



National water rolls out prepaid meters in Kampala

BY VIVIAN AGABA

THE National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) has signed a one-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a Chinese company Huawei International to provide pre-paid water meters in selected parts of Kampala.

This is a new water meter solution that uses Internet of Things (IOT) to perform functions of prepayment and reduction of non-revenue water among other benefits.

Non-revenue water is water lost through leakages, broken pipes, and people disconnecting the meters and stealing the water, and those that intentionally refuse to pay.

According to the annual reports of NWSC, the corporation loses sh50b annually in Kampala only in non-revenue water.

Explaining how the prepaid water meters will work, a mechanical engineer at Huawei Technologies, Dick Muhwezi, said the prepaid meters have a platform with a similar system like Yaka for Umeme, where a person can pay for water using mobile money or through the bank, and there is no need for anyone coming to your premises to disconnect you.

He further explained that new meters have a valve, where when someone pays for water, a signal is sent to the valve, and water flows into the house. The rates for water

costs will remain the same.

"Once the paid units get finished, the valve sends a signal and closes, a person cannot access water unless they have loaded money and paid again," he said

"The meters work like mobile phones; they get signal on wireless network to the meter and communicate to the control centre.

In the pilot project which is for only four months, 200 meters will be installed in 200 homes that NWSC is soon to identify.

Then the team will be able to monitor for four months how much water revenue the corporation will save on operational costs so that they are able to analyse whether it is feasible for them to roll out the

solution.

The new solution was revealed during the signing of an MOU between Huawei International and NWSC, which took place at NWSC offices on Jinja Road Kampala on Thursday.

The NWSC managing director, Dr Eng. Silver Mugisha, said discussions are still going on to consider what areas to install the meters but that the installation would start next month.

He noted that they are considering putting them Kololo, Naguru and Bugolobi, which have no big risks of vandalism and where people are comfortable paying.

"However, our primary focus for the corporation at this time is to



Eng. Silver Mugisha, NWSC managing director

ensure supply reliability for those already on supply and extend supply to those not yet receiving piped water," Mugisha said.

The executive director government and enterprise business group, Huawei, Bennie Bal, said the solution has worked well in China and proved to improve collection efficiency, real time monitoring of consumption and reduced operational costs.

19-year-old Italian woman denied a job because of being in a relationship with an African man