



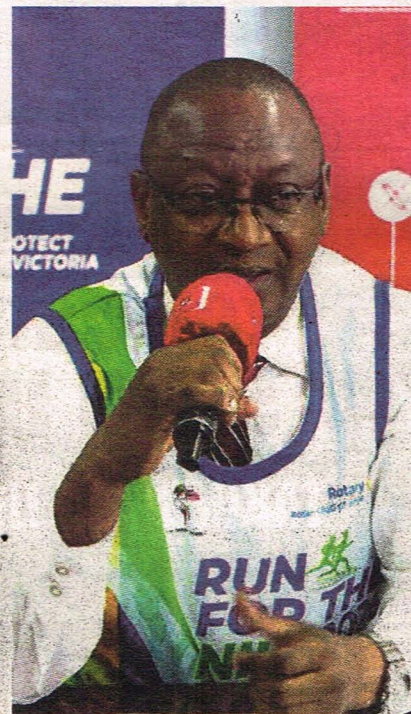
District Governor 9213 Geoffrey Martin Kitakule and Rotarian David Sserwadde Nsubuga officially launching Run for the Nile 2026

Run to conserve the Nile and Lake Victoria gathers pace through Rotary

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On March 28, the fourth edition of the "Run for the Nile" event will take place. This is an event held in Jinja, to promote environmental conservation programmes, aimed at protecting both Lake Victoria and the River Nile. However, this year, the event is targeting a collection of Shs 550 million to try and restore the affected parts in and around Lake Victoria and the River Nile.

Yasin Waguma, a member of the Rotary Club of Jinja, and chief mobiliser for the run noted that there has been a lot of destruction around these two major and iconic Ugandan water bodies. "Because of extended human development structures and industrialization, these two water bodies have suffered from silting," Waguma said. Siltation is where the water bodies have become filled with fine mineral particles like mud, clay or



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sand, often due to erosion. This accumulation tends to reduce water depth, blocks channels, and harms aquatic ecosystems. Unless such trends are reversed, these water bodies are going to suffer drastic decline in terms of how much clean and quality water they

provide. But at the same time, the quality of fish therein.

It against that background that since 2017, Waguma explained, they have been planting trees around these two water bodies. "Presently, we have planted at least 10 million trees. But we intend to plant even more. Mayuge district has provided us with 100 hectares of land to plant new trees on as a result of this cause," Waguma added.

But to do all this, resources are needed. Efforts by the Rotary Club of Jinja are spearheading this noble cause. But they are also being supported by the Rotary Clubs of Kampala Central, Jinja Metro, Kyadondo, Njeru and the source of the Nile. In fact, the run at the end of this month aims to create an awareness platform to support grassroots environmental efforts, beyond just the fundraising programme.

Waguma noted that for the environment to be safeguarded, schools in districts like Iganga have been brought up to speed on the significance of conserving mother nature. It is for the greater good of human sustainability.

According to Tomson Ofwono of the Rotary Club of Jinja and chairman organizing committee, environmental degradation in and around the Nile basin is increasingly threatening livelihoods. Rapid urban growth, industrial expansion, and agricultural run-off continue to introduce pollutants into the water systems, particularly near major population centres.

On the other hand, Lake Victoria, which feeds the Nile, faces mounting pressure from enormous plastic waste and unsustainable land practices. Ofwono noted that there is need for lasting policy and legislative efforts to address these key concerns regarding environmental protection. But at the same time, progress depends on the active public participation alongside policy action.

That said, Waguma said that they are targeting at least 5000 runners, as the sale of running kits at Shs 30,000 has already started. The run, which will have participants taking to the road in the 5km, 10km and 21km distances, will also host educational exhibitions and interactive sessions to raise awareness about pollution, waste management, and everyday actions that individuals can take to protect water resources. Research and regional conservation partnerships aimed at improving water quality across the Nile Basin continue to gather pace.