

Govt to set up innovation centres in municipalities

By Betty Amamukirori and Monica Acan

The Government, through the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Technology, is planning to build innovation and technology transfer hubs in all municipalities in the country, to boost development.

"We have many innovators in Uganda, but their ideas die before they are developed. So, we are looking for resources to start municipality technology transfer centres, which will enable them to develop and register their innovations," Dr Elioda Tumwesigye, the Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology, said.

He said the innovation centres would also help with the management of intellectual property of the innovators, offer supervisory roles and commercialise the innovations.

He was speaking during a three-day retreat on science, technology and innovation at the Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI) in Kampala, yesterday.

Tumwesigye said they also have a directive from the President to build

WHY INNOVATION HUBS?



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a space, mineral and climate science institute that will offer training and opportunities for scientists to develop their ideas.

Earlier this year, while appearing before the parliamentary committee on education, Tumwesigye said the space science institute would be built at Entebbe.

He also said they have helped a Makerere University student of chemistry and botany, Samuel

Mugarura, who invented a less toxic teargas to patent his innovation and get it registered.

Tumwesigye noted that scientific, technological and innovative advancements are a critical precursor for industrialisation and socio-economic development. They enable the creation of new firms and industries that act as avenues for translating research and development outputs into commercialised outcomes.

Tumwesigye stated that they are putting more focus on emerging science innovations in biotechnology, space science, climate science, marine science, extractive industry, renewable and nuclear energy, material science, mineral beneficiation, robotics and geographical information systems.

Speaking as the main guest, Prime Minister Dr Ruhakana Rugunda said the Government is currently implementing initiatives to enhance and facilitate Ugandan scientists and engineers, especially those who work in hard-to-reach areas, so as to increase their motivation and effectiveness.

"I am glad to note that these initiatives are beginning to yield some fruit. We now have many highly trained youth who can effectively work anywhere in the world. We will continue to provide more support to our scientists and innovators through initiatives, such as the Innovation Fund," he said.

The Speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga, noted that the Government needs to put policies that require private companies to give up a percentage of their profits to support local innovations.

... have appetite for public land'