

February 19, 2026

AVSI LAUNCHES €11 MILLION WATER AND SELF-RELIANCE PROJECT FOR REFUGEES IN KIRYANDONGO AND YUMBE

The international development organization AVSI has officially launched an €11 million project aimed at improving water supply and promoting self-reliance among refugees in Kiryandongo and Yumbe districts. The initiative targets 7,000 households over a three-year period, focusing on building resilience and facilitating sustainable livelihoods for people living in extreme poverty.

Speaking during the launch, Dr. Ritah Laro of AVSI explained that the project employs a sequenced and time-bound approach designed to help participants transition from extreme poverty to a money-based economy. “The project uses the graduation approach, which spans 12 to 24 months. Each participant household is assigned a coach and a trainer to guide them in acquiring skills, building assets, and engaging in sustainable livelihoods,” Dr. Laro said.

The graduation approach has been successfully piloted in other parts of Uganda, providing a model for scaling interventions in refugee-hosting districts. Anselm Kyaligonza, Chief Administrative Officer of Kiryandongo, welcomed the partnership and pledged full support for AVSI’s work. He highlighted that before endorsing the project, district officials conducted a benchmarking tour to Kyegegwa, where a similar initiative has been yielding positive results.



Anselm Kyaligonza the CAO Kiryandongo addressing stakeholders during the AVSI inception meeting at Kiryandongo District Headquarters

“When we visited Kyegegwa, we saw firsthand how the graduation approach works, with compelling testimonies from participants. This gave me confidence to recommend AVSI’s program to Kiryandongo,” Kyaligonza noted. He added that the project complements the district’s Parish Development Model (PDM) and has strong potential to lift target households out of extreme poverty by promoting savings and financial inclusion.

Dan Muganga, Resident District Commissioner (RDC) of Kiryandongo, emphasized the importance of tangible impact. “This project specifically targets the extreme poor. By its conclusion, we should see participants achieving improved livelihoods and living better lives,” Muganga said. He further noted that the graduation approach, being aligned with the PDM, draws considerable attention from district leaders and stakeholders for benchmarking and comparison.

The project is expected to not only improve access to clean water but also empower refugee-hosting communities to develop sustainable income sources, enhancing resilience and reducing dependency on humanitarian aid. AVSI plans to implement the interventions in a structured, time-bound manner, ensuring that all participants are equipped to graduate from extreme poverty into self-reliant, economically active households.

The launch marks a significant step towards improving the welfare of refugees and vulnerable host communities in Uganda, setting a model for integrated livelihood and water interventions across refugee-hosting districts.