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## PRESS RELEASE

News Editors,

### **Rural water and sanitation interventions boost coverage to 63%**

**Hoima:** Water and sanitation interventions by Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) in Western Uganda have boost coverage from 35% to 63%.

URCS with support from European Union and Danish Red Cross has for the past 4 years been implementing a rural water and sanitation programme in the districts of Hoima, Kabarole, Ntoroko, Bulisa and Kasese. URCS interventions in the five districts have benefitted 158, 400 people.

Today (November 4<sup>th</sup>), the Minister of Water and Environment Hon. Maria Mutagamba, alongside the Head of Delegation European Union and Danish Ambassador will hand over the 4 m Euros interventions to the district authorities.

The main objective of the programme was to ensure sustainable improvement of water supply and sanitation coverage as well as hygiene practices in the targeted areas, behavior change through household sanitation and hygiene practices to reduce the persistent outbreaks of water-borne diseases in the Albertine region of Western Uganda.

As part of the interventions, URCS has constructed and rehabilitated over 550 water sources including bore holes, shallow wells and springs.

In addition, 776 water user committees have been trained with the aim of ensuring community participation to enhance ownership of the facilities for proper operation and maintenance.

Handing over the facilities, the Minister applauded URCS and its partners for contributing to the increase in water and sanitation coverage in the country.

To promote hygiene and sanitation in communities and homes, the Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) approach was used in reaching and disseminating health information to community members. As a result, 4, 191 model homes with basic sanitary facilities like pit latrines, bathing shelter, refuse pits, drying racks were established.

URCS Secretary General Michael Richard Natakasaid that 300 PHAST groups of 60 people each have been trained to act as role models for the sanitation and hygiene practices. He noted that URCS has also constructed a gravity flow scheme (GFS) for the supply of safe water to 6, 000 people in Butiaba on the shores of Lake Albert. The communities in Butiaba, Bulisa initially used to consume raw water from the river which was polluted.

The URCS GFS receives raw water from River Waaki, treats it to acceptable standard and feeds it into the existing distribution network and tap stands so that the Butiaba community can access safe water.

To ensure proper functionality of water sources, 28 village pump mechanics were trained and equipped with repair tools. The programme has also repaired 150 non-fixing bore holes and shallow wells benefiting 45, 000 people.

It is hoped that the interventions will greatly reduce the frequent water related diseases that were affecting communities around Lake Victoria.

**Ends**

**For details:**

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