

THE WORKS INVOLVE EXCAVATING AND DE-SILTING OF CHANNELS AT THE HOT SPOTS

KASESE

By John Thawite

Sh10b project to tame the Nyamwamba launched

A sh10b project funded by the Egyptian government and aimed at de-silting River Nyamwamba has been commissioned in Kasese district.

The breaking of the ground ceremony, at the headquarters of Bulembia division, Kasese municipality, was done by the Egyptian minister of water resources and irrigation, Dr Mohamed Abdel Aty.

Once completed, the project, dubbed "Fast Track Project for Flood Mitigation in Kasese district and Rwenzori sub-region", will arrest the devastating floods caused by River Nyamwamba.

According to Dr Abdel, the Egyptian government gave a grant to the Government to construct stone gabions to prevent the river from bursting its banks.

Speaking after the ground-breaking ceremony on Monday, the Egyptian minister said the grant was also meant to strengthen the bilateral relations between the two sister countries which share River Nile.

The Minister for Water and Environment, Sam Cheptoris, hailed Egypt for the gesture and pledged to monitor and supervise the works.

The MP for Kasese Municipality, Centenary Bwambale, appealed to the contractor to also build bridges to link the neighbouring rural areas which were affected by the floods.

He also commended the project managers for employing residents through Nail and Wood Company and thus helping Kasese to combat unemployment.

The mayor of Kasese municipality, expressed gratitude to President Museveni for having fulfilled the his pledges of taming River Nyamwamba.

However, he reported that many Kilembe Mines nurses were still unhoused following the destruction of their 84 staff quarters during the floods in May 2014. The staff were forced to live in Kasese town which is seven miles away from the hospital thus negatively affecting health service delivery.



Officials of Arab Contractors taking quests on a tour of the gabions constructed near Road Barrier Primary School in Kasese district. Photo by John Thawite

The district chairperson, Geoffrey Bigogo Sibendire, asked for more support in form of irrigation schemes and tree planting as a way of conserving the river catchment area.

The Egyptian ambassador to Uganda, Mai Khalid, said the Nile is the cord that ties Uganda and Egypt tighter, calling for continued bilateral relations.

Earlier, the delegations of the two countries toured sites along the river, including Road Barrier Primary School and Kyanzuki bridge, which was washed away by the 2014 floods.

The project at a glance

Arab Contractors' resident engineer, Mohamed El Desouky, said the project will mainly secure Bulembia

BETWEEN THE LINES:

Since May 8, 2013, River Nyamwamba, Nyamugasani and Mubuku, have been flooding, killing several people, destroying private property and infrastructure

Primary School, Kilembe Mines Hospital and Road Barrier Primary school, which are the three hot spots along the river course.

Eldesouky said works involve excavating and de-silting of channels at the hot spots to remove boulders and other debris from the mainstream to flush floods efficiently and to avoid

the over-accumulation of debris that may limit channel capacity during flood time.

Other interventions, El Desouky said, include erecting gabions to protect river banks adjacent to the hot spots to prevent undercutting and fluvial scour hence protecting the vulnerable spots where flow velocities are high.

He said the works, which started earlier this year, were expected to end around December.

Since May 8, 2013, rivers Nyamwamba, Nyamugasani and Mubuku, have been flooding, killing several people and destroying public and private property and infrastructure worth several billions of shillings