

# Protecting our cultural heritage through tourism

**Justification.** People are interested in watching anything associated to culture like ritual performances.

BY JOSEPH KATO  
jkato@ug.nationmedia.com

As the world celebrates World Tourism Day today, cultural heritage has evolved as one of the tourist attractions that earn communities and countries billions of money.

Mr Stephen Asiimwe, the Uganda Tourism Board (UTB) executive director, says culture is a big thing and one of tourism attractions. He adds that people are interested in watching anything associated to culture be it ritual performances or traditional norms.

Mr Swamadu Kabagambe, the director Hearts Travel and Kabah Taxi Company, describes cultural heritage as a manifestation of the ways of how people live in communities. This encompasses how

customs, practices, places, objects, ritual, artistic expressions and values are passed on from generation to another.

According to culture development website, cultural heritage is often expressed as either intangible or tangible cultural heritage. Cultural heritage contains noticeable and palpable traces from remnant to the recent past. It produces tangible depictions of the value schemes, beliefs, ethnicity and lifestyles. Culture can be characterised in built environment, natural environment and artifacts. Culture is also exhibited in forms of intangibles such as voices, values, traditions and oral history.

## Manifestation

Mr Kabagambe says heritage involves other things such as cuisine, clothing, shelter, traditional skills, technologies, religious ceremonies, performing arts, and storytelling. The cultural resources in Uganda include Kasubi Tombs, the Uganda



**The Acholi perform their traditional dance recently. Tourism sector players says there is increasing appreciation of cultural tourism across the country.** PHOTO BY CISSY MAKUMBI

National Cultural Centre and the Uganda National Museum.

Mr Asiimwe says there is increasing emergence and appreciation of community-based museums spread across the country in addition to festivals such as Nyege-Nyege Cultural Festival and Kampala City Festival.

Nshenyi Village located in Ntungamo District is one of the community based tourism villages that started seven years ago. With

community tourism, different people are brought together to visit different communities and experience their culture.

Nshenyi is a typical homestead with many farmers growing millet, banana, local tomatoes, cattle keeping bee keeping in rocks and caves. Tourists engage in the activities and even cook for themselves as part of the community.

Currently, community museums number up to 30 in all the four re-

gions. These community museums include Igongo Cultural Museum in Mbarara, Cultural Research Centre in Jinja, Museum of Acholi Art and Culture in Kitgum, Cultural Assets Centre Museum in Kagadi and St Luke's Community Museum in Rakai, among others.

Both Asiimwe and Kabagambe describe cultural tourism as virgin in the country since it is not yet fully exploited; and they want government to improve infrastructure.