



# NEWSLETTER

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2025



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE	TITLE OF ARTICLE
02	Message from the WHO Representative
03	WHO Director-General visits Uganda, reaffirms country support
03	Uganda holds Ebola outbreak accountability forum
03	Uganda conducts filovirus full scale response simulation
04	Ministry of Health commissions refurbished health facilities
04	Uganda commemorates 2025 world patient safety day
04	Communities urged to embrace self-care for better health
05	WHO boosts capacity to tackle sexual misconduct in emergencies
05	Uganda launches adult tobacco survey report
05	WHO boosts maternal and newborn health in Bunyoro region
06	WHO Uganda champions breastfeeding at the workplace
06	Stakeholders rally support for breastfeeding
06	Uganda launches final phase of Yellow Fever vaccination
07	WHO strengthens country emergency response capacity
07	Resilience through change: Supporting mental well-being at WHO
07	WHO and partners spotlight health equity for national development
08	2gether4 SRHR steering committee assesses progress in Uganda
08	WHO supports NDA's journey towards regulatory maturity
09	The power of partnerships

## Message from the WHO Representative



Dear partners,

Welcome to the third quarter edition of the WHO Uganda Newsletter, a reflection of our collective efforts to advance health equity, strengthen emergency preparedness, and promote people-centered care across the country.

In August, WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus visited Uganda, meeting with President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni to discuss key health priorities including sustainable financing, local pharmaceutical production, and public health insurance. He also addressed the country office staff, offering reassurance during WHO's global reprioritization process.

This quarter, we celebrate significant milestones in maternal and newborn health, with WHO's support to Bunyoro and Busoga regions through infrastructure upgrades, training, and provision of essential equipment. We also joined the Ministry of Health and partners in commemorating World Patient Safety Day and World Breastfeeding Week, reaffirming our commitment to protecting every child and empowering every mother.

Uganda's leadership in self-care was spotlighted through high-level dialogues and community mobilization in Butebo district, showcasing how self-care interventions are transforming health access and resilience. Our continued support to emergency preparedness was evident in the successful Ebola Accountability Forum, the full-scale simulation exercise in Jinja, and the surge training of 78 multidisciplinary responders.

Importantly, we deepened our commitment to safeguarding dignity during emergencies by integrating prevention and response to sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment into all emergency operations. Strategic campaigns in Ebola-affected districts and capacity-building efforts have strengthened community protection and accountability.

Within WHO Uganda, we prioritized staff well-being through mental health literacy sessions and the establishment of a breastfeeding space—demonstrating that health begins in the workplace. We also joined the Ministry of Health in launching the 2023 Global Adult Tobacco Survey, reaffirming our commitment to protecting youth from tobacco harm.

These stories reflect our shared vision: a healthier, safer, and more resilient Uganda. We thank our partners, health workers, and communities for their unwavering dedication and invite you to continue walking this journey with us.

**Dr Kasonde Mwinga**

# WHO Director-General visits Uganda to reaffirm country level support

On 19 August 2025, WHO Uganda hosted Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO, at a time when the organization is undergoing a global reprioritization process to strengthen its future impact. Dr Tedros engaged with staff, addressing key challenges and offering reassurance that WHO will emerge sharper, stronger, independent, and more relevant to the world. He emphasized that the reprioritization is being conducted transparently, with fairness and humanity, with a strong commitment to preserving jobs, especially in country offices where WHO's presence is most critical. Dr Tedros also met with President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, at Nakasero State Lodge, to discuss priorities for Uganda's health sector, including sustainable financing, local pharmaceutical manufacturing, and public health insurance. [READ MORE...](#)



Dr Tedros (L) with President Museveni (R) at Nakasero State Lodge. © PPU



Dr Tedros interacts with staff at the WHO Uganda country office.

## Uganda holds Ebola accountability forum

The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with WHO and partners, held a national Ebola outbreak accountability forum on 24 July 2025 to evaluate Uganda's response to the 2025 outbreak and strengthen future preparedness. Over 100 stakeholders convened in Kampala to reflect on operational performance, coordination, and lessons learned.

The 2025 Ebola outbreak, was successfully contained, within 87 days, through strong leadership, partner support, and robust surveillance—resulting in zero fatalities among admitted patients. [READ MORE...](#)



Uganda's Health minister Dr Jane Ruth Aceng (Front row, 4th left), WHO Representative Dr Kasonde Mwinga (Front row, 3<sup>rd</sup> left) and other partners at the 2025 Ebola outbreak accountability forum.

## Uganda conducts filovirus full scale response simulation exercise

With support from WHO, and funding from the European Union's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG-ECHO), Ministry of Health conducted a full-scale simulation exercise in Jinja City on 14–18 July 2025 to strengthen emergency health response capabilities. The exercise, held under the INITIATE<sup>2</sup> project, tested the deployment of the Infectious Disease Treatment Module (IDTM) for managing viral haemorrhagic fevers such as Ebola. The simulation also tested international medical evacuation protocols using an epishuttle. [READ MORE](#)



A simulation on medical evacuation using an epishuttle.

# Ministry of Health, WHO, KOICA commission refurbished health facilities in Busoga

The Ministry of Health, in partnership with WHO and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), commissioned 28 refurbished health facilities in the districts of Iganga, Mayuge, Bugiri, Buyende and Kamuli. The commissioning was at Bulamagi Health Centre III in Iganga district on 4 July 2025.

The USD 10 million project focused on infrastructure upgrades, solar lighting, water systems, cold chain, and medical equipment to enhance reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health services in Busoga region. With adolescent-friendly spaces and improved working conditions for health workers, early results show increased antenatal care attendance and greater community engagement.

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WHO Representative Dr Kasonde Mwinga (first, left), Ministry of Health Permanent Secretary Dr Diana Atwine (middle) and KOICA Country Director Jihae Ahn commissioning the refurbished health facilities.

# Uganda commemorates 2025 World Patient Safety day with a call to protect every child

The Ministry of Health, in partnership with WHO and other stakeholders, commemorated World Patient Safety Day on 15 September 2025 at Mpumude Health Centre IV in Jinja City under the theme “Safe care for every newborn and every child” and the slogan “**Safety from the start!**”.

The event brought together diverse stakeholders to reaffirm their commitment to preventing avoidable harm in health care, especially for newborns and children. The commemoration aimed to raise awareness, mobilize action, empower families, and advocate for research, contributing to Uganda’s journey toward universal health coverage.

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Stakeholders at the national commemoration of World Patient Safety day 2025. ©JICA

# Communities urged to embrace self-care for better health and well-being

On 31 July 2025, Uganda commemorated the 2025 International Self-Care Day in Butebo district with a nationwide call to embrace self-care as a key pillar of public health, under the theme “Self-Care Interventions for Health and Wellbeing: Unleashing Young Persons’ Potential.” The event brought together government leaders, UN agencies, civil society, and communities to promote self-care as a pathway to universal health coverage. The celebration highlighted self-care as a transformative, people-centered approach that strengthens health systems, promotes dignity, and builds resilience across Uganda.

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Prior to the national commemoration, Ministry of Health, with support from WHO, organized a high-level policy dialogue on 30 July 2025 in Butebo, to operationalize Uganda’s national self-care guidelines. Uganda’s guidelines, launched in 2024, focus on self-awareness, self-testing, and self-management across key health areas including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and non-communicable diseases. With WHO’s support, these practices are being integrated into district health systems and training curricula, transforming health workers into coaches and partners.

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WHO’s Dr Bodo Bongomin and Yosuf Amran interact with stakeholders at the 2025 International Self-care day national commemoration at Butebo

# WHO strengthens capacity to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct in emergencies

The recent Ebola outbreak in Uganda deepened economic and power imbalances, increasing risks for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment among vulnerable groups.

With support from the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), on 21 July-01 August 2025, WHO collaborated with the Government of Uganda to equip 78 multidisciplinary emergency responders with skills for rapid deployment, embedding prevention and response to sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment into emergency operations.

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On 1-4 July 2025, WHO, supported by the European Union, also held capacity-building sessions on sexual misconduct for 83 participants, including health workers, leaders, and educators from Fort Portal, Kabarole, and Kyegegwa districts.

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Emergency responders flash the #NoExcuse sign, after attending a session on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation during outbreaks.

# Uganda launches adult tobacco survey report

On 16 July 2025, Uganda launched the 2023 Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) report during the 2025 World No Tobacco Day commemoration in Kampala, revealing a decline in overall tobacco use from 7.9% in 2013 to 6.7% in 2023, with notable reductions among women and in secondhand smoke exposure.

Despite progress, the report highlights rising tobacco use among youth, driven by aggressive marketing of products such as shisha and e-cigarettes. Supported by WHO, Uganda has trained law enforcers and customs officers, empowered student leaders, and drafted new regulations.

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Ministry of Health, WHO and other stakeholders during the launch of the GATS report.

# WHO boosts maternal and newborn health in Bunyoro region

WHO strengthened its support for maternal and newborn health in Uganda by donating vital information technology equipment—including a laptop, projector, and printer—to the Bunyoro local maternity and neonatal systems at Hoima Regional Referral Hospital on 22 September 2025. The handover took place at WHO country office in Kampala.

Ministry of Health established the local maternity and neonatal systems, a subnational catalytic mechanism to coordinate and build synergies among stakeholders within regions, to improve maternal and newborn health care service delivery. The system covers the districts of Kibaale, Kagadi, Kakumiro, Kikuube, Hoima, Buliisa, Masindi, Kiryandongo, and Hoima City.

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WHO hands over information technology equipment to Dr Ibrahim Bwaga (Right) from Hoima Regional Hospital.

# WHO Uganda champions breastfeeding at the workplace

At WHO Uganda, investing in breastfeeding is a vital public health and workplace commitment. The country office has introduced a dedicated breastfeeding space to support working mothers and promote optimal infant nutrition.

This comfortable, private room enables mothers to express or breastfeed during the workday, reducing stress and enhancing well-being. Staff members have welcomed the initiative as a step towards greater inclusion, health equity, and a supportive work environment. By making breastfeeding and work, work, WHO Uganda is helping build healthier families, and communities. [READ MORE](#)



Ms Maria Mugisa breastfeeds her baby in the WHO Uganda breastfeeding room.



Dr Jackline Karungi, WHO Uganda Staff Health and Wellbeing officer plays with a baby inside the country office breastfeeding room.

## Stakeholders rally support for breastfeeding

Uganda marked World Breastfeeding Week 2025 (1-7 August 2025) with a high-level breakfast meeting on 12 August 2025 in Kampala under the theme **‘Invest in Breastfeeding, Invest in the Future,’** aligning with WHO’s campaign **‘Healthy beginnings, hopeful futures’**.

The event brought together government leaders, partners, and civil society to reaffirm breastfeeding as vital to child survival, maternal health, and national development.

Stakeholders called for stronger policies, increased investment, and the establishment of breast milk banks to support vulnerable newborns. The meeting emphasized that breastfeeding is not just a maternal role but a national responsibility requiring collective action to secure the health and prosperity of future generations.

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Ministry of Health Director General Dr Charles Olaro ( Front row, 4th left) and other stakeholders at the World Breastfeeding Week 2025 commemoration in Kampala.

## Uganda launches final phase of Yellow Fever vaccination

On 30 September 2025, WHO joined Ministry of Health, Gavi and other partners at the launch of the final phase of the Yellow Fever preventive vaccination campaign in 17 districts to boost immunization efforts across Uganda. The launch was held in Iganga district. Through coordinated efforts, over 26 million Ugandans aged 1 to 60 years have already received the life-saving yellow fever vaccine during the earlier phases since June 2023. 27 African countries, including Uganda, have been classified as being at high risk of Yellow Fever. [READ MORE](#)



A Health worker administers the Yellow Fever vaccine.

# WHO strengthens country emergency response capacity

With support from the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), WHO and the Government of Uganda trained 78 multidisciplinary responders under the AVoHC-SURGE programme, a collaborative initiative between WHO and Africa CDC, designed to strengthen emergency preparedness and response capacity across Africa, including in Uganda. The training was on 21 July-01 August 2025 in Kampala.

This flagship initiative equips teams with skills in outbreak investigation, coordination, risk assessment, and rapid deployment, reflecting a One Health approach that integrates human, animal, and environmental health sectors. Participants from ministries including health, agriculture, and defence engaged in intensive simulations to build readiness for emergencies like Ebola, Marburg, and cholera. [READ MORE](#)



British High Commissioner, H.E Lisa Chesney MBE (2nd right) hands over certificates of participation to the emergency responders.

## Resilience through change: Supporting mental well-being at WHO Uganda

As the global funding landscape continues to shift, WHO Uganda has placed the mental health and well-being of its personnel at the forefront. Recognizing the stress and uncertainty brought on by organizational transitions, the office has embedded mental health literacy and stress management into staff engagements, while offering accessible, confidential support services for all personnel and their dependents.

These include in-house and external counselling, an employee assistance program and insurance covered therapy. Creating a mentally healthy workplace is a commitment at WHO Uganda that fosters a resilient, engaged, productive workforce. [READ MORE](#)



A mental health awareness session at the WHO Uganda country office.

## WHO and partners spotlight health equity for national development

On 3 September 2025, WHO Uganda joined the Ministry of Health, Center for Health, Human Rights and Development (CEHURD), and the Office of the Prime Minister at the second Uganda National Conference on Health, Human Rights and Development, held in Kampala under the theme: "Right to Health: Bridging Gaps Across Sectors to Achieve Equitable Health for All."

During the conference, WHO presented key highlights from the World Report on Social Determinants of Health Equity, emphasizing strategies to advance health equity by addressing the root causes of inequality. The conference reaffirmed the importance of cross-sector collaboration in realizing the right to health for every Ugandan. [READ MORE](#)



A panel discussion at the Uganda National Conference on Health, Human Rights and Development. © CEHURD Uganda

# 2gether 4 SRHR regional steering committee assesses progress in Uganda

The regional inter-agency steering committee of the *2gether 4 SRHR* project visited Uganda, 7-12 September 2025, to assess progress and engage stakeholders. Funded by the regional sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) team of Sweden, the program promotes access to integrated sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV, and gender based violence services across East and Southern Africa, leveraging the strengths of UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, and WHO under the “Delivering as One” approach. The committee, comprising senior representatives from the four UN agencies and SIDA, provides strategic oversight and monitors implementation.

During the visit, the committee toured Kamuli district, engaging with local leadership and visiting Kamuli General Hospital, Bulopa Health Centre IV, and Kitayunjwa Health Centre III to observe WHO-supported initiatives in antenatal and post-abortion care, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health scorecard use, and male engagement strategies to combat teenage pregnancy. The delegation also met His Royal Highness William Wilberforce Gabula Nadiope IV, the King of Busoga Kingdom and national goodwill ambassador for ending teen pregnancy, who is leading the “*Absadha Mpango*” campaign to mobilize male leaders. The visit concluded with a steering committee meeting in Kampala, urging accelerated implementation and impact documentation.



*Heads of UN agencies in Uganda during a photo moment with the King of Busoga Kingdom, HRH William Gabula Nadiope IV (centre) after a royal dinner.*

## WHO supports National Drug Authority's journey towards regulatory maturity

WHO continues to play a vital role in strengthening national regulatory systems for medical products. Following a high-level mission to Uganda in January 2025, WHO recommended a self-benchmarking assessment of the National Drug Authority (NDA), which was conducted with WHO support 25-28 August 2025. The assessment reviewed progress since the 2019 benchmarking, where NDA was rated at Maturity Level 1. Although Maturity Level 3 was not yet achieved, the exercise marked a key investment by WHO toward that goal. It identified strengths and gaps, leading to an updated capacity strengthening plan for NDA.



*The assessment team outside the National Drug Authority offices in Kampala.*

# The power of partnerships

We extend our sincere appreciation to all our partners who have contributed to our work in supporting the Government and the people of Uganda. We rely on your continued support and collaboration in ensuring the continuity of essential health services, improving the health and well-being of people, and responding to the most urgent needs of the health sector. We can only meet our goals through the power of partnership.



CFE Contributors



Partners from WHO, Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) and the United Kingdom after a meeting to review the inception report for the virtual pool for development assistance for health.

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