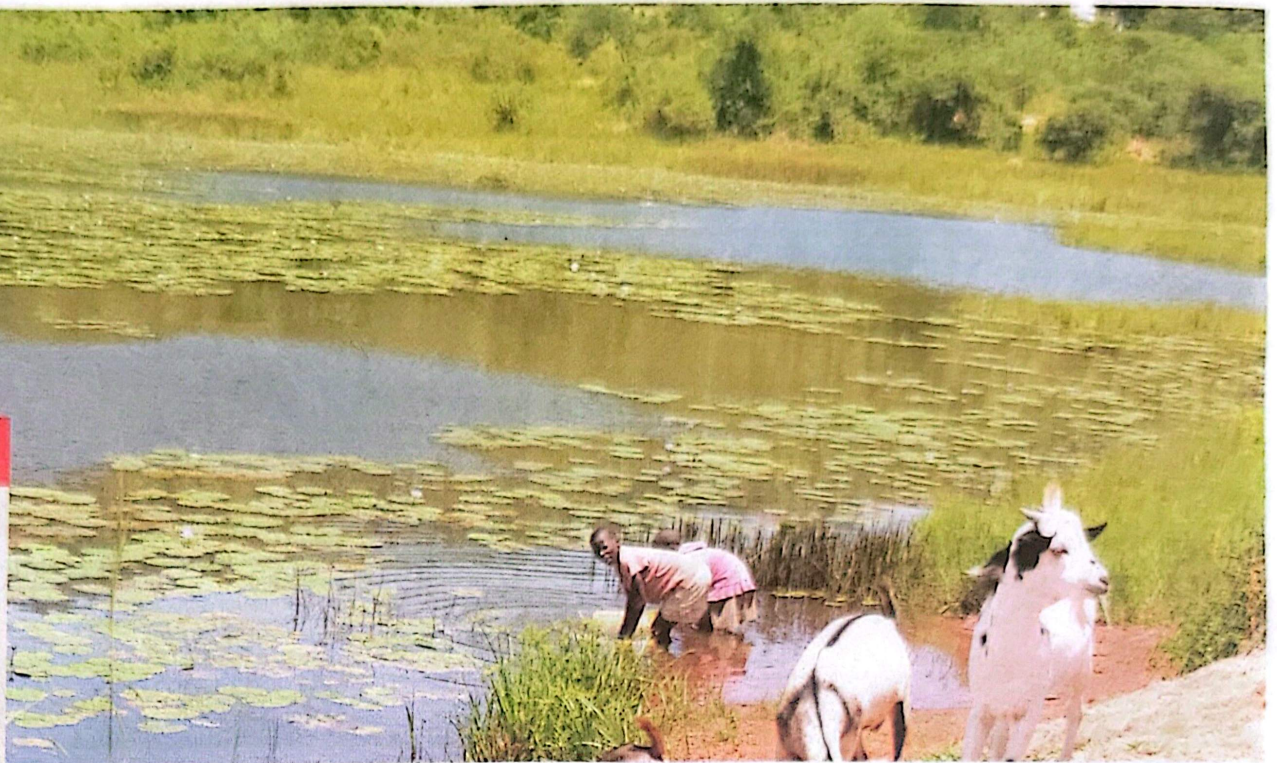


SILTATION

Residents want help

A section of Wabbale Valley Dam in Nakasongola District. Residents say the dam is silted and caused water contamination. They have asked government to intervene.

PHOTO BY DAN WANDERA



Ministers Nantaba, Namuganza clash over freehold land titles

Opposed. Ms Idah Nantaba claims the programme the Lands State minister is implementing is fictitious.

BY FRED MUZAALÉ
editorial@ug.nationmedia.com

KAYUNGA. The State Minister for Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), Ms Idah Nantaba, has opposed a government programme on the issuance of freehold land titles in Kayunga.

The programme is being implemented by Ms Persis Namuganza, the Lands state minister, with whom they have since 2016 have clashed in public over land in Kayunga District.

Government is now set to issue freehold land titles to at least 2,000 land tenants in 16 villages in the sub-counties of Kitimbwa and Kayonza.

But Ms Nantaba claims the programme is fictitious and is intended to deprive residents of their land.

Her hard-stance against the programme has again put her on collision course with some local leaders in the area and Ms Namuganza.

"I have done everything possible to save these people from the former district leaders that had sold their land. I even went ahead to compel the Minister of Lands, Ms Betty Amongi, to cancel the titles which they were processing for the so-called investors. I have done everything to a point of losing my life," Ms Nantaba claimed.

"So Kumama (George Bbaale County MP) can not downplay my efforts. The entire country knows that and so do people of Kayunga and Nkokonjeru. Indeed the two cannot fool them," she added.

But some residents have also accused Ms Nantaba of sabotage.

Mr Charles Tezikya, one of beneficiaries of the programme and a resident of Bulawula village, said Ms Nantaba is pushing for individual political interests at the expense of

ISSUES

Delays. President Museveni was expected to handover the titles to beneficiaries later this month but because of the misinformation and other technicalities, the date was shifted to early January.

Land.

The land, which government plans to issue titles for, also houses Buwawula Government Prison, Nkokonjeru Health Centre II and four public primary schools.

majority tenants in the area.

"She (Nantaba) has been moving around confusing residents that the whole project is a hoax, which is not true," Mr Tezikya said during an interview last Friday.

"She (Nantaba) was a minister for Lands for five years, but failed to get us titles, why is she now blocking this programme?" he asked.

Without mentioning names, the district chairperson, Mr Tom Sserwanga, said: "Those blocking the government's land title programme want to block their colleagues who are steering it so that they can turn around and claim to be fighting for the tenants' rights. They just want to use it to gain political capital."

Ms Namuganza recently visited Kayunga after the tenants petitioned Speaker Rebecca Kadaga through their area MP, Mr George Kumama, accusing Ms Nantaba of blocking the programme.

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briefly

1,000 face eviction

SEMBABULE. National Forestry Authority (NFA) has ordered more than 1,000 residents in Sembabule District who have encroached on Kazooba Central Reserve Forest to vacate or face eviction. Led by the NFA law enforcement officer, Mr Stephen Bagonza, and the Resident District Commissioner, Mr Henry Baguma, the residents who signed eviction documents were given a three-week ultimatum to exit the area. "Whoever fails to vacate the forest will be charged with in courts of law," Mr Bagonza said while meeting with the residents at the weekend. [Moses Muwulya]

Leaders speak out

NAKASEKE. Authorities in Nakaseke District have clarified on the status of teachers with mental health problems after some councillors accused them of deliberately deploying the said teachers. According to Mr Steven Batanude, the district education officer, they have no mandate to terminate services of any teacher who is on sick leave. "It is true the gaps left by these teachers need to be filled, but we have no mandate. We have however made arrangements to see that such schools are not affected next term," Mr Batanude said. [Dan Wandera]

Ministers clash over issuance of freehold titles

Voices

FROM PAGE 9

"We have differences in politics, religion and tribe, but we should put them away so that this programme is successful,"

DR CHRIS BARYOMUSI,
MINISTER FOR URBAN
DEVELOPMENT



"I have done everything possible to save these people from the former district leaders that had sold their land. I even went ahead to compel Minister Betty Amongi, to cancel the titles which they were processing for the so-called investors,"

MS IDAH NANTABA, ICT
STATE MINISTER



"It is surprising that a fellow minister (Nantaba) is fighting a government programme. But I am happy the beneficiaries have refused to listen to her, they know what they want,"

PERSIS NAMUGANZA,
LANDS STATE MINISTER

"It is surprising that a fellow minister (Nantaba) is fighting a government programme. But I am happy the beneficiaries have refused to listen to her, they know what they want," Ms Namuganza said.

Transaction

According to Ms Namuganza, the titles will be issued to the tenants, whose land had been illegally sold by Kayunga District Land Board to Kayunga Sugar Works Ltd in 2014.

Kayunga Sugar Works, a subsidiary of Madhvani Group of Companies, had bought the land at an unspecified amount of money to grow sugarcane.

However, on learning about the "illegal" land transaction, the then district chairman, Mr Stephen Dagada, suspended members of the board and refunded the Shs200m partial payment that had been made by Madhvani.

Later, Madhvani declared that he had lost interest in the land.

The company had ordered the tenants to vacate the land to give way to his sugarcane project.

Advised

During a meeting with residents of Nkonkonjeru Trading Centre, last week Ms Nantaba said there was no need for Ms Namuganza to intervene in the land matter because she (Nantaba) had already settled the issue.

The misinformation about the programme, last week prompted state minister for urban development, Dr Chris Baryomusi, to also intervene.

During the meeting, Dr Baryomusi asked Kayunga District leaders to work together and give the same message about the programme to the beneficiaries.

"We have differences in politics, religion and tribe, but we should put them away so that this programme is successful. I have heard some politicians claiming that the land titles are intended to steal tenants' land, such information is false," he said.

briefly

MP advises parents