

**Wide net.** After a search that attracted 48 schools, eight schools, one per region, will run the boys' programme. Kitara region's representative is yet to be confirmed at this stage.

# Fufa confirm Schools of Excellence in big rollout

BY MAKHTUM MUZIRANSA

Fufa believe their ambition to become the top most federation on and off the pitch in Africa can only make significant headway if Uganda is producing the best talent on the continent.

In a bid to create the right pathways for the talent identified through mass football – as per Fufa's technical masterplan, Fufa has identified 11 Schools of Excellence to nurture the next generation of players.

"When we came into office (in 2013), we had to deal with the monkey of qualification for Afcon (Africa Cup of Nations) as failure to do that had been the stick to beat past presidents (of Fufa) with," Fufa president Moses Magogo said on Wednesday during a function at their offices in Mengo where head teachers from the selected institutions signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the federation to kick start the programme.

## National team

"Making qualification a habit allowed us to think. In 2015, we started the Fufa Juniors League and it is now producing players for the national team.

"But if we do not do what the big boys like Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Algeria, Morocco, and Egypt are doing in terms of getting players in the top leagues in the world, we will not be able to compete with them," Magogo added during the function that was also graced by Fufa's first vice president Justus Mugisha, deputy chief executive officer Shebah Ronah Ampaire, Football Development Director Bashir Mutyaba, and legal director Denis Lukambi. Fufa want to identify talent at age 10-11 then send it to the identified schools, where they can be groomed for professionalism and also receive a formal education. "Schools have children, education facilities, accommodation, and pitches. That is the right environment to nurture this talent," Magogo said.



**Partnership.** Eleven schools signed MoUs to work with Fufa to develop talent. PHOTO/JOHN BATANUDE

The schools, which will also operate as Grade III (operating at regional level) football academies, will provide bursaries for players while Fufa "will act as a parent" and support the programme with scholastic materials, technical staff, equipment, balls, and training kits among others "and also use our television and media power to promote some of these schools' events beyond what we have in the programme." Fufa will also provide coaching, refereeing, commentary, administration programmes to interested parties in the schools. After a search that attracted 48 schools, eight schools, one per region, will run the boys' programme. While Kitara region's representative is yet to be confirmed, others will be represented by Jinja SSS (Eastern), Kibuli SS (Kampala), St. Joseph's College Layibi (Northern), St. Kagwa Bushenyi HS (Western), St. Charles Lwanga Koboko (West Nile), Standard HS Zana - Ndejje Campus (Buganda), Bukedea Comprehensive School (North East).

Meanwhile, four schools will oversee the girls' programme with each covering two regions; Bish-

## SELECTED SCHOOLS

**Boys:** Jinja SSS (Eastern), Kibuli SS (Kampala), St. Joseph's College Layibi (Northern), St. Kagwa Bushenyi HS (Western), St. Charles Lwanga Koboko (West Nile), Standard HS Zana - Ndejje Campus (Buganda), Bukedea Comprehensive School (North East)

**Girls:** Bishop Comboni College Kambuga (Kitara and Western), Amus College (North East and Eastern), Hopeful Future SS (Kampala and Buganda), Wisdom HS (Northern and West Nile)

op Comboni College Kambuga (Kitara and Western), Amus College (North East and Eastern), Hopeful Future SS (Kampala and Buganda), and Wisdom HS (Northern and West Nile). "We expect these players to take part in competitions between schools. But we also know that a player being developed for the top level will need

more contact hours (with the ball) which they might not get in the current (education) system.

"We are in conversations with the Ministry (of Education and Sports) for a tailor-made elite path for students. You cannot get the 10,000 hours required for mastery if you also have to study Physics, Biology, Chemistry, and Mathematics," Magogo said.

## Medial classes

According to Jinja SSS head teacher Isaac Balimusangayo, the school has been "depending on remedial classes to help sports players in class" and he hopes a tailor-made programme will ease their academic work. Bukedea's managing director Jonas Gumisiriza private schools have had a problem paying coaches and scouting talent and will therefore Fufa taking on this mantle.

"Fufa has a network of scouts in all 146 districts of Uganda so we believe that we can get players to feed these schools. But should there be a need to move a player from one school to another, we shall follow the right processes to effect that," Mutyaba said.