

Govt to connect 287 centres to power grid



Operation. Field officials disconnect electricity from a home in Budadiri Town Council in Sironko District last year.

PHOTO BY YAHUDI KITUNZI

Development. The project, expected to start in June, will enhance performance of the e-governance system.

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KAMPALA. The Rural Electrification Agency is in the final stages of rolling out connection of all the 287 sub-county headquarters across the country to the main power grid.

Uganda currently has about 20 per cent of the population connected to electricity, one of the lowest figures globally. The number drops to an estimated 7 per cent in rural areas.

Officials from the agency say with government moving to enhance performance and quicker accountabilities through e-governance system, the connection of the sub-county headquarters speed up the process.

"We are about to begin connecting a larger part of the country, especially all the sub-county headquarters. We are about to get financing from Xim Bank of China of more than \$200 million to extend

power to all the 287 sub-county headquarters which are not electrified. That project is starting later this year," Mr Godfrey Turyahikayo, the agency's executive director, said.

The 2013-2023 rural electrification strategy aims at increasing electricity reach to more consumers by 2022.

Mr Turyahikayo said during this 10-year planning period, the government's strategy is to achieve a rural electrification access of 26 per cent.

“We have really done a massive job in reaching out to almost all parts of the country. We are now left with small stations of extending beyond the major centres. All these sub-county headquarters are the major centres that connect many trunk lines,” GODFREY TURYAHIKAYO, REA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"A robust enabling environment will need to be created during this period to establish the necessary springboard for achieving the ambitious goals

for the years 2030 and 2040," he said. Mr Turyahikayo said over the last few years, the pace of rural electrification has picked up and hopes more funds will be provided so that the connections can be done in time.

He also said since the sub-county headquarters serve as centres, it will be easier to roll-out connections to the villages.

The agency's boss said the new strategy will focus on orchestrating resources and stakeholders to operate in a number of scaled-up service territories for which long-term electrification service business plans shall be developed.

"The government will assume greater responsibility for planning, financing and overall management of the rural electrification sector, while the private sector plays a complementary role to that of Government."

"In this respect, government will absorb the major commercial and financial risk for rural electrification development and, by so doing, remove a critical obstacle to the rapid advancement of investment in the sector," Mr Turyahikayo said.