

Promise Tracker

New special report. The *Promise Tracker* is *Daily Monitor's* weekly special feature that will track the promises made by leaders of all categories as well as public agencies to the people. The aim is to cause accountability, show status and analyse whether it was a realistic, unrealistic or empty promise.



Construction. Earlier construction works on Kayunga road. COURTESY PHOTO

Mukono-Kayunga-Njeru road struck off UNRA's to-do list

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Shs233b

Project. The cost of the Mukono-Kayunga-Njeru road.

THE PROMISE:

One of the promises that the ruling NRM party made in the run up to the 2011 general election was to reconstruct 10 major tarmac roads.

Lying in position number six on the list was the 94km Mukono-Kayunga-Njeru road, which starts in Mukono District, takes a northerly direction to Kalagi before heading northeastwards to Kayunga and winds up in Njeru Municipality in Buikwe District.

The road, which was upgraded from gravel to tarmac in the 1960s, had over the years fallen into a state of disrepair.

The other nine roads on the list included Kampala-Masaka-Mbarara - Katuna road (416km), Busega-Mityana road (57km), Tororo-Mbale-Soroti road (152km), Lira-Kamdingi-Gulu road (128km), the stretch from Mukono to Jinja (52km), the stretch

from Jinja to Kamuli via Mbulamuti (60km), the 67km distance from Kafu to Karuma, and turning the stretch between Kampala and the one between Kalerwe and Gayaza into dual carriageways.

Giving an own take on how far it had gone in as far as delivering on the promises made in the 2006 manifesto, the party indicated that it had made commendable progress.

"The roads that NRM promised to tarmac have either been completed or construction is ongoing, or were designed and are due for construction," the manifesto reads in part.

The party said its performance in the road sector had previously been pegged

back due to dependence on donor funding, which is phased in such a way that one borrows a tranche to fund the design stage before filing another funding request to

OFFICIAL POSITION

Mr Allan Ssempebwa Kyobe, the media relations manager in the office of the executive director of UNRA, Ms Allen Kagina, says the road is done and simply awaiting a technical handover.

"Works have been accomplished. The project is now under a Defects Liability Period (DLP). The contractor's work is done, but he has to stay on site for the next one year to ensure that any defects that come up are immediately fixed," Mr Ssempebwa said on Monday.

He said the road works were done at a cost of Shs233 billion.

carry out the actual work.

Besides, the manifesto indicates that the funds often come with stiff conditions, all of which makes prompt delivery of projects practically impossible.

In the case of the 10 roads that it was promising to work on however, the party expressed confidence that it would be able to deliver within record given that government had enough resources to undertake the projects without donor funding.

"With increased revenue, NRM is now able to tarmac some of the roads using own revenue. In the past, road construction was hampered by dependence on borrowing, with its attendant conditionalities. Now, we have the financial capacity to design the roads using our own money and even tarmac some of the roads," the manifesto adds.

After years of behind the scenes moves, Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA), which is mandated to implement government road infrastructure programmes, handed the contract to SBI in 2014 to work on the road and actual work began in January 2015.

IMPACT

The road was expanded from a width of between 6 and 7 meters to 9.35 meters' width. This is comprised of a 6.35 meter carriageway and 1.5 meters of shoulders on either side of the road even in the rural area. The entire road is covered with



agro-processing, hatcheries, agricultural research institutions. Uganda Christian University has increased institutional and private sector activities in the district.

Buikwe is heavily involved in tourism with sites such as Source of the Nile, Sezibwa Falls and Mabira Forest.

It also poses of big industries such as the Sugar Corporation of Uganda Lugazi (Scolu), Nile Breweries Limited plant in Njeru Town Council and textile manufacturers, Southern Range Nyanza Industries; Fisheries in Kiyindi on the shores of Lake Victoria and some few fishing villages on the Nile; as well as agricultural activity as seen in the involvement of the production of coffee, vegetables and vanilla.

Economic boost

Agriculture and tourism are also quite big in Kayunga. The few rapids and water falls on the River Nile still provide the best white water rafting spots left, while agriculture is practiced in the form of livestock and subsistence farming. Coffee and fruits such as pineapples are some of the biggest products of the land.

Completion of the road is now expected to improve inter-connectivity between the three districts and facilitate easier and faster movement of goods and services to outside markets.

It is also expected that improved access to the tourist attractions will help boost the tourism industry.

The road has now provided an alternative route for those travelling between Jinja and Kampala as they can now drive through Bukoloto, Kalagi and Gayaza.

It also provides an alternative access to Kamuli, Kaliro and other towns in the east through Kayunga Mbulamuti ferry.

It is also expected to facilitate further investments in the tourism and agro processing sectors, especially now that an industrial park has been opened in Njeru Town Council.



Completed. A section of the finished road in Kayunga District. COURTESY PHOTO

asphalt. The initial design was upgraded to provide parking lanes within the urban sections and improved drainage channels. It is also equipped with road signs and markings.

Motorists have lately been describing it as the 'vibrating road' given the safety measures installed to warn drivers if they veer off the road.

All these innovations have served to improve traffic flow on the road and helped to improve safety conditions.

The road links three very economically vibrant districts of Mukono, Kayunga and Buikwe.

Mukono is involved in an array of activities, including agriculture as seen in the cultivation of foodstuffs such as fruits and vegetables. It also boasts of fishing and fish farming in Koome and Katosi, stone and sand mining in Nakisunga and Ddundu parishes, among others.

Mukono is also home to major industries concentrated in Mukono Town Council, Lwanyonyi - Industrial park, Kyetume abattoir and railway. Carpentry, welding,

Before. A section of a street on Kayunga road before construction. PHOTO BY FRED MUZAALE

VOICES



"That is a very strategic road. It increases accessibility to tourist attractions. It helps connect to Isimba and many parts on the River Nile. Every part of the Nile is a tourist attraction. It is also a gateway to Busoga where we are developing Iyingo Landing Site and Kagulu Hill. We intend to open a museum there," STEPHEN ASIMWE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UGANDA TOURISM BOARD



"You cannot demand roads, infrastructure development and salary increment at the same time. If you increase salary that was not planned and budgeted for, that means you cut funds meant for infrastructure. Whoever tells you that all things can be done at ago is telling you lies," PRESIDENT MUSEVENI



"Completion of that road is very good news for us. Accessibility is one of the challenges we have been having with attracting investors to Jinja. No one wants to get stuck in traffic for two and a half hours on the Jinja-Kampala highway. That is why we welcome the Mukono-Kayunga-Njeru road. We think it will make it easier for people to come to Jinja," MAJID BATAMBUZE, MAYOR OF JINJA

MONITOR POSITION

Government deserves appreciation for having funded the resurfacing and expansion of the road. Besides improving traffic flow, it is evident that the road is giving a new lease of life to an area that had, until the late 1990s, been one of biggest producers of coffee, which is one of Uganda's main cash crops. The vibrancy that is returning to towns such as Kangulumira, Kayunga and Kalagi is another testimony that strategic interventions and investments in infrastructure can serve as an economic stimulus. Like we have argued before, we believe that this is a model that Uganda can adopt for stimulating economies of various regions across the country.

The road also provides an alternative route into or out of Kampala. The Jinja-Kampala highway, which forms part of the Northern Corridor of the Trans Africa highway, which links Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and parts of the Eastern DR Congo to Kenya and also links the Indian Ocean Port of Mombasa to the Atlantic Ocean Port of Matadi in DR Congo, is arguably the busiest and most congested road in Uganda. Travelling on the narrow 80km road, which used to take less than an hour has now become a travellers' nightmare. Traffic often slows down to a crawl, especially between Kampala and Mukono Town. Covering the 23-kilometre stretch sometimes takes

motorists about two hours. Where it is not congested, it is very narrow. It is a predominantly single lane affair, with the reprieves only coming when it comes to major towns or climbing lanes. This often means that travelling can at times take between three and four hours. The congestion also means higher fuel consumption. This is not good for business. Besides saving one those troubles, Mukono-Kayunga-Njeru road also gives motorists an alternative, especially when accidents occur or when trees in Mabira Forest fall. For all those new pluses, government and UNRA deserve some credit for a job well done.

VERDICT

Promise was Realistic

Promise was Unrealistic

Promise was Empty

Promise is Overdue

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