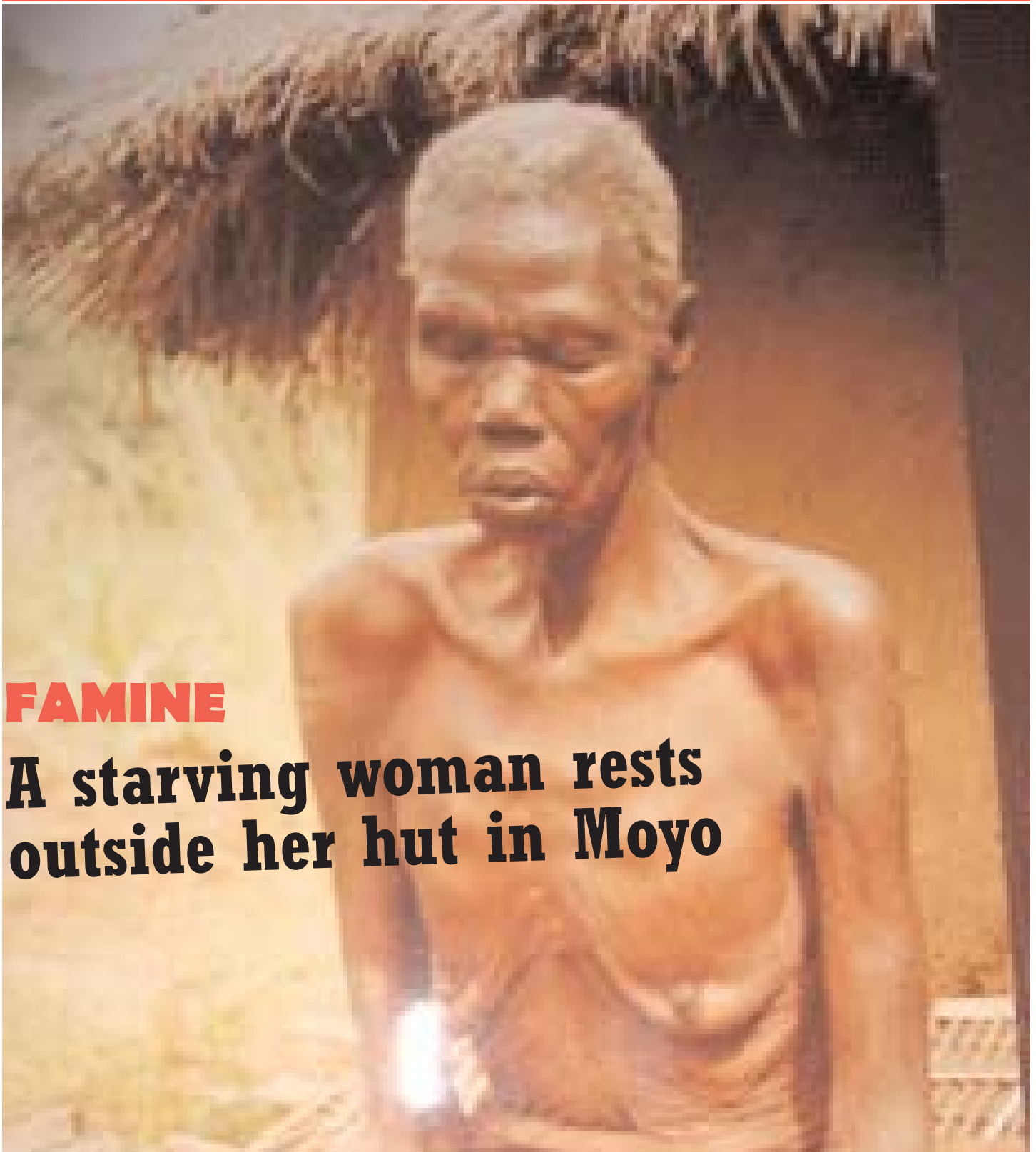




The Humanitarian

A Uganda Red Cross Society quarterly publication

July-September, 2009



FAMINE

**A starving woman rests
outside her hut in Moyo**

Word from the editor

Famine is a reality. It has affected thousands with minimal effort from the public to save the situation. The majority of districts are affected but the hard-hit are those in the North and North Eastern Uganda that have had a rough past. These districts have experienced among others floods and wars that have shattered their livelihoods and hardly have coping mechanisms.

When Uganda Red Cross Society appealed to the public to donate whatever they could, a number of people responded to the call by donating items in cash and kind which were given to the suffering communities. The question is can relief distribution be sustained? The government together with all organizations engaged in humanitarian work should think of helping communities to plant enough food to avoid food insecurity. This can be done through distribution of seeds and farm implements.



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seeds for planting

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Our Vision

An empowered, healthy and self-sustaining community that responds to the needs of the most vulnerable

Our Mission

To improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable people in Uganda as an effective and efficient humanitarian organization

The seven fundamental principles of the Red Cross Movement

Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service
Unity, Universality

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Message from the Secretary General

Dear readers, URCS has the pleasure of once again sharing with you the highlights of our humanitarian interventions for the period under review.

In addition to our regular programmes and ongoing projects, our attention was drawn to acute food shortages in 52 districts in the country, registering cases of H1N1 virus, cholera outbreaks in some parts of the country, riots in Kampala and a looming el nino in the last quarter of the year.

We continued meeting our commitments in our planned activities and at the same time made a contribution to the various humanitarian challenges as they unfolded.

I hope that you will enjoy this edition and trust that you will continue to be a partner as we serve humanity.

CGB chairperson appeals for famine victims

By Nyatara Vera

The Chairperson Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS), Mr. Tom Buruku, has appealed to the general public to become more humane.

During a press conference held at the URCS head office on Friday, 31st July, Mr. Buruku said it is important for those who have resources to share.

The press conference was convened to receive contributions from the public and to give an update on the National Society's progress towards the Shs5.6 billion appeal. Mr. Buruku noted that there were still many needs to reduce famine.

The Shs5.6 billion appeal that URCS launched on the 10th July, fetched 30,657,522 cash donations.

So far 3,577 households in Abotta village-Obalanga Sub County in Amuria district, Nyakatunya IDP Camp in soroti district and Magoro Sub County in Katakwi have benefited from the contributions.

Leading by example the Staff of URCS made cash contribution of Shs1, 168,000 million.



Representatives of Entebbe and Kampala URCS branches handover the donated food to Mr. Buruku.

Famine strikes 52 districts

URCS famine appeal

Uganda Red Cross Society on 10th July launched an appeal of Shs5.6 billion to support 50,000 people affected by famine in the North and North Eastern parts of the country. Companies and individuals have since responded to the appeal by making contributions in cash or kind as presented below.

Food contributions

- MTN Uganda - 23,100kgs maize flour, 7,337kgs beans, 1,354 kgs salt
- Radio Sanyu - 400kgs maize flour
- Britania - 1,200 cartons of biscuits, 360pcs juice
- Nailyango - 100kgs beans
- Mr. Rabbi (Mbale) - 1,000kgs maize flour, 200kgs beans
- Shell Uganda - 200kgs maize flour
- Eastern Corporation Club (Mbale)- 2,000kgs maize flour, 500kgs beans
- Step Radio - 1,500kgs maize flour, 600kgs beans, 100kgs salt, 200kgs maize grain
- Mbale SS - 600kgs maize flour
- Mt. Elgon Mbale - 400kgs maize flour
- Moyo Branch - 600kgs beans, 3,000kgs maize grain
- Tuffoam Industry - 230kgs maize flour, 230kgs beans
- Entebbe Branch - 650kgs maize flour, 400kgs beans
- Rakai - 50kgs maize flour
- Luweero - 200kgs maize grain
- Mbale Workers Fellowship - 1,000kgs maize flour, 300kgs beans, 50kgs salt



Cash contributions

- Honda Uganda - Shs500,000
- Obote Foundation - Shs22,022,022
- URCS staff - Shs1,168,000
- Moyo Branch - Shs859,000
- Radio Sanyu - Shs200,000
- Entebbe Branch - Shs600,000
- Kampala North - Shs170,000
- Ugandan artistes - Shs300,000
- Kampala Central - Shs621,350
- Kamuli volunteers - Shs100,000
- MAERSK Logistics - Shs733,000
- Mrs Anita - Shs200,000
- Joufran Hygiene - Shs200,000
- Kalangala Branch - Shs100,000

Famine appeal

Obote Foundation contributes Shs22m

By Hasifa Kabejja

The Milton Obote Foundation (MoF) donated Shs22,022,022 to support famine-stricken communities of Karamoja, Acholi, Teso and West Nile regions.

While handing over the cheque at the Uganda Red Cross Society headquarters on 4th August, the Chairman MoF, Mr. Ignatius Barungi, said, "Members of the Foundation have witnessed the suffering of the affected communities. We have seen the images of suffering people and pictures of MPs crying over the tragedy. We would like the victims to know that we share the pain and that's why we have made this symbolic contribution."

He called upon all concerned authorities to



Mr. Barungi presents the cheque to Mr. Buruku (C) as Uganda Peoples Congress party president Miria Obote looks on.

ensure that communities have enough food saying it is a basic necessity which cannot be ignored.

The Chairman Central Governing Board, Mr. Tom Buruku, commended MoF for the donation and called

upon the general public to put aside political differences during crises so as to ensure effective response to the needs of affected communities. MoF is affiliated to opposition party Uganda People's Congress.

FDC aids starving communities

By Hasifa Kabejja

The Vice Chairman of Uganda Red Cross Society, Mr. Robert Ssebunya, in August urged government to come up with a clear disaster management policy that can be followed in times of disasters.



Mr. Ssebunya and Dr. Besigye at the press conference. In the background is the food that was donated by the FDC party members.

Speaking at a press conference convened by the Forum for Democratic Change party to hand over relief food to Uganda Red Cross in August, Mr. Ssebunya said lack of a clear policy makes the situation complicated when disasters strike because there are no clear guidelines to mitigate the impact.

FDC donated over 100 sacks of relief food to the famine-stricken communities of Northern and North Eastern Uganda.

The FDC President, Dr. Kiza Besigye, applauded

URCS for aiding "people in distress" and for accepting to be intermediaries between people donating relief food and the beneficiaries. URCS is spearheading the collection of relief food in cash and kind, transportation and distribution of relief in the affected communities.

The URCS Secretary General, Mr. Michael Nataka, said there was still great need for food. He said the affected communities needed to be supported with food for three months before they could replant. URCS gave 15kgs of posho, 5.6kgs of beans and a kilo of salt to each individual in the affected communities.

Famine (Katakwi)



The Head of Logistics, Mr. Jeff Sserunjogi, hands a sack of posho to one of the beneficiaries. Inset an elderly woman crawls toward the distribution point.

1,354 people supported with food

By Hasifa Kabejja

10th July.

MTN Uganda donated relief food worth Shs70 million to 1,354 starving people in Magoro Sub County, Katakwi District.

The items which were distributed by the Uganda Red Cross Society on 23rd July, included 2,310kgs of maize flour, 7,337kg of beans and 1,354kgs of salt. Each family received 15kgs of posho, 5.4kgs of beans and one kg of salt.

Speaking during the distribution exercise, the Chairperson Uganda Red Cross Society, Mr. Tom Buruku, said this was the largest donation since the National Society launched an appeal of Shs5.6 billion at the on

“We decided to distribute the food in Magoro because there was great need in the area,” Mr. Buruku said.

The State Minister for Disaster Preparedness, Mr. Musa Ecweru, said the government was humbled by the MTN donation and praised URCS, saying the organization is a reliable auxiliary to government in the humanitarian interventions.

He said although no one had died in Magoro Sub County, residents were in dire need of food.

He said relief distribution was not a sustainable mechanism calling on all stakeholders in the humanitarian

field to ensure that the affected communities are supported with farm implements to replant.

“People in Teso are hardworking but circumstances have reduced them to almost nothing. The region was once a food basket but this is no more. Residents need to be supported to replant so that they sustain themselves,” Mr. Ecweru said.

Teso has experienced a number of natural calamities like floods and drought that have destroyed 80% crops in the region.

The minister appealed to other organizations to emulate the MTN example.

Famine

West Nile hard-hit

By Mawa Alatawa

During the quarter, the West Nile districts experienced unprecedented levels of famine.

The most affected districts were Moyo, Maracha-Terego, and Arua. In the most affected districts, 27 people succumbed to the pranks of the food shortage, with Arua registering 13 deaths, Moyo 05 and Maracha-Terego 09. The death cases may have not been a direct impact of the famine but other causes such as acute malnutrition and wild "poisonous" fruit consumption.

According to the local authorities, food shortage in West Nile could be attributed to several factors, some of which are natural like climate change that led to drought preceded by heavy rains that destroyed crops.

The continued cultivation of tobacco in Maracha-Terego made the people susceptible to food insecurity. It was only a matter of time when their main food basket Arua was crippled by dare changes in production. In Moyo, the rate of alcohol consumption is to blame. Both men and women indulge in drinking sprees that see them selling even the little harvest for alcohol.

Survival strategies

The need to survive led to counter productive survival strategies that have been adopted by some unscrupulous people in West Nile. Burglary, shoplifting and highway robbery are on the increase. Other families as a copying mechanism have resorted to marrying off their underage daughters.

URCS intervention

Uganda RedCross Society in Moyo district responded to the famine situation by distributing food aid to the most vulnerable people in the district. The beneficiaries included pregnant women, female headed households, children, the elderly and people living with Aids.

A URCS volunteer carrying out an assessment of the food security situation in Moyo.

The food included 60,000kgs of maize grains and 12,000kgs of dry beans for both Obongi and East Moyo counties. In total 23,106 people benefited.



Some of the elderly people affected by famine in Magoro Sub County, Katakwi District. They had lined up to receive food that was donated by MTN Uganda.

Below some of the beneficiaries walk back home.



The Uganda Red Cross Society Estates

The redesigned headquarter masterplan



Kotido multi-purpose block



The Rakai multi-purpose block

The African Leadership Training Centre

Update on Construction works

By Francis Gombya

The Estates Unit has embarked on a technically guided tracking of all the URCS estates. This will involve overseeing renovations, ongoing constructions, maintenance works and establishment of the various running values of all assests and properties. Below is an update of the construction and relocation works.

Countyside works

- Completion of the ground floor of the Soroti branch multipurpose block.
- Completion of the renovation works on the Soroti branch office block.
- Completion of the Kotido branch

multipurpose office block.

- Completion of the Mukono branch girls hostel block.
- Completion of the Hostel block at the African Youth Leadership and Training center.
- Ongoing works on the Abim sub-branch office block and toilet.
- The African Youth Leadership and Training center.
- Ongoing works in, Kumi, Katakwi, Abim, Moroto, Kotido, Kalangala and Rakai branches.

The Relocation Project

We are in advanced stages of beginning to construct a 3-storey structure at Kampala West branch. This is an improvement and upgrade of the existing block on theses premis-

es. This project is to kick off in the third quarter for 18/20 weeks as the construction period. This will serve as the national headquarters and Kampala West branch offices for 2/3 years as the H/Q Master plan project is being implemented.

The H/Q Master plan project

URCS is yet to engage in the construction of a state of the art modern structural facility on Lumumba Avenue. The 7-storey structure will suggest the best parking design in the city, compliance to building laws, modern technologies, to mention but a few. The construction of the 18000sm establishment is expected to start early 2010.

Disaster Management

Emergency preparedness (Arua Branch)

URCS aids Arua accident victims

By Catherine Ntabadde

Uganda Red Cross Society in August supported 107 farmers that were injured in an accident in Ayivu Sub County, Maracha Terego district along Yumbe-Arua Road with non food items.

60 of the farmers admitted at Arua Referral Hospital and 47 admitted at Onzua Chapel received 2 pieces of blankets and 5 bars of soap each.

According to a report from URCS Arua Branch, each wife of the deceased got 2 pieces of blankets and 9 bars of soap.

The farmers got involved in the accident as they were being transported to British American



An Arua Branch volunteer taking care of patients.

Tobacco Uganda (BATU) center in Arua to collect their tobacco proceeds. 10 people were confirmed dead and 105 admitted in Arua Regional referral hospital with serious injuries.

The URCS branch continued to network with BATU to support the

patients by submitting Hospital records on case management, discharges, and needs of the patients. The following support was extended to the casualties:

- URCS updated casualties list and discharges
- Volunteers worked hand in hand with Out Patient Department to assist the patients.
- BATU provided food

through URCS Arua branch to support the patients in the hospital.

- AMREF donated a sack of cassava for the casualties to be distributed by URCS branch.
- Voice of Life donated some bed sheets.

URCS improves sanitation conditions in Kyangwali refugee settlement

By Jacqueline Zawedde

The Uganda Red Cross Society contributed to the improvement of the health status of the vulnerable refugee community in Kyangwali Settlement.

URCS is currently implementing a water and sanitation project in mid Western part of Uganda, with support from European Union, through Danish Red Cross Society.

The three-year project which started in September 2007 covers five branches within the Albertan Region including Hoima, where the Kyangwali refugee settlement is located.

As part of the three-year venture, the URCS implemented a three-month project from May to July 2009 in an effort to improve health and sanitation in the vulnerable

refugee settlement.

Kyangwali Refugee settlement has been a home for over 20,000 refugees from Sudan, DRC, Rwanda and Somalia for over 10 years due to insurgency in the respective neighboring countries.

The Uganda Government had to relocate some of these refugees to Kyangwali settlement

Turn to page11



Some of the youth during a treasure hunt at the International Youth Camp at the African Leadership Training Centre in Namakwa, Mukono.



WATSAN Coordinator Patrick Wandawa (2nd L) together with the Hoima Regional Programme Officer WATSAN, Mr. Wekoye Steven, inspect some of the projects undertaken by the URCS Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation groups in Buliisa.

Helping communities to cope



The Secretary General, Mr. Michael Richard Nataka, addresses the press at Hotel Africana in July. This was during a press conference organized by local artistes to highlight their commitment to work with URCS to support famine-stricken communities. Looking on is the President of the Ghetto Republic Bobi Wine and the Acting General Manager Musalaba Mwekundu, Mr. Khalid Ssimbwa. Musalaba Mwekundu is a company that mobilizes resources for Uganda Red Cross Society.



URCS Programme Officer Disaster Risk Reduction Mawanda Shaban and Mbarara Regional Disaster Management Programme Officer Johnson Kyomukama receive the Oxfam Strategic Plan from the Rwenzori Manager Oxfam, Mr. Bernard Tumwebaze. This was during the Oxfam partners' meeting in Bundibugyo in August. Oxfam partners are expected to submit proposals in line with the organization's strategic plan.



Representatives on the New Partnership for African Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (NEPARC) during the body's General Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya. The Assembly among others discussed the NEPARC activity report February-August 2009, NEPARC and the 5-year SGS and NGOs benchmarking standard experience, Strategic Alliance building, Strategic partnership and Strategic thinking on NEPARC 5-year achievements.



Staff of KCB doing a practical during a first aid training by Musalaba Mwekundu Company Ltd at the URCS headquarters. Musalaba Mwekundu a company that mobilises resources for URCS undertakes commercial first aid training.



Gulu Branch Coordinator Terence Omonya disseminates to students at Lacor Medical School.



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1. Kasensero Landing Site in Rakai District where URCS undertakes HIV/AIDS awareness activities.

2. URCS officers from the Accounts, Estates and Organizational Development departments on a joint assessment mission on Kasensero Landing Site. The area is one of the most vulnerable in the district. URCS plans to start up activities to improve the health and economic status of the area.

3. Pig rearing is one of the income generating activities supported by URCS.

A school at the landing site.

Water & sanitation: Kyangwali refugees aided

From page 8

to occupy the land already left by the repatriated Sudanese increasing pressure on the existing facilities.

This was mainly in the areas of hygiene and water. According to Aktion Africa, the supply of water was not adequate for all the settlers, there were no hand washing facilities and the three health centers were not enough for the current population of 20,000 people.

Previously the latrine coverage was about 72% among the old settlers. No hard ware components like sand plats and slabs were provided to the

refugee households and there was lack of soap especially among the new arrivals.

URCS, in agreement with other players like the Office of the Prime Minister, UNHCR, World Food

Programme, Finish Refugee Council and Aktion Africa came up with a proposal to address some of the missing gaps to contribute to the good health of the refugees.

The activities carried out included installing seven rain water harvesting tanks at health units; installation of seven hand-washing facilities, repairing and rehabilitating five shallow wells in eleven villages; community mobilization and sensitization on sanitation and hygiene.

The Danish Red Cross is funding the project.

“
The supply of water was not adequate for all the settlers and there were no hand washing facilities
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Red Cross supports farmer groups in Lira

By Hasifa Kabejja

Uganda Red Cross Society in August gave 60 oxen and 30 ox-ploughs to farmer groups in Ogur and Apala sub counties in Lira district. The donation was meant to boost food production.

The items worth Shs34 million were distributed to 30 selected groups which also included former Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) abductees and HIV/AIDS victims.

Speaking at the distribution exercise at Ogur Sub County headquarters on 8th August, URCS Food Security Programme Officer Reuben Aine said communities are expected to increase their income through

group farming and growing high value crops.

He said the groups comprised of 4,500 members and that a total of 200 others would benefit indirectly.

Mr. Aine warned the beneficiaries against diverting the animals to pay dowry or selling them for financial purposes.

Rose Ongom, the vice chairperson Red Cross, Lira branch who officiated at the function, advised the locals to preserve the little food they have harvested.



Some of the oxen that were distributed to Lira farmers at Ogur Sub County headquarters.

Food security

URCS gives seeds to 7,750 in Lira

By Catherine Ntabadde

Imagine returning to your home after over 20 years but with no food to eat. This is the experience experienced by internally displaced people of Adwari Sub County in Lira who went through. This population has not received rains for the last seven months, experiencing severe famine due to persistent drought.

However, early August, the population received some rains and they are eager to start planting. As part of its 2nd strategy, the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) on August 19, 2009 distributed seeds to 7,750 hunger-stricken people in Adwari Sub County Lira District.

The URCS interventions were supported by the Danish Red Cross Society which contributed sh54,500,000 to the food insecurity appeal by the Uganda Red Cross Society.

The seeds and tools distributed include 5kgs of maize, 2kgs of cowpeas, vegetable seeds which include 0.02kgs of Onions, egg plants, Dodo, Sukuma Wiki and Okra and one hoe.

The beneficiaries of the seeds were mainly from Okee and

Okere parishes which were severely affected by the drought where six people died. The assistance was aimed at enabling the beneficiaries to replant what was lost and lead to a production recovery.

The Danish Red Cross Country Coordinator Charlotte Kjoerup who participated in the distribution said the intervention is timely and she hoped it will help reduce on the food shortage among the communities.

She said Danish Red Cross works with URCS on a number of projects all aimed at alleviating human suffering. "We hope you continue to receive more rain so that the crops can grow. We wish you a good planting and harvesting season," she said.

Most of the beneficiaries interviewed pledged not to sale or eat the seeds saying it is better to plant the

seeds now that the rains have started. The seeds distributed will mature in a short while, according to the URCS Gulu Region Disaster Management Officer Vincent Odoch.

Thomas Atim, a beneficiary said, "We have been facing food shortage for many months. We haven't received rain for a while. Now we have some little rain and we are happy to receive these seeds from Red Cross. We shall not eat or sell these seeds."

Grace Alele said, "Food had been a serious problem. I am happy that now I am going to plant these seeds to get food. My garden is ready and I am starting to plant immediately." Mary Awany, URCS Lira board member said the food shortage situation had reached its peak. She hoped the intervention of seeds will enable the beneficiaries plant food for immediate and future consumption.

The general objective of URCS interventions is to contribute to the reduction of food insecurity of 1,553 households (approximately 7,750 people) through the provision of short term maturing planting materials and farm implements.



The Danish Red Cross Country Coordinator Charlotte Kjoerup hands seeds to an elderly woman.

Buganda crisis: Red Cross intervenes in riots

By Catherine Ntabadde

Kampala and some areas outside the city were on fire as a cross section of the public rioted following reports that Buganda's King would not visit one of the sub counties in his Kingdom.

King Ronald Mutebi was scheduled to officiate at the Buganda Youth celebrations in Bugerere, Kayunga Mukono district on September 12, 2009. However, Mutebi's visit was halted by the Government after a section of Banyala in Bugerere insisted that the King must seek their permission before visiting 'their area.' The Banyala are seeking autonomy from the Buganda Kingdom.



URCS volunteer Philip Ngobi administers first aid on a victim of the riots in Kampala.

On September 11, 2009, sections of the public mainly youth started off a riot in the city centre. Riots rocked Kampala and surrounding places, leaving 21 people dead.

This was after the Police stopped the Buganda prime minister from going to Kayunga district to prepare for the King's visit, citing security concerns. Over 600 people were arrested and over 200 charged with rioting, illegal assembly and terrorism. As the riots intensified, Police and the Army battled the rowdy rioters who pelted

stones, burnt government cars, police stations and blocked several roads.

Uganda Red Cross Society immediately convened an emergency operations meeting to provide the needed assistance of first aid and evacuation services to those injured.

Chaired by the Deputy Secretary General/Head of Operations, Dr. Bildard Baguma, he emphasized the need to respond in time as the situation was worsening. All the five branches in Kampala; Kampala West, East, North, South and Central, Mukono branch, Entebbe branch were put on alert.

The DSG directed that each of the branches assembles 10 volunteers to support the operations. In total, URCS committed 120 volunteers to the emergency. Mukono branch which hosts Kayuga had 30 volunteers.

The National Society committed all its fleet and two ambulances to evacuate those injured during the riots. Most of the injured were referred to Kawolo and Mulago hospitals.

The URCS first aid post at the Old Taxi Park in the City centre was very helpful at the time. The Post attended to 25 cases.

As the need for first aid services increased, URCS procured more emergency supplies for all the branches that were put on alert. Mukono branch attended to 48 cases of which one died; Kampala South attended to 3 casualties, Kampala Central-41 cases; Kampala East-2 cases; Kampala West-3 cases.

URCS scales up risk reduction activities

By Shaban Mawanda

Uganda Red Cross Society Disaster Management Department has scaled up Disaster Risk Reduction interventions in Eastern and Western Uganda.

With the support of British Red Cross and Swedish Red Cross, DRR projects are in high gear in Pallisa and Kisoro branches.

The projects aim at formulating Community Based DRR groups and developing their capacities in epidemic surveillance, risk assessments and project management including demographic and baseline surveys to inform concrete actions for 2010 and 2011.

URCS has defined its way forward in the DRR framework document to include actions that build community resilience and reduce the impact of disasters in line with disease prevention, shelter, climate change adaptation/mitigation and food security.

In 2010, the DRR interventions will be expanded to include OXFAM supported Rwenzori Community based DRR programme in both Kasese and Bundibugyo branches together with formation and operationalisation of Climate change action groups in Katakwi, Apac and Kotido.

Tracing

Red Cross repatriates unaccompanied minors

By Jacqueline Zawedde

The ICRC and Uganda Red Cross Society witnessed the repatriation of 14 more Congolese Unaccompanied Minors (UAM) from Nakivale Settlement. This took place between 24th and 28th August 2009 during a joint mission to Bunagana by the ICRC and URCS.

The UAMs were handed over to the ICRC Goma team at the immigration offices in DRC on the 27th for actual re-union with their families which were earlier located by ICRC Goma.

This brought the total number of Unaccompanied Minors repatriated in the month of August to 21.

Through the Tracing Assistants who were responsible for locating and mobilizing the children in the settlement, URCS was able to locate 26 UAMs, 13 of which accepted to be reunited with their families. Unlike



URCS Tracing Assistant Olive Twikirize (R) poses for a photo with some of the children that were repatriated.

before, all the children were anxious and excited to go back home. At the office of the Camp Commandant, the team was informed that the population in the settlement had reached 48,522 by 31st June comprising Sudanese, Congolese, Rwandese, Burundians, Somalis, Ethiopians, Eritreans, Kenyans and Liberians.

The team together with the children arrived in Mbarara on 25th where they

stayed at Mbarara University. Blankets, sleeping mats, bags, mosquito nets and game equipment were provided to the children. On 26th August, the team started the journey to Kisoro.

While in Kisoro the children were given clothes, shoes and jackets before the team proceeded to Bunagana border to meet the ICRC Goma team and handover the children. At 10:15 am, on the 27th, the children were officially handed over to the ICRC Goma team and later traveled back to Kisoro for a brief meeting at the Kisoro Branch.

During the meeting it was noted that this kind of exercise had improved every time the joint missions were conducted and everybody's contribution towards the success was appreciated and that this had been the biggest number of children handled ever since the exercise started.

Health and Care

Busia Branch intervenes in cholera outbreak

By Jacqueline Zawedde

Since 8th July 2009, Uganda Red Cross Society, Busia Branch was helping in combating the cholera scourge that invaded Busia town early this year.

Reports indicate that 96 cases of cholera victims had been admitted, of which 85 were discharged and 10 died.

The Red Cross Action Teams helped to combat the situation by promoting hygiene at the health centers, administering ORS to the patients, sensitizing communities on hygiene and sanitation and distributing Information, Education and Communication materials.

NGOs like Child Development Center facilitated Red Cross volunteers to move to schools to sensitize

students and pupils on cholera prevention and management.

The URCS Regional office distributed 3,000 sachets of ORS, 20 jugs, 20 plastic cups, 15 pairs of household gloves, tablets, 3000 pieces of unscented soap, 20 litres of plastic buckets among other sanitary items. Over 4,000 purification tablets were distributed to 14,296 people.

Health and Care (Oyam Sub branch)

MTN supports URCS Mama Bag Project

By Hasifa Kabejja

MTN Uganda in August supported 500 expectant mothers in Otwal Sub County, Oyam District with safe delivery kits worth Shs67 million.

The kits, delivered through Uganda Red Cross Society, were bought using proceeds from the 2008 MTN Kampala Marathon.

Each kit contained plastic sheets, receiving sheets, a blanket, guaze wire, cotton wool, safety pins, plastic lined baby panties, baby towel, nappies, powder, plastic basin, jerry can, razor blades and baby soap among other items.

Speaking at the distribution of the kits at Otwal Health Centre III on 13th August, the Chairperson

Uganda Red Cross Society, Mr. Tom Buruku, commended MTN for always supporting the vulnerable.

"MTN has not stopped to help those in need even at this time of global financial crisis. This is a wonderful gesture that other companies should emulate," Mr. Buruku said.

He said this year's choice of Otwal Sub County was decided upon due to the biting poverty in the area just recovering from the impact of the prolonged insurgency in Northern Uganda.

"Most of the people here are unable

to meet the basic needs of life and therefore cannot afford the basic requirements for giving birth. Because of this, the area has high infant mortality rate. A recent assessment in the area also showed a high rate of teenage pregnancies which complicates the situation due to lack of basic primary healthcare facilities," Mr. Buruku said. He cautioned the beneficiaries to plan to have manageable families.

This is not the first time MTN is aiding expectant mothers with safe delivery kits. The company has been supporting the Mama Bag initiative which aims at aiding expectant mothers to undergo safe delivery since 2004. Since the inception of the Mama Bag initiative, 8, 500 expectant mothers have benefited.

“
500 expectant mothers in Otwal Sub County, Oyam district received safe delivery kits



Mr. Buruku hands a kit to one of the expectant mothers in Otwal Sub County, Oyam District. Inset a URCS volunteer organizing the kits.

Organizational Development - Youth programme

URCS hosts International Youth Camp

By Catherine Ntabadde

The Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) 2009 International Youth camp was officially opened on August 17, 2009 by the State Minister for Youth and Children affairs Ms. Jessica Alupo.

The nine-day camp which was held at the URCS Africa Leadership Training Centre in Mukono attracted 200 participants, 27 of them being international participants from Austria, Denmark, Germany, Israel, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda and Kenya.

Each of the URCS 51 branches sent two participants to the camp under the theme, **Youth and Climate change, make your move for a better world.**

Camp goals

- Enhancing the spirit of voluntarism among the youth and volunteers and developing strategies for membership retention and motivation for continuity of the voluntarism spirit within the Red Cross movement.
- Re-affirming, developing and strengthening youth efforts in support of the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement activities.

The camp objectives

- Equipping the participants with life skills to address their needs and those of the community.
- Discussing the major challenges affecting young people mainly HIV/AIDS, drug and substance abuse, volunteers recruitment and

retention and climatic change and come up with proposed actions to address them.

- Strengthening the spirit of volunteerism among the youth to assist the most vulnerable people in the national societies.
- Providing a forum for experiential learning and cultural exchange among the participants.

Camp Activities

The activities were both in door and out door and were designed to be highly participatory through interactions.

The thematic areas

- Youths in global fight against HIV/AIDS
- Youth as volunteers to respond to climate change
- Youths as agents of change against drug abuse and substance
- Youth and volunteering in Red Cross activities
- Values and principles for Red Cross with focus on youth and behaviour change.

Addressing the participants, Ms. Alupo said Youth should be called to action being the majority and key stakeholders in environmental protection and nature conservation issues.

She added that they should be more

involved in the design and implementation of climate change adaptation programs. "Youth and participants in particular should be primary environmental and climate change Ambassadors in their homes, schools and communities," Alupo said.

The event was attended by URCS board chairperson Mr. Tom Buruku, URCS Secretary General Michael Nataka, URCS National Council Chairperson Hannington Segirinya



Some of the youth who participated in the camp.

and various youth representatives.

Mr. Buruku said URCS is what it is because of the youth who form the big volunteer and membership force. He added that URCS is committed to utilizing the African leadership centre to instill a variety of skills to the youth.

Mr. Nataka informed guests that URCS owns 22 acres of land where the African leadership centre is located, adding that more facilities will be set up at the centre to accommodate more trainings.

Lake Victoria Programme (LVP)

Red Cross, City Talk to organise 2nd Lake Victoria pageant

By Jacqueline Zawedde

The Uganda Red Cross Society has partnered with City Talk Uganda to collaborate and co-sponsor the second Queen of Lake Victoria which is scheduled to take place on 10th October at Lido Beach, Entebbe.

City Talk Uganda, an organization focused on sustainable resource utilization and management of Lake Victoria, instituted the Queen of Lake Victoria beauty pageant in 2003 with support from a number of governments.

The Queen of Lake Victoria institution lives to ensure conservation and sustainable usability of the vast resources of Lake Victoria and her catchments including the Great rivers and lakes there in.

URCS Deputy Secretary General Dr.

Bildard Baguma signed a memorandum of understanding on behalf of URCS while Dan Lutaaya and David Kajula signed for City Talk.

The Uganda Red Cross together with other partners will be involved in the search for the competitors of the pageant from countries of the Great Lake Region and the Nile Basin through collaborations with Universities in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, The DRC, The Sudan, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Eritrea.

URCS will contribute to the production of the crowning magazine, posters and seasonal cards featuring sponsors' profiles, activities and achievements in form of write-ups and designed graph-



Dr Baguma (R) greets Dan Lutaaya and David Kajula, representatives from City Talk.

ics. URCS will also contribute towards the media campaign to ensure publicity through radio and television talk shows; spot adverts, posters and supplements in the New Vision.

This move is intended to promote Uganda Red Cross' Mission, Vision and activities for the sustainable utilization of Lake Victoria and strengthening opportunities of cooperation for Uganda Red Cross with other actors for the sustainability of the Nile Basin and the Lake Victoria.

Bubulo Branch gets solar panels

By Jacqueline Zawedde

Uganda Red Cross (URCS) Bubulo Branch has acquired 125 Solar Panels from the University of Gothenburg to establish solar electricity and enable phone charging services in the remote areas.

With support from the Swedish Red Cross Society, the initiative is also intended to aid lighting and computer services in schools as well as phone charging among



women groups and youth links. This is part of the income generating activities to alleviate poverty among members of the groups.

Education (Wakiso branch)

Kasangati Education Centre holds music competitions

By Jacqueline Zawedde

Excitement, joy and celebration filled the atmosphere at Kasangati Education Center in Wakiso as Schmoker House beat three other houses to emerge the overall winner in the school's music, dance and drama competitions held at the school premises on 9th August.

A bull was given to the house as reward for its outstanding participation in the five competitive items of Poetry, Traditional folk song, Traditional dance, miming and dancing completion.

The function, which attracted a number of parents, guests and well wishers, was held under the theme "A Healthy living for a Healthy World" and all items revolved around this theme.

The music festivities which are held annually are part of the move to enhance the talents of the youth aside acquiring formal educational knowledge. The school is one of the new and upcoming developments under the support of UBS Optimus Foundation in partnership with Uganda Red Cross Society.

Ms Catherine Ntabadde, the Senior Public Relations Officer of Uganda Red Cross represented the Secretary General as Chief Guest and in her speech she appreciated the developments at the school in such a short while. The school is six months old.

She urged parents to put more effort in teaching their children to be more creative especially in farming and other co-curricular activities. "You ought to give chance and opportunity to your children to explore their talents outside the classroom just like we have seen in the drama activities today," she said.

The Acting Managing Director of Musalaba Mwekundu, a company that mobilizes resources for URCS, Mr. Khalid Simbwa, also emphasized to the



Members of Ssimbwa House perform a Kiganda dance.



Pupils belonging to Schmoker House perform Entogoro, a cultural dance for Banyoro.

parents the importance of education outside the classroom. Ssimbwa, who has been the Branch Coordinator of Wakiso Branch introduced Mr. Ibrah Ssenyonga acting Coordinator of the branch and urged parents and board members to work hand in hand with him to see further development of the school.

Schmoker House won with 408 points, followed by Simbwa house with 403 points. In third place came Roger House with 395 points and Nataka House came fourth with 385 points.

Networking

URCS holds 2009 partnership meeting

By Catherine Ntabadde

September 22nd was a colourful and joyful day as partners of Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) came together to forge a way forward for 2010.

Over 20 foreign and local partners sat and listened attentively to the URCS team as they presented a report on the mid term review of the Strategic Plan 2007-2010, activities, budgets and work plans for 2010 plus cross cutting issues for the National Society.

It was noted that the Red Cross family plays a major role to intervene in a number of areas, hence the need to focus its attention on the pertinent issues affecting Uganda and any other country.

URCS Central Governing Board chairperson Tom Buruku while opening the meeting hailed the partners for their continued support to URCS. He pledged commitment of attaining excellence through programming, adding that efficiency and effectiveness will be emphasized. "We shall continue expanding and reaching out to communities. This will be possible through your support. Corporates have also become an integral part of our programming," Buruku said.

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The URCS Mbale Region staff at the Kenya Red Cross Society Mombasa Branch offices.

Mbale region staff on study tour

By Joseph Okalebo

The Mbale region field staff in August had a study tour to the Coast region of the Kenya Red Cross Society.

The trip took seven days and was meant to foster interaction between field staff of the Uganda Red Cross and Kenya Red Cross.

The Ugandan team which arrived in Mombasa on 29th September were received by the Chairman of the Coast Line region of the Kenya Red Cross Mr. Ngugi Francis and the Regional Manager Mr. Mahdi Mohamed.

The team visited the branches of Mombasa, Kwale, and Malindi. The Ugandan delegation appreciated the efforts that their Kenyan counterparts had made in making their branches self sustaining. All the three branches visited had got basic infrastructure and income generating activities.

The field staff of the Uganda Red Cross Society took it as a challenge as most of their branches had not invested in real estates as a means to generate income for their branches.



Some of the partners that attended the URCS 2009 partnership meeting at Hotel Africana.

Red Cross holds partnership meeting

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He informed partners that Uganda expects a lot from URCS, hence the need to strengthen various collaborations and partners.

The Secretary General Michael Nataka said the level of programming for the NS has greatly improved because of the increasing humanitarian needs. He said the NS is prepared to intervene incase the elnino rains hit the country as predicted by the Meteological department.

He further said URCS was also preparing to provide the needed support during the 2011 elections especially if they turn violent.

The Deputy Secretary General Dr. Bildard Baguma informed partners that the budgets of 2010 had increased as compared to those of 2009.



Some of the URCS staff and officials from other National Societies that participated in the partnership meeting.

He added that the Reproductive health programme under Health and Care Department will be re-enforced to promote safe motherhood. It will be implemented in Acholiland. URCS has been implementing a Reproductive Health programme but on a small scale.

The Head of the International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies Eastern Africa

Zone Dr. Asha Mohammed said URCS has achieved quite a lot in the past few years. She added that this is evidenced through documentation.

“Despite the challenges you face, the NS has been able to deliver its services. In the region, URCS is one of the NSs that have achieved a lot,” she added. URCS falls under the IFRC Eastern African zone.

The Head of Delegation

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Mr. Eglin Jurg said there is need to change approaches and focus on new needs as part of the strategies for Northern Uganda.

He said ICRC will be reducing its presence in Northern Uganda since the region is now stable. The ICRC offices in Kitgum and Gulu will be closed. He however added that ICRC will remain in the country and will continue supporting various interventions of URCS.

Jinja youth visit Burundi Red Cross

By Jacqueline Zawedde

A team of 21 youth, one member of the Branch Governing Board, two National Youth Council members, one member of the Central Governing Board and two staff from the Uganda Red Cross Society Jinja ranch in July visited the Burundi Red Cross Society on an exchange programme.

The visit was organized under the theme **"ME AND YOU FOR THE VULNERABLE"**.

Among the places which the delega-

tion visited was the Bubanza Red Cross Centre which is under construction by the youth and volunteers of Bubanza Branch.

They were received by the branch governing board members, the youth, volunteers and the branch coordinator, Mr. Kidas. In his remarks, the Jinja Branch Coordinator, Mr. William Male, appreciated the work the volunteers were doing and said the major reason they had visited was to promote international friendship and under-

standing through experience sharing.

Together with the Burundi Red Cross Society, the delegation also visited other areas which included Ngagara Scouts Section and the Burundi Red Cross Headquarters. They were shown different income generating activities which were undertaken by the volunteers and youth of these respective branches.

The activities include building houses for the most vulnerable, arts and carpentry.

NEPARC: Mr. Buruku re-elected

By Catherine Ntabadde

Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) was re-elected to chair the New Partnership for African Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (NEPARC). For the past five years, URCS has been chairing NEPARC through its board chairman, Mr. Tom Buruku. Buruku will chair NEPARC for two more years.

South African Red Cross is now the Vice Chairman, replacing Ethiopian Red Cross. The new members to the NEPARC executive include Liberia Red Cross, Burkinafaso Red Cross and Central African Red Cross Societies. Kenya Red Cross was seconded to the executive since it is hosting the NEPARC Secretariat in Nairobi.

This was during the NEPARC General Assembly that was officially opened in Nairobi, Kenya by the Kenyan Government Foreign Affairs Minister Moses Wetangula. The meeting which run from August 28-29 started off with the NEPARC board meeting at the newly constructed Red Court Conference hall. Kenya Red Cross Society hosted the meeting, which was attended by over 30 African Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies and Participating National Societies (PNS).

URCS was represented at the meeting by the Secretary General Mr. Michael Richard Nataka and Senior Public Relations Officer, Ms. Catherine Ntabadde who provided support to

the draft and media organising committee.

Buruku said he was happy with the trust entrusted in him by the NEPARC members and requested to chair NEPARC for only two years due to commitments in Uganda.



The Governor of Kenya Red Cross, Mr. Paul Birech (R), Mr. Buruku (3rd R) and the President of Japanese Red Cross, Mr. Konoe Taderu (2nd L) during the NEPARC General Assembly.

The General Assembly among others discussed the NEPARC activity report February-August 2009, NEPARC and the 5-year SGS and NGOs benchmarking standard experience, Strategic Alliance building, Strategic partnership, Strategic thinking on NEPARC 5-year achievements and NEPARC vision towards 2010, IFRC Strategy 2020. The General Assembly climaxed with elections.

Minister Wetangula said Red Cross/Red Crescent (RC/RC) Societies all over the world are synonymous with the human challenge. He noted the presence of RC/RC everywhere in any situation.

Buruku hailed Kenya Red Cross (KRC) for hosting the NEPARC meeting and secretariat. He informed members that NEPARC was an initiative of Abbass Gullet, Secretary General of KRC and Anisha Thomas of Fritz Institute in USA.

"NEPARC was set up to be a club of excellence. That was the basis of its formation. We wanted RC/RC societies that believe in good governance and willing to take the SGS Audit," Buruku said.

KRC Governor Paul Birech said NEPARC had come a long way, adding that one of the objectives of the 5th AGM was to take stock of where the organization has been and its future. He appealed to all RC/RC in Africa to work closely with their respective governments since they (RC/RC) are auxiliary bodies to governments.

Sir Nick Young, Secretary General British Red Cross, who represented the Participating National Societies at the meeting said, "We are glad to support this initiative of NEPARC. Africa has answers for its own sustainability."

At the meeting, two aspiring IFRC presidential candidates Konoe Taderu and Dr. Mario Villaroel Lander addressed the meeting about what they will offer to Africa if elected President of the Federation. Taderu is the President of Japanese Red Cross while Lander is the President of Venezuela Red Cross.

Networking

Secretary General to chair RC-NET

By Catherine Ntabadde

Uganda Red Cross Secretary General Mr. Michael Richard Nataka has been elected to chair the Eastern Africa Red Cross Red Crescent Network (RC-NET).

The elections were conducted during the RC-NET General Assembly that took place in Nairobi from August 31-September 1, 2009.

Other members elected to the steering committee are from Rwanda, Sudan and Madagascar Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies. RC-NET is a network of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies of 14 National Societies that constitute the Eastern African Zone of the International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

The RC-NET General Assembly discussed among others the rules of pro-



Mr. Nataka with other members of the RC-NET in Nairobi.

cedures of the RC NET, chairman's report, reports of the 4 working groups, the Pan African Conference 2008, proceedings of the 2008 General Assembly, agenda for the 17th session of the Federation General Assembly.

Members of the RC-NET include; Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda (East Africa sub region), Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan (Horn of Africa sub region), Burundi and Rwanda (Great lakes sub region), Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and

Seychelles (Indian Ocean Islands).

Mr. Nataka's committee is tasked to implement the plans of the RC-NET. The committee works through the four working groups for Health and Care, Organisational Development, Communications and Disaster Management.

Mr. Nataka said the overall objective of the RC-NET is to harness the strength and opportunities of its collective membership towards NS capacity growth and development.

The IFRC Eastern Africa zone office hosts the RC-NET secretariat and provides technical support to the Working groups. The General Assembly sits once every year and it is attended by governance and management of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies of the RC-NET.

Dissemination in Kisoro



Some of the top officials in Kisoro district that turned up for the high level dissemination session in August. Among them was the district speaker (R) and the Resident District Commissioner.

Communication Unit

Busia Branch conducts high level dissemination

By Steven Wamukota

Uganda Red Cross Society Busia Branch conducted a high level Dissemination session with the aim of boosting membership recruitment, resource mobilization and strengthening local partnership.

The objective of the activity was to share information about Red Cross activities in Busia District and to bring on board more partners.

The 33 participants included the District Health officer and Busia Health Team, probation community services, District speaker and District counselors, police, security and NGOs like Child fund, World Vision, Production Department.

After the dissemination session, the District leadership pledged to support Red Cross activities in the District.