

By John B. Thawite

**A**t least 13.2% of Uganda's population of 45 million, aged two and above, live with some form of disability. The state minister for disability affairs, Hellen Grace Asamo, in a statement ahead of International Day of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), said nearly seven million Ugandans are disabled; a figure much higher than those living with HIV, estimated at 1.5 million. "The National Household Population Census Report (UBOS 2024) indicated that disability prevalence in Uganda stands at 13.6%, representing approximately 6.9 million persons with disabilities."

These statistics are critical as Uganda joins the rest of the world today to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities at Uganda National Institute of Teachers Education in Mubende district.

She said this demographic of PWDs is capable of making significant contributions as workers, innovators, parents, leaders and entrepreneurs.

"However, many continue to face barriers, including stigma, discrimination, inaccessibility, limited education and employment opportunities, and inadequate access to financial services," she says in the statement accessed by *New Vision*.

This year's national event is being held under the theme *'Wealth*

# 13.2% UGANDANS LIVE WITH DISABILITY - UBOS

PHOTO BY JOHN THAWITE



Children with disabilities enjoying their right to education in Kasese district

forward to better serve persons with disabilities.

When the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) government took power in 1986, the situation of PWDs was in such a state that statistics about them were scarce. It wasn't, until the 1991 and 2002 censuses that disability questions were included, although exact numbers of PWDs cannot be accurately determined.

### CAUSES OF DISABILITIES

A recent Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) survey notes that among

## AFFIRMATIVE PROCUREMENT SCHEME

**A Procurement Reservation Scheme has been established under Uganda's Public Procurement and Disposal Authority (PPDA), under which at least 15% of government procurement opportunities is reserved for registered associations of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) alongside women and youth groups. This policy includes provisions to reduce participation barriers, such as waiving tender fees, relaxing eligibility criteria and replacing cash tender guarantees with declaration forms.**

**This initiative aims to economically empower PWDs by providing them with equitable access to government contracts and fostering their inclusion in national development efforts.**

beneficiaries (5857 male and 5877 female) in 40 districts, with Luwero, Mukono and Wakiso districts, as well as Mukono municipality, each bagging an average of sh421,713,994.

### PWDs IN THE PARISH DEVELOPMENT MODEL

As part of its wealth creation schemes, government has deliberately reserved and allocated 10% of the PDM funds for PWDs.

### EMYOOGA PROGRAMME

The programme also includes PWDs as a special beneficiary category within

centres that started in FY2021/22 and have so far enrolled 2,235 are Jinja Sheltered Workshop (69), Ruti in Mbarara (558), Kireka (344), Lweza (272), both in Wakiso, Mpumudde in Jinja (302) and Ocoko in Arua (490).

These centres train youth in various vocational skills, including carpentry, metal fabrication, food science and cosmetology.

The ministry says it is in the process of restructuring the courses to support the emerging market needs and skills expectations from youth with disabilities.

### FIRST-EVER PRO-PWDs TECHNOLOGY

To enhance co-ordination in delivering rehabilitation services to PWDs, the ministry has developed the first-ever National Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Strategic Plan (2025-2030).

This plan aims to strengthen rehabilitation services and promote functional independence for persons with disabilities.

### CHILDREN SURGICAL SERVICES

Surgical services for children with disabling conditions have been expanded beyond Mulago National Referral