

THE KCCA BOSS SAID THE RENEWAL OF THE LEASES WILL RESULT IN LOSS OF TAXPAYERS' MONEY

By Mary Karugaba

The executive director Kampala Capital City Authority is opposed to a directive issued by the Kampala minister, Beti Kamya, to renew leases for Centenary Park land.

Jenifer Musisi, while appearing before the parliamentary committee on commissions statutory authorities and state enterprises (COSASE) probing the controversial ownership of the park, said renewing the leases will result in loss of taxpayers' money by way of compensation.

Musisi told the committee, chaired by MP Abdu Katuntu (Bugweri County), that much as she agrees in principle that the matter of Centenary Park needs an amicable resolution, she was hesitant to execute a transaction to a private entity that would result in loss of public resources.

"As the accounting officer and chief executive officer of KCCA, I am wary of executing a transaction to a private entity. Otherwise, we will continue to see such land giveaways sanctioned by politicians, more so outside the government procurement laws and regulations," she said.

The meeting was attended by officials from the Uganda National Roads Authority, National Water and Sewerage Corporation and the proprietors of Nalongo Estates Limited, Sarah Kizito and

Musisi opposes renewal of Centenary Park leases



Musisi (left) makes a presentation before the committee on commissions, statutory authorities and state enterprises of Parliament, while Nyakana and Sara Kizito take notes at Parliament yesterday. Photo by Kennedy Oryema

husband Godfrey Nyakana.

She was responding to a recent directive by Kamya to immediately renew the leases to Nalongo Estates Limited as the sitting leaseholder, despite the controversies still surrounding the ownership of

the park

In a letter dated June 22, 2017, Kamya said the decision to grant the company's request to renew the leases was reached after consultations with President Yoweri Museveni.

"After several consultations,

the President guided that stakeholder with either legal or equitable interest in the premises must not be made absolute losers. Nalongo Estates has invested money for five years and employs over 400 Ugandans," Kamya said.

Kamya noted that as a result of the impasse, between the two parties, the country loses sh979m in contractor claims every month.

"It is imperative that this matter be put to rest without any further delay. Kampala residents are still healing from the shock of last years' demolitions" Kamya said.

BETWEEN THE LINES:

Kamya explained that after the deliberations with all the stakeholders in March 2017, the President directed that Nalongo Estates be given a lease extension since they can co-exist with government programmes.

Musisi told the committee that Nalongo Estates Limited has made it clear that before they allow the projects to take off, KCCA should first grant them leases over Centenary Park so that she can directly deal with the agencies implementing the projects.

Background

In 2006, the then Kampala City Council and Nalongo Estates signed a management contract in which it was agreed that the later would transform the property into a modern recreational park, keep the park at all times free from obstruction, open for public use and maintain the park as a green space without any structures.

However, Nalongo Estates Limited reportedly later breached the terms of the agreement and erected temporary structures, restricted it to public access and failed to transform it into a modern recreational park.

As a result, KCCA in 2011 terminated the agreement, accusing the company of failing to implement the terms of the agreement.

When the company refused to hand over the vacant possession, KCCA attempted to physically repossess the land in 2012, but the exercise was stopped by the trade minister, Amelia Kyambadde.

On June 14, 2017, the Inspector General of Government after failing to resolve the conflict, forwarded it to Parliament.

The Speaker of Parliament last week forwarded the matter to COSASE for further investigations and recommend appropriate action. The committee adjourned the meeting to today to enable Kizito present a written reply to the issues raised.