Mubende water sources get facelift

MUBENDE

By Agnes Nantambi

The Government, in conjunction with Japan International Co-operation (JICA), will rehabilitate about 863 water sources in Mubende district.

The sources are to be rehabilitated under a joint-funded project estimated at approximately sh4b for four years.

Robert Mutiibwa, the project co-ordinator, said Mubende district was lagging behind in water provision.

Mutiibwa is also the principal water officer in charge of developing ground water in the rural department of the Ministry of Water and Environment.

"According to our data base, of all the central region districts, Mubende was behind, but also the few water sources were not working.

"So to accelerate access, we chose to first of all keep the functioning sources functional and also revamp the nonfunctioning sources so that we have a critical mass," he said.

Available data indicates that Mubende has 863 water sources within the rural areas, serving people within 18 sub-counties of the district. The principal technology is shallow wells and deep wells commonly known as boreholes.

BETWEEN THE LINES:

Mutiibwa observed that most Ugandans, especially in rural areas, have lost voluntarism which was the core basis of community water maintenance system.

Speaking during a meeting to kick-start the project on operation and maintenance for rural water supply and improved hygiene at Mubende district headquarters, Mutiibwa explained that the department did an assessment of the quality of water in the district and discovered a sad story.

"We established that out of the 863 sources, almost 55% of them should not be in use because the quality is not good.

"To aggregate the statics lower, out of the 500 shallow wells, more than 270 have water which is not safe while the rest are affected by seasonal changes," he explained.

He said: "Although we talk of having 863 source points, those that are contributing effectively to the safe water supply are much less. That is why the Government has taken such an initiative to keep the functioning sources functional and then repair as many sources as possible to improve water coverage."

Mutiibwa said the reduction in water sources is a result of people's mentality. Most Ugandans, especially in rural areas, have lost voluntarism which was the basis of community water maintenance.

"We want to pilot an initiative which will help people to ensure that all the sources are functioning and will cover the entire district," he said.

Mutiibwa said the new initiative will be piloted within the eight sub-counties to retrain people and cause them to like the technology, give them support to ensure that the sources are kept functioning.

"We did an analysis which observed that the four sector players in the functionality of water – the community, the sub-county, the district and the ministry – are not doing their best.

"So we are piloting this in Mubende and once it is successful, it will be rolled out starting with the central districts," he said.



Yasuhide and Mutiibwa helping sub-county leaders in Mubende district to sign a memorandum of understanding for the implementation of the project at Mubende district headquarters last week. Photo by Agnes Nantambi

The partnership, he said, involved technical corporation where Japan brought in experts to train and help in fixing the problem.

Hajat Hawa Semakula, the district councillor for older persons, observed the need for the project to include extension of water tanks to older person's homes.

Venencious Mbonye from Sebalunga sub-county called for retooling of village mechanics to support the project.

Dr Nigauri Yasuhide, the chief advisor of the project from JICA, said eight Japan engineering experts and consultants were dispatched by JICA to offer expertise.

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