

# PWD LEADERS DEMAND DIGITAL INCLUSION FOR DEVELOPMENT

By Rhyman Agaba

Leaders of persons with disabilities (PWDs) have asked the Government to include them in the digitisation programme, saying this would speed up Uganda's development agenda.

Led by the former Kasambya County MP Patrick Mulindwa, the PWD leaders proposed that equipping PWDs with gadgets and skills on how to use them would enable them contribute to Uganda's development right from the grassroots.

Mulindwa, himself a PWD, suggested the provision of average-priced tablets to PWD leaders at the grassroots, saying they would help in implementing programmes.

"If given a chance, these people can be organised and engage in economically productive projects," he observed during a meeting of PWD leaders in Mubende on Saturday.

## **BETWEEN THE LINES**

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Charles Bitamazire, the chairperson of Mubende PWDs savings and credit co-operative society, lauded Mulindwa for providing coffee trees, eucalyptus trees, bee hives and passion fruits during his term (2011-2016).

"All the beneficiaries are still enjoying the fruits of your projects," he said.

Bitamazire leads a union of 45 PWDs who have each contributed sh300,000, collectively raising sh13.5m.

"We intend to use this money to buy 10 bee hives for each member," he said, projecting that each member could earn a minimum of sh250,000 monthly, with additional



**Former MP Mulindwa**

income potential from bee venom.

**PLEDGES, INSUFFICIENT FUNDING**  
Mulindwa decried the insufficient resources allocated to PWDs and unfulfilled government pledges.

He said President Yoweri Museveni promised each district PWD leader a motorcycle, and money was released from the Treasury. However, the funds never reached the intended beneficiaries.

"This could explain why the state minister for disability [Hellen Grace Asamo] lost. So, I'm proposing that if given a chance, this oversight role could have been augmented," he said, speaking about Asamo, who did not make it to the 12th Parliament.

Mulindwa said the sh10m start-up capital released by the President for district PWD councillors has never reached beneficiaries.

"This shows a weakness in oversight among the people who are supposed to follow up on these funds."

The PWD leaders' proposal for digital inclusion comes at a time when the Government is rolling out initiatives like the National Digital Observatory for PWDs.

Supported by the Uganda Communications Commission, the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda, and eight tech consults, the programme is aimed at addressing the persistent challenge of invisibility in data, employment systems and digital services for PWDs.