

... said while teachers.

... hope.

BY ALEX ASHABA

FORT PORTAL. Fort Portal City authorities have committed Shs700 million to resume construction of a 15-year-old stalled administration block, in a move aimed at addressing the persistent shortage of office space.

The foundation stone for the building was laid in 2010 during the tenure of then mayor Edison Asaba Ruyonga, who is also the outgoing city mayor.

However, works stalled at ground floor level due to inadequate funding.

In an interview on Monday, City Clerk Ambrose Ochen confirmed that a new contract worth Shs700 million was signed at the beginning of this year with GESES Company Limited to restart construction.

"Works officially resumed in January after we procured and signed a contract with the service provider. The contract runs until June, and we expect the contractor to complete this phase by then," Mr Ochen said, adding that the contractor is already on site.

He explained that of the Shs700 million for this phase, Shs300 million came from the central government, while Shs250 million was raised from local

Fort Portal commits Shs700m to revive city hall project

LOOKING BACK

The only work previously undertaken on the site included raising the ground floor walls and installing doors and windows. The structure was eventually overgrown with bush. For years, the abandoned site reportedly turned into a grazing area for livestock and, at times, a hideout for suspected criminals. Authorities say the renewed construction signals a commitment to completing the project.

revenue. The remaining amount is being covered by other city funds.

Mr Ochen said the ongoing works will involve erecting walls and roofing the building. Full completion will depend on the availability of additional funds in the next financial year.

He, however, said the Shs700 million



The current state of the stalled Fort Portal City administration block. PHOTO/ ALEX ASHABA

will not be enough to complete the entire building.

"To complete the administration block, we need more than Shs3 billion. For now, we are undertaking the works

incrementally, depending on the resources available. We shall continue to request government support while also mobilise more local revenue," he said.

Mr Ochen noted that the city has

Hopeful.

For now, we are undertaking the works incrementally, depending on the resources available. We shall continue to request government support also mobilise more

while local revenue.

— Ambrose Ochen, Fort Portal City clerk

rolled out new strategies to improve local revenue collection, with part of the funds earmarked for completing the long-delayed project.

Currently, Fort Portal City staff operate from an old building constructed in the 1950s, which they share with the Rwenzori West Police Region and the Resident City Commissioner's offices.

The arrangement has long been criticised as inadequate due to the growing urban authority. At times, the city hires conference halls in hotels to accommodate larger meetings due to limited space.