

agreement. We shall get back to you," Robert Kasande, the

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framework in turn pave way for the

Experts make final checks on Isimba

By Benon Ojiambo

As the construction of 183 MW Isimba hydro project nears completion, an independent panel of experts has embarked on final checks on the project.

The US\$567.7 million (shs 1.8 trillion) project, whose construction started in 2013, was contracted to China International Water and Electric Corporation (CWEC) and is expected to be commissioned before end of this year.

The dam safety Independent Panel of Experts (IPOE) for the project is undertaking a five-day visit to the project site. The visit kicked off on Monday and shall end on Friday.

The IPOE is a mechanism instituted by the Government following the April 2016 ministerial policy directive in respect of construction of 183 MW Isimba Hydro dam and its Bujagali Interconnection Project.

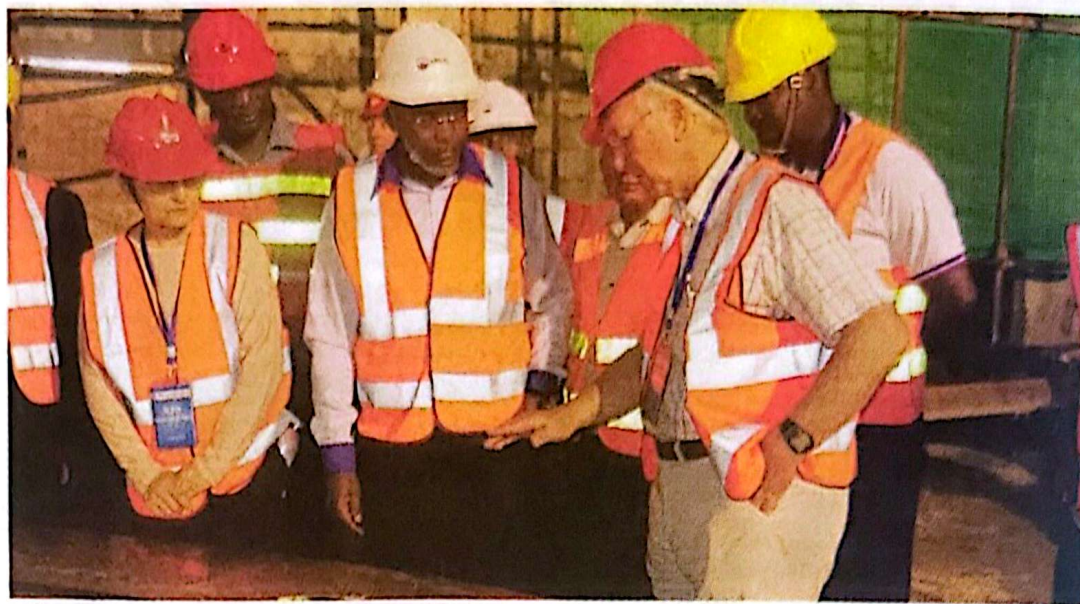
The panel will independently evaluate the quality of construction works, review basic and detailed designs as well as construction methodologies, and assess the risks associated with construction and operation phases of the project.

This is aimed at ensuring that international standards of design, risk evaluation and impact assessment are met.

In accordance with international practice, the IPOE site visits are conducted bi-annually and the last mission was undertaken in November 2017.

Eng. Dr. Harrison Mutikanga, the chief executive officer of the Uganda Electricity Generation Company Limited, described the seven-member panel as one that comprises of highly experienced industry experts from across the globe.

"The composition of the IPOE ensures coverage of the full range of the project



John Gummer (right) stresses a point as Mutikanga (centre), Ljiljana Spasic-Gril (left) and Prof. Jackson Mwakali (second left) look on during a visit to Isimba on Monday.
(Photo by Benon Ojiambo)

construction components and technical aspects," Mutikanga said. UEGCL is the government implementing agency of the project. It is chaired by Charles Hutton from the US. Other members are Prof. Kaare Hoeg from Norway, Dr. Jean Pierre Tournier from Canada, John Gummer from Australia, John Russel and Ljiljana Spasic-Gril from UK and Prof. Jackson Mwakali from Uganda.

Hutton and Mwakali will handle the civil and structural issues of the powerhouse, while Prof. Kaare Hoeg and Dr. Tournier will review embankment dam and geotechnical aspects. John Gummer will tackle the hydromechanical equipment issues.

Russel will handle all electromechanical elements, while Ljiljana Spasic-Gril will focus on risk assessment of dam safety during construction and operation phases.

During the visit, the panel will interact with the government officials represented by UEGCL, EPC Contractor's representatives and the Owner's Engineer (OE). According to Mutikanga,

the panel's site work includes inspections, independent site investigations, design review meetings and desk studies which are guided by a clear set of design criteria based on international standards, guidelines and global best industry practice.

He also explained that the implementation of the panel's recommendations from the previous visits has immensely contributed to the quality assurance and control measures required to build a fit for purpose facility.

"The current visit, undertaken by the full member panel is considered to be timely as construction of the embankment dams and electromechanical installations are at critical stages, with progress already registered in dam foundation treatment and turbine generator installations for two out of four generating units," he added.

"Preparations are underway to start dam material placement on the right embankment dam.

The preliminary findings and recommendations from the 6th POE mission will be presented

at the end of the site visit, for action by the respective project parties," he stated. "As a panel, we are keen that all the risk that might be received in the next 15 years is thought of now and be addressed," Ljiljana Spasic-Gril said.

According to UEGCL, the panel raised issues in its previous report that included removal of erodible materials from the left embankment dam and further treatment of the foundation of the same.

"This has been done. The contractor presented alternative foundation treatment methodology which was reviewed and accepted by the same IPOE," Simon Kasyate, UEGCL's corporate and public affairs manager, told the *New Vision*.

Kasyate said the experts recommended the installation of sensors at the right levels of the embankment dam to sense the dam integrity and behaviour even after construction.

"These instrumentations have since been fixed and at the right levels," he noted.

The project is currently about 86% complete.