

# Govt reforms YLP, women fund programmes

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**KAMPALA.** The government will next month introduce a new structure to improve management, monitoring and supervision of the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) and Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Fund (UWEP), the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development has said.

Addressing a press conference in Kampala on Tuesday, Ms Janat Mukwaya said the government will make YLP a strictly community demand-driven programme that will be implemented with guidance from the central and the local governments.

"In view of the rapidly changing needs, we have embarked on a journey to reduce the numbers of the groups we are giving out the youth livelihood funds to and improve business convergence strategies for the groups that will allow us grow new revenue streams for giving out to the unemployed youths in the country," she said.

Ms Mukwaya added that the initial budget estimate for rolling out the programme was Shs265b in the next five years, targeting organised groups of between 10 to 15 youth.

She explained that when she visited some YLP beneficiaries, she discovered many challenges that have made the ministry change the required number eligible to acquire funding from the originally 10 to 15 members to between five and six.

Ms Mukwaya said she discovered that some technical officers and politicians had hijacked funds meant to enable unemployed youth to establish income generating activities.

She said she had also discovered



**Dialogue.** Gender, Labour and Social Development minister Janat Mukwaya (left) and Local Government minister Tom Butime at a recent meeting. COURTESY PHOTO

that some YLP beneficiaries are not given the full amount of money they are entitled to after unscrupulous officials make deductions. She said some officials impose an illegal fee to sign YLP forms and process documents for those seeking to benefit from the programme.

"I have reports that in Mayuge, Kaliro, Nakaseke, some official have imposed a fee of Shs300,000 to sign the YLP forms to the level that even CAOs, CFOs (chief finance officers) are demanding for money in order to release the signed cheques. This is corruption and sabotage of government programme which is free," Ms Mukwaya said.

The acting YLP programme manager, Mr James Tumwebaze, said government has given out Shs84.5b

to 11, 503 youth groups and 144,235 individuals.

**"I am not going to stop arresting those who flout the YLP guidelines... and even the youth who have got money and failed to return it, I will keep arresting them,"**

JANAT MUKWAYA, MINISTER OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The national programme coordinator of UWEP, Ms Brenda Malinga, said the Shs12b had been given to 300,000 women groups under the programme, adding that about Shs110m had been recovered in less than a year.

Ms Mukwaya said the UWEP proj-

ect intends to support women in the Micro, Small and Medium enterprise sub-sector through provision of interest-free credit, technical advice for appropriate technologies, value addition and market information.

She said the funds were first rolled out in Financial Year 2016/1017 with the major focus on unemployed women and vulnerable groups such as single young mothers, widows, disabled, women living with HIV/Aids and slum dwellers.

"And this time, after studies, we are not going to be giving only 10 to 15 women groups, because this separates them from their original major women groups who are also willing to access funds. So we shall consider giving money to those big groups," Ms Malinga said.