

Kenya doctor's strike to end soon. The end of the doctors' strike could be imminent following talks between the government and the medical practitioners' union in Nairobi on Tuesday. Health Cabinet Secretary Cleopa Muli on Tuesday held a closed door meeting with four members of the Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists' and Dentists' Union for more than six hours. Their main agenda, according to a doctor, was the contentious 2013 collective bargaining agreement. It is this CBA that will provide a salary increase as well as address the doctors' working conditions, internship, training and other labour relations.



Out. Dry taps at Tenor Estate in Nairobi, AFRICA REVIEW PHOTO

Drought hampers water supply in East Africa cities

Criticism. Dar es Salaam, Nairobi, Kampala and Kigali have been experiencing continual water shortages with dilapidated distribution networks that depend on unreliable water sources.

BY ALLAN OLINGO

KENYA. East Africa's cities are struggling to supply their growing populations with water from sources that are overstretched.

Dar es Salaam, Nairobi, Kampala and Kigali have been experiencing continual water shortages. They have dilapidated distribution networks that depend on unreliable water sources.

Last month, the Nairobi Water and Sewerage Company (NWSC) announced that the city would face rationing for the next four months.

NWSC managing director Philip Gichuki said that the water levels in the dams were low following poor rains, hence the rationing until the end of April. The city's demand stands at 740,000 cubic metres, against a supply of 540,000 cubic metres.

"We expected the dams to fill up during the rainy season last October, but this did not happen. To date, our dams have only received 250mm of rain as opposed to the 1,000mm of rains expected. The Ndakaini Dam — the city's main source of water — is at below 50 per cent. We agreed to reduce the city's water production by 13 per cent to maintain water supply," Mr Gichuki said.

Nairobi doesn't have any rainwater harvesting system and relies on the dams. As such, the city remains vulnerable to water shortages — in 2002, the Sasumua Dam was destroyed by floods and in 2009, the water volumes at Ndakaini fell below 336,000 cubic metres from the regular 700,000.

The country's latest project — the Northern Collector Water Tunnel — to set up alternative water sources, funded by the World Bank and the French Development Agency, hit a snag.

There are allegations that the project, which would entail transferring water from three rivers — Irati, Maragua and Gikigie — to the Thika reservoir to increase Nairobi's water supply to about 700,000 cubic metres, will result in surrounding areas becoming deserts.

Nairobi is also facing delays in the \$33.4 million upgrade of its dilapidated water supply lines. The upgrade would have increased the city's water supply by 50,000 cubic metres. The project, which was set to be completed in the 2015/16 financial year, is yet to start as there are disputes over approvals and a pending review of its design.

Kampala shortages

Kampala also experiences frequent water shortages as the city's water sources remain vulnerable to weather patterns. World Bank data shows that more than 35 per cent of the city's 1.5 million population experience challenges accessing water.

The city's water holding and distribution infrastructure has been undergoing an upgrade to raise its output from 190,000 cubic metres to 240,000 cubic metres. Last month, the National Water and Sewerage Corporation upgraded the Gaba and Muyenga reservoirs.

Currently the city depends on the Gaba plant for its water supply; when it breaks down, the city experiences shortages. The plant pumps water to the city's two major reservoirs — Muyenga and Namasuba. Muyenga

DWELLERS BLAMED

Uganda President Museveni on Monday said the current drought ravaging the East African region was partly blamed on destruction of wetlands and large scale land degradation. Addressing the East African Legislative Assembly (Eala) plenary session, Mr Museveni said although insufficient rains was causing a lot of worries across the region, increased human activities on the local water catchment areas was another cause of the disturbing situation. He said as late as two years ago the region had recorded appreciable rains which saw the level of Lake Victoria rising closer to a record height in 1964 but that the water level had since dropped sharply due to declining rains,

has a capacity of 57,000 cubic metres and Namasuba 8,000 cubic metres. Other smaller reservoirs serving the city include Mukono, Kyambogo, Tank Hill and Makerere.

Rwanda is yet to fulfil its pledge to fill the water gap by January this year, pending the completion of key projects.

The upgrade of Nzove I, the water plant expected to add 55,000 cubic metres on the existing service level last year, is expected to be delayed. Its progress now stands at 35 per cent.

According to Rwanda's Water and Sanitation Corporation (WASAC), delays in payment have slowed the contractor.

Kigali requires about 110,000 cubic metres per day; WASAC's supply is 90,000 cubic metres. The city is undergoing rapid urbanisation, creating more demand. In addition there has been a drought in Nyabarongo area. The Nyabarongo river is a major source of water for Kigali.

Mr Sano said the government relies on the protection of "this most important river" and its tributaries under the Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project (LVEMP) to ensure high water levels.

LVEMP is involved in the protection of the entire watershed around Nyabarongo using terraces to protect the riverbanks. The water shortage has led to rationing in Nyamirambo, Gisozi, Rebero and Gikondo areas.

WASAC officials said last year's boost of 25,000 cubic metres per day from the Nzove II plant reduced the gap to 20,000 cubic metres per day. Rwanda seeks to reach a 100 per cent clean water supply by 2020. Official statistics indicate that the country has 84.8 per cent access to clean water.

Dar challenges

Dar es Salaam, with an estimated population of 4.5 million, also has water challenges, with almost 40 per cent of its population depending on alternative water sources outside of the city's supply for their needs.

According to the Water and Irrigation Ministry report, the commercial capital needs 450,000 cubic metres of water per day. With the recent completion of major projects in Ruvu Juu and Ruvu Chini on the outskirts of the city, production stands at 504,000 cubic metres per day. However, poor infrastructure hinders full access by the residents, with many areas in the city experiencing rationing of between eight and 20 hours a day.

Dar es Salaam plans to increase accessibility from 72 per cent to 95 per cent in 2020 by digging 20 wells at Kimbiji and Mpera on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam, capable of producing 260,000 cubic metres of water per day. In the past three years, Tanzania has completed 1,160 water projects, with a further 424 projects currently at various stages of implementation. The projects include the ongoing Lake Victoria Kahama-Shinyanga

briefly

Kenya moves to thermal

KENYA. Kenya is injecting thermal electricity into the national grid to compensate for hydro generation — which has been affected by low water levels due to poor rainfall. The government has ruled out loadshedding, but the use of electricity generated from plants that use diesel and fuel oil sets the stage for higher bills. In the late 1990s, Kenya started diversifying power sources to reduce dependence on hydroelectricity. The Kenya Association of Manufacturers said prolonged use of thermal power and decline of hydro output could disrupt economic growth.

Experts cry out

TANZANIA. If it were to improve the education sector, the government should, this time around, take heed of the advice from experts, stakeholders say. Speaking to *The Citizen* on different occasions, education stakeholders have aired various concerns regarding the general situation of education sector development in the country, some impacting negatively on it. They highlight some of the chronic challenges in the sector as including shortage of loans to higher education students and failure to address teachers' grievances.

Opposition leader held

TANZANIA. Tanzanian main opposition leader Edward Lowassa was arrested and briefly detained by police on Monday for allegedly holding an illegal meeting in Geita, a gold mining town in the northwest of the country. Mr Lowassa, a former prime minister and Chadema leader, was in the company of other senior party officials heading to Nkome, an area in Geita, to campaign for their member for a forthcoming civic by-election. The former premier, together with his five-vehicle entourage, is said to have arrived in Geita at about 3.30pm where he was met by party members and supporters.

Kenya shuts down NGO

KENYA. Kenyan authorities on Monday ordered the shutdown of an American NGO working on programmes related to the country's 2017 presidential election, according to a letter seen by AFP. The missive from the ministry of devolution and planning ordered the International Foundation for Electoral Systems to immediately stop its \$20m electoral assistance programme, as it was not registered as an NGO in Kenya. It also said all foreigners working for IFES had not obtained work permits, and were working in the country illegally.