

Equipment

Railway

Independence

Livelihood

First Lady calls for manufacturing skills

By Vision Reporter

The First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Janet Museveni, has encouraged students undergoing training in technical institutes to go a step further and produce equipment.

Mrs Museveni made the remarks after being taken around the various workshops at St Kizito Technical Institute Madera in Soroti district, where she was on a monitoring and familiarisation tour yesterday.

She visited the different departments of the institute, including the automotive mechanics, woodwork technology, plumbing, electrical installation and maintenance, fashion and garments, machining and fitting and the building construction departments.

"I am happy to hear these young people tell us what they are doing, but I would like them to do more. For example, they can start manufacturing simple things, like shower heads and sets, instead of ending at learning how to connect pipes and maintain the plumbing systems of bathrooms," Mrs Museveni said.

The First Lady said the Government is serious about promoting skills development in the country and is now equipping the technical institutes to train students to solve problems. She said Ugandans have ended up relying on other people to do the simplest of things, for instance, plumbing and electrical installations in the homes, because the country's education, for generations, has been focused on training students for white collar jobs.

She pointed out the importance of having skilled people, who not only do plumbing and electrical works, but also build railway lines and roads, if Uganda is to transform to a modern nation.

The education minister said there was need to re-skill the young unemployed university graduates so that they build the railway to link



Mrs Museveni (centre) at the St Kizito Technical Institute Madera department of woodwork last week. She advised the institute to establish a department that makes furniture for sale. PPU photo

Uganda to Kenya, Tanzania and Sudan as well as build and maintain our roads, instead of relying on foreign firms that charge lots of money.

"We now want to become a truly independent nation and it is only by developing such skills that we can transform and become a modern nation," she said.

Mrs Museveni appreciated the management of St Kizito Technical Institute Madera for ensuring that their institute runs well and advised them to establish a department that specialises in making furniture for sale. She said desks and chairs are

"We now want to become a truly independent nation," Mrs Museveni

particularly on demand by the schools that are sprouting up all over the country. She said the initiative would

enable the institute to make its own money, instead of always waiting for funds from elsewhere.

"This requires the leaders to plan and know how to grow the institute's income from within."

She advised the students to remember that they are training for their livelihood and, therefore, to acquire the necessary skills so as to excel in their endeavours and wherever they will be placed after school.

In her report, Beatrice Adutu, the principal, said the training centre, which attained technical institute status in 1986, benefited from the

Government of Uganda-African Development Bank funding in 2009, with which they constructed new infrastructure, including an administrative block, classroom blocks, dormitories, a multi-purpose hall and kitchen.

Adutu reported that the enrolment this year is at 502 students and that the institute does not have accommodation for staff.

The state minister for Teso affairs, Agnes Egunyu Akiror, pointed out that the poverty levels in Teso have increased from 17% to 34% and called on all leaders in the region to join hands on issues regarding their region's development.

The Teso leaders, including the Soroti LC5 chairperson, George William Egunyu; the MP of Serere who is also the chairperson for the Teso Parliamentary Group, Bishop Patrick Okabe and Kenneth Esiangu Eitunganane, the Soroti County MP, thanked President Yoweri Museveni and the Government for the modern university, technical institute and fruit factory that have been established in their region. They, however, requested the education ministry to consider rehabilitating some old schools that are in ruins, such as Pioneer Primary School and Madera School for the Blind.

They committed to mobilising more youth in the region to embrace technical education and skills development. They also appreciated the First Lady for launching the School Feeding and Nutrition campaign and pledged to advocate for it in the region.

Others who were in attendance were the staff and members of the board, the commissioner of Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training, Dr Hajat Safina Musene; Hellen Adoo, the Serere Woman MP; Jacob Opolot, the Pallisa County MP; Paul Omer, the mayor of Soroti Municipality and students and leaders of neighbouring institutes.