Daily Monitor
WEDNESDAY,
NOVEMBER 27, 2019
www.monitor.co.ug

Japanese firm eyes Uganda as hub for hi-tech sanitary ware. Japanes firm Asahi Eito has introduced hi-tech bathroom fittings on the Ugandan market. While giving her speech, the Minister of State for Lands, Persis Namuganza, said, "As government, we have the mandate to attract investors into the country. Asahi Eito have plans of making Uganda their base in East Africa." [Monitor reporter]

Poor investment in children weakens future workforce

Malnutrition. Statistics indicate that more than a quarter of children under five suffer chronic malnutrition.

BY ISMAIL MUSA LADU
iladu@ug.nationmedia.com

KAMPALA. Child poverty in Uganda remains one of the highest on the continent according to specialists. If left unaddressed, there will be problems for the future workforce.

According to analysts such as Mr Julius Kapwepwe, the programmes director Uganda Debt Network (UDN), the poor state of affairs for children will result into low skills levels in the future, describing the move as bad news for the economy.

Uganda has one of the youngest populations in the world, with more than half of its 40 million people being children.

But many children - especially in rural areas - still live in poverty and without basic necessities.

Only one in five children complete primary school, according to Save the Children, a 60 year-old organisation working to ensure that every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

Statistics by the same organisation further indicate that more than a quarter of children under five suffer chronic malnutrition, 75 per cent of children experience violence.

At least 10 per cent of girls are married before they are 15, and a quarter experienced sexual violence in the past year.

Worse still, essential services such as schools and health facilities are overcrowded and under-resourced. Laws and policies that could make a positive difference to children's lives have been passed, they are seldom enforced. Rural youth struggle to find decent work.

Presented during the stakeholder conference on investing in children in Uganda, Ms Imelda Namagga, the programme manager at UDN noted that ccurrently, over 41 per cent of expenditure on health services is out-of-pocket expenditure by households which is high with significant effects on household incomes for those below the poverty line.

Implication

This implies most households will either delay or forego access to health-care and consequently fail to provide health care to their children.

Ms Namagga further indicated that about 8.1 million children in Uganda live under conditions of serious deprivation or danger threatening their survival and wellbeing.

According to the National Planning Authority, 8 per cent of children in Uganda are critically vulnerable, 43 per cent are moderately vulnerable while 55 per cent of children under five years of age are affected by child poverty.

All this, according to Mr Patrick Tumwebaze, the Executive Director UDN, tells a story of what the economy will be grappling with in the near future.

Speaking in a sideline interview of the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the rights of the child, Mr Tumwebaze said: "The future of the country including the economy is doomed if nothing is done about the plight of the children. Investment in children's future should be a priority rather than a periphery issue."

Mr McDonald Alun, head of advocacy and communications, Save the Children International Uganda, said the quality of education should be strengthened.

Affected. Children play in a water drainage channel in Katanga, one of the slums in Kampala. Children are most likely to be affected by severe outbreaks of cholera, malaria, typhoid, bilharzia and other fatal water-borne diseases. PHOTO BY ALEX ESAGALA

INVESTMENTS IN SECTORS AFFECTING CHILDREN

The FY 2019/20 national budget focuses on interventions aimed at increasing wealth and improving the livelihoods of all Ugandans.

The total budget of Shs40.487 trillion, is financed by among others, tax and non-tax revenue and borrowing – both domestically and externally.

Out of this budget, child focused sectors have the following allocations;

Education: Shs3.4 trillion, takes the third position in the share of the budget at 10.39 per cenr of the total national budget.

The health sector occupies the sixth position with an allocation of Shs2.6 trillion which is 7.9 per cent of the total national budget.

Digital platform to link women entrepreneurs

BY DOROTHY NAKAWEESI
dnakaweesi@ug.nationmedia.com

KAMPALA. Business women can now expand their markets thanks to a new online platform.

It will allow women in 38 African countries to find information on running businesses, accessing financial services, create business opportunities online and access training resources, thus contributing to their economic empowerment.

The platform -50 Million African Women Speak - was unveiled yesterday during the Global Gender Summit in Kigali, Rwanda's capital.

It seeks to economically empower women by providing a one-stop shop for a wide range of financial and non-financial services that women need to start and grow successful businesses.

The initiative is implemented by the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC) and the Economic Community of West African States.

Comesa Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe said: "The creation of this platform is a very practical way of speaking to the general agenda of empowering women."

Through a robust social networking functionality that has been embedded in the platform, women will have opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, mentoring and sharing information and knowledge, connecting via the web-based platform or through the 50 Million African Women Speak mobile app.

The platform comes at a time when Sub-Saharan Africa hosts close to 13 million formal and informal small and medium-sized enterprises with one or more women owners.

Yet only 16 to 20 per cent of women entrepreneurs can access long-term financing from formal financial institutions to scale up their businesses.

With a financing gap for women entrepreneurs across business value chains in Sub-Saharan Africa estimated at $42 billion by the African Development Bank, the 50 Million African Women Speak platform stands out as a unique solution to provide information on available financial products.

THE POTENTIAL

The platform has the potential to unleash a dynamic online community of women entrepreneurs whose business activities transcend borders.