



The First Lady, Mrs Janet Museveni, with Princess Marie of Denmark and Danish Ambassador to Uganda Nicolaj Petersen during the cocktail reception at the ambassador's residence in Kololo, Kampala on Saturday. PPU photo

First Lady commends Princess Marie of Denmark

By Vision Reporter

The First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Mrs Janet Museveni, on Saturday joined the Danish Ambassador to Uganda, Nicolaj Hejberg Petersen and other friends of the Danish people at the ambassador's residence in Kololo for a cocktail reception in honour of Her Royal Highness Princess Marie of Denmark, who was visiting Uganda for the first time.

The First Lady welcomed Princess Marie, who is also protector of the DanishChurchAid and commended her personal effort in raising funds for the faith-based organisation in order to sustain the projects that the people of Uganda have benefitted from over the years.

She expressed gratitude, on behalf of the Government and people of Uganda, to the government and people of Denmark for the long-standing friendship between the two nations and for the substantial and consistent financial aid.

Mrs Museveni said the bond between Uganda and the Scandinavian countries goes beyond that of donor and recipient. She said it is an enduring bond of friendship, tried and tested by time.

"When we in this country were going through a rough period of political tyranny and turmoil, during the 1980s, this group of nations received us with open arms as we fled from a brutal dictator and a civil war. They sheltered us and cared for us so well that many of us still keep good memories of our time in Denmark and Sweden," she explained.

Mrs Museveni commended the Danish people for helping Uganda

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Princess Marie

as it cares for the vulnerable communities of people fleeing from terror in their own countries to seek refuge in Uganda.

"They have assisted us to ensure that refugees, refugee-hosting communities, displaced persons and communities in distress access life-saving and social economic services to become self-reliant," she said.

She also lauded the work they are doing for the stressed communities in Karamoja, Teso, Bunyoro and Acholi and their consistent desire to save lives and defend human rights.

As education minister, she appreciated the Danish toy maker LEGO Foundation and other stakeholders for the \$100m grant to Uganda and other countries to assist in promoting play-based early learning solutions for pre-primary and primary school age children impacted by humanitarian crisis.

Princess Marie, who was in Uganda since February 25, visited DanishChurchAid-supported programmes in Kampala, northern Uganda and eastern Uganda, where she engaged with poor farmer community members and urban and

rural youth. She also visited Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement in Arua and interacted with the refugees and refugee-hosting communities.

Princess Marie expressed gratitude for the hospitality and kindness that she received since she arrived in Uganda. She said she was touched to see the good collaboration between DanishChurchAid and local communities.

She said she had witnessed the climate change challenges Uganda is experiencing and how the country, in collaboration with DanishChurchAid and DANIDA, are seeking to address these challenges.

"This great collaboration between DanishChurchAid, the Danish ministry of foreign affairs, local partners and the Government of Uganda must continue," she advised.

The DanishChurchAid organisation has been in Uganda for over 40 years and through their efforts, thousands of farmers, women and youth have been strengthened and have improved their livelihoods.

Ambassador Nicolaj said Princess Marie witnessed Uganda's progressive open-door policy

towards refugees from its neighbours during her visit to Rhino settlement. He added that Denmark strongly supports the open-door policy and has recently committed more funds to help Uganda in its efforts to fulfil the education response plan for refugees and host communities led by the First Lady.

He said Denmark's efforts in Uganda include programmes to teach both host communities and refugee farmers how to increase productivity in a climate-friendly way, training in economics, plus sexual and reproductive health and rights education.

He thanked Mrs Museveni for the approval of the National Sexuality Education Framework for Uganda and for her efforts to secure education for all in Uganda.

Ambassador Nicolaj thanked Princess Marie for her efforts in promoting the work of DanChurchAid, saying the sincerity with which she promotes and appreciates the activities is inspiring. He said Princess Marie's love for children and care for the weak that she exhibited during her visit is an example to all.

He thanked DanishChurchAid for its tireless efforts in development and humanitarian work in Uganda and congratulated them for the impressive results achieved.

The cocktail reception was graced by ambassadors, the representative and secretary general of DanishChurchAid, representatives of the UN, development partners, private sector and civil society, staff of the Royal Danish Embassy plus the press from Denmark, among others.