

Sh16 trillion needed to increase access to power

By Wilson Manishimwe

Simon D'ujanga, the state minister for energy, has said the country needs over \$4.5b (about sh16.4trillion) to scale up power access to 98% by 2030 from the current 22%.

Although he did not state a possible source of the money required, he said the target is achievable since the energy sub-sector was liberalised and the Government has favourable investment policies.

During the meeting with Swedish investors at a business seminar on clean energy in Uganda at Protea Hotel in Kampala on Wednesday, D'ujanga said he was optimistic that more investors will come on board.

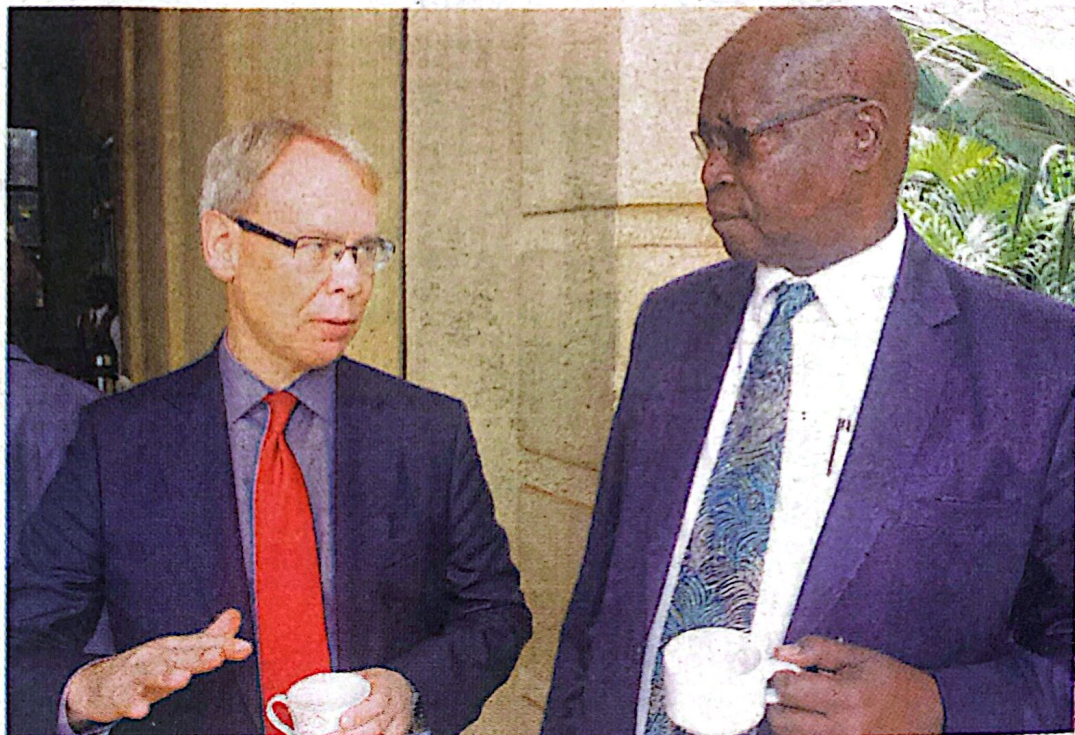
According to World Bank Statistics in 2014, neighbouring Kenya is ahead of Uganda with 36% access, Rwanda is at 19.8%, Tanzania at 16.4% and Burundi, 7%.

"We have 287 sub-county headquarters that are not connected to power and in the next two years, we hope to have covered them. Thereafter, we shall embark on massive rural connections," stated D'ujanga.

He explained that some villages have utilised electricity to fight poverty, citing an example of Busunju county in Mityana.

D'ujanga said several maize mills and coffee processing plants have been established by the residents although they say electricity costs are still high.

"The Government should keep an eye on power tariffs. High power costs discourage investors. The Bujagali and Karuma dams which are being constructed are expected to help bring down electricity



Ambassador Lindgard and D'ujanga during a coffee break at a business seminar on clean energy at Protea Hotel in Kampala on Wednesday. Photo by Abou Kisige

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costs," he explained.

Per Lindgärde, the Swedish ambassador to Uganda, noted that several Swedish entrepreneurs have interest in investing in Uganda.

"The Swedish companies can offer Uganda quality products and services at low costs," he stated.

Samuel Bishop, the senior project engineer of Rural Electrification Agency in Uganda, explained that only 5.1% of the rural population is connected to the national grid.

He said the agency's target is to have at least 26% of the population access power by 2022. He said the investment opportunities in the company include feasibility studies, power management and supply.

Bo Lansryd, the project manager of a Swiss multinational company, ASEA Brown Boveri (ABB), noted that the company trains other companies on the maintenance and management of electricity.

He said the same company trained personnel in the Uganda Electricity Board, now UMEME.

ABB whose headquarters

are in Zurich Switzerland Zurich deals in power automation and is said to be the leading supplier of products and systems for power transmission, as well as for process and industrial automation in Sweden.



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