

PRESS RELEASE

THE UN'S PULSE LAB KAMPALA OPENS ITS DOORS TO WELCOME DATA INNOVATION PARTNERS IN UGANDA

Mobilising the data revolution for Uganda's sustainable development

Kampala - Thursday 29 January 2015 – The Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda, Rt. Honourable, Ruhakana Rugunda, today, officially marked the public opening of Pulse Lab Kampala, a data innovation hub of the United Nations.

Pulse Lab Kampala is part of the United Nations (UN) Global Pulse and is the first of its kind in Africa. The Lab is set up as an interagency initiative supporting the UN in Uganda. Along with two additional Pulse Labs, already established in New York and Jakarta, Pulse Lab Kampala is exploring how new digital data sources and real-time analytics technologies can be used to support sustainable development in Uganda. This will help the Government of Uganda and Development Partners better understand the impact of socio-economic crises on Ugandan populations. Policy efforts to address poverty, impacts of natural disasters, epidemics and, food security can be supported to deliver better services.

“The Government of Uganda invited UN Global Pulse to open in Uganda the first data innovation hub in the whole of Africa,” says the Rt. Hon. Ruhakana Rugunda. “Global Pulse will enable us to harness new data and technologies to better monitor the effects of epidemics, natural disasters and other problems that affect the people of Uganda. In the past, there has been slow uptake of information meaning that response time has been slow, and sometimes inadequate”, he adds.

The Lab is a hub for data innovation in Uganda, bringing together partners from Government, the UN, academia and the private sector to collaboratively develop new data analytics technologies to promote sustainable development. The explosion in access to mobile phones and digital services means that Ugandans everywhere generate vast amounts of digital data every day. This happens as they buy and sell goods, transfer money, make phone calls, search for information on the Internet or share their experiences on social media. A data revolution is underway and new tools and systems for data analytics are needed. Pulse Lab Kampala supports the United Nations and the Government of Uganda to tap into the data revolution by building the tools and capacities necessary to harness the new sources of digital data for socio-economic research.

Speaking at the grand opening event today, the UN Resident Coordinator in Uganda, Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onochie, said “Uganda was selected to host Pulse Lab Kampala because of the country’s reputation as an early adopter of innovations”. She highlighted the strategic relevance of Pulse Lab Kampala to support the UN Uganda’s *Delivering As One* process. Dr. Paula Hidalgo – Sanchis, Manager of Pulse Lab Kampala explained that the data revolution presents unprecedented opportunities to support human development and humanitarian challenges in Uganda.

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About Global Pulse

Global Pulse is a flagship innovation initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General on the data revolution. Its mission is to accelerate discovery, development and scaled adoption of data innovation for sustainable development and humanitarian action. The initiative was established based on recognition that digital data offers the opportunity to gain a better understanding of changes in human well being, and to get real-time feedback on how well policy responses are working.

In collaboration with UN partners and public sector institutions, Global Pulse identifies problems that could be addressed through real-time monitoring of digital data. Global Pulse is organized into a network of Pulse Labs in different regions of the world with a headquarters lab in New York, a lab in Jakarta, Indonesia, and a lab in Kampala, Uganda. For more information please visit: **www.unglobalpulse.org**

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