

Unreliable power supply hurts industrialisation, says Muloni

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KAMPALA. Energy minister Irene Muloni has said unreliable power electricity could hurt Uganda's industrialisation plan. Prospective manufacturers, she said, will only set up shop here if there is reliable and quality supply of electricity.

Therefore, the Electricity Sector Industry (ESI) - generation, transmission and distribution companies - should improve the reliability and quality of the supply of power for Uganda to industrialise.

They could ensure reliability and quality by investing in modern and durable plant equipment, transmission and distribution lines, as well as electrical substations.

"We need to attract industries. Industries consume large volumes of electricity," Ms Muloni said.

"For us to attract industries, the quality of electricity and the price of electricity come into play."

She was speaking during an Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA) forum on the supply of electricity in Kampala on Tuesday. The forum was attended by the chief executive officers of Uganda's electricity generation, transmission and distribution companies.

Ms Muloni said ERA should ensure electricity utilities live up to the conditions in their licenses.

ERA's chief executive officer Ziria Tibalwa Waako said ensuring lower tariffs and reliability, as well as the quality of supply, are among ERA's focus areas.

"We want a signal at the right standard offered at a desirable and anticipated level of service..." Ms Waako said.

Mr Selestino Babungi, the man-



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IRENE MULONI, ENERGY MINISTER

aging director of Umeme, said according to a customer survey the company has just done, Uganda's current industrial consumers said they want reliable and quality power supply.

"Reliability is a big challenge," Mr Babungi said.

"The root causes are the network capacity constraints. For example, if you look at Lugazi [Town Council in Buikwe District], before we extended a line and put up a substation at Moniko, there was suppressed demand around Lugazi; the 66kV transmission line was not sufficient given the growth in that area."

According to the National Small Business Survey Report 2015, 33 per cent of Uganda's small and medium enterprises experience power outages lasting upwards of five hours.

The outages, the report says, constrain the growth of such business, which are a source of livelihood for up to two million Ugandans.

Ms Muloni also said the transmission line must be extended to more areas in Uganda, as well as to neighbouring countries.

"When Karuma and Isimba [power dams] come on line within a year or so, we might not be in position to consume all that power at a go," Ms Muloni said.

"We now need to prepare the facilities...so that any excess we can send it to our neighbours that might need it. South Sudan is in need of electricity, Rwanda is in need of more electricity."

33%

THE PERCENTAGE OF UGANDA'S SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES WHICH EXPERIENCE POWER OUTAGES LASTING UPWARDS OF FIVE HOURS, ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS SURVEY REPORT 2015.

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