



Under construction, The 600MW Karuma Hydropower Project whose construction is at over 70 per cent complete.

PHOTO BY BILL OKETCH

Karuma power project nears completion, says contractor

Complaint. Community members say they have not benefited from the project despite offering their land.

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KIRYANDONGO. Sinohydro Corporation Ltd, the Chinese firm undertaking the construction of the 600MW Karuma power dam in Kiryandongo District, has revealed that the project is 70 per cent complete in accordance with the budget and time frame.

The construction firm also noted that "the progress is well controlled.

The project which commenced on December 16, 2013, is due for commissioning in December 2018.

While updating the State minister for Energy, Mr Simon D'Ujanga, on the progress of the work, during the commissioning of the construction of the permanent employers'

camp at Karuma recently, the company's vice president, Mr Wang Yantao, said: "The hydropower which Uganda is blessed with is economical, environmentally friendly and will provide sustainable energy."

Mr Yantao added: "The Chinese government always supports and encourages Chinese enterprises and national institutions engaged in construction of hydro power to benefit Ugandans."

He revealed that the project now employs more than 5,000 workers including Uganda and Chinese nationals.

However, the LCI chairman for Karuma, Mr Severino Opio, said residents are unhappy with government since they are being neglected.

"As I know the project is almost coming to an end but

there is nothing being done for the community," he said.

Speaking at the same event, the Oyam District chairperson, Mr Nelson Adea Akar, said it would be fair for the constructor to employ residents as one way of making the community own the project.

"Our prayer is that if bad things are to come let the good things also happen. Right now there are complaints about young girls getting married to

workers," he said.

The Uganda Electricity Generation Company Limited (UEGCL) chief executive officer, Eng Dr Harrison Mutikanga, explained that they had so many activities planned and their priority was to concentrate on the hydro power project.

"The hydro power project has progressed significantly and we are now embarking on the second stage which is the employers' facilities and next will be the community development action plan," he said.

Mr D'Ujanga, noted that for Uganda to shift from a peasantry to an industrialised and largely urban society, it must be propelled by electricity as a form of modern energy.

"The 600MW Karuma Hydro Power project is one of such big hydro power projects under construction and that once complete will provide reliable and affordable electricity to our people," the minister said.

FUNDING

Karuma power dam is being financed by both the government of Uganda and Exim Bank of China. The government of Uganda is contributing 15 per cent and while China is financing the other 85 per cent component.