

# DR Congo asks Uganda to relax varsity entry requirements for its citizens

BY JOHN SEMAKULA

The government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has asked Uganda to relax the university entry requirements for its citizens, to allow them access good quality higher education.

The appeal was made by the administrative Secretary at the Congolese embassy in Kampala, Timothee Lemba Munga, while meeting officials of the Uganda Christian University (UCU), Mukono at the university's main campus in Mukono district on Wednesday.

Munga said it is not a good gesture for the citizens of DRC to cross over to Uganda to access university education only to be

denied a chance because of the tough entry requirements.

He noted that many times, when Congolese students went to the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) to equate their academic papers, they were not helped.

"As a result, our students are not allowed to enrol in some universities, hence missing out on the much needed higher education," Munga said.

In a bid to help DRC citizens access university education in Uganda, in October last year, Uganda and DRC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to remove the barriers.

The MoU, among other things, allowed the DRC embassy to reach

out to individual universities in Uganda, to sign MoUs directly.

However, *Saturday Vision* has learnt that not much has changed yet.

Munga implored the education ministry to reach out to UNEB, to ensure that the barriers for Congolese students are removed, in line with the MoU.

The spokesperson of the education ministry, Patrick Muinda, said they were aware that UNEB had found challenges in equating academic documents of students from some countries, such as India, because of the huge disparity in the number of subjects they offer.

"In one of these countries, students offer four subjects at O'level against Uganda's 12," Muinda said, adding that UNEB

was still ready to help students from any of the countries.

Available statistics indicate that Congo has got over 3,600 students studying in Ugandan universities and thousands in primary and secondary schools.

Whereas DRC is one of the richest countries on the globe because of its huge natural resource base, endless wars in the country have affected most of its institutions, including universities.

*Saturday Vision* has learnt that Congolese citizens from the eastern provinces of Goma and Kisangani are now relying on Uganda for university education.

Uganda is a hot bed for university education in the region as students from the neighbouring countries,

such as Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi flock to it for higher education.

Munga noted that the number of Congolese students studying in Uganda could multiply if UNEB removed the barriers.

In his remarks, UCU vice-chancellor Dr. John Senyonyi told Munga that the university was ready to admit more students from DRC because the Church's aim is to extend education to every part of the world. UCU is a Church of Uganda founded university.

Senyonyi said the university is ready to exchange staff and students with Congolese universities to build capacity. The Congolese embassy and UCU agreed to sign an MoU on the matter.