

ABOUT SH35B SPENT ON TRAINING OVER 14,000 TECHNICIANS

By Peter Abaanabasazi

Ugandan youth have been implored to embrace technical and vocational education if they are to be part of Uganda's socio-economic transformation.

The appeal was made by the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Mrs Janet Museveni, during a graduation ceremony at the Uganda Petroleum Institute Kigumba (UPIK) in Kiryandongo district on Monday.

"As Uganda prepares for full-scale oil production, the role of UPIK becomes even more critical. The sector requires not only engineers and technicians, but also safety specialists, supervisors and managers with integrity, discipline and a deep sense of responsibility to God and our country.

"I, therefore, urge you never to separate your technical knowledge from your moral values. The real measure of your success will be how you use your skills to serve others

FIRST LADY RALLIES YOUTH TO EMBRACE VOCATIONAL SKILLS

PHOTO BY PETER ABAANABASAZI

and build our nation," she said.

Her message was delivered by the education ministry permanent secretary, Dr Kedrace Turyagyenda.

The function was also attended by China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) Uganda's head of legal, Ma Jin and the Petroleum Authority of Uganda executive director, Ernest Rubondo, among others.

The institute's principal, Bernard Ongodia, hailed the graduands upon completing their studies. He said those who attained diplomas were trained for two years with support from the Government, while those who got certificates were trained for six months



with sponsorship from CNOOC Uganda.

Ma said the training was geared at empowering Ugandans, especially those

from the Albertine area, to benefit from the oil and gas industry. He noted that this year alone, CNOOC Uganda, in partnership with UPIK,

trained 240 welders, bringing the total number of those trained through CNOOC support to 500.

Rubondo said the training

IN NUMBERS

A total of 781 students graduated with diplomas and certificates in petroleum industry operations disciplines. Out of 781 graduands, 153 graduated with diplomas in upstream and downstream petroleum operations, while 628 got certificates in petroleum fields such as operations, safety, environment and welding.

Rubondo (left) handing over a certificate to one of the outstanding students during the UPIK graduation ceremony in Kiryandongo district on Monday

comes at a time when Uganda's oil and gas sector needs skilled technicians.

"UPIK is a centre of excellence for oil and gas training. The institute has demonstrated consistent capacity to provide demand-driven training. You heard the principal saying that 70% of the graduates are being employed in the sector," he said.

Rubondo added that the critical mass of skilled trainees has debunked the claim that Ugandans will not participate in the oil and gas sector.

He said \$10m (about sh35b) has been spent in training over 14,000 Ugandan technicians for the sector.