

# Kampala-Mpigi Expressway project kicks off in 2018

**Opportunities.** Mr Negatu says the road will boost trade in Uganda and neighbouring countries and also create 360 jobs for women.

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**KAMPALA.** The Uganda National Roads Authority (Unra) is targeting early 2018 for commencement of construction of the proposed multinational Busega-Mpigi Expressway also called the Kampala-Mpigi Highway, connecting to the Kampala-Masaka road enroute to Mirama Hills- Kagitumba at the border with neighbouring Rwanda.

The plan is to connect the road, which is part of the Northern Corridor a transport network that links landlocked Uganda, Rwanda, South Sudan and Burundi from the Mombasa Port in Kenya, to Rusumo (at Rwanda-Tanzania border) which is part of Central Corridor from the ports of Tanga or Dar-es-Salaam as an alternative road route for movement of cargo from the Indian Ocean.

Unra's head of corporate communications, Mark Ssali, told this newspaper yesterday they are looking at getting on board a contractor by October next year plus the mandatory additional three months for (a contractor) mobilising equipment on the road project.

"We are basically looking at a year's time," Mr Ssali said. "The Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) report has been completed and is with the Chief Government Valuer for approval before we can start."

This followed yesterday's signing of two loan agreements worth Shs535b (\$151m) between the Finance minister Matia Kasajja and the African Development Bank (AfDB)'s director general for East Africa Gabriel Negatu for the construction of the the Busega-Mpigi Expressway (23.7km) and rehabilitation of its ancillarythe Kagitumba-Kayonza-Rusumo road (208km).

The Kampala-Mpigi Highway is one of the main thoroughfares that roads body has been working for a long a time and its designs have been on the shelf for a while. The four lane, dual carriage way will cost \$91m (Shs322b), and will include four major interchanges to facilitate interconnection



**Signatories.** The African Development Bank regional department director, Mr Gabriel Negatu, (left), and Finance minister, Mr Matia Kasajja, display signed loan agreements. PHOTO BY DOMINIC BUKENYA

to with roads at designated points at Nabbingo, Nsangi, Maya and Lugala in Wakiso district off both the Northern Bypass and the Entebbe-Expressway whose expansion and construction, separately is ongoing.

The highway will also include 20km of link/service roads (of normal width 7km), five flyovers and 8km of auxiliary lanes.

Mr Negatu, commended government for its devoutness to infrastructure development, and described the road as "a response to the country's growing population" and "need to trade with neighbouring countries to boost self-reliance". As part of the employment opportunities created by the project, he expressly, indicated that 360 jobs will be allotted to women.

The signing was also attended by the Unra executive director, Ms Allen Kagina, Works and Transport minister

Monica Azuba-Ntege, and Secretary to the Treasury, Mr Keith Muhakanizi.

Mr Kasajja, decried the hardships government is going through to acquire land for infrastructure, which President Museveni has indicated is his priority, and also further warned against technical delays that could lead to low absorption of the credit facility.

"This project is aligned with the Eastern Africa regional Integration Strategy which supports development infrastructure which has an impact on regional transport and integration," he said.

The Mirama Hills-Kagitumba-Kayonza road at the border and through Rwanda will cost \$60m (Shs212b) from the AfDB's Africa Development Fund, the concessional financing window of the Bank that lends to low income Regional Members.

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