



KIRYANDONGO DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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PRESS STATEMENT ON ACQUISITION OF 25 KM RESERVOIR FOR KARUMA HYDRO POWER PROJECT

Kiryandongo- October 15,2021

The government of Uganda through the Ministry of Energy is in the process of acquiring 25 Km reservoir for the Karuma hydro power project in Kiryandongo district. The reservoir is likely to affect the cultural and historical heritage along 25 Km stretch on the Nile banks.

In a bid to protect and preserve the cultural and historical heritage, the Ministry of Gender Labor and social development in partnership with Kiryandongo district local government and Ministry of Energy is engaging the stakeholders of the cultural and historical sites within the 25 Km stretch which are likely to be destroyed by the rising water levels of the Nile. The stakeholders of the cultural and historical sites include the Bunyoro Kingdom, land owners and the various clans which practice cultural rituals along the Nile river.

The Ministry of Gender organized a stakeholders' meetings on **11th and 13th October 2021** at Kiryandongo district headquarters and Okwece Primary school respectively with an aim of establishing the right people whose cultural and historical heritage will be affected by the reservoir. The meetings also followed a claim of right of use of the cultural sites along the Nile by the Paluo-Tekwaro Foundation.

According to Denis Dacan the Principal Assistant CAO Kiryandongo, the district has received communications from various cultural organizations claiming compensation from the Ministry of Energy over the Karuma Hydro Power Project.

Bakaye Lubega the Assistant Commissioner for culture Ministry of Gender stressed the need to protect and preserve the cultural sites along the planned reservoir by relocating them. According to Lubega, there will be a need for a community museum to preserve the relocated cultural

heritage. Lubega further informed the stakeholders that the government of Uganda is willing to facilitate the rightful owners of the affected cultural sites to relocate them.

Nyendwoha Mutiti the 1st deputy premier of Bunyoro Kitara kingdom reiterated the interest of the kingdom as being protection and preservation of the cultural and historical heritage rather than compensation. Mutiti added that there was need to establish the authenticity of the Paluo-Tekwaro Foundation claims and documents submitted to the Ministry of Energy and also find out whose interests they represent.

Denis Kitembo one of the leaders of the Paluo-Tekwaro Foundation said some cultural sites which were at the spot where the Karuma dam has been established were destroyed which has prompted the ancestral spirits to haunt the Paluo. Kitembo added that the Paluo as the indigenous cultural community were not given an opportunity to appease their spirits at the inception of the project before their sites were destroyed.

It should be noted that the controversies in the establishment of the rightful owners of the cultural and historical sites within the 25 Km for the reservoir along the Nile have greatly contributed to the delay in the completion of the Karuma Hydro Power project. Kiryandongo district has undertaken the effort to establish the rightful owners and the stakeholders of the various cultural sites are therefore called upon to speed up the process of establishing what it takes to relocate the sites so as the government can facilitate the process.

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