

Michael Atingi-Ego: Handover of Kigoroby health centre IV

Remarks by Mr Michael Atingi-Ego, Deputy Governor of the Bank of Uganda, at the handover of Kigoroby Health Centre IV, Hoima District, 25 January 2025.

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Esteemed leaders, respected elders, honoured guests, and the resilient people of Bunyoro, allow me to stand on the established protocol and wish you a good morning.

Today, we gather not just to commemorate the handover of the refurbished Kigoroby Health Centre IV, but to celebrate the collective progress and determination of the people of Hoima District. This occasion reflects the enduring spirit of Bunyoro, a region with a rich history, a vibrant culture, and a unique place within Uganda.

Bunyoro's Uniqueness

Bunyoro-Kitara, is not merely a geographical location; it is a cradle of Ugandan history and culture. Bunyoro boasts a rich cultural heritage, evident in its traditions, music, dance and folklore. As Professor Mbabi Katana (a renowned professor of music) stated, "There is no history of Uganda without the history of Bunyoro". This is a place of natural beauty and historical significance. As we move forward, we must remember that Bunyoro is at the heart of Uganda. Its heritage is a source of strength, one that we must nurture.

Socio-economic Challenges

However, our journey is not without its challenges. We must acknowledge the socio-economic hurdles we face, including:

- Health: Uganda has made commendable progress in reducing maternal mortality, but challenges persist. While the maternal mortality rate has thankfully declined from 336 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2022 to 286 in 2023, we must acknowledge that every preventable maternal death is a tragedy.

Infant mortality rates have improved, decreasing from 43 deaths per 1,000 live births to 38, a testament to the hard work of our healthcare providers. However, neonatal (infant) mortality remains a significant concern at 22 per 1,000 live births. Moreover, we must address the unique vulnerabilities faced by young mothers, particularly the alarming rates of teenage pregnancies prevalent in this region.

Kigoroby Health Centre IV stands as a beacon of hope, serving the vital needs of thousands of patients annually across the sub-counties of Bombo, Kijongo, Kapapi, Kigoroby, and Kisukuma. Recognizing its critical role, we acknowledge that this facility serves a broader community, extending its reach even beyond our borders to include patients from the Democratic Republic of Congo. This underscores the profound impact of such vital healthcare institutions within our communities.

- **Poverty and Employment:** Many of our families struggle with poverty, unemployment, and limited opportunities. Access to quality education and financial services is not always available, preventing many from reaching their full potential.

Bank of Uganda's Role

At the Bank of Uganda (BoU), our primary mandate is to ensure price stability and foster a sound financial system. We also recognise that economic stability must translate into tangible improvements in people's lives. This belief guides our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, embedded within our broader Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) sustainability strategy.

Here in Kigorobyia, the BoU's commitment to maternal, infant, and child health is evident. Through a partnership with the Ministry of Health, local leaders, and the dedicated staff, we have refurbished the Kigorobyia Health Centre IV.

This facility is now equipped with upgraded infrastructure, modern medical equipment, and essential utilities, including solar power and clean water. This is not just a building; it is a lifeline, poised to deliver lifesaving services to mothers, children and families in Hoima.

But our commitment goes beyond healthcare:

- **Agricultural Credit Facility (ACF):** The ACF supports farmers and projects involved in the agricultural value chain. By September 2024, approximately 1 trillion Uganda shillings had been disbursed under this facility, with 22% of these funds benefitting Western Uganda.
- **Business Recovery Fund (SBRF):** The SBRF supports businesses recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, over 39.7 billion Uganda Shillings have been disbursed, with 17.5% of the total beneficiaries in the Western region as of September 2024.

These initiatives are aligned with government programmes such as the Parish Development Model (PDM), aiming to foster inclusive growth and empower our people.

Financial Inclusion and Literacy

Financial inclusion is a cornerstone of our development strategy. We encourage everyone to adopt mobile financial services, which can revolutionise how we manage our money. Mobile money enables us to save, access loans, make investments, and secure ourselves with insurance. We must build a culture of saving and make responsible financial decisions. We urge all to learn how to keep financial records, budget effectively and make informed choices.

Addressing Climate Change

We cannot ignore the growing impact of climate change on our region. It is essential that we work together to adopt sustainable practices to protect our natural resources and environment. We must implement land management practices that prevent soil

erosion, protect water resources, and plant trees. Furthermore, the exploitation of oil and gas resources in Bunyoro must be conducted responsibly and sustainably, prioritizing environmental protection and minimizing the carbon footprint to mitigate the potential negative impacts on the climate.

Call to Action

The refurbished Kigoroby Health Centre is a testament to what we can achieve together. We must ensure its responsible use and maintain it for the benefit of generations to come. Let us embrace a spirit of collective responsibility, working together to build a healthier, more prosperous and sustainable Bunyoro.

Conclusion

The Bank of Uganda remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting community-led development initiatives within our mandate and resources. We are here to partner with you, to empower you, and to ensure that Bunyoro continues to thrive.

Thank you. God bless!