

# Karuma Dam completion date hangs in balance

By The Independent Reporter

**U**ganda has set mid next year as the date for commissioning Karuma Hydropower Dam on the upstream of River Nile but there are now new concerns that the facility may not be ready as planned owed to a slow project implementation.

Ruth Nankabirwa, the minister for energy and mineral development said during the routine inspection on Sept.21 that the 'project site looks abandoned yet the remaining work is too huge.'

"The work is really huge. The kind of work that takes a lot of time is cabling which they had to review. Initially, the contractor (Chinese firm Sinohydro Corporation Ltd), had bundled all the cables together," she said. "Staff houses were supposed to be ready before construction of the dam started but they are not yet complete."

Nankabirwa said more staff will be needed on the site of the dam if it is to be commissioned as planned.

Eng. Harrison Mutikanga, the Chief Executive Officer at the



**Energy minister, Ruth Nankabirwa (L) launches the construction of Purongo Primary School in Nwoya District as part of Community Development Action Program on Sept.22.**

Uganda Electricity Generation Company Ltd (UEGCL) reiterated the need for the contractor to add in more resources to speed up the construction works which mainly involve correcting wiring electro-mechanical defects on the powerhouse facility.

"Projects like these usually have challenges but the most important thing is that these challenges are addressed and

addressed properly so that by the time we are giving to Ugandans, we are giving them a fit for purpose project," he said.

Mutikanga said they are now sure of the new equipment which had been brought in as they are compliant with the specifications.

The dam was initially set to be commissioned in December 2019 but missed the target. This

prompted for an extension of 12 months that the contractor again failed to meet in December last year when UEGCL raised concerns related to quality and more other defects.

The delay in the completion of the \$1.7 billion hydropower project means that the population and businesses in the West Nile and northern regions especially Gulu and Lira will continue to experience unstable power supplies for the unforeseen future.

Meanwhile, the energy ministry unveiled the Community Development Action Program phase 1 works at Purongo Primary School in Nwoya District.

The Shs3bn project has been divided into 3 lots and works will include the construction of two classroom blocks with an office, four staff houses and four stance VIP latrines each at Nora Primary School in Oyam District as Lot 1, Purongo Primary School as Lot 2 and Diima Primary School in Kiryandongo District as Lot 3. The projects will be supervised by UEGCL with the local district officials of three districts. 