

UPDF land hinders water project

BUSIA

By Egeessa Hajusu

Busia district has appealed to the water ministry to provide sh150m to buy land so as to enable a multi-billion piped water project to take off.

The sh36b project that was initially planned to be completed mid this year, has delayed to take off after the defence ministry declined to give out two acres of its land in Majanji for the construction of a water reservoir.

The main design of the project was based on a site owned by the Uganda People's Defence Forces.

Paul Ogutu, the acting district chairperson Busia, said an alternative piece of land has been identified, but the district cannot raise sh150m, which the owners want for the six-acre piece of land.

"We have informed the ministry that we cannot raise that amount of money," Ogutu said.

Last year, the water ministry tasked the district and municipality with securing land on which the facilities will be constructed.

The project is expected to benefit 150,000 people by next year and 186,000 by 2020.

It is equally meant to benefit six sub-counties along the shores of Lake Victoria in Majanji, where the water will be pumped from.

This project was initially meant for Busia municipality at a cost \$6.6m, but the cost was adjusted upwards to \$10.3m to enable all the sub-counties located along the 27km route to benefit.

The sub-counties include parts Majanji, Lumino, Buhehe, Masaba, Masafu, Dabani, Busia municipality and Busitema in Samia Bugwe North.

Ogutu said they have secured land in Butangasi, while the municipality has acquired land in Dabani, for the construction of main reservoirs to serve Samia Bugwe south and Busia municipality. Safe water coverage in Busia stands at 74.6%.

The district has 383 functional boreholes, 102 shallow wells, 207 protected springs. Pit-latrines coverage is at 79%.

Acquiring a new site implies that the design made by Fechner M&E associates Ltd, a consultancy firm contracted for the project, will also be reviewed.

Silver Mugisha, the managing director of National Water and Sewerage Corporation, told *New Vision* that the project will boost their capacity to deliver quality services in Busia.