



## Press Release

### **UN Resident Coordinator concludes mission to South Western Uganda**

***Commits to increasing support to UN critical programmes during COVID-19 response, and calls on youth to share innovations to promote the Sustainable Development Goals***

Mbarara, 9 August 2020 - The United Nations Resident Coordinator and Designated Official for Security (UNRC/DO) in Uganda, H.E. Rosa Malango, has concluded a three-day mission to South Western Uganda. The purpose of the mission was to visit United Nations frontline staff and partners implementing critical humanitarian and development programmes in conformity with COVID-19 preventive and response measures. The mission also aimed to increase awareness of UN actions underway in support of vulnerable populations, to visit youth innovation initiatives promoting the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to encourage youth to take part in the One Million SDG Solutions Innovation Challenge as part of the UN@75 and SDG Decade of Action. This challenge aims to identify youth with viable solutions so that they can be supported by private sector, development partners and the UN system. She also engaged with local government and other partners to better understand achievements, challenges and opportunities including the impact of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable.

At the commencement of her mission, the UNRC/DO met the district leadership of Mbarara and Isingiro Districts. Mbarara District Chairman, Captain John Bosco Tumusiime recognized the efforts of the United Nations system in the South West region particularly in Mbarara District. He outlined the challenges they were facing including the limited understanding of the presence of refugees in Mbarara City and recommended the official recognition of urban refugees. He called for the United Nations to supplement the medical facilities in the district to improve health services in Mbarara City. The Deputy Resident Commissioner for Isingiro District, Mr. Gideon Tumusiime noted that Nakivale Refugee settlement had more than 145,000 Refugees, he commended the UN and the Office of the Prime Minister for being active participants in district level coordination platforms and recognized the importance of the robust support of the security forces. He also noted that the district leadership faced a challenge at the border due to insufficient observation of the standard operation procedures for the prevention of COVID-19 by some of the people crossing. Ms. Malango welcomed the close coordination and committed to bring the issues to the attention of the relevant authorities in Kampala.

During her mission, the UNRC/DO H.E. Rosa Malango was accompanied by the UN Area Coordinator for the South West, Ms. Bik Lum; Assistant Private Secretary to the President of the Republic, Ms. Caroline Kembabazi; Ag. Refugee Desk Officer Ms. Polyne Irene Abina; UN Staff, members of the Youth Coalition for SDGs Edwin Muhumuza and Maurine Tukahirwa; and Youth from the media challenge Noah Omuya and Christine Kabazira. The mission visited Nakivale Refugee Settlement where she observed first-hand the on-going UN critical programmes and the impact of COVID-19 on service delivery. During her visit to Rubondo, she observed the cash enrolment and verification (CEV) for Nutrition by the World Food Programme (WFP) and engaged in a dialogue with beneficiaries on the impact of the assistance. She also visited a Green House Project in Rubondo, operated by a group of women survivors of gender based violence supported by UNHCR. She visited the Accelerated Education Programme (AEP) supported by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Kashojwa. During the dialogue with parents, teachers, children and youth, AEP was recognized for promoting alternative means of education for children while schools are closed due to COVID-

19. A request for additional material and support to sustain these safe spaces especially for the youth was reiterated clearly. A visit to the Kabahinda COVID-19 Quarantine Centre supported by UNHCR and Isingiro District led to a conversation to better understand how to reinforce links between this center and district management in light of the growing number of local residents.

“I wish to convey my profound appreciation to the UN Area Coordinator and Security Official for the South West for her leadership and to all UN front line staff and partners for staying on post and sustaining the lifeline to those who rely on assistance to survive. Every single place we went to, we heard a vote of thanks, appreciation and concrete examples of how the critical UN programmes are helping to sustain and improve lives,” said Ms. Malango. “I thank the Government of Uganda for enabling us to be able to deliver on our humanitarian mandate during these challenging times and for the leadership in sustaining the fight against COVID-19,” she added. She also thanked donors for enabling UN critical programs to continue. She also observed that UN staff working on critical programmes were overstretched and committed to increasing support as part of her duty of care.

On the second day of her mission, Ms. Malango visited several youth innovation initiatives promoting the attainment of SDGs in Mbarara and its environment which included: Bishop Stuart University Youth Incubation Hub where youth demonstrated solutions to agri-business, renewable energy and cleaning products including adding value to bananas, producing briquettes and energy saving stoves as well as the production of sanitizers, liquid soap etc. She also visited the Youth Go-Green Bamboo Collection Center/Mother Garden and discussed modalities to link to this innovation to the Presidential Initiative for Wetland Restoration and River Catchment areas. Youth engagement included a visit to Cynthia Winery Innovation producers of banana wine and briquettes as well as youth working on home decorations and cleaning materials. During the launch of the Mbarara Innovation Centre promoting tailoring among other initiatives she called on the youth in Mbarara to work together to promote the SDGs and each other. She invited the Innovation Centre to look into opportunities for youth in high school to facilitate their access to sustainable livelihoods.

Ms. Malango concluded her mission with a live TV talk show on TV West which was also transmitted live on Radio West. She was accompanied by two leaders of the Youth Coalition for SDGs, Edwin Muhumuza and Maurine Tukahirwa, and youth innovators from Mbarara, Cynthia Nkahirwa and Abbey Musiime, as well as the Assistant Private Secretary to the President. As part of activities in Uganda to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations she called on the public to participate in the global online survey and share their views on the United Nations they want in future by participating in the survey at [www.un75.online](http://www.un75.online) She called on youth in the South Western Region to participate in the One Million SDG Solutions from Youth in Uganda Innovation challenge, which aims at identifying youth with solutions that are changing lives. Youth are called upon to submit entries at [www.ugandayouthsolutions.com](http://www.ugandayouthsolutions.com) as the best innovations will receive grants and start up support from UN agencies, private sector and partners.

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