

# Govt to commission new 10MW Tororo solar plant

By Benon Ojiambo

Uganda is set to commission a new 10-megawatt (MW) solar power plant in Tororo as the Government tries to diversify electric power generation in a bid to reach 2500MW installed capacity.

The Tororo plant, which follows the Soroti one of equal capacity commissioned last year, inches the country towards its goal. This will bring the solar power connected to the national grid to 20MW, according to the Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA).

Other alternative renewable sources to the traditional hydro-power generation that the Government is targeting include thermal power and power from waste, according to ERA.

The Tororo solar plant has been under construction since December last year. The management of ERA is on a five-day countrywide tour of electricity generation projects. During the tour, ERA seeks to establish the progress and whether licensees are adhering to the terms and conditions of their licences.

According to the energy ministry, Uganda's total installed generation capacity stood at 924.9MW at the end of 2016. Of this, large hydro plants account for 69% of installed capacity, while thermal, co-generation and small hydro account for 15%, 9% and 7%, respectively.

Works at the Tororo Solar plant were



A solar plant in Kalangala that supplies power to the main grid in the district. The Government is investing in alternative energy sources to boost the national grid

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■ Uganda's electricity generation is hydro-dominated and the country has been struggling because the water levels drop during dry seasons

undertaken by Building Energy, a South African firm, as the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contractor.

"It is currently undergoing technical performance tests by UETCL and Umeme and is expected to be switched to the national grid early next month," Jaco Brits, the project site manager, said on Monday.

Brits was addressing the

visiting ERA management at the project site in Tororo.

Eng Ziria Tibalwa Waako, the ERA chief executive officer, described the project as one of government's initiatives to implement the renewable energy policy under which it seeks to diversify electricity generation.

Waako noted that Uganda's generation mix is hydro-dominated and the country has been struggling as the water levels drop during dry seasons, making it hard to extract maximum installed capacity with hydro plants.

"Therefore, this plant brings on board a generation mix that enables us to go through all these, despite the season of the

year," Waako said.

She said power should be generated where it is consumed to minimise technical losses and stabilise the grid.

"It is implemented near the Uganda Transmission Company Limited load centres and this contributes to reduction in technical losses that may be incurred during transmission over long distances," she explained.

The plant is located less than a kilometre away from the substation in the district.

However, Waako declined to divulge details of the project cost and financing, explaining that "the plant being work in progress, we shall have the details during commissioning".

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