

Meanwhile, 83.1kms (about 35.8 per

The Auditor General calls for clarity in the roles of local governments and the Water ministry and clear maintenance plans for dams in Karamoja Sub-region.

BY SIMON PETER EMWAMU

The latest Auditor General's report has highlighted several gaps in maintenance of more than 106 valley tanks and five dams across the nine districts of the Karamoja Sub-region.

The anomaly cited by the Office of the Auditor General in its report released on December 31, 2025 comes at a time when the pastoralists across the region are facing water crisis as a fair share of valley tanks and dams have dried up, leaving animals emaciated as a result.

The report signed off by Mr Edward Akol, the Auditor General, confirms the Ministry of Water and Environment, and the Office of the Prime Minister, constructed over 106 valley tanks at Shs8.7b and five dams across the region at Shs45b for purposes of supporting livestock economy and irrigation in Karamoja but they have remained poorly managed.

#### Financing

During the 2024/2025 financial year, the Water ministry was allocated Shs1.1 billion for the maintenance of water sources in the region. The audit report, however, indicates that the funds were not utilised effectively.

An inspection conducted in November 2025 on 25 valley tanks and five dams found that 18 valley tanks (72 percent) were heavily silted, while seven (28 percent) faced maintenance challenges, including weed-invaded inlets, dilapidated cattle access ramps, and eroded embankments.

The Auditor General noted that heavy silting has significantly reduced water storage capacity, limiting water availability for livestock and agriculture in a sub-region already grappling with recurrent drought.

The report also cites the absence of clear maintenance plans, unclear division of roles between local

the city authorities, however, face a challenge in dislodging occupants on

land for 14 roads after they constructed fences, sanitary facilities, and kiosks on the road reserves.

"These roads will have solar-powered street lights installed on them. This will improve security and trade," Mr Okwonga said. He also warned the city's road engi-

putes in the future. Even if the land owners are long gone, their children will know the boundary of their land and the public land," the town clerk said.

# Report exposes gaps in maintaining water dams



A woman of Turkana origin waters her herd at Kobebe water dam in Moroto District, Karamoja Sub-region, last Friday. The dam, located on the Moroto, Kenya border, has since dried up. PHOTO/SIMON PETER EMWAMU

and limited community ownership as key weaknesses undermining sustainability.

"I have advised accounting officers to establish clear maintenance plans and budgets for all 106 valley tanks and five dams, and to clarify the roles of local governments and the Ministry of Water and Environment," Mr Akol stated in the report.

#### Affected facilities

Among the affected facilities is Kawomeri Dam, which remains non-functional due to a lack of water, partly attributed to encroachment on its catchment area.

In Moroto District, concerns are mounting over the state of Kobebe

both Karamojong pastoralists and neighbouring Turkana communities. The dam, with a capacity of 2.6 billion cubic litres, supports an estimated 700,000 head of livestock.

Dr Francis Inangolet, the Moroto District production officer, said the dam has become heavily silted and is drying up, forcing pastoralists to migrate in search of water.

"If it does not rain in the next two weeks, nothing will be left. The dam needs to be desilted as soon as possible," Dr Inangolet said, adding that engineers must investigate whether or not ongoing road construction around Kobebe dam has affected water flow into the reservoir.

"We have not yet commissioned

up, but it could be due to roads being constructed in the area, preventing water from flowing easily into the

dam," he explained.

#### Affected residents speak out

Ms Stella Florence Namoe, a peace activist in Rupa Sub-county, said during a water crisis, the women suffer most, not just because they have to look for water but the children left behind run-out of milk from the kraals as herds are migrated hundreds of kilometres from the settlements.

Ms Namoe said during such times, it is often the women who use hands to sink creators along the river beds to search for water.

"When the animals die, the source for fresh milk and raw blood we use for raising the children is affected. This normally happens during such dry spells," she added.

Mr John Robert Adupa, the chairperson of Lotisan Sub-county in Moroto, said Kobebe Dam dried up two weeks ago, prompting herders to dig craters along riverbeds in search of water. Others have migrated to neighbouring districts such as Napak and Kotido.

Observers warn that unless urgent desilting and structured maintenance plans are implemented, Karamoja's multi-billion-shilling water infrastructure investments risk becoming white elephants, further threatening livelihoods in one of Uganda's most climate-vulnerable sub-regions.

#### WATER DAMS AND VALLEY DAMS IN KARAMOJA

- Kobebe dam in Moroto District
- Tapakonye valley tank in Moroto District
- Kawomeri valley dam in Moroto District
- Nakichumet dam in Napak District
- Nakumama valley tank in Napak District
- Arachet valley tank in Napak District
- Lokillim valley tank in Napak

- Kanapdei calley tank in Kotido
- Sinat valley tank in Kotido
- Kyoyagorok valley tank in Kotido
- Koilong valley tank in Kotido
- Natapar Alotwula valley tank in Kotido
- Komosing valley tank in Kotido
- Nakujanaarweny valley tank in Kotido
- Watakau valley tank in Kotido