



UN Names New Poverty Weapon

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THE United Nations Secretary General's Special Adviser on Millennium Development Goals, Prof. Jeffrey Sachs, has said the UN will introduce research villages in Uganda to help the country fight poverty.

"We want to introduce a scheme known as research villages here where we shall make significant investments in food production, by empowering people to be more productive, introduce increased access to rural electrification, increase health, education and nutrition among children," he said.

He revealed this yesterday while meeting Prime Minister Prof. Apolo Nsibambi at the latter's office in Kampala.

Sachs is in the country on the invitation of the government.

He was accompanied by Unicef Executive Director Ann Veneman who is also in the country to raise awareness about the humanitarian situation in northern Uganda. Veneman is expected to push for renewed humanitarian efforts for children and women affected by the northern conflict.

Sachs said the concept of research villages had worked well in western Kenya where it was introduced a year ago.

"Kenyans now grow improved seeds and can grow food on large scale," Sachs said.

He said the introduction of village schemes tallies with the UN objectives of halving poverty through empowering people to be more productive, with improved education and health.

Sachs said the pilot research village scheme will start from Kabale and Mbarara districts and move to other regions later.

But Nsibambi recommended that it be started from northern Uganda where poverty is at its peak, mostly due to the 19-year old insurgency that has left hundreds of thousands of people on the verge of starvation.

"Much as I would prefer that we start with northern region, ideally I would want to see a system where we have research villages for every region of the country," Nsibambi said.

Sach said they would consider Nsibambi's recommendation as long as the UN team is assured of security in northern Uganda.

"We will support any area which you recommend as long as there is physical security, interest by the local community and support of the local governments," he said.

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