

Xsabo Group donates Shs 50m to Covid-19 taskforce

JOHN MUSINGUZI

The Xsabo Foundation, the corporate social responsibility arm of Xsabo Group, donated Shs 50 million to the National Task Force on Covid-19 on April 16, 2020.

The donation was handed over by Frances Ruth Atala, a director at The Xsabo Foundation, and received by Prime Minister Dr Ruhakana Rugunda. Present was Mary Karoro Okurut, minister of General Duties in the Office of the Prime Minister and head of the Fundraising Effort, National Task Force on Covid-19.

Atala told *The Observer* that Xsabo had earlier made other donations

to the anti-Covid-19 fight at the local level in Uganda. These include Shs 5m to Gomba district taskforce on Covid-19 and Shs 4m to Mubende district taskforce on Covid-19. Xsabo Group operates a 20MW solar power plant in Gomba district, and is constructing a 20MW solar plant at Nkongwe in Mubende district planned to be commissioned in April 2021.

Other donations by the group are Shs 4m to the Otuke district task force on Covid-19 and hands-free washing facilities to Kiruddu hospital. Xsabo Group has plans to set up its first off-grid hybrid solar power plant in Otuke district.

Umeme to spend Shs 5bn on Kakiri substation

NICHOLAS BAMULANDEKI

Power distributor Umeme will put up a \$5.3 million (Shs 4.4 billion) substation to improve the quality of power in Kakiri, Namana and Wakiso.

These notes currently rely on the Kawanda and Busungu feeders, which, given the area they traverse, are prone to current drops.

Umeme will spend the money on land acquisition, plant and guard houses, two large transformers, switchgear and protection relays.

Additionally, it will spend on power cables, earthing, SCADA system and on storm water drainage, among others.

Umeme is now in the course of procuring a contractor to execute the work, a company statement, quoting Arnold Kalyegira, the project manager, stated.

Kalyegira, an engineer, said that since completion, the Kakiri substation will limit power supply interruptions that would have resulted from the decommissioning and re-design of the Namungoma substation.

Kakiri, Namana and Wakiso are fast-growing areas where it comes to power use because they are home to many of Kampala city's workers as well as to an army barracks and some factories.

"The issue is reliability," Kalyegira said.

In Kakiri alone, unmet demand for power is projected to increase by 19 per cent between now and 2026 while in Namana's case there will be a 13 per cent rise.

Umeme, which as of December 2018 had over 21 substations and 11, 031 transformers, intends to put up more.

The distributor, which presently has 1.5 million customers, plans to connect two million more premises to the national power grid within the next five



An engineer connecting electricity

years. This is in line with the government's free Electricity Connections Policy (ECP) through which the government intends to increase percentage of Ugandans accessing electricity from 25 per cent (2019) to 60 per cent by 2025.

All that the eligible households pay is Shs 20,000 for the inspection of their premises.

On their part, the distribution utilities are extending the distribution lines to those areas that are presently not covered, stocking up on materials such as meters and recruiting more staff to handle the increasing number of customers.

And with the lines come substations, which are facilities comprised of

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transformers to step down high-voltage power received from the transmission company to levels that would not damage consumers electrical appliances.

Continuous investment in power generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure is essential to ensure reliable electricity supply, according to the Doing Business Report 2020.

The report notes that without investment in generation, generation capacity would "quickly be overwhelmed by rising demand" while aging infrastructure would result in "increased losses and deterioration of the reliability of supply".

BUSINESS

ADB DISTANCES ITSELF FROM FUNDING CRUDE OIL PIPELINE

ROSE MUGENA

The African Development Bank has distanced itself from financing the East African Crude Oil Pipeline, saying it is looking a lot more at supporting renewable energies.

African Development Bank strongly rejects claims that it plans to provide financial support to the East African Crude Oil Pipeline Project, the body said in a recent statement.

It added: "The NEPAD Infrastructure Project Preparation Facility (NEPAD-IPPF) has not provided financing to any private sector projects in East Africa. No commitment was, therefore, made to any party to fund the East African Crude Oil Pipeline Project. The project is not included in the Bank's lending program. The Bank is strongly committed to renewable energies."

The bank said it has for more than a decade crafted policies and delivered investments that promote sustainable development practices on the continent, including climate adaptation and resilience.

"The Bank is committed to facilitating the transition to low-carbon and climate-resilient development in African countries across all its operational priority areas," it said.

On issues as a dirty form of energy, usually attracting criticism from environmentalists. However, oil has also been seen to transform economies for the better.

Governments have found themselves in a critical balancing act on how to exploit and use their oil resources.

The ADB, one of the continent's biggest lenders to government, said that in 2020, approximately 36 per cent of its total financial approvals were directed to climate action. It added that it plans to double its climate finance to \$25 billion between 2020 and 2025.

Furthermore, ADB said it was joining forces with other multilateral development banks to design a framework that ensures that all our investments align with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

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Sanlam donates to Covid-19 fight

Sanlam Uganda, a provider of insurance and financial services in Uganda, has donated Shs 285 million to Uganda's National Response Fund Covid-19, to limit the impact of the pandemic in the country.

Gary Corbi, the CEO of Sanlam General Insurance Uganda, said the group is proud of and appreciates the efforts of the ministry of Health to combat the spread of the virus.

"Sanlam made corporate social responsibility worldwide a business mandate with a conscious decision to be a virtuous corporate citizen in the countries in which we operate," he said during the handover ceremony.

"We are, therefore, pleased to stand with Uganda in this time of great need."

Dr Diana Arwine, the permanent secretary, ministry of Health, observed that health workers were putting their lives and those of their families at risk for the sake of this country. She said

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some of the money would be used to buy protective gear for health workers.

"The protective gear to be purchased would be a great opportunity for us to minimise the risk of health workers getting infected, and to provide the much-needed safety in these uncertain times," she noted, adding, "each time a symptomatic person goes to a health center, whether or not it's Covid-19, the health workers attending to them do so not because they are fearless, but because they are making a sacrifice for the country."

Mubale Kabanda, the country manager of Sanlam Investment Uganda, said Sanlam is devoted to conducting its business in a responsible manner.

"This donation comes on the backdrop of many other corporate social responsibility initiatives the group is involved in - in Uganda and at group level," he added.

NICHOLAS BAMULANDEKI