

construction of the new Parliament chamber, the extra allocation implies a total of sh57.8b will have been spent on the project in the current financial year.

Electronix who are producers of thermal electricity. The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development has been allocated sh19b, of which

development of an vaccine by Ugandan scientists based at Makerere University's College of Veterinary Medicine and meeting costs of the

Dr. the Makerere economics don, said. part of ... "Unfortunately, I cannot see

We have not approved sand mining in Lake Victoria, says Wakiso boss

By Jeff Andrew Lule

In a new twist of events, the Wakiso district leaders have dismissed reports that they have approved the Chinese firms to carry out sand mining in Lake Victoria.

Addressing the media at the district headquarters yesterday, the district boss, Matia Lwanga Bwanika, said they have never approved sand mining as reported in sections of the media.

"There is no such resolution from the district council. This is just propaganda intended to tarnish our names," he said.

Local media reports quoted the deputy chief administrative officer (CAO) Wasswa Masokoyi as saying the district had rescinded its decision following an environmental impact assessment report from the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) that allowed the mining activities on the shores of Lake Victoria.

Bwanika explained that there had been three firms which were engaged in illegal sand mining on the shores of Lake Victoria, which were stopped.

They are a Chinese company called 'Only You' which was operating in Namagombe village, Lugumba landing site in Kasanje town council, 'Mango Tree' (Chinese firm) operating in Bussi Islands, but stationed at Bugiri landing site in Katabi town council, and 'Porch Ltd' owned by Nigerians operating in Nkumba Bukolwa village in Katabi Town Council.

Bwanika said Mango Tree sought permission to construct a ship meant for water transport and it was given permission by NEMA.

"Later, it came to our attention that they were using ships to sail late in the night to Bussi islands in Lake Victoria to excavate sand and would later bring it on the shores at Bugiri landing site and sell it," he noted.



Matia Lwanga Bwanika, the Wakiso district chairman

"That is when my executive stopped and arrested one Chinese and handed him over to Kisubi Police Station."

Bwanika said months later, he was contacted by a high profile person in government seeking for what he called a 'developmental meeting', which they had at his home.

"He introduced the subject

of "Mango Tree" and tried to convince me how good the project was, but I personally disagreed with him. I advised him to seek technical guidance," he added.

He also alleged that he received reliable information that the same official went ahead and held two other meetings on November 17 and

December 21, 2017 with the district councillors.

The official is also said to have engaged several technocrats in a meeting at Kawanda, trying to show them how important the project was, which they rejected citing its environmental and eco-system degradation problems.

Bwanika noted that, though councillors might have reached an agreement with the official, the district has never pronounced itself in support of Mango Tree or any other sand mining company from Lake Victoria.

"All those were informal meetings and whatever was discussed is not binding. There is no official documentary evidence which can be adduced whatsoever on record in support or indicating that the district has endorsed sand mining," he added.

Bwanika said he would never be party to the scheme of degrading the environment through excavating sand from

Lake Victoria and also called on the civil society to join him in the fight.

CAO denies statements

At the same briefing, Masokoyi distanced himself from the statements attributed to him in the story, wondering where the writer got them.

"We only discussed licences on dredging the way of the ship and that is all. This was a misrepresentation of facts," he noted.

"If sand mining is wrong we should talk about it as a district. As far as I know, the council has never passed any resolution on sand mining and NEMA has never approved such a project," Masokoyi added.

However, he admitted to have attended a meeting in Kawanda with agricultural experts and Operation Wealth Creation officials to discuss appropriate agriculture approaches in Wakiso, but not sand mining by Mango Tree.