

THE PROJECT WILL PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE, CLIMATE-RESILIENT LAND

KAMPALA

By Juliet Kasirye

The Government has secured \$8.2m (sh29b) to enhance water supply in five districts located in the cattle corridor.

The project, which is expected to start in May next year and end in July 2031, will be implemented in Mityana, Rakai, Kole, Pader and Kitgum districts.

The project will promote sustainable and climate-resilient land and water management by enhancing access to clean water and local-level climate adaptation, among others.

The cattle corridor is a semi-arid 84,000-square-kilometre area, which is home to about 40% of Uganda's population and about 90% of the country's cattle. Despite its agro-pastoral socio-economic structure, the region faces severe threats, including deforestation, wetland degradation, wildfires, prolonged dry spells, soil erosion and water pollution, largely driven by high population growth, poverty, and over-reliance on natural resources.

The project, titled: *Fostering Water Security and Catchment Resilience in Uganda's Cattle Corridor*, will be funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by Conservation International in

Government secures sh29b for water project

PHOTO BY JULIET KASIRYE



Stakeholders during the consultation workshop for the GEF-funded project at Golf Course Hotel in Kampala

partnership with the water and environment ministry and the Africa Innovations Institute.

The State Minister for Water, Aisha Sekindi, emphasised that the cattle corridor comprises 51% of Uganda's land area, whose challenges the project will transform into opportunities for growth and resilience.

"By securing long-term capacity to adapt to climate change impacts, we will protect our catchment areas, restore degraded landscapes, sustain water security and

FACT CHECK
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use efficiency for improved production and productivity," the minister explained.

According to the ministry statistics, as of June last year, safe water coverage in Uganda was estimated at

70% overall, with 67% of the rural population and 73% of the urban population having access to safe water within a radius of 1km and 200 metres, respectively.

"About 57,951 villages (81.4%) out of 71,225 have at least one safe water source, leaving 13,274 villages (18.6%) without any safe water source, largely in the cattle corridor," she said.

Sekindi made the remarks during the stakeholder consultation workshop for the design of the GEF-funded

project held at the Golf Course Hotel in Kampala.

The meeting focused on validating the results framework of the proposed GEF project.

Addressing stakeholders, Sekindi said the impacts of climate change on water affect other sectors, such as agriculture, electricity generation, transport and health.

"The long-term vision of the water ministry is to build a water-resilient and sustainable cattle corridor landscape, by promoting a shift from traditional water management to integrated landscape management approaches," she explained.

According to her, this will be achieved through the protection of catchment areas, the restoration of degraded land and innovative water storage infrastructure.

"We will establish a science-based platform to predict climate-related risks," Sekindi stated. The minister's remarks were contained in her speech delivered by the assistant commissioner for water for

production, Eng. Ronald Kato Kayizzi.

Joseph Lule, the principal policy analyst at the ministry, said they will start with five districts and later expand to 26 cattle corridor districts under a bigger project supported by the Green Climate Fund.

STAKEHOLDERS SPEAK OUT

During the meeting, Abdu Bbaale, a farmer from Rakai, said the country is losing a lot of cattle to prolonged drought.

Because of the dry spell, Bbaale said, they not only trek long distances in search of clean water and fresh pastures, but also contract diseases.

"During the rainy season, several areas of Rakai lose livestock as a result of flooding of Lake Kijanebarola," he explained.

Bbaale welcomed the upcoming project, noting that it will provide farmers with access to safe and clean water for production.

The climate change and gender focal person at the agriculture ministry, Imelda Kanzomba, said the project will not only avail water for livestock, but also promote small-scale irrigation to help farmers get enough food at the household level.

The chief executive officer of the Africa Innovations Institute, Prof. George William Otim-Nape, appealed to beneficiaries to seize this project as a chance to transform their livelihoods.