

THE BODY IS BUILDING THE LARGEST SEWERAGE TREATMENT PLANT IN EAST, CENTRAL AFRICA

# NWSC covers over 200 towns

From just 24 towns in 2013, the National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) has expanded to 225 towns. As we commemorate the Uganda Water and Environment Week, the executive director Dr Eng Silver Mugisha in a wide ranging interview told Betty AmamuKirori that the water supply situation in Uganda is set to improve further

**NWSC STRATEGIC FOCUS IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS IS TO ADDRESS EQUITY IN SERVICE DELIVERY AND ACHIEVE 100% WATER SERVICE COVERAGE IN ALL THE AREAS UNDER ITS JURISDICTION**



NWSC executive director Dr Eng Silver Mugisha says NWSC services have grown in leaps and bounds

## Q What is your assessment of the water situation in Uganda?

The national goal of Uganda's water supply and sanitation sector is to increase urban and rural access to water supply services from 77% and 65% respectively to 100% and 79% by 2020.

Notable progress has been made both by the water ministry and NWSC to ensure that every Ugandan has access to safe drinking water. Whereas NWSC currently operates in 225 towns having been in only 26 towns in 2013, there are still some disparities in the national service coverage countrywide.

These disparities are being addressed by a series of projects being undertaken by NWSC and the water ministry.

## NWSC is one of the few government parastatals that have not been privatised. How have you managed to survive the curse that sunk parastatals?

Whereas NWSC is a public parastatal, we operate with the efficiency of any of the successful organisation in the world. We aspire to be the leading customer centred water utility in the world. We focus on financial and operational efficiency. We prioritise development expenditure, infrastructure development with a strong customer focus. As an organisation, we focus on professionalism, a positive work ethic, customer delight, stakeholder engagement through innovative, efficient and sustainable business approaches.

## What are your areas of focus this year?

Our biggest challenge in NWSC is people who do not have access to water. Through our 100% Service Acceleration Project (SCAP100) we

have already delivered 1500km of water pipes across the country this year. The three-year project funded by the Government will see NWSC connect water to 12,000 villages in areas mandated to the corporation.

## What are some of the challenges and what are you doing to address them?

The key challenges include compensation of Project Affected Persons (PAPs), which involves lengthy negotiations, lack of physical plans in most of the towns, insufficient counterpart financing/delayed release of funds by the Government, delayed approvals by donor partners and securing project financing.

To overcome the challenges, NWSC commits to carry out infrastructure designs to minimise compensation, work closely with local authorities in the planning and implementation of infrastructure projects, lobby the Government for more funding, ensure continuous collaboration with approving agencies to timely secure permits, among others as well as carrying out feasibility studies, detailed designs and tender documentation of projects using internal resources to ensure improved service delivery.

## How far have you gone with sewerage management?

Currently, our piped sewerage network is only limited to the central business district of Kampala and other older towns. A majority of people in towns rely on onsite sanitation such as septic tanks. In Kampala areas covered include Nakasero, Kololo, Old Kampala, Industrial Area and limited parts of Mulago, Makerere, Bwaise, Bugolobi,

Mbuya, Bukoto and Ninda.

We maintain our sewer lines and respond promptly to sewage blockages and overflows. We also carry out proactive sewer desilting as a preventive measure. There is also a habit of some residents who empty fecal sludge from their elevated pit latrines into drainage channels and roadside drains during rains. The enforcement required to curb this behavior is outside NWSC's jurisdiction.

We are building the largest sewerage treatment plant in East and Central Africa at our old plant in Bugolobi- Nakivubo. The plant which is 90% complete comes with 31km of sewer network that will see NWSC extend sewerage services beyond the central business district.

It will treat 42 million litres of waste water daily, treat the dry flow of the heavily polluted Nakivubo channel and generate 630KW of electricity from biogas. We will build other sewerage treatment plants in Nakulokolongo, Kajjansi and Lubowa etc. We are experimenting on packaged sewerage treatment plants on Kisoro and Fort Portal.

This will help us provide solutions for smaller towns. We are also looking at the possibility of making briquettes as an alternative fuel and reduce the cutting and burning of trees. As part of corporate social responsibility the corporation constructed 100 public toilets in Kawempe and Bwaise. We have also constructed some public toilets in Kwapa-Tororo and Busia.

## What other achievements have you had in the last four years?

NWSC services have grown in leaps and bounds. NWSC geographical

## Way forward

Dr Eng Silver Mugisha says NWSC remains committed to providing water to all its customers. The implementation of the "100% Service Coverage Acceleration Project (SCAP100)" will go a long way in achieving the universal access to piped water supply in NWSC areas of jurisdiction. Our service footprint will expand to cover about 300 towns and rural

growth areas.

In the spirit of continued innovation and the need for increased efficiency, NWSC with the support of the Government will continue investing part of the surplus from its business operations into infrastructure development projects so as to ensure adequate water supply to the growing population.

coverage has increased from 24 towns in 2013 to 225 towns in 2018, the population served has increased from 2.6 million people to over 7 million people and water service coverage in all the towns stands at 77%. The growth in assets and service foot-print has improved from only 80km of water pipe network extensions annually in 2013 to an average of 1000km annually. All these extensions have been funded from internally generated funds.

As a result of the good performance, the corporation won several regional and global awards in recognition of its efficiency improvements in revenue collection, excellence and innovation, infrastructure service delivery, and replicating good practices to other utilities through the external services wing of the Corporation.

## What is your vision for the next five years?

NWSC's strategic focus for the period 2016-2021 is on two pillars: Infrastructure development and 100% reliable service delivery. Under the first pillar, the corporation intends to focus on the development and rehabilitation of its critical water

supply and sewerage infrastructure.

The second pillar targets increasing the corporation's geographical coverage and 100% water supply coverage. NWSC strategic focus in the next five years is to address equity in service delivery and achieve 100% water service coverage in all the areas under our jurisdiction. The NWSC focus under the Strategic Direction 2016-2021, and which the SCAP100 project will purposely address is the reduction in water supply inequality within its service area and ensure that every village is adequately served with reliable safe drinking water.

## What is your analysis of the Lake Victoria sand mining situation? Can it affect water supply?

The sand mining in Lake Victoria is outside the jurisdiction of NWSC. It is being handled by competent authorities.

However, Lake Victoria is an important shared resource for Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. It needs to be managed well.

The construction of the largest sewerage treatment plant in East and Central Africa by NWSC at Bugolobi is meant to help