

Investors deny us jobs, Basoga tell Kadaga

JINJA

By Donald Kiirya

Residents of Walukuba/Masese division in Jinja municipality have accused investors of denying them jobs in preference of people from other parts of the country.

They said this during the Speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga's tour of factories in Jinja on Tuesday.

The residents stopped Kadaga's convoy as it left Nilus Tobacco Processing Plant premises and told her that industries in the area sideline the Basoga when recruiting workers.

"Factories do not consider the Basoga when giving out jobs. Instead, they give people from other parts of the country. We request you to talk to those people so that they give us jobs," Bosco Mulaavu, told Kadaga as she got out of her car.

Kadaga promised to follow up on the issue and requested for a telephone contact of their leader.

Earlier, Kadaga had visited Nilus Tobacco Processing Plant, Nile Agro Wheat Mill and Auro Meera Industries.

The investors and factory owners, under their umbrella association, Jinja Investors Forum, told Kadaga that smuggling, delay in processing land titles as well as high power tariffs and taxes were frustrating them.

Kadaga visited the factories at the invitation of the investors.

Investor cries out

Chacko Babu, the leader of Jinja Investors Forum, said although more factories have been established in the area over the last five years, exorbitant taxes and high power tariffs have increased the cost of doing business.

"We pay more than 15 types of taxes — import duty, infrastructure levy, ground rent, property rates,



Auro Meera Industries director Margan Bhai Patel (right) handing to Rebecca Kadaga some of the products his firm makes as other investors look on. Photo by Donald Kiirya

BETWEEN THE LINES:

■ Kadaga urged the Basoga youth to desist from fighting for inheritance, especially land and learn from Patel that families have to work together in business to succeed.

operational tax, fees for route sale, local service tax and pay as you earn — which increases our cost of production," Babu told Kadaga.

He told Kadaga that producing a 50kg bag of wheat flour requires electricity worth sh4,000, which is high.

"Uganda is surrounded by water

but National Water and Sewerage Corporation charges industries about sh10,000 per unit," he said, adding that securing titles for land on which to set up factories is a nightmare.

Babu further told Kadaga that wheat millers in eastern Uganda face the problem of brands that are smuggled from Kenya.

Kadaga responds

Addressing investors at Auro Meera Industries, Kadaga commended Marganbhai Patel for establishing 28 factories in Jinja and Uganda.

"What shocks me is that Patel started his businesses at a family level and they are still strong. Why don't Basoga do this?" Kadaga asked.

She urged the Basoga youth to desist from fighting for inheritance, especially land and learn from Patel that families have to work together in business to succeed.

"Tariffs are high and this has affected profits and output. But I promise to send the parliamentary committee on finance to come and find out more so that we resolve these challenges," Kadaga noted. She called upon the Basoga with the means to establish industries in the region.

Present were Jinja East Municipality MP Nathan Igeme Nabeta, Titus Kisambira (LC5 chairperson) and ZamZam Namakula (Walukuba/Masese division chairperson).