

Butambala leaders decry inadequate road funding

BY SADAT MBOGO

BUTAMBALA. Residents and motorists in Butambala District are struggling with badly damaged roads marked by deep potholes and sections that become impassable during the rainy season.

The poor state of the roads has driven up vehicle maintenance costs, turning routine travel into a challenge.

The complaints grew louder on Tuesday after district officials inspected several ongoing and completed road projects, amid rising frustration over limited funding from the Uganda Road Fund.

Butambala District Chairperson Rashidah Namboowa and Butambala District Woman MP Aisha Kabanda toured key stretches, including the completed 6km Lugala-Kajjoolo Road, the 8km Bulu-Bugobango corridor, the 8km Sseggabi-Namiryango section, and other feeder roads, together with

selected government employees.

The leaders voiced profound dismay at the persistent underfunding, which they said has severely hampered routine maintenance and left critical community access routes in poor condition.

Ms Namboowa highlighted that the district received a combined Shs183m from the Road Fund for the first two quarters of the financial year, an amount barely sufficient to rehabilitate roughly six kilometres of road.

That is despite the need to serve the entire district with sub-counties like Budde, Bulu, Kalamba, Ngando, and town councils such as Gombe and Kibibi.

"This money is peanuts compared to what is spent on individuals in government. Why doesn't this government prioritise social services like roads?" she questioned pointedly.

She added that even with an

 Taking produce to Kam-pala or nearby markets now takes twice as long due to the bad roads. Vehicles get stuck, and we lose fresh vegetables. Our school children also struggle to get to class on time in the rainy season. These feeder roads desperately need more funding.

– Ms Sarah Nakato, a small-scale trader in Ngando

additional conditional grant of about Shs1b, the resources fall far short of tackling the district's extensive road

 Dust in the dry season and mud in the rains make driving hazardous. My car's suspension has broken twice this year alone. Without increased Road Fund support, these roads will deteriorate further, hitting everyone's livelihoods in Butambala hard.

– Mr John Kiziza, a frequent traveller on the Sseggabi-Namiryango route

network challenges.

"Butambala doesn't own an excavator, only borrowing one when need arises. The equipment given to us was supposed to last five years, but ours is now eight years old," Ms Namboowa explained to this reporter.

Equipment breakdown

She noted that frequent breakdowns and costly repairs, often requiring major overhauls at regional workshops, drain resources and delay operations, yet locals blame the district for shoddy work.

Ms Namboowa appealed to the central government to substantially boost road maintenance allocations and urgently supply modern equipment, beginning with an excavator, to enhance service delivery.

MP Kabanda also stressed the importance of community participation in safeguarding roads, observing that some residents deliberately obstruct drainage channels to keep water off their farms or homesteads, hastening road degradation.

The local road users also voiced similar grievance.

Mr Ibrahim Ssenyonga, a boda boda rider in Kalamba, said: "These roads are

destroying our motorcycles. Potholes force us to crawl along, and in the rain, some parts become completely impassable. We spend more on repairs than fuel, yet passengers grumble about high fares. The government must do better."

Both leaders and residents called for immediate government action to halt the decline, restore connectivity, and safeguard economic prospects in the district.

Butambala District's road network is approximately 206 kilometres, comprising 144 km of district roads and 62 km of Gombe and Kibibi Town Council roads, all surfaced with gravel.

Community access roads, not captured in this total, are estimated to stretch several hundred kilometres further, also predominantly gravel.

The only tarmacked section in the district is part of the Mpigi-Kanoni national road, a 65-km stretch traversing Mpigi, Butambala, and Gombe districts, with an estimated 20-30 km falling within Butambala.

According to Ms Namboowa, using Ministry of Works and Transport guidelines for periodic maintenance of gravel roads, rehabilitating the 206 kms alone would demand roughly Shs5.56b.