

3 NU LAUNCHES BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY BRANCH

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Busitema University became the fourth **NatureUganda** branch, after Gulu University, Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU), and Mbarara University of Science and Technology. On the 19th February 2014, **NatureUganda** launched Busitema university branch at Nagongera campus. The launch was graced by the Vice Chairperson of **NatureUganda**, Ms Nantongo Pauline. She also handed over office equipment to support the coordination of activities to the branches (Busitema and IUIU). The equipment included; computers, binoculars and books. These were handed over to the branch coordinators of the two universities.



Deputy VC, Dr. Samuel Baker Kucel

The Deputy Vice Chancellor of Busitema University, Dr. Samuel Baker Kucel on behalf of the Vice Chancellor, Prof. J. N. Mary Okwakol said that the partnership between the University and **NatureUganda** will stimulate sustainable developmental issues which are in line with the University's mission. He noted that the partnership will also benefit the university and the community as well as the region with some of the outreach programmes that are relevant to the needs of the community.

The day begun with a nature walk and bird counting exercises that started as early as 0600 hours to Tororo Rock and Golf Course in Tororo municipality. These activities included taking note of the sound of the birds, watching and recognising. This was followed by taking a hike on Tororo rock. These exercises involved staff from **NatureUganda**, and staff and students from Busitema University, Nagongera campus. There were a total of 29 bird species counted during the birding exercise. **NatureUganda** operates through branches which are set up in various institutions of higher learning across Uganda. Membership is **NatureUganda's** constituency and strength where conservation, research and information dissemination is done by members.

The patron of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) programme, Mrs. Margaret Ujejo Suubi said that, the merger between **NatureUganda** and Busitema University will improve on the environmental conservation drive within the university campuses and the neighbouring communities. The student chairperson of ESD, Mr. Ivan Oyege said that the ESD programme involving outreach programmes, sensitisation and awareness campaigns that include sanitation and hygiene, career guidance, HIV/AIDS counselling, tree planting, as well as garbage collection and cleaning will improve with **NatureUganda** on board. He outlined the future and general plans for the ESD programme which will include extending ESD to other campuses and creating a strong bond between Busitema University campuses and **NatureUganda**.

Dr. Edward Andama, the dean faculty of Science and Education, and coordinator of **NatureUganda** activities at Busitema University, thanked the organisation for launching a branch at the University. He said that the marriage will be relevant to the university and the surrounding communities to have a great impact on natural resource conservation. He noted that the ESD programme is not for learning purposes alone, but to show how important the campus is to the adjacent communities on sustainable development ideas.

The Ag Executive Director Mr. Michael Opige thanked Busitema University for the warm welcome. He said that **NatureUganda** is a membership, research-based and conservation organisation that strives to create a nature-friendly public, enhance knowledge of Uganda's natural history, take action to conserve priority species, sites and habitats, and advocates for policies favourable to the environment. He said that the partnership between **NatureUganda** and Busitema University will propel conservation issues.

In her remarks, Ms. Nantongo said that the branch is now the second in the Eastern region and that it will probably serve the Eastern and North Eastern part of Uganda. She gave a background about **NatureUganda** noting that it was started by a team of scientists, naturalists and professional hunters with interest in the natural world in what was then called British East Africa to form a Society.



Group at the launch of NU Branch, Busitema University

Busitema University is the first multi-campus public University established by the Act of Parliament of Uganda in the year 2007. The main campus is located at Busitema, along Jinja-Malaba Highway, about 27 KMs South West of Tororo Town. The University has five operational campuses and one Study Centre located in Tororo Municipality. The Faculty of Engineering is located at Busitema campus, Science and Education located at Nagongera campus, Faculty of Agriculture and Animal Sciences located at Arapai campus, Faculty of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences located at Namasagali campus and Faculty of Health Sciences located at Mbale Campus (within the Mbale Referral Hospital). Other upcoming faculties are; Faculty of Management Sciences located at Pallisa Campus and Faculty of Vocational Education at Kaliro Campus.