

Ferries linking Busoga, Teso, and Lango commissioned

The Bukungu-Kagwara-Kaberamaido (BKK) ferry service will link the Busoga, Teso and Lango subregions.

BY SAM CALEB OPIO

Excitement and ululations filled the air in Bukungu, Kamuli District, on Friday as two ferries linking Busoga, Teso, and Lango sub-regions were commissioned. The project is expected to bring strategic investment in productivity and regional integration.

The Bukungu-Kagwara-Kaberamaido (BKK) ferry service, constructed by the Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) at a cost of Shs42b, is expected to connect eight districts across the three sub-regions and significantly cut travel time across Lake Kyoga.

In a speech delivered by Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja on behalf of President Museveni, the ferries are more than transport vessels.

"Today, we commission the BKK Ferry, a strategic investment in connectivity and productivity that advances the 2026-2031 NRM Manifesto and National Development Plan IV goals," he said.

He urged residents to use the improved connectivity to boost production and wealth creation, warning against working merely for subsistence.

"Wealth comes from production, value addition, and productivity. Infrastructure like this must move our people from subsistence to the money economy," he noted.

Long wait fulfilled

First Deputy Prime Minister Rebecca



One of the two ferries launched last week. The ferry is expected to cut travel time from eight hours to about one and a half hours, lower transport costs, reduce post-harvest losses and boosts trade. PHOTO/SAM CALEB OPIO

OPERATIONS

The Bukungu-Kagwara-Kaberamaido (BKK) ferry service, constructed by the Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA). UNRA commissioned Tanzanian-based Songoro Marine Transport Ltd under a design-and-build contract signed on June 29, 2020.

ca Kadaga recalled that the President first pledged the ferry in 1990, with sus-

tained follow-up during the 9th Parliament.

"I am delighted that the ferry is operational after a long journey through four transport ministers," she said.

"It is embarrassing that we still import technicians from Tanzania, which is why we insist on establishing a Marine University in Namasagali and strengthening programmes at Soroti University."

She said Parliament had benchmarked the Masaka-Ssesse Island ferry and insisted that two vessels be procured for the BKK route.

Local concerns

Despite the celebration, leaders raised concerns about incomplete docking sites and related infrastructure.

Kasilo MP Elijah Okupa urged the government to clear unpaid domestic arrears affecting works and to tarmac docking areas to keep mud off passengers and create parking hubs.

Kaberamaido MP Alfred Edakasi noted that the Kaberamaido docking site remains incomplete, while works on the Katine-Ochero road have stalled. At the grassroots, residents expressed

optimism.

Emmanuel Kabenge Segujja, a fisherman from Bukungu, described the ferry as the most tangible development gain in decades.

"This is the real gain for our community. Bukungu had been underdeveloped as a closed terminal," he said, recalling that the last ferry on the route, locally known as 'Laitta', operated about 50 years ago.

Bukungu Town Council LCII chairperson Mathias Aribo Nyadundo said the ferry cuts travel time from eight hours to about one and a half hours, lowers transport costs, reduces post-harvest losses and boosts trade.

Tanzania's Ambassador to Uganda, Paul Kisake Simuli, emphasised the importance of regional cooperation.

He pledged that Tanzania will continue offering scholarships and capacity-building opportunities in marine construction and water transport to support knowledge transfer and cross-border trade.

"This bilateral engagement strengthens trade infrastructure, improves cargo handling and fosters economic integration," he said.

The ferries were built by Tanzanian-based Songoro Marine Transport Ltd under a design-and-build contract signed on June 29, 2020.

Songoro Marine Country Director, Richard Katende Mukiibi, said the vessels are equipped with facilities for persons with disabilities, washrooms, crew rest rooms, a cafeteria, a mini health room and an ambulance.

The ferries are also fitted with suction cutter pumps capable of removing floating vegetation and silt from water bodies, helping to maintain navigability on Lake Kyoga.

Mr Katende said passengers travelling from Bukungu in Buyende District to Kagwara in Serere District and Akampala in Kaberamaido District will access the ferry free of charge.

The commissioning marks a significant step in restoring water transport on Lake Kyoga and strengthening economic ties between Busoga, Teso and Lango, as the government pushes infrastructure development to spur national transformation.

Shs42b
COST OF
BUILDING THE
FERRIES