



Eng. Herbert Nuwamanya, Assistant Commissioner, Planning and Development, during the interview

Utility Management Division Ensures Steady Operation of Water and Sanitation Schemes

Constant break down of Water and Sanitation facilities remains a key challenge to the 24-hour supply of water.

This is because, the practice of Operation and Maintenance had been neglected in the past causing an adverse effect to the credibility of the investments made, the functioning of the services, the well-being of rural populations, and the development of further projects.

However, its importance has gained considerable visibility over the past few years appearing that policy-makers and project designers are now more conscious of the direct link between improved Operation and Maintenance practices and the sustainability of water supply and sanitation services.

It's against this background that the Ministry of Water and Environment formulated a Support

to Utility Management Division to address issues of Operation and Maintenance of water and sanitation projects.

Engineer Herbert Nuwamanya the Assistant Commissioner, Urban Water and Sewerage Department in charge of Support to Utility Management Division says, the Division which has been in existence for at least three years, was formulated after realising that the communities were finding it hard to access clean and safe water due to frequent breakdowns of water and sanitation projects.

“In the past, we used to hand over systems to Local Governments to manage directly but we found out that some things were not moving out well.

We would hand over a project with 500 connections but five years later, the connections would keep reducing from 500-400 and lower until people completely ran without water.

As a Ministry, we continued to construct water systems, but when we handed them over, we realised that it was a bit technical and required the technical team like engineers to enhance proper management and maintenance.

We found out that the communities were not in position to maintain the piped water supply systems thus the Division to enhance operation and maintenance of these systems.

Our role is to give them technical back-up support to those operating and to solicit funds for them, especially to do expansions and renewal of piped water supply systems, “he says.

He explains that with the Division in place, operation and maintenance is greatly improving among the two water authorities the National Water and Sewerage Corporation NW&SC and Umbrella Authorities.

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450,000

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NW&SC is managing large towns whereas Umbrella Organisations are directly managing and operating Small Towns and Rural Growth Centres.

The Umbrellas include Karamoja in Moroto district, Eastern Umbrella in Mbale, Central Umbrella in Wakiso, South Western Umbrella in Kabale, Midwestern in Kyenjonjo, and Northern Umbrella in Lira district.

This, Eng. Nuwamanya, says has greatly led to improvement of water coverage given the fact that they can support each other.

“Whereas the Local Governments would be managing one water supply system, whatever little it would save, it would not be enough to replace a pump, but with utility bodies operating many systems, with each saving some money, it makes it easier to replace any pump which breaks down on the system.

This, he says, has helped to enhance a 24-hour delivery of water to customers.

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Like any other system, water supply systems tend to break down but these days it takes Umbrella Authorities very short time to do the replacement.

According to Eng. Nuwamanya, the Division is not targeting particular areas but focusing on the entire country including extending water in hard to reach areas like Karamoja and Kalangala.

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