

demand to meet Museveni on USE

Grievance. The owners accuse government of not consulting them about the decision to withdraw their support to the schools.

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KAMPALA. Private school proprietors have asked to meet President Museveni following government's decision to withdraw its partnership in institutions implementing Universal Secondary Education (USE).

The schools, under the umbrella Federation of Non-state Education Institutions, termed the manner in which the Ministry of Education phased them out on a programme they had partnered for 10 years as disrespectful.

'Unfair'

"The procedure government used to withdraw is belittling the value of proprietors. When they wanted our service, they came to us and we agreed. Now, they have dumped us without consultation. No, that is not fair. Why do they withdraw now when poverty indicators are worse than they were when the programme started? Is government realistic?" Mr Stephen Wako Muzinge, a director at Kaliro College, asked recently.

He was speaking at a workshop that drew more than 300 school owners together in Kampala.

However, Mr Ismail Mulindwa, the commissioner in charge of private schools at the ministry, warned that while signing the memorandum of understanding, the members did not comprehend the contents of the document and asked them to concentrate on other opportunities to enable their schools continue operating.

"There are many reasons for

the phaseout and mismanagement was one of them. A decision has been taken. Reversing it might be difficult. We are mindful that some students have not gone to school. You cannot be more concerned than government. It is coming up with big plans," Mr Mulindwa said.

"Government has said we come up with a framework which will allow other alternatives not necessarily money like it has been. We hope this will take interests of all schools because there was a concern why we are giving priority to only schools we are partnering with," he added.

"We insist that there is no phase-out. We want the President to tell us because he made the pronouncement to wrong people. If there are schools that did wrong, they should not be the reason to punish innocent children. We want them to punish those implicated but not act outright," FOGO DRANI, OWNER OF ST DANIEL KOBOKO MODERN SCHOOL

Mr Geoffrey Kyomukama, proprietor of Blessed Parents Vocational Secondary School, said government should incur the liabilities for teachers who will be laid off.

In 2007, government introduced free education in secondary schools to complement primary school leavers who were failing to continue their education and partnered with private institutions.

This year, government said it will not continue with the partnership starting with this year's Senior One and Five entrants.

See related story on page 11