



WHO UGANDA NEWSLETTER

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OVERVIEW

- ✓ WHO advocating for a smoke-free environment in Uganda
- ✓ Health financing experts highlight reforms for resilient health systems in Uganda
- ✓ Uganda receives an ambulance to improve timely transportation of patients in Karamoja
- ✓ Life after Ebola, a survivor's experience
- ✓ Uganda's efforts to save the life of children with malnutrition
- ✓ Uganda advocates for universal health coverage on World Health Day

Meet Dr Olive Sentumbwe Mugisa, a remarkable expert in reproductive, maternal, and neonatal health in Uganda

"Around 45% of all cancers of the bladder are among tobacco users. Tobacco also increases the risk of developing cancers of the esophagus, cervix, lungs and many more."

Dr Mugisha Mugume Noleb, Lead of the Cancer Prevention and Detection Services at Uganda Cancer Institute.

Protecting the public in Uganda from the harmful effects of tobacco



20%

of Ugandans between the ages of 13 and 15 are exposed to tobacco smoke at home.

30%

are exposed in enclosed public places.

In Uganda, one in ten people use tobacco daily, and exposure to second-hand smoke can cause a range of serious health effects in people who do not smoke.

To protect the public from the harmful effects of tobacco, Uganda passed the Tobacco Control Act and Regulations in 2015 and 2019, respectively, and is taking steps to ensure compliance with existing legal frameworks.

In December 2023, the Ministry of Health, with financial support from WHO and in collaboration with district health officials, police, and the media assessed the level of compliance with the 2015 Tobacco Control Act in 5 targeted districts. [Read More](#)

53% REDUCTION

in designated smoking areas in the assessed public places visited.



30% INCREASE

in the number of places without smoking ashtrays.

Meet Dr Olive Sentumbwe, a Ugandan expert in reproductive, maternal, and neonatal health

Dr Olive Sentumbwe Mugisa is a Doctor of Medicine with a master's degree in obstetrics and gynecology. She is an exceptional Ugandan woman who has worked hard to achieve her career goals.

She began her medical career in 1984 as a physician in a Missionary hospital in Masaka district. She went for a postgraduate in obstetrics and gynecology at Makerere University and worked in Mulago National Hospital as a health specialist.

In 1997, she joined the World Health Organization as WHO's technical expert on reproductive, maternal, and newborn health. She collaborated with the Ministry of Health on community awareness programs and pioneered the "Maama Kit" to reduce childbirth infections. Today, Olive speaks of her achievements with great joy. [More info](#)

524 DEATHS PER 100,000

The maternal and infant mortality rate has fallen.



70 PER 100,000 LIVE BIRTHS

is the global target of reducing maternal and infant mortality.

Health financing experts discussed needed reforms to ensure high performance and resilient health Systems in Uganda



Dr Jane Ruth Aceng, the Ugandan Minister of Health addressing the roundtable discussions.

The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), brought together health financing experts in a 2-day roundtable discussion to reflect on priority strategies and reforms to accelerate progress towards achieving sustainable and effective financing of health in Uganda.

Countries committed to achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as part of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goal is to ensure that all people have access to the full range of quality health services they need without facing financial hardship

whilst receiving needed health services. However, six years to the end of the SDG era, several countries, including Uganda, are facing challenges that are compromising their movement toward UHC.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Dr Jane Ruth Aceng Oceru, Uganda's Minister of Health, pointed out that the country's health resources are highly fragmented, resulting in a mismatch with government priorities leading to duplication and wastage of resources.

“To achieve our goal of universal health coverage, I urge all partners to channel their resources through a single system to facilitate efficiency and coordination,” Dr Jane.

MoH, with support from WHO and partners, has made commendable progress in improving the health financing landscape in Uganda. The government's budget allocation to the sector has steadily increased, with an annual health budget growth rate of 10% in the 2022/23 financial year.

“To meet our goal of Universal Health Coverage, it is essential to strengthen strategies to improve government resource allocation to the health sector and to ensure that donor efforts in support of essential health programs are sustainable,”

Dr Yonas Tegegn Woldemariam, WHO Representative to Uganda.

WHO and the Embassy of Ireland donated an Ambulance to improve transportation of patients in the Karamoja Sub-region



“This ambulance will be stationed in Abim Hospital and will contribute to reducing deaths due to emergency illnesses and injuries in the Karamoja region,” Dr. Diana Atwine, the Permanent Secretary of the Uganda's Ministry of Health.

The Ugandan Ministry of Health received on 30th April, an ambulance worth USD 47,378.48, equivalent to UGX 178,598,866, to support prehospital care in the Karamoja sub-region. The ambulance was donated by the Embassy of Ireland in Uganda through World Health Organization, as part of their health partnership towards the regionalized Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system.

Karamoja has over 1.2 million inhabitants, predominantly nomadic pastoralists. The region faces a high burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases, acute malnutrition coupled with poverty, and a higher mortality rate. It is served by only 126 health facilities, not all fully equipped to meet the population's health needs. The Type B Land Cruiser Ambulance donated today is ready to facilitate patient transportation and referrals within the Karamoja region.

[More details](#)

Life after Ebola, a survivor's experience



Mr Shafiq, a Motorider in Uganda

Shafiq, a motorbike rider for over ten years, almost lost his life to the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) just over a year ago. He used to go deep into villages to pick up and drop off passengers.

Since recovering from Ebola virus disease, his life has changed as he can no longer ride long distances. He feels tired most of the time, a common symptom that has been reported by many Ebola virus disease survivors.

"Even though I look strong, I don't always feel that way. I can't ride for long hours like I used to," he said.

When he recovered and was discharged, people were terrified of him.

"Everyone in the community was scared of me. They all ran away as if they had seen a ghost," Shafiq narrates sadly.

Today, thanks to multiple community awareness and sensitization campaigns against stigma carried out by the Ebola Survivors Programme, Shafiq has happily been reintegrated back into his community.

The survivor programme is implemented by the Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization (WHO) in Uganda, and other partners, with funding from the European Union Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO).

Besides supporting survivors during community reintegration, the programme supports monitoring viral persistence. The Ebola virus can continue living in certain parts of the body, even after recovery. In particular, it can persist in breast milk, eyes, brain, cerebrospinal fluid, and semen. This means that without a condom, a male survivor can infect his sexual partner.

“After I was discharged from the hospital, I had to undergo medical and psychosocial follow-up to avoid any resurgence and to promote my re-integration back into the community,” explained Shafiq. [More info](#)

Uganda's Efforts to Save the Life of Children with Malnutrition



Over 268,000 children in Uganda suffer from malnutrition, specifically wasting. To combat this, the country is enhancing data collection and use in its healthcare facilities and communities through the Nutrition Information System (NIS) project. Accurate data will contribute to informed decisions for improving population health.

The European Union funded the 4-year NIS project, implemented since 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United

Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) through the Ministry of Health and the district local government. This project targets Kyegegwa, Kamwenge, Yumbe, and Koboko districts.

The NIS project has significantly improved the management of malnutrition through the provision of data collection tools, and data interpretation to enhance early detection of malnutrition. Noela Nyirabashage, a mother from Kamwenge District, credits the project for saving her child's life.

“When my child was six months old, a Community Health Worker visited us at home and measured my son's arms. When he discovered severe acute malnutrition, we were immediately referred to the health facility for treatment.”

Through the NIS project, there has been significant improvement in data for nutrition programming at the national and district levels. Districts can now use data to plan for nutrition supplies, medicines, and equipment based on the trend in the number of malnutrition cases seen. [Read more](#)

Uganda engaged communities in physical and mental health activities as part of the World Health Day Commemoration



Participants of the World Health Day commemoration

The Ugandan Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization (WHO), and its partners carried out awareness-raising, community engagement activities, and a photo gala to commemorate World Health Day in Uganda. In line with the theme "My Health, My Right," these activities included a public sports walk, mass screening for communicable and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), a blood donation drive, and a photo exhibit focusing on the Ministry of Health, WHO, and partners work to achieve Universal Health Coverage in the country.

The event was organized at the WHO Country Office in Kololo, Uganda. It brought together the country's stakeholders, including government representatives, the UN family, development and implementing partners, and the media.

This edition took place just six years before the evaluation of countries' progress toward achieving Universal Health Coverage, the Ministry of Health and WHO emphasized the need to strengthen collaborative efforts to support Uganda in ensuring equitable access to comprehensive health services.

“Ensuring that all Ugandans fully enjoy their right to health requires collaborative efforts from all sectors, partners, and communities under the one health approach. It is my appeal that we all channel our energies towards achieving UHC,”

Dr Jane Ruth Aceng Oceru, Uganda's Minister of Health.

During the "Walk the Talk" public sports walk, participants were encouraged to engage in activities that promote physical and mental health. With support from the STOP TB Partnership, Victoria University Medical Centre, and Uganda Blood Transfusion Services, participants were screened for non-communicable diseases, including diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity, as well as communicable diseases such as HIV, hepatitis B, and tuberculosis.

Dr Yonas Tegegn Woldemariam, WHO Representative to Uganda, welcomed the country's progress in key healthcare areas.

“Uganda has made significant progress in reducing maternal and child mortality, as well as new HIV infections by 40% between 2010 and 2022. These results are commendable, but further efforts are needed to ensure that all people in Uganda have access to integrated, person-centered health services,” he said.

WHO continues to work with its partners, mobilizing financial and technical resources to support the country in improving its health system to achieve Universal Health Coverage.

[More info](#)



Uganda hosts Budget Centre Master Trainers Workshop

The World Health Organization (WHO) hosted from 17th to 21st June 2024, a master trainers' workshop in Uganda on the Programme Management System (PMS), which is intended to replace the Global Management System (GMS). The five-day training course brought together 75 WHO budget programme managers who will be responsible for rolling out the SPM, training all target users, and acting as a resource person for each budget centre.

"This workshop is crucial as it marks the start of our effort to equip our key staff with skills to leverage SPM effectively, and enhance our planning and operational capabilities," Dr. Yonas Tegegn Woldemariam, WHO Representative to Uganda.



Your Mental Health Matters

World Health Organization facilitated a talk between members of the United Nations system in Uganda on the importance of Mental and physical well-being to improve performance, stress management, and overall quality of life. The discussions took place during the UN annual deputies retreat 2024, in the district of Entebbe in Uganda.



Using Social Media to Promote Health

The External Relations, Partnership, and Communications Unit of the World Health Organization trained 35 WHO staff members on the usage of X, a social media platform, to promote WHO's work while ensuring ethics and professionalism.

The power of partnerships

We extend our sincere appreciation to all our partners who have contributed to our work in supporting the Government and the people of Uganda. We rely on your continued support and collaboration in ensuring the continuity of essential health services, improving the health and well-being of people, and responding to the most urgent needs of the health sector. We can only meet our goals through the power of partnership.



Participants of the Stakeholders Workshop to Pilot the Global Guidance Framework for the Responsible Use of the Life Sciences in Uganda.



Trainers of the WHO Budget Centre Master Trainers Workshop



Family photo during the graduation ceremony of the 22nd cohort of 14 Epidemiologists under the Uganda's Public Health Fellowship Program in Kampala.



Participants of the training of midwives and doctors on providing Reproductive, Maternal & Newborn Health services in 5 districts of the Busoga region, held in February 2024.



A Student from Buikwe district receiving vaccine at the launch of the Yellow Fever Vaccination Campaign.

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