

Minister re-assures beneficiaries on increased mobile money costs

By Hakim Mutesasira

The increment in charges for MTN mobile money services that have recently taken effect in the country will not affect the grant amount received by beneficiaries of the Senior Citizens Grants and Vulnerable Family Grants under the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (**SAGE**).

The Minister for Gender, Labour and Social Development, Mary Karoro Okurut made the assurance during her visit to beneficiaries in Nebbi district, one of the piloting districts of the Programme on June 28.

She said that the Programme meets all the costs associated with delivering the grants and so beneficiaries will receive in full the stipulated UGX 24,000 as all transaction costs will have been covered by the Programme. She said beneficiaries whose money was deducted by the system during the increment transition will be re-imbursed.

Karoro praised especially the Senior Citizens Grants as making substantial impacts in people's lives. She said the Government is exploring ways to ensuring that the Programme is sustained and expanded to cover other parts of the country, beyond the 14 current pilot districts.

Currently the Programme is implemented in the 14 piloting districts of Apac, Kole, Nebbi, Kaberamaido, Kiboga, Kyankwanzi, Katakwi, Kyegegwa, Kyenjonjo, Moroto, Napak, Nakapiripirit, Amudat and Zombo.

By June, the Programme was reaching over 74,000 beneficiaries spread across 99 sub-counties in the 14 districts, disbursing UGX 1.8 billion every month.

Speaking at the same event, Daniel Graymore, Head of Office in Uganda for the UK's Department for International Development, who also spoke on behalf of development partners- Irish Aid and UNICEF, said they were impressed by the good implementation of the Programme. He said they were able to see the real impact that the direct income support is making in the communities.

Hakim Mutesasira reports for UBC TV