

FIRST LADY WELCOMES NEW IRISH AMBASSADOR

PPU PHOTOS

By Vision Reporter

The First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Mrs Janet Museveni, has called for strengthened collaboration between Uganda and Ireland, with a particular focus on expanding practical skills training to meet the country's growing infrastructure and employment needs.

While hosting Ireland's Ambassador to Uganda, Margaret (Mags) Gaynor, at State House Nakasero yesterday, Mrs Museveni underscored the importance of equipping Ugandan youth with hands-on technical skills, especially in areas such as road and dam construction.

The meeting, held on St Patrick's Day, reaffirmed the long-standing and cordial relationship between Uganda and Ireland, particularly through Irish Aid programmes that have significantly supported education and community development initiatives in the Karamoja sub-region.

"I want to welcome you to Uganda and assure you that you are among friends," Mrs Museveni said. "We value our partnership and the consistent support extended to our education sector, especially in Karamoja."

SEEKS ENHANCED SKILLS PARTNERSHIP

Mrs Museveni emphasised the need to expand skills training into critical and high-demand areas such as road construction, dam construction, and other infrastructure-related fields.

"We have many technical schools, but we lack hands-on trainers who can train people on the job. We would like



Mrs Museveni (centre) with Gaynor, Ireland's Ambassador to Uganda (third-right), Dr Kaducu (third-left), Dr Turyagyenda (second-left), with other officials at State House Nakasero, Kampala yesterday

to explore the possibility of bringing skilled trainers to Uganda to build the capacity of our instructors locally. This approach would enable us to address key skills gaps in the country and empower young Ugandans with hands-on skills currently outsourced to foreign firms," she said.

The First Lady also recognised the success of the "Teachers Making a Difference" programme, supported by Irish Aid. She said the programme, which provides professional development opportunities for outstanding teachers through exposure visits to Ireland, enhances the quality of education and motivates educators across the country. A cohort of teachers is set to travel soon.

"We are building a global village for

our children. Wherever we can hold hands together and partner to improve what we are doing, it is for the good of our nations," Mrs Museveni said.

AMBASSADOR'S REMARKS

Ambassador Gaynor reaffirmed Ireland's commitment to supporting Uganda's development priorities. She said Irish-supported programmes are increasingly focused on employability, combining skills training with practical work experience and entrepreneurship support, particularly through partnerships with other organisations.

"We want to train people for jobs, not just certificates," she said, adding that Ireland is open to exploring new innovative approaches, including partnerships with government and

the private sector, to scale up skills development in priority sectors.

OTHER OFFICIALS SPEAK OUT

The State Minister for Primary Education, Dr Joyce Kaducu, stressed that improving trainer capacity would significantly enhance skills transfer to learners, while also commending Ireland's contributions to school feeding programmes and infrastructure development.

Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education and Sports Dr Kedrace Turyagyenda emphasised the importance of training qualified instructors to sustain the quality in vocational education.

Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to continued

IRISH CONTRIBUTIONS

Over the years, Irish-funded projects include support to the School Feeding Programme in Karamoja, the Karamoja Primary Education Expansion Project and the Skilling Uganda Project – Karamoja. Currently it supports three vocational institutes in Nakapiripirit – St Daniel Comboni and Kotido. The new Irish Ambassador, Margaret (Mags) Gaynor, highlighted ongoing collaborations with development partners, including support for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes as well as initiatives that link trainees to employment and business start-up opportunities.

collaboration, with a shared vision of empowering young people through relevant education and skills development.

The meeting was also attended by officials from the Irish Embassy including Naome Atako Muhwezi – Education Advisor, Angella Athieno Programmer Executive and Justine Katebarirwe Niyonzima Personal Assistant to the Ambassador, alongside senior technical officers from the Education and Sports Ministry.