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Hijra Report On World Day To Combat Desertification In Oruchinga Valley (Kibwera) 2015

The persistent degradation of dry land ecosystems by variations in climate and human activities (Desertification) is one of the greatest environmental challenges today and a major barrier to meeting basic human needs in dry lands especially water, clothes and food; thus affecting the livelihoods of millions of people who rely on the benefits that dry land ecosystems can provide.

In this regard, the World Day to Combat Desertification has been observed since 1995 to promote public awareness relating to international cooperation to combat desertification and the effects of drought as declared in 1994 by the United Nations General Assembly (General Assembly Resolution A/RES/49/115) June 17 the "World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought".

This year in Uganda, Kibwera a neighboring village of Oruchinga refugee Settlement was selected as the host due to its location in the South Western dry cattle corridor ecological zone of the country.

In addition to joining the rest of the invited organizations, HIJRA played a crucial role by taking lead in mobilizing and organizing the refugees and the adjacent host community who actively participated in the function. The mobilized groups included: 2 School clubs and 2 community groups; one of which was from the hosting community



Figure 1: The Oruchinga valley stream in the center has a swamp running from Kibwera to Kagera River in the south Western part of the settlement.

The function which commenced on 15th to 17th June 2015 with exhibitions on daily basis impressed the guest of honor and the other guests due to the amazing innovations. Additionally, the minister for animal and agriculture advised the agricultural and production personnel in the district to always use the technical



Figure 2: Guest of honor and team inspect exhibitions.

People to promote production with relative utilization values and means of production

Meanwhile, with the slogan for the celebration being, **‘No such thing as a free lunch. Invest in healthy soil’**, the following actions were called for:

Sustainable land Management; a change in our land use practices through smart agriculture and

adaptation to changing climate, especially in the dry fragile parts of the world where food shortages are becoming more and more severe

Access to technology and land rights for small holder farmers who safeguard the environment and meet the food needs of millions of households, especially among the poorest households

A balance in the land use for ecology and consumption, drawing on the best practices

More investments in sustainable land practices so that sustainable food systems become the normal practice

More effective action on desertification whose effects on security, peace and stability are invisible yet real for the affected countries due especially to food and water scarcity and environmentally forced migration.

The brick making project for ex-detainees from Busheka village

Life usually is not easy after detention as most of them lose everything and have to start from scratch. For one to be able to sustain his/her life, it is not that easy. Well, some people just don't seem to give up so easily even after falling several times. In Oruchinga Refugee Settlement, four (4) ex-detainees have proven beyond doubt that life has to continue no matter what happens. With support from HIJRA through the guidance, psycho-social support and counselling rendered to them, these persons of concern have been empowered to find a way forward of tackling their issues as ex-detainees and support their livelihood activities thus significantly improving on their household income. Now undertaking a brick making project in Busheka zone in Busheka village, the ex-detainees seem to have a bright future ahead of them



Figure 3: Brick making income generating activity by the persons previously detained in progress.

During the field monitoring visit conducted, it was discovered that:

1,190 Un-burnt bricks had been made and were due to be burnt

Currently they sell the bricks at Uganda shillings 150/= @

They have managed to sale off 340 bricks at UGX.51,000/= and that they used these proceeds to buy 01 duck at UGX.15,000/=, 01 template for molding bricks at UGX.1,000/= and 01 Bar of Soap at UGX.4,000/= as visible success stories.

However, they raised a few challenges like lack of plastic sheeting for covering the bricks, limited work materials such as panga, hoes, jerry cans, firewood for burning the bricks and limited market for the un-burnt bricks.