

# DIGITALISED LAND SYSTEM TO TRANSFORM SECTOR

By Umar Nsubuga

Over the last decade, the Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development has engaged in reforming the land sector through the formulation and enactment of an enabling legal framework, the establishment of land administration institutions, and land tenure regularisation.

According to the ministry, the computerised system has decentralised land governance through the establishment of 22 self-contained one-stop Ministry Zonal Offices (MZOs) across the country, demonstrating a significant impact on strengthening land tenure security, reducing corruption, consolidating revenue, and improving service delivery.

With support from the Competitiveness and Enterprise Development Project (CEDP), the Uganda National Land Information System (UgNLIS) is an initiative that has modernised Uganda's land sector.

Dr Sam Mayanja, the state minister of lands, says with the installation of UgNLIS, the land dispute situation has improved, through computerisation by using software for automating the database and scanning land records.

## HOW IT WORKS

According to UgNLIS, a transaction for land conveyancing begins with a member of the public submitting their documents, which include the land title, the National Identification Number (NIN), a telephone number, passport photos, and stamped copies.

The system scans these documents, and if it finds an existing title or land on wetlands, it will reject the application, he says.

If the documentation passes this stage, the person who submitted the application receives payment advice, which they then use to proceed with their application through the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA).

The UgNLIS automatically receives an advisory



Lenin Victor Oonyu, the project manager for the National Land Information System Enhancement Project at the lands ministry explains how the system works

## A TRANSACTION FOR LAND CONVEYANCING BEGINS WITH A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC SUBMITTING THEIR DOCUMENTS, WHICH INCLUDE THE LAND TITLE, THE NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (NIN), A TELEPHONE NUMBER, PASSPORT PHOTOS, AND STAMPED COPIES

from URA confirming the successful payment. In just minutes, the transaction is completed. "With the UgNLIS in place and constantly updated, the land registry has regained its position as a sacred place for land records," he adds.

According to the ministry, the policy envisions a transformed Ugandan society through the optimal use and management of land resources, leading to a prosperous and industrialised economy with a developed services sector.

This vision directly aligns with and supports the achievement of the Vision 2040, which aims to transform Ugandan society from a peasant to a modern and prosperous country within 30 years.

Nearly 80% of Uganda's land is under customary tenure and not available for development, so it is crucial to support interventions

that help with customary land documentation. This will protect the owners and users and give them the confidence to make complementary investments.

Lenin Victor Oonyu, the UgNLIS project manager at the ministry, says the system is responsive to the needs and demands of citizens and business clients, and has tremendously eliminated back-door transactions and forgeries.

## WHAT IT DOES

He says UgNLIS is specifically designed to manage the spatially referenced land registration, valuation, planning, and administration-related data across Uganda.

This is in accordance with legislation, procedures and techniques for the systematic collection, update, processing, and



Dr Sam Mayanja, state minister for lands, says the installation of the The Uganda National Land Information System (UgNLIS) has improved the land management system in the country

- By using the system, Ugandans will have easy access to procedures, cost, and documentation swiftly.
- The goal of this system and its outcomes is to build on and improve knowledge for different stakeholders involved in land administration.
- It will ensure secure

distribution of this data. Technology is necessary to better understand the extent to which citizens use the system and the resulting certificates of rights, enabling the ministry to take measures to maximise their effectiveness and accessibility.

This system includes the anticipated benefits of good land administration, such as increased property

- forms of land tenure for citizens, as well as efficient land management and administration.
- The programme has procedures to carry out first-time systematic registration of land in the names of its owners with the aim of creating a complete public record of landholdings.

rights security and a decrease in land disputes.

It gives the Government revenue through the collection of land taxes and improves land administration and management through the use of land information.

## LAND OWNERSHIP CHALLENGES

This system is set to solve land ownership related challenges, through the passage of several laws and



Dennis Obbo

policies. This has required extensive training of officials and campaigns to raise awareness about the land registry system. While these challenges persist, the country can claim significant successes in formalising its land administrative system.

The 11-year system has implemented various strategies, including changing Uganda's policy and legal framework, safeguarding the rights of vulnerable groups, modernising the land registry to improve land service delivery, supporting the decentralisation of land administration institutions, providing public information on land rights, developing strategies to protect vulnerable groups' rights, and developing a national land policy.

The Government in partnership with the Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development implemented the Uganda National Land Information System with support from the Competitiveness and Enterprise Development Project (CEDP) a five-year project funded with credit from the World Bank.

This system has modernised and enhanced the land sector's ability to deliver services that meet the needs of Ugandans.

It has established a modern land information system and land records, which it archives.

According to Dennis Obbo, the spokesperson at the lands ministry, Ugandans can benefit from UgNLIS because it takes services closer to them. This applies to freehold, leasehold, and mailo titles.

"It tackles corruption-associated land issues through checking, updating, or transferring titles," he says.

PHOTOS BY MPALANYI SSENTONGO