

FIRST LADY HAILS 50 YEARS OF EU PARTNERSHIP

By Vision Reporter

The First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Mrs Janet Museveni, has commended the strong and long-standing partnership between Uganda and the European Union (EU), as the two sides prepare to mark 50 years of bilateral co-operation.

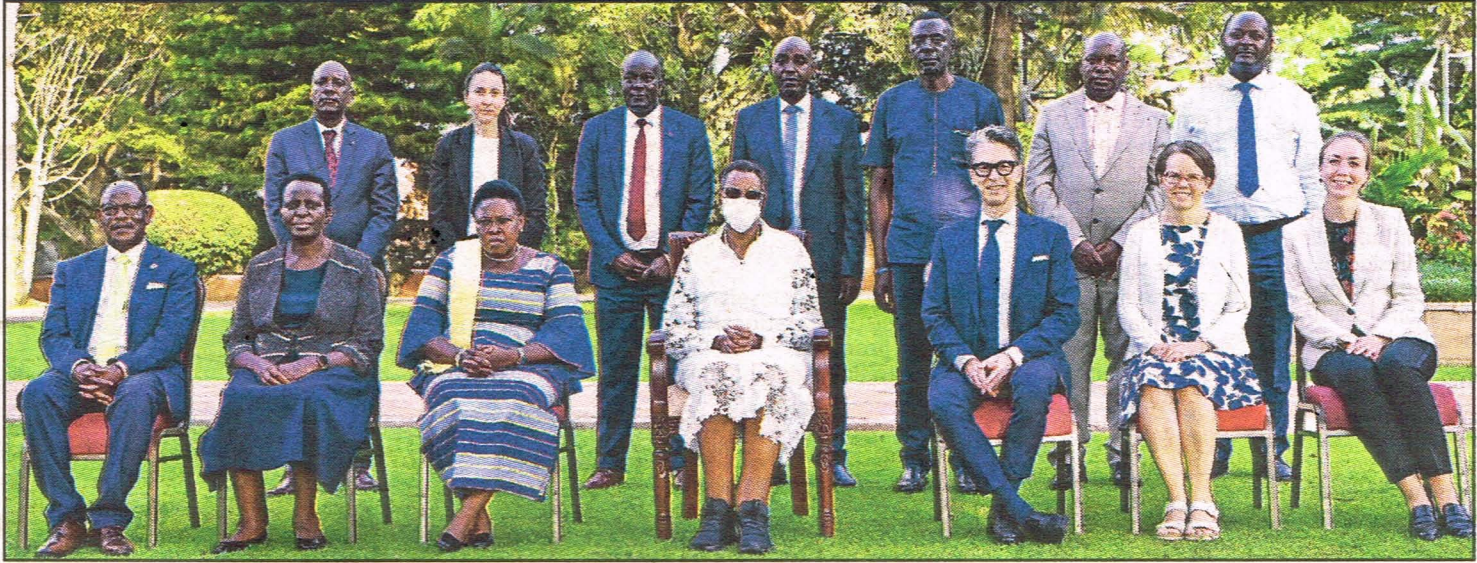
She expressed gratitude for the EU's continued support towards changing the quality of life of Ugandans through various initiatives, including programmes focused on skills development, employment, entrepreneurship and private sector development, as well as social protection efforts targeting women and youth.

"We thank God for the long-standing partnership. I congratulate you and the people of Uganda on the 50 years of our bilateral co-operation, which has contributed to the development vision," Mrs Museveni said.

This was during a meeting with the EU Ambassador to Uganda, Jan Sadek and his delegation at State House Nakasero on Tuesday. Also in attendance were the Minister of State for Primary Education, Dr Joyce Kaducu, Makerere University vice-chancellor Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe and senior technical officers from the Ministry of Education, led by the permanent secretary, Dr Kedrace Turyagyenda.

Mrs Museveni reaffirmed Uganda's commitment to strengthening its partnership with the EU, expressing optimism for continued collaboration in the years ahead.

"On behalf of the Government and the people of Uganda, I thank the EU for its support over the years. We look forward



Mrs Janet Museveni (seated, centre), with Sadek (seated, third-right) and their respective delegations at State House Nakasero on Tuesday. Also seated, left to right, are Nawangwe, Turyagyenda, and Kaducu

to building an even stronger partnership as we build the global village for the future," she said.

The First Lady also welcomed the upcoming EU-Uganda Research and Study Fair, describing it as timely and beneficial to Uganda's education sector.

"I'm happy to hear about the EU-Uganda Study Fair that you are organising this year, which will bring together institutions of higher education and showcase study and research opportunities available to Ugandan students. We look forward to this initiative," she noted.

The study fair, scheduled for June 4, at Makerere University, is being positioned as a flagship activity in celebrations marking 50 years of co-operation between Uganda and the EU.

On education infrastructure, the First Lady assured the delegation that the ministry would fast-track coding approval for six schools to enable

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infrastructure development under ongoing EU-supported programmes.

Sadek described the 50 years of bilateral co-operation as a milestone that offers an important opportunity to celebrate and further strengthen the long-standing partnership.

He said the research and study fair will bring together European and Ugandan higher education

institutions to promote academic exchanges and showcase study and research opportunities available to Ugandans, particularly through programmes such as Erasmus+ and complementary EU-member state programmes. The fair is expected to attract a wide range of participants, including students, university leaders, policymakers and researchers.

"This initiative aims to connect Ugandan students, researchers and universities with institutions across Europe. It is not only about academic mobility, but also about investing in Uganda's young generation and building skills for the future," the ambassador said.

He noted that since 2022, more than 1,400 Ugandan students and academic staff have benefited from the Erasmus+ EU-funded exchange and training programme, while Ugandan institutions are actively participating in over 25 collaborative research projects

under the Horizon Europe programme.

The ambassador noted that the study fair forms part of a broader calendar of activities to mark five decades of EU presence in Uganda, dating back to the establishment of its delegation in 1976. The anniversary celebrations will include exhibitions, public engagements and outreach events showcasing the impact of the five decades of EU-Uganda co-operation.

He highlighted key EU-supported initiatives in Uganda, including the euros 114m (about sh491.3b) gender for development programme, which focuses on girls' education, life skills development and the prevention of gender-based violence in northern Uganda.

Sadek reported significant progress, including the training of over 1,500 teachers, improved school infrastructure and support to vulnerable adolescents. In addition, the EU has committed 50m Euros

(about sh215.5b) towards skills development and job creation, particularly in green sectors such as sustainable agriculture and renewable energy.

The EU Ambassador also informed the meeting that they were exploring further opportunities for collaboration in sports, particularly as Uganda prepares to co-host the upcoming Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON). He revealed plans to visit the modern Hoima Stadium with EU envoys to assess facilities, including the newly constructed stadium expected to host some of the games.

Nawangwe praised the EU for its substantial contribution to research funding, noting that the institution is among the largest beneficiaries of EU-supported academic programmes globally.

"Makerere has recovered its position as a top global research university, largely due to its partnership with the EU. We are honoured to host this historic fair," he noted.