

By John Ricks Kayizzi

Vision Group Chief Executive Officer Don Wanyama has commended the various organisations that have sponsored the 2025 Pakasa Forum, arguing they have complemented the company's efforts of empowering Ugandans to start and manage successful businesses.

Under the theme of *Opportunities and Ideas for Growing Businesses*, the Pakasa Forum is scheduled to take place tomorrow from 8:00am to 5:00pm at the Enterprise Uganda business training centre in Butabika, opposite Butabika Hospital.

Speaking during a meeting with sponsors of the event yesterday at the Vision Group headquarters on First Street Industrial Area, Wanyama said the strategic partnership with Enterprise Uganda, Centenary Bank, the finance ministry, the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), Pearl Bank (formerly Postbank), Pepsi, and the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) will help in making this year's Pakasa Forum bigger and more impactful.

Wanyama expressed happiness that native/local banks like Centenary Bank and Pearl Bank are highly progressive and thanked the two banks for complementing the efforts of Vision Group to empower local businesses.

He also commended NSSF for the various initiatives through which it creates economic opportunities, not only for its members but also university students through the Hi-Innovator programme which equips the youth with innovation and entrepreneurship skills.

"Additionally, the finance ministry is playing a leading role in the economic transformation of Uganda and improving the economic welfare of Ugandans. By organising Pakasa Forum, Vision Group and partners are providing complementary efforts to help the finance ministry execute its mandate," Wanyama explained.

Entrance to the Pakasa Forum will be free of charge with an open door for all Ugandans who are doing business and those who plan to start business.

"It will be the climax of the celebrations for the Global Entrepreneurship Week, which usually takes place in the third week of November every year," Wanyama noted.

WHAT TO EXPECT

He said this year's forum will involve sharing of vital information on government's key priority sectors and interventions in the tenfold

CENTENARY BANK, NSSF, PEARL BANK, PEPSI, FINANCE MINISTRY JOIN PAKASA FORUM SPONSORS

PHOTOS BY MIRIAM NAMUTEBI



From left: Sydney Miria, the head of special projects at Vision Group, Mulondo, Bahemuka, Wanyama, Arimi, Nakhokho, and Hope Nuwagaba, the head of sales at Vision Group after a meeting ahead of the Pakasa Forum tomorrow. This was at Vision Group head offices on First Street Industrial Area, in Kampala yesterday



Wanyama (left) receives a dummy cheque from Nakhokho



Wanyama (left) receives a dummy cheque from Arimi

WHY VENUE WAS CHOSEN

Moses Mulondo, the Vision Group Pakasa project coordinator, said the choice of the location of this year's Pakasa Forum was meant to take Ugandans to the new business training facility which is meant to support all of them.

"Enterprise Uganda which is a public-private partnership got funding from the finance ministry and development partners and established a multibillion business training facility at Butabika, which I have been told is the first of its kind in Africa," Mulondo explained.

growth strategy, what successful entrepreneurs share in common, importance of formalising businesses, how to run successful family businesses, financing opportunities for SMEs, and inspiring stories from successful entrepreneurs.

SPONSORS SPEAK OUT

Dr. Evans Nakhokho, Centenary Bank's head agribusiness/agricultural

finance, said although they manage to reach out to about 300,000 borrowers a year, Pakasa Forum will enable them have an interface with many more local entrepreneurs and prospective investors.

"Centenary Bank has about 3 million accounts that sit in these spaces and across sectors. So, coming onto this forum is important for us. It will support our cardinal objective of supporting the

transformation of SMEs in the country," he said.

Barbara Arimi, the NSSF head of marketing and corporate affairs, said since they exist to ensure that they make savings a way of life for more people, Pakasa Forum gives them a platform to speak to hundreds of people.

"It's within this framework that we want to ensure that we support the creation of their capacity to sustain their operations through our Hi-Innovator Programme, through which we equip start-ups in this land," she said.

Arimi noted that through Hi-Innovator, they equip small businesses with basic management

skills.

"At the Pakasa Forum, we will have the space not only to ask people to save, but also encourage them to establish enterprises to enable them have something to save," she said.

She said they will inform participants about compelling products like Smart Life Flexi, where they can save as little as sh5,000 and earn interest on their daily balances.

Arimi said they will continue to explore the bigger opportunities that they believe are still

adept in this space of small and growing enterprises, which the Pakasa Forum 2025 will bring together.

Laura Bahemuka, Pearl Bank's head of SME banking, said the reason why they chose to jump onboard is to empower SMEs to scale, thrive and collaborate.

"We do that through our two high impact goals where we drive sustainable financial inclusion, but also stimulate entrepreneurship and services," she said.

Isaac Shaka, a communications officer at the finance ministry, said their ministry will fully participate in the Pakasa Conference and share relevant information on the various development programmes Ugandans are supposed to benefit from including information on the tenfold growth strategy of government that seeks to drive Uganda's economy from the current \$61b to over \$500b in the next 15 years.

"We encourage Ugandans in business and those who plan to start businesses to come for the Pakasa Forum and learn from successful entrepreneurs and business experts to guide them on what they need to do to start and run successful businesses," Shaka stated.

FOREX RATES

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
DOLLAR.	3615	3670
EURO.	4100	4300
POUND.	4650	5000
KENYA SH.	27	30
TZ SH.	1.35	1.65
DIRHAM.	900	1000
S.A. RAND	190	300
JAPANESE YEN	20	40
RWANDESE FRANC	2	3.5
DOLLAR SMALL	3350	3670

COMPILED BY MOSES KIGONGO
RATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

FIND OUT
MORE ONLINE
WWW.NEWSVISION.CO.UG
UGANDANS BORROW
SH 5 TRILLION VIA MOBILE
MONEY



Shaka