

Public varsities advised on funds

By Martin Kitubi

The First Lady and the Minister for Education and Sports, Mrs. Janet Museveni, has urged public universities to establish endowment funds to promote self-reliance.

She said the idea will reduce over reliance on the Government and donor funding, which often delays due to other state demands.

An endowment fund is an investment fund established by an institution for sustainability purposes.

"Most international universities have performed because they have endowment funds, but not relying on government for everything," the First Lady said.

"Endowment funds have helped such universities to perform and grow. As a country, we want to see public universities becoming self-reliant, coming up with investment plans," she added.

She said most universities in the country have properties, including land and buildings, that would be ideal for investment to raise funds, if properly managed.

Mrs. Museveni made the remarks on Thursday during her monitoring visit at the newly constructed Soroti University, in Soroti district.

It was part of her monitoring tour in Sebei, Teso and Karamoja sub-regions. She explained that the move would save public universities from endless debts, which have crippled some institutions.

The First Lady also wants public universities to come up with proper



The First Lady, Janet Museveni (wearing a hat), with Soroti University staff, local leaders and other stakeholders on Thursday

plans on how to manage institutions, and stick to intended goals for establishment of training institutions.

"Do not focus on numbers

(enrolment), but emphasise quality and let Soroti University be known for quality and this will be reflected in the graduates we will produce," she said.

Mrs. Museveni told the management to include maintenance of the constructed university blocks, facilities in plans other than waiting

for them to break down and seek government intervention.

She said this in response to several needs, which were raised by the Soroti University management due for official opening.

Prof Ikoja Odongo, the Soroti University vice-chancellor told the education minister that the university needs more money to purchase teaching and learning materials for several programmes including medicine, nursing, electronics and computer engineering.

"These would amount to about sh1.5b, we also need money for salaries, which amounts to sh3b," he said.

Soroti University

Soroti University was established by the Government, with the aim of teaching science, medicine, nursing, electronics and computer engineering.

Construction kicked off in July 2014. Ikoja said sh15b has been spent on constructing the three multi-purpose buildings, which make the university now.

Agnes Akiror, the state minister for Teso affairs applauded the Government for the university, adding that: "We want to see quality here and we should be the leading university in sciences."

Gen. Jeje Odongo, the minister of internal affairs, who welcomed the education minister, said: "Teso must rise again with the university. Our children should be given priority and we should thank the Government."