

# LAND REGISTRY MOVES TO EMBRACE COMPUTERISATION

The Uganda National Land Information System (UgNLIS) was set up in March 2013 to digitise land titling, registration and mapping after the Government of Uganda secured a World Bank loan of \$65m (about sh246b). It was initially rolled out under the Second Private Sector Competitiveness Project (PSCPII) and later the Competitiveness and Enterprise Development Project (CEDP). UMARU KASHAKA interviewed CEDP coordinator at the lands ministry Johnson Mukaga on this and other related issues.

**Q** Tell us about the CEDP-Additional Financing (CEDP-AF) land reforms?

**A** Until 2013, the land registry in Uganda ran a manual system of records-keeping, but as the numbers of records and transactions grew, it (manual system) came with challenges. Issues of inefficiencies, inadequate space and the laborious system opened up to human error such as issuing of multiple titles and loss of documents made land transactions a nightmare.

The Government noticed that these were fundamental issues that had a far reaching impact, not only on the economy, but also compromised security of tenure.

The reforms and the computerisation of the land management system is a response to these issues that were a result of poor records' management.

With the installation of the NLIS, a number of reforms have been taken to that effect. These have been rolled out under the World Bank-funded project from the PSCPII to now CEDP-AF. All these have supported the digitisation of the land records.

**As the land registry moves to embrace computerisation in this era of cyber-crime, one would want to know how secure their land titles are.**



PHOTOS BY MPALANYI SSENTONGO

**Joseph Ronald Opio, a senior ICT Officer at the lands, Head Quality Assurance - UgNLS**

**Johnson Mukaga CEDP coordinator at the lands ministry**

**How have you prepared for this?**

Our first basic line of defence is the physical restrictions both for our staff and the public from accessing certain sensitive spots of the land registry. The NLIS is designed in such a way that nobody can access, transfer or delete data without being identified. For any illegal or irregular transaction that is attempted, an alert is immediately registered. We have fire proof systems and backups for every transaction that happens at the NLIS centre [in Kampala] and some other undisclosed locations. In essence, we have both hard and software systems where in extreme cases

## WHY EMPHASIS ON LAND AND THE NLIS?

Land is an important factor of production and, therefore, the ease with which you register, own and use land greatly affects productivity. The purpose of this reform is to make it easier for people to register land. Only an estimated 20% of land in this country is registered, and you cannot undertake investments or use land as collateral unless you have land titles. So, the ownership of land must be formalised, especially for a country that is largely agricultural and rolling out the Parish Development Model program interventions to help citizens. We are, therefore, improving security of tenure to enable landowners to exploit the opportunities that come with landownership as well as encourage investments.

if one has access to a document, it can only be a mirror image of the original.

Some members of the public have experienced

our free land registry open days, where they ask our staff any questions, make land claims and get the opportunity to see their online documents. All these

are designed to improve our transparency.

**Why then do you still have delays in service delivery when you computerised the land registry?**

The computerisation of the land registry has been a

huge change step involving changing land processing from a manual orientation to a computer-based environment. This affected all the departments along the process line that are required to make a land title including surveys and mapping that provide the deeds plans and the land administration that must check and approve all applications before titling.

**What should Ugandans expect from the land registry as the CEDP-AF programme rolls on to the climax?**

The current trend shows that land services are improving. This will trigger a digital business economy and if all this information is linked to the other institutions doing business in Uganda will be easy thus the competitiveness story will have been written. For this to happen, it means that we must create a strong foundation for scaling up the titling of rural land from its current level of 5% to about 50% within 10 years to strengthen land tenure security, better manage government-owned land, and promote more sustainable land use. We are committed to achieving this as well as regaining the trust of Ugandans.

PHOTO BY WILFRED SANYA



**A building constructed by Shumuk Aluminium Industries on the land allocated to Megha Industries demolished after a court ruling at Nakawa, Kampala. The UgNLIS is intended to avert such cases**