

Lands ministry scores high, targets more innovations

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Lands, housing and Urban development is one of the key sectors that contribute hugely to the development of the country.

Annually, key stakeholders meet to assess the performance of the sector, establish interventions, set budget priorities and draft strategies of boosting the sector.

The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development conducted its joint second sector review meeting under the theme: 'Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation through Planned Land use, Tenure Security and Housing for All'.

It was meant to complement last year's theme that was: 'The Journey to a Middle Income Economy: The Role of the Lands, Housing and Urban Development Sector.'

During the review meeting held at the Prime Minister's office in Kampala, the minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Ms Betty Amongi, said for the past one year, there has been a tremendous progress in the lands, housing and urban development.

She said the lands sector has put in place key policies required to guide the sector, which includes the National Land Policy (2013), National Housing Policy (2016) and the recently approved National Urban Policy (2017).

"The National Land Policy provides a framework for managing and administering land and land-based resources in the country where it provides a framework for housing development, while the National Urban Policy provides a framework for managing Uganda's urbanisation process," Ms Amongi said.

She added that the National Urban Policy provides direction for government agencies and other stakeholders to plan, implement and effectively manage the urban growth.

She noted that the Urban Policy is going to play a critical role as the country urbanises and reach the middle income economy.

The policy addresses problems associated with the rapid urbanisation, which include among others, high population growth, urban poverty, urban unemployment, environmental degradation, urban safety and security, urban housing, inadequate urban transportation and traffic management, inadequate urban infrastructure and service delivery, poor urban governance, and inadequate financing.

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development, Ms Dorcas Okalanyi, said there has been finalisation of the drafting of Uganda Land Commission Bill. The Bill has been cleared by the necessary authorities and will be submitted to Cabinet soon for consideration, and thereafter, it will be submitted to Parliament for enactment into law.

"The ministry has commenced construction of the eight ministry zonal Offices in Tororo, Moroto, Mpigi, Kabale, Rukungiri, Mityana, Luwero, Soroti, Wakiso and Mukono and multi-purpose hall and dormitory for the Institute of Surveys and Land Management.

The construction of the eight ministry land zonal offices will increase the number of zones to 21. The zonal offices will provide all services previously provided only at the ministry headquarters.

"With the computerisation of land records, we have been able to reduce and eliminate forgeries and graft in the land registration system, problems of missing land records have been eliminated, and land



State Minister for Lands Hon. Persis Namuganza (right) handing over customary land titles to some of the beneficiaries in Nwoya district.

transactions are more efficient and speedy thus reducing the cost of doing business," she says.

Ms Okalanyi added that the ministry has completed the piloting of systematic registration of individual and communally owned land by pretesting Systematic Land Adjudication and Certification in the districts of Jinja, Buwekula Parish, Mawuta Village and Walukuba Division, Masese II Cell, Sheema-Kihunda Parish, Nyamiko village and Apac-Chawente Sub County, Adogarya village. The communities will be issued with land titles at a nominal fee of Shs 70,000 thus enhancing on their security of tenure.

The sector also continued with the exercise of regularizing land rights for lawful and bonafide occupants in Kibaale District, Ankole region and Nakasongola District. 324 land titles were issued by President Museveni to lawful land occupants in Kibaale District.

Implementations

In last year's joint sector review meeting, a number of resolutions were made and have been implemented.

The inadequate facilitation, uncoordinated

operations of land management institutions was solved by training 24 district land boards and area land committees from 24 districts and 45 physical planning committees.

Marginalisation of women and children was addressed by public sensitisations on land rights for women and other vulnerable groups through radio and TV talk shows, dissemination and distribution of IEC materials.

For the escalation of district boundary disputes, a task force was constituted and carried out a survey and boundary demarcation in the districts of Butaleja, Budaka, Adjumani and Amuru.

Commended

The Prime Minister, Dr Ruhakana Rugunda, while speaking at the meeting commended the individual efforts that development partners and civil society organisations have undertaken to improve the welfare of citizens, particularly those living in rural areas.

He also urged them to pursue a more collaborative effort not only among themselves but also to engage local and national leadership and where possible, in direct consultation with the local citizens for whom the development is intended.

"I'm aware of the efforts by the development partners and civil society organisations to improve land administration and management through introduction of the computerised land information system and registering of customary land. Government can only ask that this mechanism be strengthened and closer collaboration ensued to provide public trust amongst the citizens," Dr Rugunda said.

He said the basic or most common land transactions should also be completed within reasonable time as it is in other countries.

"We are also waiting for the report from the commission of inquiry into land matters headed by Lady Justice Catherine Bamugemereire, to propose recommendations aimed at improving the land sector," he added.



Some of the customary land owners.