

Govt to cancel land titles in wetlands

By Nicholas Wassajja and Mary Karugaba

In a move to save the environment the Government has named 27 certificates of titles issued for land in wetlands that are due for cancellation.

The land titles are part of the bulk of over 350 land titles that have unlawfully been awarded to individuals and companies.

Section 36 of the National Environment Act provides for the protection of wetlands and prohibits any person from encroaching, erecting or demolishing any structure that is fixed in, on, under or over any wetland.

The registered beneficiaries of the affected titles include Aisha Mulungi, Kellen Karemera and Emmanuel Gasana who got plots on Butabika Valley Road, Irene Kwera on By-pass Close, Azida Nantege and Huudu Ssemuga both on Sports Road.

Others are Floriculture and Organic Products Ltd (Peninsula Crescent), Barbara Nalubega (Peninsula Link Close), Bob



Betty Amongi



Persis Namuganza



Speaker Rebecca Kadaga

House passes motion to lobby for UN base

By Henry Sekanjako and Nicholas Wassajja

Members of Parliament yesterday voted in support of a motion to intensify the engagement of diplomatic channels to convince the United Nations (UN) to retain the regional service centre in Entebbe.

The relocation of the UN base has since been endorsed by the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres. This is according to a May 1 report to UN's advisory committee on administrative and budgetary questions.

However, debating a motion by Lwemiyaga County MP

pending relocation, which they intimated to her would affect their employment.

"The UN should know that one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) provides that no one should be left behind. If this base is removed from Entebbe, we are going to leave thousands of Ugandans behind," Speaker Rebecca Kadaga, who chaired the House yesterday, warned.

It is estimated that 400 jobs would be lost once the relocation took effect. The UN base is said to be employing 427 staff and two-thirds of these are Ugandans. The UN report proposes

Certificates of titles issued on land in wetlands due for cancellation

BENEFICIARY	PLOT	ROAD
Aisha Mulungi of Kampala	2-12	Butabika valley road
Kellen Karemera of Kampala	26-36	Butabika valley road
Aisha Mulungi of Kampala	14-24	Butabika valley road
Irene Kiwera of Kampala	1-4, 5-7 & 8-11	By-pass close
Azida Nantege of Kampala	2-8	Sports road
Floriculture and Organic Products Ltd, Kampala	11A	peninsula crescent
Nalubega Barbara of Kampala	2-5	Peninsula link close
Ssemuga Huudu of Kampala	56-58	Sports road
Kanaabi Bob of Kampala	2A	Butabika valley road
Rutaaganda Augustine of Kampala	8	Miami close
Kataali Rogers of Kampala	4-5	Aqua close
Gasana Emmanuel of Kampala	4	Butabika valley close
Kwagala Real Estates Ltd, Kampala	20-26	Binayomba close
Trussnet (U) Ltd, Kampala	1 & 2	Aqua close
Tumwine Siliagi Tumusime, Kampala	10-16	Sports road
Asuman Inunga	44-52, 54-62 & 64-72	Sports road
Tar investments Ltd, Kampala	23-33	Sports road
Kiwanuka Wamala of Kampala	5	Miami close
Namaganda Olivia of Kampala	4	Miami close
Rolco Corporation (U) Ltd, Kampala	5-11	Peninsula crescent
Kiwanuka Wamala of Kampala	7	Miami close
Nalubega Barbara	18-22, 24-32 & 34-42	Sports road
Hossana properties Ltd, Kampala	1A-1G	Sports road
Palm Development (U) Ltd, Kampala	9	Railway Ring road
Kibanza Benon	60	Peninsula road
Moskam contracting Ltd, Kampala	2	Butabika valley access
Moskam contracting Ltd, Kampala	6-10	Butabika valley access

committee on physical infrastructure by the Uganda Land Commission (ULC) as inventory of government land. The committee chairperson, George Nsamba (Bbaale County), said the list was

Organic Products Ltd, Kampala (Peninsula Link Close), Bob Kanzaabi (Butabika Valley road), Augustine Rutaganda (Miami Close), Rogers Kataali (Aqua Close), Kwagala Real Estates Ltd (Binayomba Drive), Trussnet (u) Ltd (Aqua Close), Asuman Inunga and Tumwine Siliagi, both on Sports Road. The list also includes Kiwanuka Wamala and Olivia Namaganda, both on Miami Close, Tar Investments Ltd (Sports Road), Rolco Corporation (U) Ltd (Peninsula Crescent), Barbara Nalubega and Hossana Properties Ltd, both on Sports Road, Palm development (U) Ltd (Railway Ring Road), Benon Kibanza (Peninsula Road) and Moskam Contracting Ltd on Butabika Valley Access.

Asked to explain when the cancellation would take effect, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) spokesperson, Naomi Karekaho, said: "We issued the list, so it is the responsibility of the lands ministry, which issued the titles, to cancel. But the actual reclaiming of the wetlands, will be done by Ministry of Water and Environment."

When contacted, the lands minister, Betty Amongi, declined to comment on the matter saying she was in a meeting. Last year, the junior lands minister, Persis Namuganza, said the land titles to be cancelled are for individuals that unlawfully acquired land in several areas that include Bugolobi, Kansanga, Ninda, Bukoto, Kinawataka, Nansana, Buloba and Bulenga. The Government said the directive would only affect those who acquired the land

Experts have warned that Kampala could face flooding and a number of diseases

presented following queries on how far the cancellation process had gone. In her response recently, Amongi said not much had been done because those set to be affected had filed numerous court injunctions against the move.

The Government has in the recent past toyed with the idea of cancelling land titles in wetlands, including those that arc said to have been approved by authorities, such as NEMA and the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA).

Experts have consistently warned that Kampala, which sits on the shores of Lake Victoria, could face severe flooding, shortage of drinking water and disappearance of fish, as well as a number of health hazards if wetland destruction is not urgently stopped. They said wetlands serve as the rainfall catchment area for Africa's largest freshwater body.

According to NEMA, the wetland catchment areas around Lake Victoria have shrunk by more than half their size in 20 years from 7,167.6sqkm in 1994 to 3,510 sq.km in 2008.

However, debating a motion by Lwemiyaga County MP Theodore Ssekikubo about the proposed relocation, the MPs resolved that the Government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs explores diplomatic means by engaging various players at the UN, to have the proposed plan dropped.

The MPs also implored the Kenyan government, to consider withdrawing its interests and intentions of hosting the base, saying the relocation of the centre would impact on Uganda economically in terms of revenue and employment of many Ugandans.

"The UN centre at Entebbe brings into the country an estimated \$30m annually (about sh110b). The UN staff use Ugandan hotels, eat Ugandan food and use Ugandan facilities. We, therefore, need the Government to fight and retain the centre," Ssekikubo said.

Justifying the need for Uganda to retain the centre, Ssekikubo noted that Uganda was the first country to send troops to Somalia. He said since the country remains the largest contributor to AMISOM, it would be undiplomatic to take the centre away from Uganda saying it was the only resource Uganda has.

Seconding the motion, Rose Mutonyi (Bubulo West), the chairperson Parliament's committee on foreign affairs, said Ugandan workers at the base had petitioned her committee about the

thirds of these are Ugandans. The UN report proposes Nairobi as the new home for the UN regional centre for Africa, along with Budapest, the capital of Hungary in Europe and Mexico City in Mexico, as possible locations. Citing out Nairobi in Kenya, the MPs, however, noted that Kenya is already a host of various UN offices such as UN Habitat.

"Kenya should withdraw and allow Uganda to retain the base. UN should also appreciate Uganda's continued support towards peacekeeping missions in countries such as Somalia and South Sudan by leaving this base in Uganda," Silas Aogon, the MP Kumi Municipality, said. Unlike other MPs, Kira Municipality MP Ibrahim Ssemujju Nganda, supported the re-location of the base, saying Nairobi was a regional capital and, therefore, suitable for the hosting of the UN base.

Prime Minister and leader of government business in Parliament, Ruhakana Rugunda said the Government was engaging various players at the UN to have the base retained at Entebbe.

Yoweri Museveni has taken up the matter and he has written to the Secretary General of the UN asking them to have the centre remain at Entebbe," Rugunda said.

He also assured the House that no decision regarding the relocation of the base had been reached yet by the UN.