RUGBY DESERVES FUNDS

By Silvano Kibuuka

PHOTO BY SILVANO KIBUUKA



Rugby Africa president Herbert Mensah (R) and Kayangwe during the assembly

Rugby Africa president, Herbert Mensah, has challenged Government to inject substantial funding into rugby, saying the country has the potential to qualify for the Rugby World Cup.

Mensah made the call during the closure of 17th Rugby Africa General Assembly at Kabira Country Club in Bukoto, Kampala on Friday.

"If Uganda rugby can get 10 percent of the money invested in football, Uganda has the potential of qualifying for the World Cup," noted Mensah in an apparent reference to the sh17b invested in local football.

Mensah, however, commended the Government for commitment to developing rugby infrastructure as one of the pathways for advancing sport in the country.

Uganda is preparing to host the 2027 HSBC Africa Sevens Championship.

During the assembly that drew delegates from 32-member countries across the continent, Uganda Rugby Union (URU) president Godwin Kayangwe was unanimously elected to the Executive Committee of Rugby Africa for a four-year term.

Mauritius Rugby Union president, Kevin Venkiah was elected Treasurer.

Following his election, Kayangwe hailed World Rugby for its continued recognition and expansion of the game across Africa.

He also expressed gratitude to Government for creating an enabling environment for sports development.

"It was important for Uganda to decide to host the assembly. We now have a voice up there not to help only Uganda but all the unions on the continent," Kayangwe noted.

"We want to see interesting rugby in Africa with a target of having at least three African countries representing the continent at the World Cup," he added.

Beyond the elections, the assembly focused largely on administrative matters within the executive committee and on strengthening standards that bind member unions in the development of the game.

Among the constitutional amendments passed was the formal adoption of the body's official identity from Africa Rugby Union (ARU) to Rugby Africa (RA).

The previous Anglophone and Francophone divisions were replaced with North and South regional groupings, aligning with World Rugby structures.

Other key reforms include expanding organisational objectives to cover environmental sustainability, safeguarding player welfare, and promoting gender equality within executive committees—ensuring that neither gender holds less than 40 percent representation.

The Executive Committee membership was also expanded from seven to eleven members.

The new Executive Committee comprises Mensah and board member, Nasser Bougja (vice president), Clare Barrell (director of International relations) and Coralie Van Den Berg as (regional partnership Manager).

Others are Maha Zaoui (general manager of Rugby Africa), Kevin Venkiah (treasurer and executive Committee member) and Kayangwe (executive committee member).

The next General Assembly is scheduled to take place in Morocco in 2027.