

Government to set up fish parks

By David Lumu

Cabinet has approved a proposal to set up aqua parks in all districts, to boost fish production.

According to Shaban Bantariza, the deputy spokesperson of the Government, the proposed reforms in the fisheries sector are contained in the principles for the Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill, 2018 that Cabinet approved on Monday.

"The Bill seeks to create a conducive investment environment through aqua parks, to increase fish production and productivity. It will also ensure availability of effective monitoring systems, adequate and relevant information for planning and decision making," he said.

Bantariza, who was on Tuesday addressing journalists at the Uganda Media Centre, said the Bill also seeks to handle matters of prevention and control of pathogens, disease-causing organisms and other contaminants of the water bodies in the country.

New coffee law

The ministers, on Monday, endorsed a proposal for a new coffee law, which is expected to streamline the mushrooming institutions and players in the sub-sector that contributes sh158b to the economy every month.

Bantariza said the proposed new law will also repeal the existing legal framework that establishes the Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA).

"The National Coffee Bill intends to facilitate the development of a competitive, equitable and sustainable coffee industry by promoting coffee research, good coffee farming practices, domestic consumption of coffee and adding value to coffee," he said, adding that ministers also proposed the introduction of a coffee auction system to ease trade in the sub-sector.

"The Bill will also provide for an authority to



Shaban Bantariza

regulate all on-farm and off-farm activities in the coffee value chain."

According to Joseph Nkando, the chairperson of the National Union of Coffee Farmers in Uganda, the Bill should not only be passed into law quickly, but also implemented quickly and strictly.

"We welcome the Bill because we want to see that Uganda's competitiveness in the global market improves. The Government should pass the Bill quickly and also work on building the capacity of coffee farmers in the country," he said, adding that farmers do not want a law that will stay on paper.

"Enforcement of the law is key in the coffee sub-sector," he added.

The Government targets to export 20 million bags of coffee every year, by 2020.

Official figures from UCDA indicate that Uganda currently exports 401,930 bags every year.