

BUKENYA WANTS ENCROACHERS **EVICTED** FROM KYEWAGA FOREST RESERVE SWAMP

By Job Nantakiika

Former vice-president and senior presidential adviser on environmental matters, Gilbert Bukenya, has called on the Ministry of Water and Environment to evict individuals who have constructed buildings in the swamp within Kyewaga Forest Reserve.

Kyewaga Forest Reserve is located in Katabi town council, Entebbe municipality in Wakiso district. The National Forest Authority (NFA) allocated 20 hectares of the reserve to Bukenya to restore tree cover in an area where trees had previously been cut down.

"I do not know whether the environment ministry will hear me, but I want them to evict all the people who have built in this swamp and break all those buildings so that I

CALL FOR A **LAW**

The former vice-president and senior presidential adviser on environmental matters, Gilbert Bukenya, also urged the Government to enact a law prohibiting private individuals from planting eucalyptus trees on government land.

Bukenya noted that eucalyptus trees should be grown on privately owned land since they are mainly for commercial purposes.

establish fish ponds as well as trees so that the place regains its natural look," Bukenya said.

He made the remarks on Wednesday during a tree-planting exercise aimed at restoring the degraded forest reserve.

Bukenya revealed that although NFA granted him permission to replant trees in Kyewaga Forest Reserve, he was later approached by individuals claiming ownership of plots of land within the area, despite it

being government property.

He criticised NFA authorities for allocating government land to private individuals to plant eucalyptus trees, which he said degrade the soil instead of supporting indigenous species. Bukenya added that, in some cases, the individuals later acquire land titles.

"I cannot leave individuals to take government land which was reserved by our ancestors so many years ago and I'm very happy that the trees which I'm planting are doing very well,"

Bukenya added.

He explained that he is establishing an agro-forest system, allowing some people to grow crops that do not harm the trees, while also helping to maintain the planted seedlings.

According to Bukenya, Kyewaga Forest Reserve will host medicinal tree species, such as prunus Africana (*entasesa*), torell's eucalyptus and empress tree, among others.

UPDF COMMENDED

Bukenya commended the Uganda People's Defence Forces, particularly the Air Force and the Special Forces Command, for supporting the planting of 12,000 trees during the first phase last year.

He also hailed the president of Heal the Planet, Dr Earnest Benjamin Kivumbi, for providing the trees planted during Wednesday's exercise.