

Regional News

Local leaders say the university should first compensate families that have occupied part of the Kamuli Agriculture Campus land for decades.

BY OPIO SAM CALEB

Busoga University has intensified community engagement efforts with people occupying part of its 98 acres of land at the Kamuli Agriculture Campus, as both parties move toward a mutual agreement to pave the way for development.

During a consultative meeting on Tuesday, residents expressed willingness to vacate the contested land, provided they receive fair compensation to facilitate resettlement.

The development marks a significant step toward resolving a long-standing land dispute that has hindered the full operationalisation of the campus.

Local leaders, however, raised concerns over what they described as historical injustices in the land transaction process.

Residents said the Church of Uganda Busoga Diocese allegedly misrepresented facts during the sale of the land to the university, claiming that all occupants had been compensated.

"We welcome development in our area, especially after losing the primary teachers' college that was relocated to Kaliro," Mr Mohamed Sebairawo, the Bukwenge Village chairperson, said.

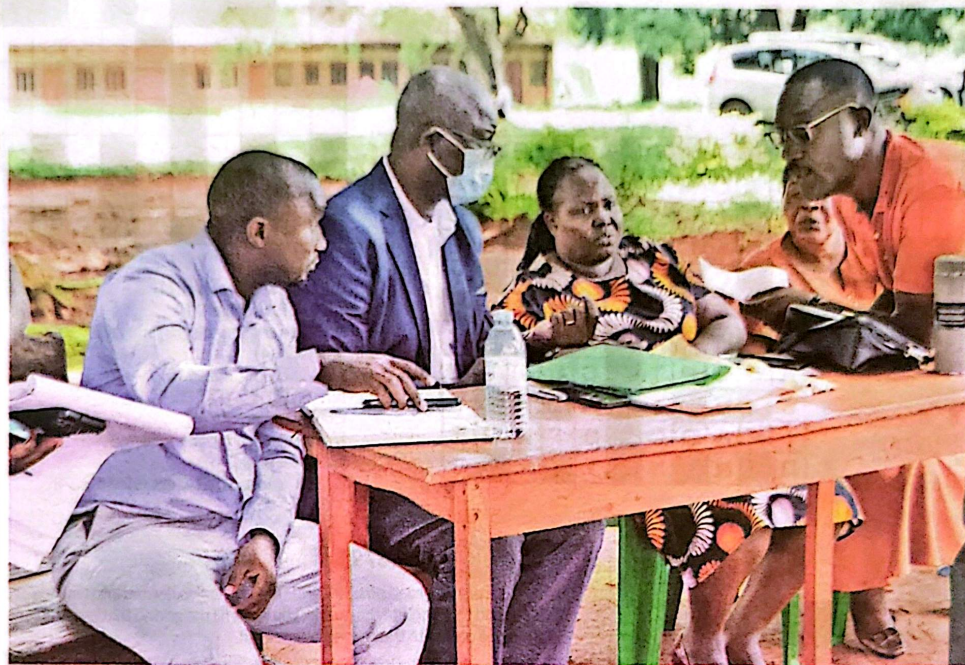
He added: "The Church reportedly assured the university that all landowners had been compensated, which was not the case."

Mr Sebairawo said 17 families have not been compensated.

Mr Sebairawo claims could not be independently verified by press time yesterday.

The Kamuli site, located in Northern Division, has undergone several developments over the years. It was

Busoga varsity asks 'squatters' on 98 acres of land to vacate



Busoga University Task Force Committee members during a post-harmonisation meeting with residents and local leaders on Tuesday. PHOTO/OPIO SAM CALEB

originally established as Kamuli Primary Teachers College (PTC) before being phased out by the government.

It was subsequently transformed into a technical instructors' college through a partnership between local leaders and the Church.

Community elder Jamada Kiyingi said efforts were previously made to compensate landowners gradually, led by then PTC Principal David Kazungu (RIP) and educationalist David Wakaisuka. However, some residents were not compensated.

"The same spirit of transparency and

fairness used in the past should guide this process," Mr Kiyingi emphasised.

The elder added: "Back then, it was a small college, but now it is a university. Land values have increased, especially with the coming of the tarmac road."

Speaking at the engagement, the Busoga University Task Force Committee Chairperson, Prof John Tabuti, acknowledged the grievances and assured residents of a transparent process moving forward.

"We are here to serve the community," Prof Tabuti said, adding: "We will reorganise the compensation plan

and open a one-month window for submission of verified claims. Our goal is to resolve this matter amicably while managing expectations."

The Kamuli Deputy Resident District Commissioner, Mr Adonia Mafumo, called for dialogue and cooperation between all stakeholders to prevent external interference that could derail government development programmes.

"The people of Kamuli are fortunate to have such services brought closer. This campus will enhance access to education, promote modern

BACKGROUND

Busoga University was shut down by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) in 2017 due to irregularities, including employing unqualified staff, offering unaccredited courses, and awarding fake degrees to more than 1,000 students, many of whom were of South Sudanese descent.

In February 2018, Busoga University was handed over to the Ministry of Education and Sports to facilitate its reopening as a public institution as directed by President Museveni.

Established in 1999 by the Church of Uganda, Busoga University is still undergoing preparations for its reopening as a public institution, including the renovation of its main campus in Iganga and other branches such as Kamuli, Jinja, and Bugiri.

agriculture, and stimulate local business. These are gains worth protecting," Mr Mafumo said. The expansion into Kamuli aligns with the university's broader mission of decentralising education and promoting community-based learning.

The Agriculture Campus is expected to play a transformative role in Busoga Sub-region by promoting modern farming technologies, supporting agribusiness and value addition, enhancing skills development among youth as well as strengthening food security initiatives.

Its proximity to rural farming communities makes it strategically positioned to serve as a hub for agricultural research, extension services, and innovation.