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NEWS RELEASE

Not for publication before
3 March 2005

FIRST PRECISE MAPS OF UGANDAN POVERTY PUBLISHED

Book Pinpoints Poorest People at the County Level

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Where are the poor in Uganda? Today, the first 'high-resolution' maps and tables of poverty for Uganda were announced at a book launching held at the Hotel Equatoria, in Kampala. The book, titled *Where are the Poor? Mapping Patterns of Well-Being in Uganda*, is the culmination of a spirited and innovative two-year research project conducted by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) in collaboration with the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), with technical and financial assistance from the World Bank and with financial support from the Rockefeller Foundation and the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

The publication is the first to provide a comprehensive map-based view of poverty in Uganda. It provides a wealth of facts and figures on poverty and inequality for 1992 and

1999. The book presents poverty and inequality estimates for regions, districts and counties and highlights changes in poverty and equality between 1992 and 1999. The book can be used to design and implement effective pro-poor development strategies.

The estimates presented in the book are the result of state-of-the-art statistical modeling techniques—also called poverty mapping—which combine data on household consumption obtained from a 1992/93 Integrated Household Survey and a 1999/2000 Uganda National Household Survey with complete geographic coverage provided by a 1991 Population and Housing Census. Using simulation techniques, researchers were able for the first time to estimate reliable measures of poverty for very small geographic areas, such as counties.

Poverty mapping is becoming a key tool in identifying ways to improve living standards of the poor. Though poverty maps themselves provide information rather than answers, in combination with budget, socio-economic, environmental and other information, the maps become a rich source of information for development planning and policy formulation at the national and sub-national levels. The Ugandan poverty maps and tables will help Government and development partners target their projects for greatest benefits to the poor. More precise geographic targeting of pro-poor expenditures, for example, can maximize the coverage of the poor while minimizing leakage to the non-poor. Poverty maps and tables also facilitate budget allocation and allow the distribution of central government resources according to the prevalence of poverty in different areas. When poverty maps and tables are complemented by other information, such as access to, and quality of, public services and education, they provide policy makers with tools for more transparent and evidence-based targeting of public resources and service delivery.

An electronic version of the book will be made available on the websites of Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), <http://www.ubos.org>, and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), <http://www.ilri.org/>. Data for the changes in poverty can be obtained on request from UBOS.

The following are highlights of the information presented.

Changes in poverty incidence—more than 90 percent of Uganda’s rural counties have estimated poverty levels that were lower in 1999 than in 1992, and of these, 29 percent experienced declines of between 0 and 30 percent. Most of the declines were in Western, Central and Eastern Regions. Only a few counties in Northern Uganda experienced the decline.

Pockets of high poverty incidence—relatively small areas with a very high proportion of the population falling under the poverty line—are not concentrated in any one region of Uganda. The County-level estimates show high spatial heterogeneity ranging from 11 to 84 percent in urban areas and 15 to 91 percent in rural areas. The poverty rates were greatest in the least secure areas of Northeast and Northwest and parts of Eastern Region.

Poverty density ‘hotspots’—relatively small areas with very high numbers of poor people—also occur in many areas of Uganda. The highest poverty density was in counties in Mbale and Kisoro districts. High densities were also observed in Kasese, Masaka, Kampala and Tororo.

REGIONAL ROUND-UP

Central Region: stood out as the least poor region in 1992 and 1999 for both rural and urban areas. The district-level poverty incidence (i.e., percentage of the population falling below the relevant poverty line) ranged from 31 to 64 percent in 1992. The poorest district was Mubende, with more than 64 percent of its rural population living below the poverty line. Kampala stood out as the wealthiest district, with only 15 percent of its population living below the poverty line. Inequality, as measured by a 'gini coefficient' (ranging from 0 to 1, with higher figures indicating more inequality) ranged from 0.24 to 0.46 in urban counties and 0.28 to 0.35 in rural counties.

Eastern Region: With a rural population of 3.7 million people and 0.3 million found in urban areas, this region demonstrated the widest variability in poverty levels. Jinja District had the lowest poverty (38 percent) in 1992 while Kumi had the highest at 82 percent. County-level variations were even higher. Income inequality ranged from gini coefficients of 0.22 to 0.44 at the county level.

Northern Region: With over 75 percent of the population poor in 1992, this remained the poorest region in Uganda in 1999. The poorest districts were Kotido and Kitgum, with poverty incidences of 91 percent, while Arua and Lira stood out as the least poor districts. There was significantly more variation in poverty in this region at both district and county levels.

Western Region: This region ranked the second least poor in Uganda. More than half the rural population and one-third of the urban population lived below the poverty line in 1992. Rural poverty was highest in Kisoro and lowest in Mbarara District. In 1999, there was a lot of variation in poverty incidence in this region. Masindi, Bundibugyo and Kasese had greater than 50 percent poverty incidence while relatively wealthy districts such as Mbarara and Bushenyi had poverty levels below 20 percent.

Changes in Poverty between 1992 and 1999: The results from the analysis of poverty changes are encouraging, with large and widespread decreases in poverty seen countrywide. These trends should be viewed as indicative only, as cautious interpretation of the 1999 estimates is required due to the relatively small number of households surveyed in 1999. The 1999 maps will be updated to 2003 soon, making use of Uganda's new census data. The highest drops in poverty in rural areas between 1992 and 1999 can be seen in Central and parts of Western Region in the districts of Kibaale, Luwero, Bushenyi, Rakai, Mpigi and Kisoro. Poverty was observed to have increased in Arua, Moyo and Apac in the Northern Region and Kasese District in the Western Region. At the county level, the maps demonstrate how almost all rural areas in Uganda benefited from the country's growth during the 1990s. Poverty worsened in 8 percent of Uganda's rural counties during this period. In terms of inequality, increasing inequality was observed in the Northern Region and some districts in the Western Region, including Masindi, Kasese and Bundibugyo.

These results are all shown in maps and tables by Region, District and County in the book.

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