Vision Group to run special editions on infrastructure, oil

By Taddeo Bwambale

Uganda is undertaking some of the largest infrastructure projects in the country's history: the kind that has potential to accelerate the East African region's economic fortunes in the coming years.

In addition, the country is bracing itself for the first commercial production of oil and natural gas, two of the natural resources seen as major drivers of economic development over the next decade.

Unfortunately, even as extensive preparatory works take shape on the ground, little has come to light about the opportunities that lie in the path of the huge projects worth billions of dollars.

However, the situation is bound to change, starting with the new year, when Vision Group unveils two new editorial products, one exclusively on infrastructure and the other on oil and gas.

The series on infrastructure will be published every Monday, while another extensive package on the oil and gas sector will run every Tuesday, Vision Group's chief executive officer, Robert Kabushenga, reveals.

"We want to show readers what infrastructural developments are underway; be it roads, bridges or airports. We want people to be better informed, especially about the opportunities being created for them by such projects," explained Kabushenga, who noted that the level of participation in the lucrative projects by Ugandans remains low due to inadequate information.

"If you are a supplier or a contractor, you will know what is needed for you to participate in these projects. We shall highlight all these projects, at what stage they are, what one needs to participate in their development and the aspects of financing."

The first in-depth article analysing opportunities in the infrastructure sector will be published in *New Vision* on January 15 next year.

Besides providing extensive information about infrastructure, the weekly package will help Ugandans choose careers that tap into the benefits of the infrastructure, oil and gas projects, Kabushenga explained.

"For instance, if two big hydropower dams are under construction, what are the skills required to run those dams? What kind of services will the dams consume? Such information will help people equip themselves to be part of the country's developments. Kabushega explained.

The stories will further pry into the more long-term effects of the huge projects in order to prepare citizens for choices about future market changes, he elaborated.

Citing an imminent growth in power generation, he highlighted that the resultant growth of industries will help entrepreneurs plan and the labour organisations to train labour for the prospective jobs.

Vision Group's editor-in-chief, Barbara Kaija, said the special package on infrastructure will play a crucial role in linking audiences to enterprising ideas that will create jobs for youth or indirect business.

Kabushenga

BETWEEN THE LINES:

The edition is intended to equip readers with information on infrastructural developments, as well as the progress in the oil and gas sector, highlighting the opportunities that such lucrative projects avail to Ugandans.

"We are going beyond our traditional roles to look out for opportunities for our audiences. The infrastructure projects have so many spill-overs for the youth to explore," she said.

Oil and gas

The special packages on oil and gas will be bringing to readers exclusive updates on the sector with arguably the most anticipated economic outcomes.

In 2006, Uganda hit gold with the first commercial discovery of oil in Kaiso Tonya area on the shores of Lake Albert. Uganda has an estimated 6.5 billion barrels of oil and 500 cubic feet of natural gas.

The country plans to start commercial oil production in 2020, with projections that the resource will fetch $3b (sh10.8 trillion) from oil exports and services.

Unlike many oil-producing countries, the Government has for the last 10 years embarked on works to build all the infrastructure for value addition to the oil before it is drilled.

Some of the projects include the construction of a road network in the Albertine Graben and a $4b (about sh14.2 trillion) 60,000 barrels-per-day refinery in Hoima district and oil pipelines.

While *New Vision* will be the main platform for news and features about the two new editorial projects, the stories will air on all TV and radio channels and feature prominently online.

Discussion on *Urban Today*, a morning show on Urban TV will focus on the two projects on Monday and Tuesday. News segments on radio and TV programmes will feature the stories.

According to Kabushenga, the two projects will run on Monday and Tuesday because people are most interested in the topics early in the week.

"If they need more time to follow up on what they have identified, they have three or four working days in which they can do so," he explains.

Harvest Money moves to Friday

A raft of changes brought about by the introduction of the special projects will see *New Vision's* extensive guide on farming, *Harvest Money*, moved from Tuesday to Friday.

"We find it relevant to move *Harvest Money* to Friday because people are starting to plan weekend trips to their farms. They can act on the ideas immediately," Kabushenga says.

According to Kaija, the changes will give more time to people who have interest in farming to plan for the activities.

"The changes will allow corporate workers and civil servants to go home with their *Harvest Money* pull-out in the Friday newspaper and use it as guide on their farm over the weekend," she explained.

Pakasa shifts to Sunday

The entrepreneurship platform *Pakasa*, will in turn shift from Frid to Sunday. It will also be merged wi Secure Your Future, a similar editi initially conceived to inspire retire that runs on Sunday.

Combining the two editions based on findings that even youth increasingly interested in plann their retirement, while at the sa time seeking inspiration for busine

"We believe these prod innovations will enable people focus on things that can mak difference in their lives next y Kabushenga said.