

By Vision Reporter

The Netherlands is best known in Uganda for sponsoring the Best Farmers Competition under *New Vision*. But its influence is now shaping leadership beyond agriculture.

That imprint is evident in Daniel Mukasa Ddamulira, Uganda's incoming Rotary District 9214 governor, who credits the Dutch for shaping his outlook during his studies at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague.

"Much of their land lies below sea level, yet instead of retreating, they engineered solutions – dikes, canals and the delta works," he said. "They did not surrender to nature, they negotiated with it."

From that experience, Ddamulira draws a leadership lesson: "Great challenges are not barriers, they are invitations to innovate. Leadership is not about reacting – it is about designing the future."

He was speaking at his homecoming ceremony hosted by the Rotary Club of Mengo on Monday, attended by Rotary leaders from districts 9213 and 9214 ahead of his term, starting July 1.

Dutch lessons propel Ddamulira to Rotary top job



Ddamulira (third-left) and his wife Alice Ddamulira (fourth-left) joined by Kitakule (left), Kyeyune (second-left), past district governor Stephen Mwanje (third-right) and other Rotarians in cutting the cake during Ddamulira's homecoming ceremony hosted by the Rotary Club of Mengo on Monday

Ddamulira becomes only the second governor from the club after the late Nelson Kawalya.

Since 2014, the Netherlands has supported the Best Farmers Competition, a flagship *New Vision* initiative that promotes agricultural

excellence and enables Ugandan farmers to learn from Dutch expertise.

Flanked by his wife, Canon Alice Ddamulira, Ddamulira said the Dutch model offers practical lessons for Rotary. He emphasised shared responsibility

"In Holland, if one dike fails, everyone suffers. Our projects must create co-owners, not beneficiaries." He also stressed consensus and long-term thinking, urging clubs to "build systems, not just solutions" and shift from one-off activities to lasting impact.

ABOUT DAMULIRA

Born in Rakai district to a schoolteacher, Daniel Mukasa Ddamulira rose to become a respected economist, serving at USAID Uganda, Bank of Uganda and Makerere University, before founding St Mark's College Namagoma in 2003.

"Let us build something that will outlast us," he said.

Ddamulira pledged to lead with data, knowledge and expertise.

"Let our service be not just heartfelt, but effective," he said, drawing applause from leaders, including governor Christine Kyeyune Kawooya and District 9213 governor Geoffrey Kitakule.

He urged clubs to prioritise engagement over attendance. "Our members purpose. When people are involved, they create impact," said, outlining a vision anchored stronger clubs, accountability, collaboration through multi-projects, alongside increased support to The Rotary Foundation.