



Access to safe water improving

BY ZUURAH KARUNGI
zkarungi@ug.nationmedia.com

tion, irrigation, livestock and industrial use.

Water resources, biodiversity, ecosystems and forests are what make up a great environment. In order to protect and preserve them, the NRM government put strong policies, laws and regulations on how people can manage them.

In its manifesto, the NRM government promised to focus on the provision of access to safe and clean water and improved sanitation in both urban and rural areas.

The ruling party also promised to increase water for production storage facilities by investing in construction of multi-purpose water reservoirs to boost agricultural production through irrigation.

The NRM government also recognises environment and natural resources as a critical component in development, wealth creation and therefore, promised to promote massive tree planting and restoration of the degraded ecosystems country-wide.

Water supply and sanitation

The NRM manifesto (2016/2021) prioritised provision of safe water in rural and urban areas, provision of water production across the country, integrated water resources management as well as management of environment and natural resources.

In the area of access to safe water and sanitation, the NRM manifesto prioritises increased access to clean and safe water from the 65 per cent to 79 per cent in rural areas and from 72 per cent to 100 per cent in urban areas by 2021 with the aim of providing a safe water source in every village.

"In regard to sanitation, the focus is to increase access to improved sanitation in rural areas from the current 77 per cent to 79 per cent and from 84 per cent to 100 per cent in urban areas by the year 2021," the manifesto reads in part.

The NRM government also pledged to invest in water for production infrastructure to boost commercial agriculture and industrial activities with emphasis on construction of large and small-scale water schemes for irrigation, livestock and rural industries.

The target is to increase cumulative storage from 27.8 million cubic metres to 55 million cubic metres by 2019/20.

There are plans to pump water from large reservoirs to a high point and then extend it by gravity to reach more areas so that water is brought nearer to users for home consump-

What has been done

While addressing the nation on the progress of manifesto implementation last week, Mr Sam Cheptoris, the Minister of Water and Environment, said rural water coverage increased from 68 per cent in June 2016 to 70 per cent in June 2017 with a total of 36,614 villages estimated to have been served with safe water countrywide, while sanitation coverage has increased from 79 per cent to 80 per cent.

Water for production projects

Mr Cheptoris said the government has developed a national irrigation policy, which will guide planning and implementation of irrigation programmes in the country.

He said the cumulative storage capacity for water for production stands at 38.9 million cubic metres compared to 37.2 million cubic metres realised in financial year 2016/17.

He also noted that the government has constructed 10 small scale solar powered irrigation schemes in the districts of Isingiro, Mbarara, Rukiga, Lwengo, Mukono, Mityana, Masaka, Oyam, Bugiri and Soroti.

Environment and natural resources management

Mr Cheptoris said the ministry supplied a total of 1,856,696 seedlings to the districts of Bududa, Bukwo, Namisindwa and Mbale, catchment areas of Ngeenge (Kween), Tochi (Oyam), Wadelai (Nebbi), Mubuku II (Kasese), Doho II (Butaleja), Olweny (Lira) and Agoro (Lamwo) irrigation schemes as well as the districts of Luwero and Nakaseke.

"National Forestry Authority (NFA) produced about five million assorted seedlings and supplied to the communities around the forest reserves, while 244 hectare of forest plantations were established. 176.6Kms of wetland boundary were demarcated out of the planned 320Km," he said.

He also noted that government through NEMA stopped 19 companies involved in sand mining in Mpigi and Kalungu districts due to non-compliance to permit approval and issuance conditions.

The National Environment Act was reviewed and the National Environment Bill is currently before Parliament.

The Bill is key in management of environmental aspects of oil and gas, electronic waste as Uganda enters into the oil and gas production stage.

n
e its sur-
ere is no
goods in
y harmful
, but also
roducing

ncreased
sure that
d or un-

l Industry
ue in the
cessing),
of mini-
-county

on and
sistance
ment in
railways,
mission
f doing

ing fa-
blished
yunga,
ese to
essing
d ease

by the
ntinue
e EAC
affect
d ser-

trans-
sub-
alture-
rial or
tract-
l and

as far
anda
heart
East