

HOPE

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Kiira, Nalubaale dams set for Shs737bn renovation



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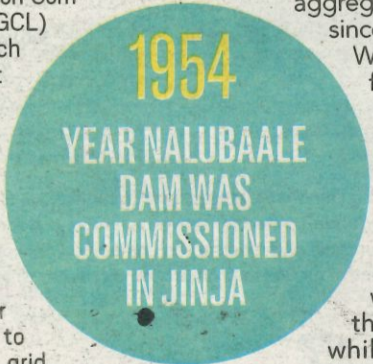
Nalubaale Dam will also undergo critical civil works to reinforce its structure which has long been a matter of concern while the control system of Kiira, which is relatively newer have outlived their design life.

BY COLLINS MUHWEZI

Uganda's oldest hydropower plant — Nalubaale and Kiira — are set for a major facelift under a €170 million (Shs737,179,442,917) partnership between the Uganda Electricity Generation Company Ltd (UEGCL) and the French Development Agency (AFD). The two dams have combined generation capacity of 380 MW reflecting their importance to the national grid. The refurbishment will be carried out in two phases.

The first includes replacing the dam's aging substation, dating back to 1953, and upgrading turbines and control systems to meet modern

distribution standards. Nalubaale will also undergo critical civil works to reinforce its structure which has long been a matter of concern. Mr George Tusingwire, Acting CEO of UEGCL, explained: "Nalubaale has cracks caused by alkali aggregate reaction since the 1950s. We are therefore reinforcing the structure to extend its lifespan by at least 30 years." Tusingwire made the remarks while hosting a delegation led by French Ambassador Virginie Leroy, alongside representatives from AFD, the European Union, and technical teams. Although Kiira is relatively newer, its control systems



Mr George Tusingwire Ag CEO UEGCL (C), French Ambassador H.E Virginie Leroy and officials from AFD during a tour of Naluubaale Dam power house. PHOTOS/COLLINS MUHWEZI

have outlived their design life. Automation upgrades are planned to boost efficiency. Also expanding the genera-

tion capacity of the dam by over 20 MWs remains under discussion, with an estimated €80 million required. Nalubaale has previously

undergone renovations, including a 1990s upgrade that added 30 MW to its original 150 MW capacity. The second phase of

the current project will focus on climate resilience, studying lake water level variations and adding spillways to withstand climate shocks. "In East Africa, climate change is manifesting through increased rainfall," Tusingwire noted, adding that rising lake levels demand stronger safeguards for the dams and their ecosystems. Despite the investment, Nalubaale remains Uganda's least-cost hydropower site, producing electricity at about one cent per unit. Ambassador Leroy emphasized: "The Nalubaale-Kiira rehabilitation project demonstrates the strength of the partnership between France, Uganda, and the EU, built on shared priorities of inclusive growth, energy access, and climate action." The ambassador also noted that money for the first phase was also approved by the various development agencies in Europe and additional funds for environment impact assessment is also being fast tracked and will be approved by end of the year. Work on the dams is scheduled to commence sometime next year.

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