

MPs' development pledge: For richer, not poorer

TEREGO

By Isaac Nuwagaba

Wilfred Erima Babanga and Rose Obigah have pledged to jointly tackle poverty, alcoholism and other social challenges affecting communities in Terego district.

Speaking during a victory celebration held on Wednesday at Kololo Senior Secondary School, shortly after being sworn in as the MP for Terego East, Babanga said poverty eradication would be his top priority through community empowerment initiatives under the Babanga Foundation.

"Fighting poverty is my biggest assignment. We want to empower our people, especially the youth and women, with skills and resources to break the cycle of poverty and addiction," Babanga said.

He added that his mandate from the ruling National Resistance Movement and Yoweri Museveni is to ensure government wealth-creation programmes directly benefit local communities.

"We shall ensure our people access government programmes, such as *Emyooga* and Parish Development Model funds, so they can improve their livelihoods," he said.

Babanga pledged to continue supporting communities through the Babanga

Obigah (left), Babanga (right) and a guest (centre) during Babanga's MP swearing-in victory celebration in Kampala, on Wednesday



PHOTO BY ISAAC NUWAGABA

Foundation, which was established 10 years ago to improve access to clean water, health services and education. He noted that more than 100 children in Terego district have already benefited from bursaries for primary education.

"We shall work with different groups and institutions to promote unity, sustainable development and transformation in Terego. We shall also use the model village approach to complement government efforts in fighting poverty," he added.

ANNUAL CANCER SCREENING

Babanga also raised concern over rising cancer cases in West Nile, particularly in Terego district, linking many of these to excessive alcohol consumption and smoking.

"Cancer is another serious concern. I will champion annual cancer screening and encourage our people to regularly test for early detection," he said.

According to Bridget Angucia of the Uganda Cancer Institute, liver and oesophageal cancers are among the leading cases reported in the area.

"Excessive alcohol consumption and smoking are major contributors to the rising cancer cases in our district and local authorities must address this," Angucia said.

She added that alcohol abuse has contributed to poverty, domestic violence and serious health complications.

IRON SHEETS ARE A MUST

Rose Obigah, the Terego Woman MP, said every household in Terego should work toward owning iron-roofed houses as part of improving living standards.

"Every person in Terego must sleep under iron sheets. We want to promote commercial agriculture, entrepreneurship, counselling and treatment services for those battling addiction," she said.

She added that leaders will work with communities to raise awareness about the dangers of alcohol abuse and promote healthier lifestyles.

"We are committed to transforming Terego. Every person deserves a healthy and productive life, free from poverty and addiction," Obigah said.

BACKGROUND

Born on July 14, 1967, Terego East MP Wilfred Erima Babanga attended the MP swearing-in function at the Parliament, on Wednesday, alongside his wife, Hellen Kepo, their two children and other family members.

Babanga previously worked as a Programme Manager at ZOA Uganda, an international relief and recovery organisation operating in West Nile.

Babanga, a son of the late Silvanus Alinzua Babanga and Priscilla Babanga, thanked his brothers Patrick Feni Babanga, the Divine University Academic Registrar in Fort Portal and Sidney Miria Babanga, the new Vision Group editor-in-chief, for supporting his campaign.

"Through thick and thin, Babanga emerged victorious. We endured arrests and beatings, but we remained strong. Now we hope he will improve our roads, provide clean water and support our schools," Jamila Chandiru, a resident in Ndapi parish, Omugo sub-county, said.