

Fast-track land cases, UNRA asks judges



Deliberation. Justice David Wangutusi (left), the head of the Commercial Division at the High Court, makes a submission as UNRA executive director Allen Kagina takes note during a meeting with the Judiciary on Monday.

PHOTO BY PAUL ADUDE

Delays. The roads authority says civil cases in the high court have stalled ongoing road construction works in the country.

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KAMPALA. The executive director of the Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA), Ms Allen Kagina, has said delayed cases before court have stalled the body's construction works.

"Amidst the high volumes of new cases and backlog that you are faced with, UNRA has enjoyed a smooth working relationship with the Judiciary. You have often prioritised and disposed of pertinent cases that would have otherwise held back progress of works, and thereby avoiding huge costs on both government and the taxpayer," she said.

Ms Kagina made the remarks on Monday during a workshop with the justices at Kigo.

She said the body faces

inadequate funding, especially for road maintenance, which is increasing the backlog

180

cases. Number of ongoing civil cases in the High Court that have stalled ongoing road construction works countrywide. Mr Mark Ssali, the head of public and corporate affairs at UNRA, said 80 per cent of the cases are land ownership and dispute related while the rest are contract issues.

and downgrades the level of service.

"We currently receive Shs274b but require Shs554b in maintenance and we have Shs3.5b for road development for the year 2017 to 2018, but require Shs4.2 billion which is a big challenge," Ms Kagina said.

The UNRA boss also said the slow land acquisition process has made the construction projects more expensive with 80 per cent of works undertaken by foreign road construction companies which also affected domestic contractors.

Advice

Justice David Wangutusi, the head of the Commercial Division at the High Court, while talking to *Daily Monitor* urged government to always have surveyors to inspect ongoing works, singling out land encroachers as one of the issues UNRA has to address.

"UNRA has marked clearly where the boundaries stop and it compensates a person whose land is going to be used for construction but the problem is some people are not land owners, they are tenants," Mr Wangutusi said.

He said courts would ensure that land owners are compensated.