

Oil sector: Minister tells Ugandans to hold govt accountable for faults

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KAMPALA. State minister for Energy and Mineral Development Peter Lokeris has said Ugandans can go ahead and hold government accountable for faults within the oil and gas sector.

"We have the laws talking about the environment; how we should sustain water bodies, safeguard the tourism industry because this is where we found the oil.

"If we government breach any part of the law, citizens can go to court and say but you have omitted here and this is in the law," he said.

He made the remarks at the launch of Shared Resources Joint Solutions programme held under the theme "Promoting food, water security and climate resilience amidst oil and forest degradation challenges" on Friday at Hotel Africana in Kampala.

With benchmarks from countries considered to have best oil management practices like Norway, government has put in place the Petroleum Act

2013 to guide exploration and production activities within the Albertine Graben.

Commenting on the oil and gas laws, African Institute for Energy Governance chief executive officer Dickens Kamugisha said Uganda's challenge is failure for government to comply and implement laws but called for vigilance within the public.

"The big challenge is failure to comply with laws. This is because most citizens are not playing their role.

"70 per cent live in villages and can hardly communicate with ministers. We need to talk about how we use oil money and ensure oil revenues are used well and that affected people get the right services," Mr Kamugisha said.

On oil management, Great Lakes Institute for Strategic Studies Associate director Mr Godber Tumushabe said the exploitation and beneficial use of oil resources is not so much dependent on the laws and policies but on the institutions of governance.

Commercial production of oil may start in 2020.