

# Govt launches guidelines for disabled children

BY BARBRA NALWEYISO

**MUBENDE.** The government has rolled out new national guidelines on disability inclusion in child protection. This sweeping policy reform, officials say, will strengthen the safety and welfare of children with disabilities.

Speaking during national celebrations to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Mubende District on Wednesday, Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja, who represented President Museveni, said the government has invested heavily in efforts to reduce the number of children born with disabilities.

The new framework is designed to guide government ministries, communities, and families in safeguarding and supporting children with disa-

bilities. Under the arrangement, families caring for children with severe disabilities will receive Shs100,000 per month to ease the financial burden of specialised care.

In President Museveni's speech, which was delivered by Ms Nabbanja, he said several disabling conditions, many still poorly understood, continue to emerge among children, underscoring the need for sustained scientific research to uncover and prevent their root causes.

This year's celebrations were held under the theme "Wealth creation programmes: A key to socio-economic empowerment for persons with disabilities," a reminder of both Uganda's strides and the persistent barriers facing millions of citizens with disabilities.

President Museveni said disability prevalence has consider-

ably declined, dropping to 3.4 percent for severe disabilities and 13.2 percent for less severe forms. He outlined four priority areas he considers essential for further progress: prevention of disability, early rehabilitation, socio-economic empowerment of persons with disabilities, and strict adherence to affirmative action policies, including the National Resistance Movement's four-acre model.

At the same event, Mr Yona Waswa, the chairperson of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, reported that employment of persons with disabilities remains critically low, leaving many unable to improve their livelihoods.

Unicef Country Representative Robin Nandi commended Uganda for establishing legal and policy frameworks to protect the rights of PWDs.