The facility will consist of 17 different blocks, including a manufacturing and electrical training centre

INDUSTRIAL SKILLING CENTRE CONSTRUCTION LAUNCHED

BY JEFF ANDREW LULE

President Yoweri Museveni has commissioned the construction of the National Industrial Skills and Training Centre at the Kampala Industrial Park, in Namanve, Wakiso district.

The two-year project ending in 2019, is to cost $30m (sh108b) funded by the Chinese government. The project is also contracted to Chinese contractor, Jiangsu Jiangdu Construction Group Company Ltd, which started work in November last year.

In his speech read by the Prime Minister Dr Ruhakana Rugunda, the President said the centre is good for the country's industrialisation boost.

"As the National Resistance Movement government strives to create an enabling environment to ensure social economic transformation of our population through initiatives and activities such as infrastructure development, there is also an urgent need for us to accelerate industrialisation," he noted.

He said industrialisation will lead to creation of more jobs, reduction of poverty and promotion of inclusive economic growth.

The President said the president of the African Development Bank, Akimwumi Adesia rightly observed that agriculture must be at the forefront of Africa's industrialisation, a course that Uganda has been emphasising. It is not sufficient for modernisation of the economy minus industrialisation.

He emphasised that protracted industrialisation must complement the agricultural initiatives, if the country is to achieve middle-income status.

President Museveni said industrialisation will enhance and fast-track value addition to "our agricultural produce" thus earning the country more money. He said it will also contribute to improving household incomes.

He pointed out three pillars upon which industrialisation is anchored: appropriate technology, human capital (skilled manpower) and affordable financing.

PHOTO BY NANCY NANYONGA



Ambassador of China to Uganda Zheng ZhuQiang, Elioda Tumwesigye, Charles Kwesiga and Ruhakana Rugunda during the launch of the Mechanical and Industrialisation Training Centre in Namanve, Wakiso district on Thursday

"The project we are launching today is intended to address the issue of appropriate technology and human capital by introducing modern methods and practices for machining and manufacturing," he noted.

He added that the project will address skills through various specialties, including mechatronics (which combines the technologies of mechanics, pneumatics, hydraulics, electronics, information processing, basic electricity and motor and motion control), computer numerical control technology, which is used to operate a variety of manufacturing tools and equipment.

> **"The project is intended to address the issue of appropriate technology and human capital**

He said this was a great milestone for the NRM government and thanked the Uganda Industrial Research Institute's (UIRI) team led by Prof. Charles Kwesiga for their efforts to get the project off the ground.

The President said the concept of establishing the machining and manufacturing centre was conceived by Prof. Kwesiga and Dr Dick Kamugasha through a proposal that was submitted to the finance ministry in 2012.

"Subsequently, I negotiated a grant from the Chinese government in 2014 to finance it. I commend and welcome the support from China that has helped us turn the proposal into reality," he noted.

The President appealed to the contractors to try and shorten the duration of construction "so that we quickly start to tap into the fruits of the facility".

Science and technology minister Ellioda Tumwesigye said the facility will consist of 17 different blocks, including teachers and staff dormitory, female and male dormitories, machining and manufacturing centre, electrical training centre and wood working and carpentry workshop.

The state minister of investment and privatisation, Evelyn Anite, said the country has a lot of unskilled labour, stressing that the centre will be used to change the trend.

"Some of the investors like in Kapeeka Industrial Park, had to first train the workers for required skills, which is costly," she noted.

The Chinese Ambassador to Uganda, Zheng ZhuQiang, said employment is the key factor for the country's development and directly affects people's livelihood. He said unemployment can also lead to social insecurity, a reason why they have decided to support the industrialisation of Uganda.

"We hope this facility can lead to production of more manufacturing technology to the local enterprises and equip the youth with skills," he said.

Court directs Stanbic to pay 84-year-old over sh100m

Museveni donates sh20m to