

# New anti-malaria product tested

By Patrick Jaramogi

MALARIA could be wiped out in Uganda if the Government approves the use of non-toxic natural plant extracts that have been proved to be effective in the fight against the disease in Egypt and South Africa.

"We have sent our proposals to the Ministry of Health and National Environment Management Authority for approval. We want the project to be included in the national plan to eradicate malaria,"

said Dr. Walid A. Aly, the project manager of the Innovative Research and Development.

"The vectors, which will be developed in laboratories, kill the larvae of mosquitoes that cause malaria. They are friendly to the environment."

Walid, who holds a PhD in immunology and genetic engineering, told *The New Vision* that the \$20m (sh34b) project was only awaiting government approval to kick off.

"This is the first project of this kind to be imple-

mented in Sub-Saharan Africa. Uganda was chosen because of the type of mosquitoes found here and their breeding habits. If the project is implemented, malaria will be reduced by 80% in four years."

He said the technique was the outcome of intensive research that was conducted in the Egyptian capital, Cairo, in 1996.

Dr. Grace Nambatya, the head of the national chemotherapeutic laboratory in Wandegaya, Kampala, said tests had proved that the product

was effective in breaking the breeding cycle of mosquitoes without causing any harm to the environment. "We have tested the product, which is extracted from plants and found it to be effective. It is a breakthrough in the fight against malaria," she said recently.

Malaria accounts for 40% of out-patients and 20% of in-patients in hospitals in Uganda.

To fight the disease, the Government started indoor spraying of DDT in Oyam and Apac districts in April after the World Health

Organisation warned of an increase in malaria and the Rift Valley fever due to increasing temperatures because of global warming. Other 15 endemic districts will also be sprayed, according to the director general of health services, Dr. Sam Zaramba.

However, environmentalists and other people who are against the use of DDT, like Conservative Party leader, John Ken Lukyamuzi, claim the chemical damages the human brain and causes cancer in the liver.