

# Vendors flee Kaabong market over human waste

## KAABONG

By Paul Watala

Kaabong town council market is choking on human waste and overgrown bushes that have forced hundreds of vendors to flee the facility. The vendors now ply their trade at the roadside.

Kaabong market is one of the few fairly modern markets constructed by the Government in the Karamoja sub-region, with the aim of attracting business people from other regions.

The market was constructed about three years ago, but it has not lived to serve its purpose. Several business-people, especially women from Bugisu, have stalls in the market, but due to poor management, the market seems to have gone to the dogs.

When *New Vision* visited the facility, they found that faecal matter littered in the market,

right from the entrance, to the stalls, despite the fact that the market has a pit latrine. The toilets are surrounded by overgrown grass.

Vendors, customers and town council authorities are blaming the mess on each other.

Recently, during the accountability forum organised by Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) at the office of the Kaabong resident district commissioner, the town clerk, John Okello, was grilled and tasked with explaining why sanitation at the facility was poor.

Okello was also accused of collecting market dues and not putting them to good use to maintain the facility.

"We were lucky that the Government constructed for us a modern market to attract business from outside Karamoja, but our leaders are abusing the efforts of the Government," Monica Chila, a vendor, said



Kaabong market, which has been abandoned due to faecal waste. Photo by Paul Watala

The vendors demanded to know why the council authorities continue charging market dues for work not done.

"Town council authorities should be investigated because when the market was being constructed, we were told that

it would have piped water, a fence and solar power, but that has not been the case," she said. "Our goods used to be stolen

because the facility has no security guard," Chila added.

Magdalena Namongo, a fruit vendor, blamed the poor waste management on the culture of backwardness and children who sneak into the facility at night because it has no guard or fence around it.

"No customer can stand the smell and flies to buy our merchandise. It is worse for those dealing in food," she added.

She said several vendors had made losses and that some had left for other places, such as South Sudan.

The Kaabong resident district commissioner, Simon Lolim, threatened to have Okello arrested, but he apologised and pledged to sort out the mess.

Lolim directed town council authorities to team up with the Police to arrest those who defecate in the market, adding that the authorities should organise vendors and residents to clean the market.

# Jinja signs sh11.6b road pact with Lebanese firm

## JINJA

By Jackie Nambogga

The Jinja municipal council has finally secured a Lebanese firm – Stars Group – to reconstruct the main streets in the town.

The sh11.6b project had stalled after the cancellation of Plateaux Services Ltd, which had earlier been evaluated as the best bidder for the work.

In July, municipal authorities rescinded their decision after they learnt that Plateaux lacked the required documents and its location was not known.

According to the town clerk, Francis Byabagambi, some of the documents indicated that the firm was registered in Uganda, while others stated that it had been registered in South Sudan.

On realising these anomalies, they sought advice from the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Lands, who supported its termination.

This called for the re-advertising of the project that saw the Lebanese firm beat nine other competitors to the contract from.

On Friday, municipal authorities, together with the Lebanese contractors, signed the sh11.6b deal that was also witnessed by top senior Police officers in the region and other security operatives in the council board room.

The project is funded by the World Bank, through the Government's infrastructural development project of the



Batambuze with Stars Group contractors, Atrache and Osman, after signing the road contract on Friday. Photo by Jackie Nambogga

## BETWEEN THE LINES: Funding of the project

The project is funded by the World Bank through the Government's infrastructural development project of the Uganda Support to Municipal Infrastructure Development, under the supervision of the lands ministry.

Uganda Support to Municipal Infrastructure Development (USMID), under the supervision of the lands ministry.

Construction work had been scheduled to take 10 months, but with such delays of re-advertising, Rajab Kitto, the municipal's spokesperson, said it will take eight months, ending in June next year.

Of the sh11.6b, Kitto said sh8b had already been deposited on their account to start work. Byabagambi said the roads had

many potholes and cautioned the firm against doing shoddy work.

He said 30% of the labour must be local and that labour importation should be for expatriates only.

Saeed Muhammed, the municipal engineer, said UB Consulting Engineers is the lead supervisor of the project, along with the municipal council technocrats.

Much as officials had anticipated construction work

to stretch from the Jinja Police Station roundabout to PostBank on Jinja Main Street, Muhammad explained that it would not be attained due to limited resources.

As a result, construction may stop at Narambhai Road.

*New Vision* learnt that the contractor asked for sh15b to complete the entire stretch.

Jinja mayor Majid Batambuze asked the contractor to complete the section of the road as part of their corporate social responsibility.

Eng. Bilal El Atrache, the chief executive officer of Stars Group, said the project was their first one in Uganda after leaving South Sudan due to insecurity.

Atrache thanked President Yoweri Museveni for creating a good environment that enables them to work.

# Japan builds sh260m lab for Katakwi school

## KATAKWI

By Emmanuel Opio

Students at Ongongoja Secondary School in Katakwi district will no longer have to squeeze themselves in a small laboratory, thanks to the support from the Japanese embassy in Uganda.

The embassy constructed the modern science laboratory block funded by Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Project (GGP) for the school.

The laboratory worth \$103,068 (about sh360m) was commissioned by Kazuaki Kameda, the ambassador of Japan to Uganda. He said the embassy gave the support because the school's laboratory did not meet the standards of the Ministry of Education and Sports.

Kameda commended the school for their successful implementation of the project.

Michael Akori, the headteacher, applauded the donors for their support.

"No student in this school has passed with a distinction in science subjects since its establishment in 2007. With this laboratory, we hope to excel in science subjects," Akori said.

Jessica Alupo, the former education minister, commended the embassy for their help to schools in remote areas.

"This modern laboratory has given our school a bigger image, both at district and national level," Alupo said.

The construction of the laboratory started on March 9, 2015. The Government of Japan has supported 222 projects, led by local communities since 1992, in the fields of education, water and sanitation, health, agriculture, gender and social development.



Kameda commissioning the laboratory at Ongongoja Secondary School in Katakwi. Photo by Emmanuel Opio