



Mbayo congratulating Hellen Nalweyiso as Balunywa looks on in Iganga on Sunday. Photos by George Bitá

# Minister wants gambling machines out of Busoga

## IGANGA

By George Bitá and Moses Bikala

The Minister for the Presidency, Esther Mbayo, has expressed disappointment with businessmen running gambling joints in Busoga villages.

According to Mbayo, such outlets tempt villagers to spend their hard-earned money carelessly, contributing to poverty.

"Gambling machines should be shifted to urban centres where people are well-off and not kept in rural areas to further impoverish the residents. Basoga are already ranked among the poorest people

in Uganda hence the need to be protected from such unscrupulous dealers," Mbayo argued.

The minister made the remarks on Sunday while presiding over a graduation party for members of Balunywa Foundation at Kasolo village in Iganga district.

Mbayo wondered how the local authorities can allow a foreigner to move slot machines from a country like China to a remote location in Luuka district.

"A farmer after getting his seasonal income of sh120,000 runs to *zaala* (gambling)," Mbayo said.

"Then they fool him using a chance win of sh10,000 so that he invests all his money and loses

## BETWEEN THE LINES:

■ Villagers in Busoga spend their hard-earned money carelessly, contributing to poverty, according to Mbayo.

everything," she adds.

The foundation, that has over 5,000 members, of which an estimated 750 are fresh graduates, is the brainchild of Prof. Waiswa Balunywa, the principal of Makerere University Business School.

Balunywa urged parents to take their children's education seriously and stop referring to them as

'government's children'.

"Some parents have money to go gambling yet they cannot even buy a pen or pencil to sustain a child under the universal education programme. It is obvious Basoga need to change their mindset," Balunywa said.

Herbert Sembera, the Kasokoso LC1 chairperson, disclosed that unemployment, especially among the youth, coupled with a negative attitude towards work pushes many into gambling.

"Even those with family land are not bothered. Imagine someone settles for a paltry sh2m to rent out five acres of land to sugarcane growers for 10 years," Sembera lamented.