

# Skills Development Council to certify skills for oil and gas sector

By John Odyek

The Government is fast-tracking the setting up of a Skills Development Council, which will be responsible for the certification of skills to be used in the embryonic oil and gas sector.

Energy minister Irene Muloni yesterday told the Presidential Investors Round Table Meeting V that the council would provide Ugandans with the necessary skills to work in the fast-growing sector as part of the national content policy.

The council will be based at the education ministry. The meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Dr Ruhakana Rugunda, at his office

in Kampala, discussed developments in the oil, gas and mineral sector.

Rugunda urged the two ministries to do all that was necessary to get Ugandans certified and employed in the sector.

According to Muloni, the education ministry has established five sector skills councils that will work on a tripartite arrangement among employers, government and training providers.

The councils are; oil and gas, construction, agriculture, manufacturing and hospitality and tourism.

There are 25 industries with a high potential for national content, which

have been identified by the industry players. They include transport, logistics, cement, food supply, work safety products, light equipment manufacturing, technical consulting services, vendors, furniture manufacturing, facility management services, catering, manpower agencies, fuel wholesale, domestic airlines, security services, production operation services and general maintenance services.

Others are hazardous waste management, generic waste management, road construction, mechanical construction services, civil construction services, structural/steel manufacturing,

reinforcement steel manufacturing and bulk construction materials.

Muloni said a national talent register and supplier database had been developed by the Petroleum Authority of Uganda, to boost local participation in the sector.

Alex Kakooza, the permanent secretary in the education ministry, said Uganda's institutions interested in providing training for the sector should affiliate to the Offshore Petroleum Industry Training Organisation (OPITO), with offices based in UK and Dubai.

OPITO is a global institution that creates standards for training in the sector. The Government will also work

with the City and Guilds of London Institute, a global leader in skills development.

## More opportunities

The Lake Albert Basin Development projects, where oil and gas activities will take place, will generate thousands of direct jobs in Uganda, with a peak 13,000 workers in the construction phase and a plateau of 3,000 people in the operation phase.

Beyond direct jobs that will be created on site, oil and gas activities will also have the potential to generate 100,000 to 150,000 indirect and induced jobs.

Jimmy Mugerwa, the chief executive officer of Tullow

Oil Uganda, asked the Government to move from planning to action.

Mugerwa, who is also the chairperson of the technical working group, requested the Government to involve them in their meetings, where many technical issues, bottlenecks and problems, such as land, need to be resolved expeditiously.

Elly Karuhanga, the president of the Uganda Chamber of Mines and Petroleum, said practical steps need to be taken by the Government to ensure that the private sector gets necessary capital and Ugandans get skills to participate in the sector before time runs out.