patrick Owel Programme Coordinator during her one day visit to the center where she interacted with staff and the youth. Handing over the certificate, Ms. Malango recognized the good work the Youth Peacemaker Network Programme is contributing to the communities in the region especially in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement where refugee youth use the centre to equip themselves with computer skills and networking.

“We are happy for this partnership and with this additional car, we will be able to manage the growing demands of the Programme in the Acholi sub-region region,” said Mr. Patrick Owel, Programme Coordinator, Youth Peacemaker Network Programme.

The hand over comes after Whitaker foundation requested the UN through the Resident Coordinator for an additional vehicle to support its programmes specifically in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement. In response, the UN Resident Coordinator engaged the UN Missions in Entebbe (MONUSCO)
and was able to acquire the vehicle which will be officially handed over to the youth center by 27 April this year.

“I would like to commend MUNUSCO for its generosity and contribution towards this peace initiative and I am confident that the vehicle will be a great asset to the project” said Ms. Malango.

Kiryandongo branch is one of the two Youth Peacemaker Network programme branches established in Uganda in collaboration with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the Office of the Prime Minister and in partnership with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Ericsson, MTN Foundation and the Western Union Foundation. The other branch is in Gulu district in Northern Uganda.

The programme has a Community Learning Centre (CLC), sports fields and Resolution Education (CRE) that offers courses in secondary and primary schools in the settlement which can be used by all youth.

_Pictorial:_ A few highlights from the trip
For more information, please contact:

Michael Wangusa
michael.wangusa@one.un.org
+256 (0) 771 005 988
UN Resident Coordinator’s Office (RCO)

Monicah Aturinda
monicah.aturinda@one.un.org
+256 (0) 772 147 505