

# Karuma Hydropower Dam defects fixed

## The contractor set to come up with a new commissioning plan

By Isaac Khisa

**K**aruma Hydropower Dam, the country's flagship power project, now has all identified defects fixed but it is likely to miss the June 2022 target date for commissioning.

Executives at the state-run Uganda Electricity Generation Company Ltd said concerns related to poor cabling and non-conformity of standard of some materials have been fixed.

UEGCL Chief Executive Officer, Harrison Mutikanga, said during the dam's routine inspection on April 1 that good progress has been recorded and now awaits the contractor – Sinohydro Corporation – to come up with a new commissioning plan.

"The biggest challenge was cabling con-conformances and this has been corrected... New cables as well as new cable cabinets have been brought in and fixed including carrying out other modifications," Mutikanga said, adding that only handful of work is now remaining to completion.

Mutikanga added that the dam's construction agreement allows for renegotiation and re-scheduling to ensure that the work meets international standards.

Karuma Hydropower dam's construction started in 2013 and was initially planned

for commissioning in December 2019, but missed the target date, and an extension of 12 months was granted.

But the contractor again failed to meet the December 2020 deadline after UEGCL raised quality concerns. This compelled UEGCL to grant the contractor another extension to June 2022 but the ravaging coronavirus at the time saw majority of the Chinese staff return in China. It is only early last month that the contractor send new staff at the site to hasten project completion, UEGCL executives said.

The US\$1.7 billion infrastructure sitting on River Nile in Kiryandongo District is expected generate 600MW of electricity to the national grid to power the growing industrial sector as well as export surplus to the neighbouring countries including South Sudan.

Proscovia Njuki, the chairperson, Board of Directors at UEGCL said the Board is pleased with the level of commitment from the contractor towards closing the identified non-conformances and the completion of the national flagship project giving hope that the dam is indeed on course for commissioning this year.

"Most of the issues that were raised as a concern have been addressed quite well. The cabling has been done very professionally

and to the international standard," She said.

"The corrosions are being addressed with a good paint. We are really happy as a Board that the things that were of concern as we move towards the commissioning have been addressed and we should be able to commission soon."

Meanwhile, the UEGCL Board of Directors also inspected the progress of works for the Karuma Hydropower Project Community Development Action Program (CDAP) Phase I works at Diima Primary School, Kiryandongo District which are currently at 93% overall physical progress. The few remaining works include the installation of solar system and architectural finishes.

The Shs3 billion project has been divided into three lots; and the works include the construction of two classroom blocks with an office, four staff houses and four stance VIP latrines at each of the following schools; Nora Primary School in Oyam as Lot 1, Purongo Primary School in Nwoya as Lot 2 and Diima Primary School in Kiryandongo as Lot 3.

These projects are supervised by UEGCL in collaboration with the District Local Government officials from Oyam, Kiryandongo and Nwoya Districts. 

