



Some of the beneficiaries pose for a group photo before heading to Zambia for the training. In a suit is Harrison Mutikanga, CEO UEGCL.

# UEGCL sends staff for retooling in Zambia

## This comes as the company plans to switch on Karuma Dam

By Julius Businge

**U**ganda Electricity Generation Company Limited (UEGCL) on Feb.08 flagged off some of its staff to Zambia to acquire more skills and enhance the institution's capacity to manage operations of electricity generation facilities countrywide.

This development comes after the company signed a 5-year program known as 'the hydro-power operations and maintenance excellence' with the Norwegian ministry of foreign affairs for institutional support for the period 2020-2024.

The beneficiaries will be trained by experts at the Zambia based – Kafue Gorge Regional Training Centre.

UEGCL Chief Executive Officer, Harrison Mutikanga said, the experts will provide technical support to the operation and maintenance teams at both Karuma and Isimba hydro power stations to ensure the set up and implementation of best practice industry standards, plans, procedures, and strategies for the power plants.

The Shs33bn grant support is structured under two sub-programmes – technical support and capacity building.

Mutikanga said the programme will establish UEGCL as a professional operator of its hydropower plants, through the establishment of systems, procedures, technical support and provision of a wide range of capacity building activities for key staff.

The key training areas include, hydropower maintenance routines, machinery vibration monitoring and analysis, shift charge operations and generator inspection, testing and maintenance. At least 20 staff are expected to benefit from the programme expected to run

from Feb.14 to April 22.

"We are in a comfortable place to operate and maintain power facilities though we have been disrupted by recruitment restrictions by Public Service because of the mergers."

Currently, the company has a total of 200 staff, 80% of which are technical by specialty with skills to do operation and maintenance of power facilities.

### Karuma dam commissioning

Meanwhile, Mutikanga said the 600MW Karuma HPP is to be commissioned this year.

"Everything we do is driven by our purpose and our aim is to have plant availability at 97-100%," he said, "having trained personnel is key given that this country is growing with new industries coming up and demand for electricity growing."

He also said that the capacity building programme is in line with the country's National Development Plan III which highlights 'capacity building' as one of the pillars for operational and financial sustainability of government agencies, making reference to UEGCL's ability to attain profitability in the financial year ended June 2021 as a result of robust and competent workforce.

"We want to continue doing project development, investment planning, strategy and business development and grow the company and continue being profitable," Mutikanga said.

Going forward, he said, the company is on course to meet its "roadmap 1300" objective of delivering 1300MW by 2023, while supporting the NDPIII particularly with respect to the increasing availability of stable, reliable and affordable electricity. PL