

BY SADAT MBOGO

Mpigi-Muduuma roadworks take shape amid hurdles

MPIGI. Construction works on the 15.6-kilometre Mpigi-Muduuma Road are taking shape, raising hopes of a reliable alternative route connecting to Kampala City centre off the Kampala-Masaka Highway.

However, some residents may slow down the works after denying the contractor, Zhongmei Engineering Group, the right of way, claiming they should be compensated like their counterparts on the road.

Ms Annet Nabuuma, the Mpigi District community development officer and coordinator of the Metro Development Forum, said although 97 percent of Project-Affected Persons (PAPs) have consented to surrender part of their land for the project, some — including owners of eucalyptus forests — have sought redress in courts of law.

"The government chief valuer came, but still they failed to cooperate. They want the court to resolve their concerns," Ms Nabuuma said in an interview last week. She also highlighted structural challenges.

"The road is very wide. If it was narrow, the cost would have been lower, including that of compensating the PAPs as guided, and complaints would be fewer. Some access roads are very wide, requiring compensation, yet they offer no value for money," Ms Nabuuma said.

The road is one of the key infrastructure projects under the World Bank-supported Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area Urban Development Programme (GKMA-UDP). The programme, which has total financing of approximately \$566 million (about Shs2.1 trillion) from the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA), aims to improve institutional capacity for metropolitan coordination and increase access to better infrastructure and services across the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area.

Mr Joseph Muwanguzi, a resident of Muduuma, expressed cautious optimism while closely monitoring the developments.

"We are seeing some positive changes,

with signage in place and a few motorists already using parts of the road. However, we still need better drainage to our homes and gardens, and those eucalyptus trees on the roadside are dangerous, especially in Kibutu Village, where grading has exposed the roots,"

ONGOING WORKS

The Mpigi-Muduuma Road is expected to be upgraded to bitumen standard within 18 months. Construction commenced in 2025 to reduce travel time and stimulate economic activity between Mpigi Town Council and Muduuma Sub-county. The cost for the road segment is approximately Shs60.2b. Current activities include culvert installation, deep excavations, grading and levelling in several sections.

he said.

The road traverses villages, including Kibutu, Mayembe Lower, Nabunya, Kikamula, Nnono, Ggavu, Kyengeza and Muduuma. Other positive strides include the right of way being largely secured, with institutions such as St John's SS Muduuma properly accommodated.

"Some house structures and electric poles still lie within the graded corridor. Water blockage has also occurred after pipes were destroyed during the works," Mr Muwanguzi added.

Regarding the 23 buildings slated for restructuring as compensation, bills of quantities (BoQs) have been prepared, but the exercise has been delayed. This delay has affected drainage plans, prompting some who had earlier consented to begin reconsidering their positions.

Mr John Baptist Ssengendo, a Metro Development Forum member, called for timely reconstruction to minimise inconvenience to residents.

Ms Nabuuma said reconstruction of the affected buildings and gates will commence before the end of this month.

"But gates are for the contractor, and as a district, we are only supposed to reconstruct 23 buildings, which is our responsibility because budgets are different," she said.

She acknowledged the shifting goodwill but expressed confidence in continued engagement with PAPs.

"Those changing their minds affect us, but we shall not hesitate to engage them in discussions. Fortunately, for those who have changed their minds, the contractor has already cleared their spaces, and we do not expect work to stop," she added.

Residents, leaders and other stakeholders continue to monitor the project closely, hoping that drainage, compensation and reconstruction issues will be resolved swiftly so that the road delivers lasting benefits to the community.