...to the ministry of Agricul- | spared. Mr John Tusiime from Pakanyi | Mr Francis Byamukama

Govt unaware of Busoga varsity renaming – Minister Muyingo

BY GOFREY MASIKO

IGANGA. The State Minister for Higher Education, Dr John Chrysostom Muyingo, has said he is unaware of any formal government decision to rename Busoga University, describing the proposal as an idea still under review by a task force.

Speaking to *Daily Monitor* last week, Dr Muyingo said discussions about renaming the university were news to him, adding that the matter has not yet reached ministerial level.

"As people discuss, many ideas come on board. We have a whole council community taskforce working on several policy issues, and they have not yet concluded," Dr Muyingo said.

"When the task force is ready, they will invite the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) to advise the minister. But at the moment, the issue of changing the name has not reached me," he said.

He added that during the last briefing he received from the task force, the issue of renaming the university was never discussed.

However, Mr Ezra Gabula, the Iganga District chairperson and an alumnus of Busoga University, said attempts to rename the institution lack a legal basis.

"The President directed a takeover of Busoga University; he did not say the government should create a new university," Mr Gabula said.

Reasons for renaming university

Meanwhile, Mr Patrick Kayemba, a former member of the Busoga University transition committee, said some officials from the Education ministry had suggested renaming the university to avoid inheriting a 'bad image' associated with its past challenges.



According to Mr Kayemba, the officials argued that a public university should have a name that reflects skills development and a fresh start, especially given Busoga University's transition into a public institution.

"The thinking is that Busoga University is unique as it already has branches in Kamuli, Jinja, and elsewhere, which is unusual for a public university," Mr Kayemba said.

He added, however, that several stakeholders believe the name Busoga University represents the cultural and regional identity of Busoga, and should, therefore, be retained.

While acknowledging the ministry officials' concerns, Mr Kayemba criticised the timing of the proposal.

"Why didn't the issue of the name come up at the beginning? Now it feels like a delaying tactic. What matters most is when the university starts," he said.

Students, alumni reject proposal

Students, alumni, parents, and other stakeholders have openly opposed the proposed renaming, warning that it threatens the university's identity and could negatively affect graduates' academic records.

The proposed names, Busoga University Public (BUP) and Busoga Public University (BUPU), were discussed at a meeting on January 3, 2026, in Kampala City.

Protesters argue that the rebranding was introduced without adequate consultation and undermines the historical, academic, and legal significance of the name Busoga University.

They said the university's name was adopted after extensive consultations involving prominent Busoga leaders and elders, including the late Kyabazinga of Busoga, Henry Waako Mulooki, former Chief Justice Waako Wambuzi, Former Bishop of Busoga Cyprian Bamwoze, Mohammed Kisambira Lubega, and Ms Rebecca Kadaga, currently the Kamuli Woman MP, the First Deputy Prime Minister and East African Community Affairs minister.

They also cited two presidential letters issued in 2018, which guided the transformation of Busoga and Bunyoro universities into public institutions. The protesters argue that the directives focused on governance reforms.

Background

Busoga University was closed in 2017 by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) over serious irregularities, including hiring unqualified staff, offering unaccredited programmes and fraudulently awarding degrees to more than 1,000 students.

In 2018, President Museveni directed the Minister of Education, Ms Janet Museveni, to facilitate the government takeover of the Mountains of the Moon and Busoga universities.

The government then established a committee headed by Mr Muyingo to spearhead the processes of taking over Busoga University as a public institution.

The government also appointed a six-member task force, chaired by environmentalist Prof John Tabuti, to initiate the transition of Busoga University into a public institution.

Busoga University, affiliated to Busoga Diocese under the Church of Uganda, was founded in 1999 with its main campus located in Iganga Town.

CamScanner