

Controversy as UWA top job is advertised

By Chris Kiwawulo

The Public Service Commission has finally advertised the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) top job amid controversy emanating from the UWA board's recommendation to renew Dr Andrew Seguya's contract.

Seguya's contract expired on November 20, which prompted the UWA board, chaired by Dr Ben Otto, to unanimously recommend the renewal of his contract on the basis of his good performance.

According to a reliable source, the board recently wrote an appraisal report to the tourism, wildlife and antiquities minister Prof. Ephraim Kamuntu, in which they rated Seguya's performance at 72%.

"The executive director (Seguya) has continued to perform well and he deserves consideration for renewal of his contract," the source quoted the UWA board's recommendation.

But as a requirement, sections of UWA staff argued, the UWA board was supposed to recommend the advertising of the post of the executive director three months to the expiry of the office holder's contract.

This sparked off controversy. But following *Saturday Vision's* story exposing the matter recently, the Public Service Commission has advertised the job.

"In line with section 6 of the Uganda Wildlife Act, section 4.2.2 of the UWA Board procedures manual and section 1.4.2 (b) of the human resource manual, the Public Service Commission was requested and agreed to undertake the recruitment and selection exercise of the executive director on behalf of UWA," the advert reads in part.

The advert requires applicants to hold a bachelors degree in biological sciences related to wildlife conservation, plus a relevant masters degree in either natural resources management or biological sciences from a recognised university.

"Possession of a minimum of a post graduate diploma in business administration or public administration and management or management or tourism or human resource management will be an added advantage," the advert states.

Applicants should also have 10 years of proven experience in management of relevant natural resources at senior management level, three of which should have been served as head of department and above, from a reputable organisation.

According to the Uganda

Wildlife Act Chapter 200, UWA shall have an executive director appointed by the minister (of tourism, wildlife and antiquities) on the recommendation of the board.

The Act further says the executive director shall serve for a period of five years and shall be eligible for re-appointment. This makes Seguya, who has been at the helm of UWA since 2010, eligible for another term.

However, a source in UWA said: "At one point, the board was divided over the issue of advertising Seguya's job, with some members having a view that his contract should be renewed since it is provided for in the Uganda Wildlife Act. But they later all agreed on renewing his contract."

BETWEEN THE LINES:

■ Seguya's contract expired on November 20, which prompted the UWA board, chaired by Dr Ben Otto, to unanimously recommend the renewal of his contract.

However, some people with interest in the job have expressed concern that by not advertising it, the board did not promote transparency as one of the virtues expected of it.

Earlier, tourism state minister Godfrey Kiwanda confirmed that the UWA board had approved the renewal of Seguya's contract.

He said the recommendation had been sent to his senior (Kamuntu) for re-appointment. Kamuntu could not be reached for a comment.

Sources said Seguya's contract has been temporarily extended for three months, until a new executive director is appointed.

When asked recently whether he was interested in being re-appointed for the job, Seguya said: "I will let you know at the right time."

Seguya's reign

Seguya replaced Dr Moses Mapesa (RIP), who was sacked together with scores of other directors. Seguya was serving in acting capacity before he became substantive executive director in November 2012.

In 2014, a routine check found that 1,335kg of ivory valued at about \$1.1m (about sh4b) had vanished from the UWA strong room. The then Minister of Wildlife, Tourism and Antiquities, Maria Mutagamba (RIP) suspended Seguya, together with five other top managers to pave way for an investigation into the missing ivory. Seguya was, however, later cleared and reinstated.