

# Busitema University to add 4MW of solar power

The 4MV grid connected solar plant at the main campus will be commissioned at the end of this year. Once complete, this will boost the country's solar energy production to 54MW, Philip Wafula explains.

Busitema University in Busia district will by December add 4MW of solar power to the national grid.

According to Busitema University Vice Chancellor Prof Paul Waako, since inception in October 2007, the only-science varsity has passed out 6,045 graduates. Of these, some of the engineers have over the last two years been involved in ensuring that the power project becomes a reality.

"Out of the 1,046 graduates at this year's 10th graduation ceremony, about one third are engineers. So it is no surprise that we are making our own solar electricity," Mr Waako said at the University.

He appreciated the support from government that has seen the once two-faculty institute grow into a six-faculty university. Besides easing access to energy, the plant will be used as a training ground for students of Busitema University in renewable energy.

## 4MW Solar plant

"The 4MV grid connected solar plant at the main campus will be officially commissioned at the end of this year.



The entrance to Busitema University in Busia District. The university will by December add 4MW of solar electricity to the national grid PHOTO BY PHILIP WAFULA

This is the first of its kind to be undertaken by a university nationwide," he added.

Once complete, this will boost the country's solar energy production to 54MW. Others are Mayuge (10MW), Soroti (10MW), Tororo (10MW) and Kabulasoke (20MW).

Mr Timothy Tumwesigye, a Third Year agro-processing engineering student, expressed satisfaction with the power project, saying electricity was the backbone of industrialisation.

"There is no industry that is not dependent on power supply. As industrialisation is fronted to develop the country, input of our solar power plant becomes a key contribution to national development," Tumwesigye said.

Sharifa Nakandi, a medical student, observed that more projects are in the offing.

Prof Vinand Nantulya, the University Chancellor, noted that the power project is funded by government in conjunction with the Egyptian

## OTHER SOURCES

Solar is increasingly becoming an important electricity source because of the scarcity of electricity and escalating tariffs from the conventional hydro and thermal power sources in the country.

This is due to the high operational costs of the existing and planned thermal power plants and the failure to develop other alternative electricity sources such as co-generation, wind and geothermal potential sources in the country.

government.

"Supervisors of the project included the Egyptian Ministry of Electricity and Renewable Energy, the Egyptian new and renewable energy authority. These worked hand with

Uganda's Ministry of Energy," Nantulya observed.

Elisha Obella, the Academic Registrar, said Busitema University would use the opportunity to save on its power bills that have been exorbitant over the years.

"Once we have our own source, it means we are becoming self-reliant. Our operations have been affected in the past with due to unreliable electricity supply," Obella observed.

Rosemary Mutyabule, the university council vice chairperson, appreciated the development, saying it was an indicator that Busitema is a sciences university.

Peace Balala, the University publicist, identified Arab Renewable Energy Company (ARECO) and Arab Organisation for Industrialisation (AOI) as the main project contractors.

"They worked with local labour and materials. This was a boost to the locals who supplied the needed items," Balala said.