

## ***KADAGA CALLS FOR UPGRADES AT BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY***

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First deputy Prime Minister Rebecca Kadaga called for government intervention to address the infrastructure challenges hindering the smooth operation of Busitema University. Kadaga acknowledged that while she has visited all seven campuses of the university, she agrees with the management's assessment that the university is facing an infrastructure deficit.

Her comments followed concerns raised by both management and students regarding the poor state of infrastructure at the institution.

### ***GROWTH AND CHALLENGES***

The vice-chancellor, prof. Paul Waako, explained that the university is experiencing rapid growth, with a current student population of 8,000 and 500 staff members. However, the institution is struggling with outdated and deteriorating infrastructure across all its campuses.

Waako said lack of proper infrastructure limits the number of students the university can admit and in turn, appealed for each campus to be equipped with facilities that reflect the university's status.

The university inherited its infrastructure from former colleges that were elevated to university status and much of the infrastructure is no longer adequate.

Kadaga visited the university on Friday last week to raise awareness among students and management about the integration process of the east African community.

### ***STUDENT CONCERNS***

During the visit, students raised several concerns including the arrest of opposition leader Kizza Besigye in Kenya, inter-university student scholarships, differing curricula across EAC states, and delayed consultations for EAC integration, joint efforts to combat epidemics, drug manufacturing and the ongoing conflict in the DR Congo.

Kadaga expressed her shock at Besigye's arrest and urged EAC member states to respect human rights. On the issue of curriculum harmonization, she explained that while the EAC currently

promotes student exchange programmes for final-degree students, efforts to standardize academic credentials have been successful.

On the topic of epidemics, Kadaga said EAC has established a joint commission in Burundi to coordinate the response to such health crises.

As for the conflict in the DR Congo, she stated that the issue is being addressed at the heads state level.

### ***INTEGRATION AND YOUTH BENEFITS***

Edith Mwanje, the permanent secretary of the ministry of EAC Affairs, noted that her ministry serves as the focal point for coordinating EAC matters.

Mwanje highlighted the social, economic and political benefits of EAC integration and encourages universities in the region to support this initiative.

While progress has been made over the past 25 years, she acknowledged that there is still much work to be done, especially in areas, such as the common market, monetary union and political federation across the EAC countries.