

MANIFESTO: ANKOLE COMMUNITIES SAY TIME FOR DELIVERY IS NOW

VOTERS' NEEDS

As part of the comprehensive coverage of the presidential campaigns, *New Vision* will be seeking views and voices of voters on issues affecting them and expert solutions. In this edition, **Nelson Kiva, Chris Mugasha, Bruno Mugizi and Edward Anyoli** focus on Bushenyi and Sheema districts.

With a combined population of 535,667 people, Sheema and Bushenyi districts are pursuing prosperity, challenges notwithstanding. Agriculture is the backbone of the local economies with crops like coffee, tea and bananas widely grown.

The districts, especially Bushenyi, have also undertaken critical steps to improve the quality of their cattle to rearing hybrids, increasing the quality and quantity of milk production. To, among others, enable market access for their products, voters in the respective districts are asking for improved road networks.

"We are happy with the progress being made on key fronts, but roads must be prioritised," Michael Muhumuza, a resident of Kabwohe in Sheema district, said.

Another resident of Kabwohe, identified as Imam Kushaba, tasked the presidential candidates with laying a strategy for tarmacking the Kabwohe-Masheruka-Bwizibwera-Nsiika and Kabwohe-Kitagata-Kabira-Rukungiri roads.

The voters, civil and political administrators in Bushenyi and Sheema are also asking for the rehabilitation of Mbarara-Ishaka road which they claim is in a bad state.

WIDE POTHOLE

The 56km road, they said, has wide potholes which have caused some fatal road crashes recently. The voters say the spot-targeted rehabilitation is not enough; the whole road needs total reconstruction.

"We expect a solution to this road; its lifespan is over and a new one is needed. As taxi drivers, every evening, we have to go to the garages to do mechanical repairs," Douglas Mataze, a taxi driver, said.

Addressing a rally in Enganju sub-county in Buhweju district on Saturday,

Bushenyi and Sheema district profiles

Bushenyi
Population: 283,392
Distance from Kampala: 323km
Economic activities: Semi-intensive agriculture (tea and coffee), trade and commerce, transport, and construction plus stone and sand mining, mineral mining, and lumbering.



Sheema
Population: 252,275
Distance from Kampala: 301km
Economic activities: Agriculture, growing bananas, coffee and tea plus livestock farming and mining.

GRAPHIC BY BRIAN SSEKAMATTE

**BUSHENYI, SHEEMA VOTERS WANT
ROADS, HOSPITALS IMPROVED**

WHAT PEOPLE SAY

PATRICK KASHAJA KITABIRE, A MILITARY VETERAN IN BUSHENYI: Tea farmers in Bushenyi are experiencing hardships due to low tea prices and high fertiliser costs.



IMAM KUSASIRA: We want Kabwohe-Masheruka-Bwizibwera-Nsiika and Kabwohe-Kitagata-Kabira-Rukungiri roads tarmacked.



MICHAEL MUHUMUZA: Ankole Western University should be granted a charter. The university is growing well, and the local youth have benefited by being able

to study nearby.

GODFREY MUCUNGUZI: I appeal to the Government to revive the Rubaare silk project. If properly funded, it could generate income for the district and help address unemployment.



LUKIA NAKARISA, SHEEMA MUNICIPALITY DEPUTY MAYOR: We want an industrial park to be established in our municipality because they attract investment, create jobs and spur economic growth.



economic issues, environment, domestic conflicts and leadership gaps, among others.

Sheema Municipality MP Dickson Kateshumbwa said there is a need to grant a charter to Ankole Western University on top of upgrading Kabwohe Health Centre IV to a district hospital and the elevation of Kitagata Hospital to regional referral level.

"We appreciate the upgrading of Kabwohe Health Centre IV, the construction of Migina Health Centre III, the establishment of the municipal headquarters and the sh2b provided for road maintenance," Kateshumbwa said.

Bushenyi district NRM chairperson Hassan Bassajabalaba said they want Kitagata Hospital elevated to a regional referral hospital to serve the entire sub-region better.

Kitagata Hospital is located in Sheema district and it was built during the leadership of former president Milton Obote.

"Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital needs to be upgraded [to national referral level] to handle cases that would be referred to Mulago in Kampala," Bassajabalaba said.

The Bushenyi district chairperson, Jaffari Bassajabalaba, said some sub-counties in the district, like Kizinda, Nkanga, Bushenyi Central division and Ishaka division, lack health centres III.

"Our wish is to see each constituency in the sub-region have a health centre IV

equipped with an ambulance," Jemima Buhanda, the Sheema district LC5 chairperson, said.

Bushenyi district was carved out of the original Ankole district in 1974. In 1993, Ntungamo district was also carved out of Ankole, taking away Rushenyi and Kajara counties.

Bushenyi is bordered by Rubirizi district to the northwest, Buhweju to the northeast, Sheema in the east, Mitooma to the south and Rukungiri to the west.

Sheema was created by an Act of Parliament and operationalised on July 1, 2010 as part of Uganda's decentralisation agenda. Before its creation, it was known as Sheema county and was part of Bushenyi district.

President Museveni, the NRM presidential flag-bearer, in his re-election, is scheduled to campaign in Bushenyi and Sheema today ahead of other rallies in Mitooma and Rubirizi tomorrow.

Local leaders said in both Bushenyi and Sheema, there are electricity projects that were abandoned. The residents in sub-counties like Kakanju, Kyamuhunga and Nyabubare want to see the hanging poles, which have acted as scarecrows for some time, start to carry electricity wires.

"We gave out our land for the power lines to pass through. It is now coming to 10 years without using our land while we await the power lines to be fixed. We have complained to MPs but we have not received any solution regarding these hanging poles," Ainea Mwiine Kafurembe, a resident of Kakanju sub-county, said.

Regarding agriculture, the residents want to see, especially, the challenges in the tea industry getting addressed once and for all.

"The tea industry needs a well-structured system so that there is order in the sector. For how long is the tea industry going to be run in a laissez-faire manner?" Paul Kahiigi Turyamureba, the board chairperson for Kyamuhunga People's SACCOS, asked.

MANIFESTO

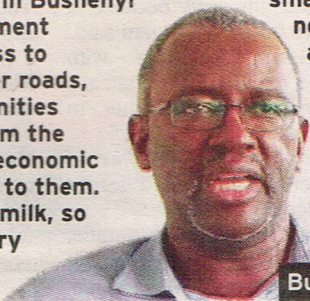
New Vision's Citizens' Manifesto shows about 27.2% of the respondents in Bushenyi endorsed the state of health services, while in the education sector, more than 87% believe something should be done to improve the sector's performance.

Only 6.3% of the respondents in the district approved the state of the roads and transport as more than 93% suggested a need to improve the social services.

WHAT EXPERT SAYS

Paul Busharizi, an economic analyst and veteran business journalist, said infrastructure remains a major concern. He said roads in Bushenyi urgently need improvement to boost farmers' access to markets. Without better roads, Busharizi said, communities cannot fully benefit from the financial systems and economic opportunities available to them.

They produce a lot of milk, so access to improved dairy breeds would be a major boost. The



farmers in that area engage heavily in dairy farming, but not on large ranches or vast pieces of land. They rely on smallholdings, which means they need intensive farming practices and strong extension services to improve productivity.

"Similarly, there is an urgent need to promote improved varieties of matooke, cassava and coffee to help farmers increase yields and withstand the climate and market pressures," Busharizi said.

Busharizi