



# West Nile Today

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PEACE. EDUCATION. AGRICULTURE. INVESTMENT

# Editor's Note

Welcome to the fifth edition of West Nile Today your trusted regional publication dedicated to telling the authentic stories of Uganda's West Nile. Our commitment remains steadfast: to spotlight the region's investment potential, celebrate government milestones, amplify local innovations, promote regional unity, and unveil the rich tourism gems that define West Nile.

This week's edition, thoughtfully compiled by district communication officers, delivers compelling coverage tailored for our diverse readership community members, leaders, investors, tourists, and the diaspora alike.

From Arua, we bring you a powerful environmental response in Ewa Parish, where a JICA-backed tree planting initiative takes root to combat pollution. In Maracha, we echo President Museveni's wealth creation message, while in Koboko, thousands united in faith during the Way of the Cross, led by the mayor with a moving Easter reflection on forgiveness.

We also journey to Moyo to rediscover Fort Dufile, a historic treasure resting on the banks of the Albert Nile. Other impactful stories include: Adjumani's firm stance on Emyooga fund recovery, Koboko's integration into the national malaria vaccine rollout, A review of West Nile's road network developments, Minister Aceng's deployment of 181 CHEWs to boost health services in Maracha and Norbert Kamau's inspiring PDM success story in Terego District.

Each story captures a vital piece of the West Nile narrative—its progress, its challenges, and its promise. Through these pages, we strive to inform, inspire, and ignite dialogue that drives meaningful transformation.

Thank you for your continued support.

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# POPE FRANCIS DIES AT 88: WHAT COMES NEXT FOR THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

## The Passing of a Pontiff

The world is mourning the death of His Holiness Pope Francis, the 266th Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, who passed away at the age of 88 due to a stroke and subsequent irreversible heart failure on Easter Monday, April 21, 2025 as reported by the Vatican. Tributes continue to pour in from world leaders, religious figures, and faithful Catholics around the globe.

Pope Francis, born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Buenos Aires, Argentina, made history when he was elected in March 2013, becoming the first Jesuit Pope, the first from Latin America, and the first non-European Pope in over 1,200 years. He led the global Catholic Church for 12 years, until his death in 2025. He became a symbol of humility, reform, and compassion during his papacy, addressing issues such as clerical abuse, social inequality, and climate change.

## A Legacy of Reform and Inclusion

Pope Francis led the Church through some of the most turbulent moments of the 21st century, including the COVID-19 pandemic and widespread political unrest. His tenure was marked by efforts to reform the Roman Curia, encourage interfaith dialogue, and champion the rights of marginalized communities. He was widely respected for promoting environmental stewardship through his landmark encyclical *Laudato Si'* and calling for a more inclusive and compassionate Church.

## Sede Vacante: The Vacant See

With the passing of Pope Francis, the Catholic Church enters a transitional period known as *Sede Vacante* — Latin for “the seat being vacant.” During this time, all major decisions regarding Church

governance are suspended until a new pope is elected.

## Funeral Arrangements

Pope Francis will be honored with a traditional papal funeral, scheduled for Saturday, April 26, 2025, at 10:00 AM in St. Peter’s Basilica. The Mass will be presided over by Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re and concelebrated by patriarchs, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and priests from around the world.

On Wednesday, April 23, 2025, the Pope’s coffin will be moved in a solemn rite of translation from the Casa Santa Marta chapel to St. Peter’s Basilica. The ceremony will begin at 9:00 AM, led by Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Camerlengo of the Holy Roman Church.

Following the funeral, Pope Francis will be laid to rest in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, one of Rome’s major papal basilicas.

## The Novendiales: Nine Days of Mourning

The funeral Mass will conclude with the *Ultima commendatio* and *Valedictio*, which mark the beginning of the *Novendiales*, a traditional nine-day mourning period. During this time, daily Masses and prayers will be offered for the repose of the Pope’s soul.

“The Eucharistic celebration will conclude with the *Ultima commendatio* and the *Valedictio*, marking the beginning of the *Novendiales*,” the Vatican confirmed in an official statement.

## The Conclave: Choosing a Successor

The most significant step following a pope’s death is the papal conclave, the process by which a new pope is elected. All cardinals under the age of 80 will gather in the Sistine Chapel for this sacred task. The conclave typically begins 15 to 20 days after the Pope’s death to allow time for all eligible cardinals to arrive in Rome.

The election is conducted in strict secrecy. After each round of voting, the ballots are burned; black smoke indicates no decision; white smoke signals that a new pope has been chosen.

Once elected, the new pope will step onto the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica, where the Cardinal Protodeacon will announce: “*Habemus Papam*” (“We have a Pope”), revealing the new Pontiff’s name and papal title.

## A Church in Transition

As the world prepares to bid farewell to Pope Francis, the Catholic Church now turns toward the future. The coming days will be marked by solemn rituals, reflection, and anticipation as the faithful await the election of the next spiritual leader to guide the Church through a new era.

# POPE FRANCIS

1936 - 2025

# GOVERNMENT BOOSTS LIVELIHOODS OF 40 ELDERLY AND DISABLED PEOPLE THROUGH SPECIAL GRANTS

By Okuyo Bernards: Communication Officer, Koboko Municipal Council



Five Members of the Isoko Ward Lotomore Elders Group proudly showcase their newly purchased goats, (Photo credit: Okuyo Bernard)". Photo by Okuyo Bernard

The Special Enterprise Grant for Older Persons (SEGOP) and the National Special Grant for Persons with Disabilities (NSG) – Koboko Municipality has seen remarkable improvements in the lives of its most vulnerable citizens.

In total, 40 individuals, comprising 22 elderly citizens and 18 persons with disabilities, have benefited from these programs.

In July 2024, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development allocated 30 million Ugandan Shillings to six special interest groups, with each group receiving 5 million Shillings.

These groups were established from three divisions within the municipality, ensuring that one group for the elderly and one for persons with disabilities was selected from each division.

After the funds were distributed, the groups initiated various projects, primarily focusing on goat rearing. The positive outcomes of the grants are evident through several successful initiatives:

#### SEGOP Beneficiaries:

**Abele Ward Awara Older Persons:** Engaged in pot molding, with each pot selling for 15,000 Shillings. Each member has accumulated savings of at least 250,000 Shillings.



Abele ward Awara Older Persons group members display their pottery, a result of SEGOP and NSG government support in Koboko Municipality. (Photo by Okuyo Bernard)

**Isoko Ward Lotomore Goat Rearing Group:** Started with 30 goats, which have now increased to approximately 41 goats.

**Triangle Ward Older Persons Produce Buying and Selling Group:** Acquired a grinding machine that generates daily income, along with a savings initiative where each member saves 20,000 Shillings monthly.

#### NSG Beneficiaries:

**Nyangilia Ward Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Goat Rearing Group:** Involved in the buying and selling of goats.

**Amunupi Ward Tokeyi Goat Rearing Group:** Expanded from an initial 25 goats to around 38 goats.

**Teremunga Ward PWD Saving Group:** Offers loans to members at a 5% interest rate.

While the groups have achieved much, they also face challenges, including theft and diseases affecting their goats. For instance, a member of the Nyangilia Ward PWD goat group reported the theft of four goats, which is still unresolved. Additionally, there have been instances of a mysterious disease leading to livestock losses.

Acidri Cosmas Remo, the Municipal Community Development Officer (MCDO) for Koboko Municipal Council, noted that this grant program is an annual initiative by the government to assist the elderly and individuals with disabilities.

“But first Project proposals are submitted by the Community Development Officers of the Divisions to the Ministry, which conducts site verification and offers technical support before transferring funds into group accounts” he guided.

This year, the MCDO-Koboko Municipal Council confirmed to West Nile Today that six new groups have already been selected and approved by the Ministry and are awaiting additional funding.

During a monitoring visit on Thursday, April 16, 2025, the Social Service Committee of Koboko Municipal Council emphasized the importance of saving money in banks or SACCOs rather than at home, where it is vulnerable to loss.

They also recommended ongoing training and support to ensure that groups remain on track.



*A member of the Amunupi ward Tokeyi PWD group in Koboko Municipality, empowered by SEGOP and NSG support, seen grazing his goats Photo by Okuyo Bernard.*

## ADJUMANI DISTRICT LEADERS ENFORCE TOUGH GUIDELINES FOR EMYOOGA FUND RECOVERY

By Bazio Doreen.



*Ms. Dipio Agnes, the Ag. District Commercial Officer, sensitizing EMYOOGA SACCO leaders during a review meeting held in April*

Leaders in Adjumani District have introduced rigorous requirements for Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs) to improve the recovery of loans distributed through the Presidential Initiative on Wealth and Job Creation (Emyooga) Program.

These organizations are required to recover at least 25% of the loans they received and return those funds to the Microfinance Support Centre (MSC) in order to access an additional seed capital of 20 million shillings, which is currently held in their bank accounts.

So far, only 14 out of 36 SACCOs have qualified for a total of 280 million shillings in extra funding.

This directive was established during a review meeting conducted by the MSC on April 9, 2025, aimed at tackling the challenges of fund recovery within the Emyooga program. According to MSC records, the 36 SACCOs have successfully recovered 894,149,004 shillings of the 1,568,220,000 shillings loaned to 338 associations.

Nsubuga Francis, the Regional Manager for Northern Uganda, pointed out that each SACCO has, on average, lost about 60 million shillings over the past three years due to delays in repayment.

He attributed some of the repayment challenges to a perception among groups that the government’s financial assistance was politically motivated, linking it to electoral support for the ruling party and President Museveni.

“There has been a misunderstanding that these funds were simply a tactic to gain votes. It is vital to shift this mindset, recruit accountable members, and adhere to sound financial management,” Nsubuga stressed.

The Acting District Commercial Officer Dipio Agnes encouraged SACCO leaders to reorganize their groups, restructure leadership through Annual General Meetings by May 9, 2025, and complete a financial audit for 2024 by April 25, 2025. She warned, “No one is above the law... The government is willing to offer technical assistance, but strict adherence is crucial to avoid legal repercussions.”

Obumai Simon Peter, the Assistant Resident District Commissioner, supported these views, emphasizing the government’s awareness of previous mismanagement of funds. He reiterated the necessity for accountability and advised SACCOs to invest loans directly into their businesses rather than misallocating funds.

As of March 2025, the government had allocated 1,120,000,000 shillings to SACCOs and groups in Adjumani, resulting in the creation of 1,260 jobs and benefiting 1,903 individuals. To enhance access to services, the MSC has established a new office in Moyo District, allowing SACCOs from Yumbe, Adjumani, Moyo, and Obongi to receive support without having to travel to Arua City.

Initiated in August 2019, the Emyooga Program is part of a broader governmental strategy aimed at transitioning 68% of households from subsistence to market-oriented production, with the overarching objective of promoting job creation and increasing household incomes across 18 targeted sectors.

# CELEBRATING FRANCOPHONIE IN WEST NILE: A BRIDGE TO OPPORTUNITY AND GLOBAL CONNECTION

By Ayikoru Diana

Communication Officer-Arua DLG



Cwinya-ai awarding participants at the event at Mvara. (photo credit: Adukule Benon)

In the Arua district and the West Nile sub-region of Uganda, the significance of the French language has been recognized as vital for both local and international communication, particularly due to its official status in the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

This recognition is celebrated annually during Francophonie, a global event dedicated to honoring the French language and its cultural heritage.

Although the celebrations ideally occur in March, scheduling challenges prompted two events this year: West Nile “A” on April 5th and West Nile “B” on March 29th.

## ***A Focus on Communication: “Prenez la Parole”***



Mr. Kareem Cwinya-ai in a black suit (Guest of Honour) and Mr. Amule Baraka, APFOs First-Vice President as chief guest.

This year’s Francophonie celebrations centered around the theme “Prenez la Parole,” meaning “Speak French.” This theme was designed to motivate students to improve their spoken French skills, enhancing their communication abilities and opening up new opportunities for them.

The schools participating in West Nile “A,” located in the greater Arua and Ma’di sub-regions, aimed to inspire students to embrace the language, while West Nile “B” represented schools in the Nebbi sub-region.

## ***West Nile A: Mvara SS Takes Center Stage***



An S.1 student of Vurra SS in Arua district reciting a poem in French to the congregation (photo credit: Adukule Benon)

Mvara Secondary School hosted the West Nile “A” Francophonie celebrations, which engaged over 21 schools, showcasing the

community's enthusiasm for French.

The event featured Mr. Kareem Cwinya-ai from Alliance Française de Kampala (AFK) as the Guest of Honor, who passionately urged students to actively use the French language to transcend borders and enhance career prospects.

Mr. Cwinya-ai emphasized the critical role of French in cultivating bilateral trade with the DRC: "Your region's proximity to the DRC makes French a vital tool for communication and the promotion of trade."

He underscored that mastery of French would provide a competitive advantage in the global job market, particularly in institutions like the United Nations, which often favor applicants fluent in French.

Mr. Amule Baraka, an experienced French teacher, further engaged the students with his inspiring narrative about how French proficiency had transformed his life and the lives of those around him.

He encouraged the learners to actively participate in language learning, emphasizing its importance for professional success.

#### Alliance Française de Kampala: A Hub for Language and Culture

Alliance Française de Kampala plays a crucial role in promoting French language and culture in Uganda.

Beyond language instruction, AFK supports various cultural initiatives, including the arts, culinary pursuits, and professional development for French teachers. It also offers specialized courses for French-speaking businesses in Uganda.

The West Nile "A" Francophonie event featured a vibrant mix of activities, including poetry recitations, miming performances, skits, and fashion shows, all conducted in French.



*Such activities were designed to nurture camaraderie among students and teachers, significantly enriching the language learning experience.*

Ms. Ayikoru Diana, a communication officer for Arua District, also attended the event, sharing her experiences of using French in her professional life to facilitate connections with the DRC.

She highlighted the growing demand for bilingual professionals and encouraged students to recognize and seize these emerging opportunities.



*Ayikoru (yellow dress) poses with some of the attendees of francophonie at Wadelai seed secondary school (photo credit: Adule Benon)*

#### West Nile B: Celebrating at Wadelai SS

Meanwhile, the West Nile "B" Francophonie celebrations took place at Wadelai Secondary School, drawing students and community members from various schools.

Ms. Ayikoru Diana, representing the Association des Professeurs de Français en Ouganda (APFO), motivated learners to practice their French skills outside the classroom.

She stressed the unique opportunity presented by the school's language curriculum: "Take this golden opportunity of learning an international language at school; otherwise, it is expensive to learn it in these institutions of language."



Her message also included an appeal for learners in the Nebbi sub-region to participate in future West Nile "A" celebrations, fostering greater interaction with peers from other areas.

She highlighted the local challenges, such as rising teenage pregnancy rates, urging students to be role models and inspirations within their communities.



*This year's Francophonie celebrations centered around the theme "Prenez la Parole," meaning "Speak French." This theme was designed to motivate students to improve their spoken French skills, enhancing their communication abilities and opening up new opportunities for them.*

# ARUA'S EWA PARISH RESPONDS TO POLLUTION WOES WITH JICA-BACKED TREE PLANTING PROJECT

By Ayikoru Diana

Communication Officer-Arua DLG



Angujibi Jacob, LC III Ajia subcounty addressing the congregation. (Photo Credit: Habban Piriyo)

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA PROCEED), a project implemented by Arua District, conducted a stakeholder engagement on Friday, April 11th, with the residents of Ewa Parish, Ajia sub-county.

The purpose of this engagement was to raise awareness about an upcoming tree planting initiative designed to mitigate the effects of air and water pollution that could impact the health of those living near the Meridian Tobacco Company (MTC).

JICA PROCEED, under the auspices of the Japanese government, is focused on cleaning urban areas within Arua.

This pilot project is currently centered around the Dubai trading center in Ocoko-Ajia, with hopes of expanding to additional trading centers in the future.

The development agency has placed disposal bins and conducted community engagements in Dubai, aiming to educate residents on proper garbage disposal, segregation, hygiene, and wellness.

The initiative targets key stakeholders in the market, schools, and local community members both within and around the polluted Ewa Parish, which is home to MTC.

Residents have continually expressed concerns about the pollution and unpleasant odors coming from the factory, particularly during tobacco grinding and processing.

“The smell here is overwhelming, and as locals, we feel unfortunate that we must endure this on our ancestral land. If planting trees can provide a solution, as explained by Forest Officer Ms. Ayiru Lillian, we are consoled and eager to participate,” lamented Alioni, a resident of Ewa Parish.

The local community is requesting training to ensure the trees grow to maturity. “Often, the government has supported our tree planting efforts by providing seedlings, but unfortunately, many of these trees fail to survive. We wish to receive assistance in this regard,” pleaded Habban, the Parish Chief of Ewa Parish.

“We kindly ask the authorities to plant trees around all sides of Meridian Tobacco Company, as the smell permeates everywhere. We understand that these trees will help absorb the toxic emissions from the factory,” implored Adukule Bob.

Given the communal land ownership and tenure challenges, Ms. Ayiru Lillian, the District Forest Officer, encouraged residents to collaborate, merge their land, and market it collectively.

“I advise those interested to register as an association to access government services. The government prefers to invest in groups rather than individuals,” Ayiru noted, referencing a successful group in Adumi, Ayivu (Arua City).

She also informed residents about the carbon credit project, encouraging



them to plant sufficient broad-leaved trees capable of absorbing environmental pollutants so they can earn money while contributing to a healthier planet.

District Planner Mr. Adule Kefa assured the community that trees would be provided to those living around MTC instead of the initially planned mahogany trees for the lower belt of MTC.

Ayiru motivated the community to embrace this initiative, emphasizing its benefits for individual landowners.

“We initially intended this tree planting project to restore a water source that has become undrinkable due to emissions from the tobacco factory. However, given the community’s feedback regarding the widespread effects, we will revise our strategy and plant trees in all districts,” Ayiru stated.

The chairman of LC III for Ajia sub-county, Mr. Aguajibi Jacob, urged locals to begin planting trees without delay.

“I encourage everyone to start preparing their fields for tree planting during this rainy season, as it increases the survival rate of the plants,” said Aguajibi.

Deforestation, characterized by tree cutting, is a prevalent livelihood in

Ajia sub-county within Arua District.

It has gained prominence in the region and in the bustling city of Arua as a leading source of charcoal, which is known for its hardness and is derived from indigenous tree species.

Ajia sub-county, located in the lower belt of the district, is particularly vulnerable to flooding during the rainy season, as well as prolonged drought and high temperatures reaching up to 40 degrees Celsius, according to the Daily Monitor.

During the dry season, the district, through ordinances and presidential directives on deforestation, has mobilized the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) to combat this illegal activity.

Thanks to the intervention of the Red Cross and various organizations, local communities are being educated on the dangers of tree cutting and the benefits of tree planting.

The Ugandan government, alongside Arua District Local Government and other partners, is making deliberate efforts to green the region by planting environmentally friendly broad-leaved trees to help reduce carbon emissions.

## NEBBI PRIORITIZES EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND STAFF WELFARE IN 2025/2026 BUDGET

By Odiya Godfrey, Communication Officer-Nebbi District



Nebbi District Council members pose with Secretary for Finance, Hon. Kisa Lawrence Ojok (center), after the 2025/2026 budget presentation.

**N**ebbi District has revealed a budget of 42.4 billion for the upcoming financial year 2025/2026, with the Education and Health sectors receiving the largest allocations.

The Education sector has been allocated 15.2 billion, while the Health sector will receive 10.2 billion, representing 36.7% and 24.5% of the budget, respectively.

Together, these two sectors will account for 25.5 billion, which is 60% of the total budget.

Other sectors receiving significant funds include Administration, which has been allocated 9.1 billion, making up 21.9% of the budget.

This funding will support pensions and gratuities for retiring staff.

The Road sector will receive 1.3 billion, amounting to 3.5%, while

Natural Resources will get 760.8 million, equivalent to 1.8%.

The least funded departments are Trade and Industry, with an allocation of 217.5 million (0.5%), and Internal Audit, which will receive 34.7 million (0.1%).

Speaking during the budget reading at the district headquarters, the Secretary for Finance, Kisa Lawrence Ojok noted that 22.8 billion shillings, or 55% of the budget, will be allocated for staff wages across all departments and sectors.

Additionally, 15.9 billion shillings, representing 38%, will be dedicated to recurrent costs to support the operations of government and council policies, programs, and projects throughout the district, while 3.1 billion shillings, or 7%, will be earmarked for capital development projects.

Kisa emphasized that the budget for the upcoming financial year aligns with the Government’s “Ten-Fold Growth Strategy,” which aims to expand the national economy from approximately \$50 billion in 2023 to \$500 billion by 2040.

To achieve this strategy, the district will focus on value addition in agriculture (including forestry and fisheries), tourism, and minerals, while continuing best practices in production and productivity through the Parish Development Model (PDM) and EMYOOGA initiatives.

Other initiatives will include maintaining and improving existing infrastructure and reducing the cost of credit through promoting membership-based financing options like VSLAs and SACCOs.

Of the Education sector budget, 11.2 billion shillings will finance salaries for teachers in primary and secondary schools, along with education management.

Additionally, 3.7 billion shillings will be allocated as capitation grants for school operations, and 361.9 million shillings under the School Facility Grant (SFG) will be used to construct two classroom blocks and five-stance VIP latrines in various schools.

For the School Maintenance Grant, 594.6 million shillings is proposed for completing the football field at Atego Seed Secondary School, with part of the funds designated for renovating eight classrooms at Adwongo P/S and Athele P/S, as well as constructing five blocks of five-stance VIP latrines in various schools.

In the Road Sector, the district plans to maintain 146.7 kilometers of roads through Routine Manual maintenance on specific routes, including Nyaravur – Parombo and Agwok - Kucwiny – Kikobe.

Additionally, 81 kilometers of roads will undergo Routine Mechanized maintenance on routes such as Parombo - Alego Lower and Akaba - Paminya – Paceru.

To enhance the current access to safe water coverage, projected at 69%, and to improve functionality to 70% and 80%, respectively, the district has proposed an allocation of 668.1 million shillings for rural water supply and sanitation awareness.

The Council aims to operationalize the Nziri piped water scheme in Pachaka Parish, Erussi sub-county, and the Palyech scheme in Abar East, Ndhew sub-county.

These water schemes, valued at over 1.2 billion, were constructed and completed in the current financial year 2024/2025 by the Ministry of Water and Environment.

The Council also plans to expand safe water coverage by promoting connections of yard taps, including extending the Pongo piped water scheme to Nyapany village in Ondier Parish, Akworo sub-county.

To combat climate change, the district has planned to raise 80,000 tree seedlings at the district nursery to restore the Erussi local forest reserve and the Oguta catchment in Erussi and Akworo sub-counties.

With support from the Local Climate Adaptive Facility (LoCAL), the

district also proposes to construct the Jupala Central Dam to enhance resilience against prolonged dry spells and facilitate associated investment services costs.

District Chairperson Urombi Emmanuel informed the Council that the budget formulation incorporated priorities from villages, parishes, and sub-counties.

Consultations at the district took place during a budget conference held in October of the previous year.

Urombi assured pensioners and retiring staff that a sufficient allocation of 6.9 billion shillings has been made under the Department of Administration for pensions, gratuity, and arrears.

The district chairman urged District Councilors to prioritize service delivery during the budget review process before final approval by the Council in May 2025.

## NEBBI STAKEHOLDERS UNITE TO REVAMP EDUCATION SYSTEM

By Odiya Godfrey  
Communication Officer Nebbi District



Stakeholders participate in a collaborative dialogue at Happy Hotel in Nebbi Municipality, marking the beginning of a unified effort to revamp the education system

Paul Bwire Ogallo, the Deputy Resident District Commissioner, has called on stakeholders in Nebbi District to actively engage in addressing the challenges faced in the education sector.

This appeal was made during a stakeholder engagement held at Happy Hotel in Nebbi

town, where findings from a district survey conducted with UNICEF support through the Gender 4 Development Project were shared.

Bwire emphasized the importance of collaboration, urging stakeholders to refrain from blaming one another and instead focus on fulfilling their responsibilities to enhance

performance.

“Nebbi District, like a football team, has lost the game, and we all share the blame. We faced setbacks last year, but now we need to devise strategies for improvement,” Bwire stated.

While presenting the findings, Opiyo Boniface,

the District Planner, reported alarming statistics, including high dropout rates, inadequate attendance from both learners and teachers, and overall poor performance in the district.

The report also highlighted a shortage of teachers, which significantly contributed to these issues.

In 2024, out of 87,447 enrolled learners, 69,037 (79%) completed term three. In the current academic year of 2025, during the survey conducted from March 25th to 28th, 63,661 (79%) of the 80,584 enrolled learners attended school from Monday to Friday.

Of the 1,498 teachers, only 985 were present in schools, and only 54 out of 91 government-aided schools had a school feeding program.

In 2024, among 2,507 pupils registered for Primary Leaving Examinations, the district achieved a pass rate of 95%, with 29 attaining first grade, 970 in second grade, and 905 in third grade.

The findings sparked varied reactions among stakeholders, with some attributing the issues to management and parents.

Jukama John Walter, Inspector of Schools,

pointed to Head Teachers as responsible for the shortcomings in schools. "As an Inspector of Schools, I can't visit every school daily. It's the Head Teachers' duty to regularly oversee teachers to ensure effective learning, but many fail to meet these expectations," Jukama remarked.

Odwokacen Wilson, a Head Teacher, shifted the blame to parents for not sufficiently supporting their children's education.

Fuambe Ida, the Secretary for Social Services, urged parents to pack food for their children in school, highlighting that a lack of nutrition hampers concentration and contributes to poor performance.

Bwire questioned why private schools appear to perform better than government schools, despite the government offering better salaries. He encouraged stakeholders at every level to monitor and supervise schools to drive improvements.

He noted that the poor performance should serve as a wakeup call, urging stakeholders to prioritize addressing gaps in education.

Jalacida Collins, the LC III Chairperson of Erussi Sub County, advised parents to provide their children with necessary school supplies

and ensure their regular attendance.

"School management should foster a friendly learning environment and ensure the content delivered is suitable for the students," Jalacida added.

The Gender 4 Development initiative, which supports the district's education sector, is a multi-agency program co-funded by the European Union, Germany, and Belgium in collaboration with the United Nations.

Gwotho James, the Senior Inspector of Schools, explained that the project aims to empower adolescent girls and women by enhancing their access to inclusive, quality education.

Currently, the project supports eight schools through a School Performance-Based Grant Model, offering cash assistance of 1.8 million Ugandan shillings to each school to boost retention, survival, and completion rates.

Additionally, the project aids 304 girls through the Cash Plus Program, providing support and complementary services to adolescent girls in lower secondary school for four years to facilitate their transition from primary to post-primary education.

THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH

**Under the Net**

**“Time is of essence when treating Malaria! If you have a fever, test for Malaria within 24 hours. Malaria is preventable!”**

**Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng Otero**  
Minister for Health/Woman MP, Lira City

**Chase Malaria to Zero**

**#LLINCampaign23** **#ZeroMalariaStartsWithYou**

# FROM GRANT RECIPIENT TO COMMUNITY INSPIRATION: NORBERT KAMAU'S PDM SUCCESS IN TEREGO DISTRICT

By Atizoyo Judith  
Communication Officer-Terego DLG



*In Terego District, the Parish Development Model (PDM) is making a remarkable difference in the lives of beneficiaries, as illustrated by the story of Nobert Kamau, a resident of Odumini village in Bileafe sub-county*

In 2023, Kamau was awarded a financial grant of 700,000 shillings through the PDM initiative. He wisely invested this funding, spending 300,000 shillings to buy three goats and using the remaining 400,000 shillings to cultivate four acres of cassava. This initial investment yielded impressive returns; Kamau sold three acres of his cassava for a remarkable 4.5 million shillings, keeping one acre for his family's consumption.

Kamau's entrepreneurial drive didn't end there. With 2 million shillings from the sale, he expanded his agricultural efforts by planting seven additional acres of cassava, ensuring a reliable income source for the future. Acknowledging the significance of education, he allocated 500,000 shillings to cover his children's school fees. His initial investment in Nobert kamau at his 7acre cassava plantation in Odumini village, Nicu Parish ,Bileafe Sub County Terego district

In Terego District, the Parish Development Model (PDM) is making a remarkable difference in the lives of beneficiaries, as

illustrated by the story of Nobert Kamau, a resident of Odumini village in Bileafe sub-county.

In 2023, Kamau was awarded a financial grant of 700,000 shillings through the PDM initiative. He wisely invested this funding, spending 300,000 shillings to buy three goats and using the remaining 400,000 shillings to cultivate four acres of cassava.

This initial investment yielded impressive returns; Kamau sold three acres of his cassava for a remarkable 4.5 million shillings, keeping one acre for his family's consumption.

Kamau's entrepreneurial drive didn't end there. With 2 million shillings from the sale, he expanded his agricultural efforts by planting seven additional acres of cassava, ensuring a reliable income source for the future.

Acknowledging the significance of education, he allocated 400,000 shillings to cover his children's school fees. His initial

investment in livestock also paid dividends; his three goats had given birth, and he now oversees a total of 13 goats alongside his growing cassava garden.

Kamau's aspirations continue to flourish. He intends to build a kraal for his goats and invest part of the profits from his cassava sales into further agricultural pursuits, showcasing a proactive approach to both livestock and crop production.

His journey highlights the transformative impact of the PDM program, not only in terms of income but also its broader effects on family welfare and community development.

Kamau encourages fellow PDM beneficiaries to make wise investments, inspiring them to utilize their resources for similarly life-changing outcomes.

Overall, Kamau's experience emphasizes how the Parish Development Model is driving economic growth and enhancing the quality of life for individuals in Terego

District, paving the way for sustainable futures for families in the West Nile Region.



Terego RDC Godwin Angalia, DPO Wilfred Chakua, SAE Nicholas Munu and Bileafesubcountystaff interacting with Nobert Kamau at his farmin Odumini Village.

## ROADS OF WEST NILE: A JOURNEY FROM ISOLATION TO CONNECTION

Compiled by: Ociru Beatrice, Communication Officer-Obongi  
Ayikoru Diana, Communication Officer-Arua



A contented engineer Afimani Simon poses with the Principal Auditor, Dada Gadi (Right) on Ongogero bridge in Ajia-Arua district

The West Nile region of Uganda is experiencing a significant boost in road connectivity, driven by a strategic initiative from the Ugandan government.

A grant of one billion shillings allocated to each district is proving to be transformative, revitalizing neglected road networks and stimulating economic growth throughout the region.

The comprehensive effort aims not only to repair existing infrastructure but also to create a more accessible and integrated West Nile for all its residents.

### Addressing Years of Neglect

Many districts in West Nile have faced chronic neglect regarding their road infrastructure, suffering from limited funding and inadequate maintenance tools, which has led to community isolation.

For example, in Arua district, some roads had not been rehabilitated for over 20 years, resulting in impassable routes that greatly affected local livelihoods.

Similarly, Obongi District, which separated from Moyo in 2019, initially grappled with dire road conditions rated at just 46%.

Thanks to a recent financial boost from the Ministry of Works and Transport, this trend is rapidly changing.

The grant, combined with new road maintenance equipment, empowers local governments to undertake extensive road maintenance and rehabilitation projects, significantly improving connectivity and access.

### Obongi District: A Model for Successful Change



*RDC-Mpimbaza Hasaka and District Chairperson Hajji Abibu Buga of Obongi took part in a symbolic ceremony atop a wheel loader at the launch of 1 billion road rehabilitation of 11.4km Palorinya- Laropi road link*

The impact of the road grant is particularly evident in Obongi District, which is undergoing a remarkable transformation. Ibrahim Musafir, the Acting District Engineer, reports that government initiatives have raised road conditions from a “fair” rating of 46% to an impressive 79%.

The district has strategically allocated the road maintenance fund to meet critical infrastructure needs.

In the past financial year, 30.4 kilometers of roads were maintained, with plans to extend this to 34 kilometers in the upcoming year.

The numerous projects will improve access to essential services such as schools, healthcare facilities, and markets, directly benefiting local livelihoods.

Obongi’s total road network spans 449 kilometers, with the one billion shilling grant facilitating periodic maintenance and emergency repairs. On April 15, 2025, district officials and stakeholders launched maintenance work on three key road links, totaling 34 kilometers:

1. Palorinya-Laropi Road (11.4 km): This vital route connects Obongi to the Laropi ferry, significantly enhancing access to Moyo District. Years of neglect had made the road impassable, isolating healthcare facilities during heavy rains. Its rehabilitation is expected to improve residents’ access to essential health services.
2. Ngungu-Obogubu Road (8 km): This route is crucial for the district’s agricultural community, facilitating the transport of produce to markets. Maintenance for this stretch is budgeted at approximately 234,772,713 shillings, reflecting its significant role in local economic activities.
3. Obongi-Itipa-Malanga Road (12 km): This extensive connection links schools, markets, and health facilities, providing an alternative route during rainy seasons. The projected maintenance cost is 374,873,965 shillings, focusing on improving drainage and surface quality.

During the project launch, the Chairperson of the District Local

Council highlighted the importance of community support in achieving the project’s objectives. The Resident District Commissioner encouraged local residents to closely monitor the project to ensure high-quality work.

Despite the progress, Musafir emphasized the need for additional road construction equipment, including trucks, rollers, and excavators, to maximize the impact of the current resources, which are limited to a grader and a wheel loader.



*Works Committee Chairperson Hon. Leku Gloria, the Secretary of Social Services, and Engineer Afimani Simon inspect the newly built culvert on the Anguru-Ejupala road, a key component of ongoing efforts to improve connectivity in West Nile.*

Arua District is also beginning to enjoy the benefits of increased funding for road maintenance. Hon. Candini Luiji, Secretary for Social Services, inspected various road and bridge improvements and praised the government’s decision to boost the road works budget to one billion shillings, significantly up from the previous allocation of 300 million shillings.

The district has earmarked 200 million shillings in their 2025/2026 budget for road maintenance, demonstrating a commitment to sustained infrastructure advancements.

Assessment teams have reported significant progress, including new culverts installed on critical roads and widening efforts on the Arivu-Ajia road. Work continues on the Ongogero bridge, vital for connectivity to the Ajia sub-county headquarters.

The one billion shilling road initiative aims to achieve several critical objectives including enhancing the movement of people and goods, thereby reducing travel times and transportation costs, improving access to markets, schools, and healthcare, which stimulates local economic growth and creates new opportunities and strengthening connections between urban and rural areas, fostering exchanges of goods, services, and ideas.

“The ripple effects of this initiative are already visible in improved healthcare access, educational opportunities, and strengthened economic livelihoods,” Luiji stated.

# URSB TO LAUNCH MASS BUSINESS REGISTRATION IN TEREGO DISTRICT

By: Judith Atizoyo - Terego



*URSB officials join Terego district leaders and business community representatives for a group photo ahead of the launch of business registration services.*

The Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) is set to initiate a mass registration of businesses in Terego District, as announced by Registration Officer Jackline Adroru during a stakeholder engagement meeting held on Wednesday, April 16 2025, at the district headquarters.

Adroru emphasized the importance of business registration, highlighting that it not only creates job opportunities but also allows individuals to trade under their own name. Additionally, she said, registered businesses can become eligible service providers, facilitating supplies to various establishments.

Furthermore, URSB offers assistance in

drafting documents to align names and dates of birth with those on national identity cards, streamlining the registration process for business owners.

Senior Registration Officer Nakate Fatuma outlined the key requirements for business registration, which include, valid National Identity card for Ugandans, passport for non-Ugandans and refugee card for refugees.

For online registration, an email address for the business and a phone number are also necessary. The costs associated with registration are as follows:

Business name registration: UGX 93,000

Company registration: UGX 230,000

Legal documents: UGX 55,000

The Resident District Commissioner (RDC)

Godwin Angalia pointed out that many individuals in Terego District are conducting business illegally due to a lack of legal documentation. He stressed the need for formalizing business practices within the community.

District Chairperson Wilfred Saka expressed appreciation for the URSB initiative, stating that formal business registration would ensure that the market space is occupied by legitimate vendors. He pledged to mobilize the community to support the program.

The proposed trading centers for this mass registration exercise include Wandu, Kubala, Owaffa, Omugo, Ocodri, Ofua III, Point J, Opotani, and Leju Town Council. The registration activity is scheduled to take place from Monday, April 28 2025, to Friday, May 2, 2025.



*URSB's Jackline Adroru, speaking at a district engagement meeting in Terego, outlined plans for the launch of business registration services.*

## **DISCOVERING YUMBE: A FUSION OF ADVENTURE AND UNTAMED BEAUTY IN THE HEART OF WEST NILE**

*By Achidri Akim*



*A Stunning side view of Mount Midigo, pictured from the southern part.*



In this edition of West Nile Today, we invite you to explore one of West Nile’s hidden treasures—Yumbe district, with a special focus on the stunning Mountain Midigo, situated near the Uganda-South Sudan border.

Mountain Midigo presents a picturesque landscape that is part of the expansive Kei Forest Reserve, rich in diverse flora, whose enchanting beauty is increasingly attracting visitors from beyond Yumbe’s borders.

On a recent weekend morning, we set out on a journey that would reveal the hidden gem nestled within the vibrant green scenery.

Midigo is more than just a mountain; it is home to various traditional tree species, some with medicinal properties. Additionally, it serves as a habitat for a notable population of black-and-white colobus monkeys, locally referred to as ‘Londe,’ providing visitors with breathtaking sights. Truly, we give glory to the Almighty for His creation of such incredible beauty.



*A playful black-and-white colobus monkey leaps through the trees, epitomizing the wild heart of West Nile*

The area offers a unique opportunity for exceptional mountain climbing, along with the chance to observe some of Africa’s most stunning birds and wildlife.

Its distinctive location along the Uganda-South Sudan border allows visitors to enjoy iconic views of South Sudan from the mountain’s summit.



*Mount Midigo: Untamed West Nile beauty with a view towards South Sudan.*

At the peak, we were greeted with a refreshing breeze; as the saying goes, the higher you climb, the cooler it gets. Our West Nile Today team, after an arduous ascent, was welcomed by the refreshing weather that set a perfect pace for relaxation—a moment truly worth the trek to the summit.



*Experiencing the beauty of West Nile after a rewarding climb in Yumbe. Adventure awaits!*

“Visiting this serene and cool place is ideal after a stressful work period. I think I will plan another trip soon; I had no idea Yumbe was so blessed,” remarked Odama Emmanuel, who joined us on our journey to discover West Nile.



*A magnificent view of the South-Western part of Yumbe district from the summit of Mount Midigo*

### **Ascending into History: The Grandeur of Mount Midigo**



*More than a scenic peak, Midigo is steeped in the rich lore of the Aringa people, especially the Yambura clan, some of Yumbe’s first inhabitants*

Local legends recount a catastrophic volcanic eruption that reportedly occurred centuries ago, a life-altering event that transformed the landscape and the lives of its people. While scientific confirmation of Mount Midigo’s volcanic origins is still pending, the tales of its fiery past add an intriguing layer to its already captivating presence.

But the stories continue. Elder Achile Mustafa shares a tale of a mystical creator lake hidden at the mountain’s top. “A drum was once tossed into it,” he recounts, eyes sparkling with ancient wisdom, “and was later discovered at the Nile River.” Whether rooted in fact or folklore, such narratives vividly illustrate the deep bond between the people and their land.

Today, Mount Midigo invites adventurous spirits to conquer its slopes. The ascent is a fulfilling challenge, offering sweeping views that stretch beyond Yumbe.

Imagine capturing that breathtaking sunset, knowing you stand on a site of historical significance and unmatched natural beauty. It’s an experience that will linger long after you descend.

# WHY WEST NILE'S MOYO DISTRICT SHOULD BE YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE!

Moyo District is more than just a destination, it's a journey into the heart of Uganda's West Nile Sub region. With its stunning natural landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and significant historical landmarks, Moyo offers yet another unique experience that blends tradition, nature, and history.

Whether you're looking to explore the scenic mountains, immerse yourself in the cultural traditions of the Madi people, or uncover

the fascinating history of the region, Moyo provides an unforgettable adventure.

## Explore the Natural Beauty

The district is adorned with stunning natural landscapes, from lush green hills to the sparkling waters of the Albert Nile. Whether you're hiking in the scenic mountains or taking a leisurely boat ride along the Nile, Moyo's pristine environment promises a

refreshing escape into nature.

## Cultural Immersion

Visitors have the opportunity to engage with the Madi people, an ethnic group with a rich cultural heritage. Experience their traditions, festivals, and everyday life to gain a deeper understanding of the community's values, customs, and artistic expressions.

## Historical Landmarks, Fort Dufile



*A serene view of the Albert Nile in Moyo District, where the natural beauty enhances the rich cultural heritage of Uganda's West Nile region*

One of Moyo's crown jewels is Fort Dufile, a historical site perched on the banks of the Albert Nile. Built by the notable Emin Pasha between 1874 and 1879, the fort played a pivotal role in combating the transatlantic slave trade. Visitors can explore the ruins and hear tales of the Battle of Dufile, a notable conflict between Mahdist forces and a garrison loyal to the Egyptian khedive in November 1888.



*The historical Dufile Egyptian Station in Moyo, where visitors can uncover the stories of Emin Pasha and the fight against the slave trade.*

The site not only symbolizes colonial history but also showcases the

resilience of people who confronted the slave trade. Its proximity to Nimule National Park adds even more allure, as visitors may spot African elephants, antelopes, hippos, and other wildlife during boat excursions.

## Madi Monument: A Symbol of Unity and Peace



*The Madi Monument in Moyo, a symbol of peace, hope, and unity, featuring the iconic white cock with red wattles, white feathers, and yellow legs.*

In the heart of Moyo stands the Madi Monument, a powerful emblem of peace, hope, and unity among the Madi people. The striking white cock design captures the community's core values through its distinct

features:

**Red Wattles:** Symbolizing brotherhood and unity, they remind the community of their strength in togetherness.

**White Feathers:** Representing peace, they herald harmony within and between neighboring communities.

**Yellow Legs:** Standing for sunshine and hope, they embody the aspirations for a prosperous future.

Prominently visible from Moyo Town, this

monument serves as an inspiring reminder of the shared values that unify the Madi people.

**Other Noteworthy Sites**

While in Moyo, consider exploring:

**Angel’s Foot:** A site with cultural significance and scenic views.

**Ilo Hill:** Perfect for hiking enthusiasts and nature lovers.

**Moyo Main Markets:** Experience local

life through vibrant markets showcasing crafts, produce, and delicacies.

**Nightlife**

As the sun sets, Moyo District offers a lively nightlife for those looking to unwind. Notable spots include:

**Dreams Club:** A popular destination for music, dancing, and socializing.

**12 Tables Club and Restaurant:** Offering a cozy atmosphere with great food and entertainment options.

# MINISTER ACENG DEPLOYS 181 CHEWS TO STRENGTHEN HEALTH SERVICES IN MARACHA DISTRICT

By Atule Moses, Communication Officer - Maracha DLG



Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng, Minister of Health flagging off the CHEWS after their commissioning.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) is actively deploying community health workers (CHEWs) in the West Nile region to enhance healthcare access.

The first deployment occurred on Monday April 14, 2025, with 124 CHEWs in Koboko district, followed by the inauguration of 181

CHEWs in Maracha by Hon. Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng, the Minister of Health. This initiative follows a six-month training program completed in August 2024.

Dr. Aceng highlighted the crucial role of CHEWS in strengthening primary healthcare, emphasizing that all health issues

begin within the community.

“Primary healthcare is all about accessibility; that’s why you engage in door-to-door outreach to ensure people can reach you. It’s affordable, which is why you provide free services during community visits. It is also culturally relevant, as you were chosen from

your own villages,” said Aceng

Dr. Aceng encouraged the CHEWs to remain focused on their duties rather than being swayed by financial incentives, which can threaten community well-being.

“From my experience, I’ve observed that community health extension workers sometimes prioritize financial gain over their responsibilities. This isn’t uncommon; medical work is a calling,” she noted.

She also remarked on the effectiveness of the newly introduced malaria vaccine, with CHEWS playing a key role in its rollout.

Dr. Aceng pointed out that some CHEWs tend to undermine Village Health Teams (VHTs), which creates tension and hampers collaboration between the two groups.

“When we train community health extension workers, they may feel empowered and start to belittle my village health teams. VHTs are an essential link, connecting community health extension workers to the village,” Dr. Aceng explained.

“Our program is designed for door-to-door outreach. A parish may cover five villages, and you can’t manage them all alone. Therefore, your duty is to empower the village health teams, collaborate with them, supervise their efforts, and compile reports together.” She explained.



*Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng, Minister handing over kits to one of the CHEWs*

Hon. Jennifer Driwaru, Maracha District Woman MP, urged the district to support the CHEWS in their roles.

“Let’s rally behind our team to ensure they can perform their duties in the field; without our support, they won’t succeed,” she stated.

Hon. Driwaru also emphasized the need to upgrade Maracha Health Centre IV to a general hospital as resources become available to address increasing health demands.

Hon. Obitre Stephen, Maracha District Chairperson, commended the government for allocating Shs 7.4 billion to upgrade six health centers under the Uganda Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers (UgIFT) program.

He expressed concern about the poor health-seeking behavior of local residents but remains hopeful that this will improve with the introduction of CHEWS.

“Given our community’s nature, there is a prevalent negative attitude toward seeking healthcare, worsened by an information gap. With the introduction and training of CHEWS, we are optimistic that our people’s health-seeking behavior will improve,” he remarked.

Dr. Charles Olaro, acting Director General of Health Services at the Ministry of Health, stated that the computer tablets provided to CHEWS will enhance electronic health data management.

He encouraged CHEWS to serve as role models in their communities to build trust in their work.

“Lead by example. We ask that you be our foot soldiers, promoting good hygiene, sanitation, and nutrition within your households,” he advised.

Ms. Monica Kotevu Koliba, the Deputy Resident District Commissioner (RDC) Maracha, mentioned that CHEWS will help raise awareness about government programs and address poor socio-economic indicators.

“You have increased the number of my mobilizers. In addition to the LC1s, LC2s, LC3s, and VHTs, I want you to tackle issues like teenage pregnancies, early pregnancies, and school dropouts. Please strive to reach the schools,” she instructed.

At the district level, CHEWS will be managed and supervised through existing local government structures, with the District Health Officer holding overall responsibility while delegating relevant officers to oversee the CHEWS strategy at lower levels.

Dr. Paul Onzubo, Maracha District Health Officer, revealed that 63 VHTs have been selected to become CHEWS in recognition of their commitment. He assured support for the CHEWS strategy from the district.

Mr. Letia Jimmy, a CHEWS representative, expressed the CHEWS’ commitment to implementing the malaria smart strategy and initiating a malaria repellent garden soon.

Dr. Gift Patrick Asibo, the deputy lead trainer, suggested that the Ministry of Health should establish a career growth path for CHEWS, as many are eager to advance professionally.

The CHWs underwent both classroom instruction and field placements, equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to serve their communities effectively.

This training program was funded by the Global Fund and facilitated through The AIDS Support Organization (TASO).

Dr. Richard Kabanda, Commissioner for Health Promotion at the Ministry of Health, informed attendees that the curriculum for CHWs is currently under review to include “mindset change,” as some CHWs have been noted to be “not well aligned.”

The CHEW structure underscores the government’s commitment to strengthening community health systems and improving health outcomes in underserved areas. The CHEWs will be deployed across the 91 parishes of Maracha District.

# ‘FOCUS ON WEALTH CREATION’ - PRESIDENT M7 ADDRESSES WEST NILE COMMUNITIES

Moses Atule, Communication Officer, Maracha District Local Government



President Yoweri Museveni arriving at the West Nile Peace Day celebrations in Yumbe District

**D**uring the West Nile Peace Day celebrations in Yumbe District, President Yoweri Museveni reiterated his dedication to enhancing household wealth.

He announced that families would see an increase in income through the Parish Development Model (PDM) program.

“The most urgent challenge we face is poverty, which is why we are allocating funds for the PDM. We estimate that with 1 million Ugandan Shillings, you could acquire 450 coffee seedlings per acre. At that time, those seedlings cost 180,000 Ugandan Shillings, leaving you with 820,000 Ugandan Shillings for other investments,” he explained.

The President highlighted that many people are turning to poultry and other enterprises, signaling the start of something much larger.

“We will be increasing the funding. Recently, the fishing community indicated that 1 million Ugandan Shillings is not sufficient for their requirements,” he assured.

As the chief guest on Saturday, April 12, President Museveni urged, “Let’s enhance this PDM program so that we can ensure every family participates in the money economy.”

He discussed the 4-acre model’s origins and functioning: “In the NRM manifesto of 1996, we proposed a 4-acre model – one acre for coffee, another for fruits, a third for pasture for dairy cows in the shade, and the fourth for food crops like cassava, which doubles as food and a cash crop. We also recommend poultry, and for those not of the Muslim faith, pig farming and fish farming. Additionally, we are considering cocoa, as well as cashew nuts and macadamia.”

Hon. Abdulmutwalib Asiku, Yumbe District Chairperson, reported that over the last three years, the government has allocated Shs 40.7 billion in PDM funding, with expectations to reach Shs 60 billion by the end of the current fiscal year, benefiting 60,000 individuals.

He emphasized that local leaders are proactively educating residents on effectively

utilizing these funds.

“As leaders, we continue to encourage our people to make wise use of these resources, aiming to elevate them from the 30 percent poverty threshold to a better quality of life,” he stated.

Hon. Asiku pointed out that the micro-scale irrigation program under the Uganda Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers (UgIFT) has been successful but urged the government to subsidize the 25 percent co-funding required from farmers.

President Museveni invited Hon. Yorke Alioni Odria, Aringa South MP, to discuss the income potential from cultivating mangoes.

“In one acre, if you space mango trees 8 by 8 meters, you can plant 40 trees, and after three years, you could earn at least 12 million Ugandan Shillings in a single season, with two seasons each year,” Hon. Odria shared.

He also mentioned that the mango processing

facility established in Yumbe District to support farmers in northern Uganda will resume operations in May 2025.

Gen. Moses Ali, the Second Deputy Prime Minister, suggested a cooperative model supported by the government to assist most West Nile residents in overcoming poverty.

“Your Excellency, I propose that West Nile communities unite around the cooperative SACCOS model to implement a comprehensive strategy for sustainable community development,” he recommended.

Hon. Geoffrey Feta, chairperson of the West Nile Parliamentary Caucus and Ayivu East MP, presented a memorandum on behalf of

West Nile leaders, emphasizing the need for a government initiative focused on the widespread distribution of seedlings for newly introduced cash crops.

Feta noted a gradual phase-out of tobacco as a cash crop in West Nile, stating that there are currently no alternatives to keep residents engaged in the money economy.

The government has prioritized cocoa, cashew nuts, macadamia, and Hass avocado, alongside export crops like coffee in the region.

“To initiate the extensive promotion of these crops and drive agro-economic transformation in West Nile, we request your support in

providing 13 million disease-free, drought-resistant seedlings,” Feta appealed.

Additionally, the Ayivu East Constituency representative to the 11th parliament called for the development of initial capacity for seedling production, inputs, value addition, and establishment of cooperative societies for improved market access and price stabilization.

The West Nile Peace Day celebrations revolved around the theme: “Consolidating 23 Years of Peace and Security in the West Nile Region for Socio-Economic Transformation.”

## KOBOKO DISTRICT JOINS NATIONAL MALARIA VACCINE ROLLOUT

On Tuesday, April 8 2025, Koboko District joined Uganda’s nationwide rollout of the malaria vaccine, marking a significant milestone in the fight against the country’s

leading disease burden.

The Acting District Health Officer Dr.Denis Oloya said the malaria vaccine officially adds to the 14th vaccine in Uganda’s routine immunization schedule, complementing existing vaccines for diseases such as Polio, measles, yellow fever and tetanus

The R21/Matrix-M malaria vaccine is administered in four doses at six, seven, eight and eighteen months targeting 105 districts with high and moderate transmission rates including Koboko. The campaign aims to protect over 1.1 million children under two years across Uganda.

The Malaria Focal Person Mr.Idringi Dieuddone said some Health facilities still register big numbers of patients especially Bamure HC3 with 75% and Lobule Prisons at

73% still need intervention; adding that the subsequent plan for Indoor Residual Spray will target those facilities.

Meanwhile the Secretary for Social and Community based Services Hon.Isaac Todoko said sub counties like Kuluba and Ludara have high malaria burden because of people who migrate from neighboring districts for farming and sleep without nets exposing to mosquitoes. “Continuous sensitization is needed on use of mosquito nets, and interestingly, Sub counties have high malaria burden compared to the urban areas with low prevalence probably because most people in urban areas go to private facilities and the data is not captured,” added Todoko. A health worker administers the malaria vaccine to a young child in Koboko District as part of Uganda’s nationwide rollout



A health worker administers the malaria vaccine to a young child in Koboko District as part of Uganda’s nationwide rollout



Parents in Koboko District with their children to receive the new malaria vaccine



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