

Illegal sewage hookups cripple Kampala roads, trigger health fears

PHOTO BY LAWRENCE MULONDO

By Lawrence Mulondo

Kampala's ambitious road construction programme is facing a major setback as illegal sewage connections into road drainage systems threaten public health and undermine the quality of infrastructure works, officials from Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) have revealed.

The problem came to light on Wednesday during a monitoring and inspection exercise of ongoing road works across the city, led by KCCA executive director Sharifah Buzeki.

Officials warned that unauthorised sewage hookups into storm water trenches are interfering with construction activities and exposing surrounding communities to the risk of waterborne disease outbreaks.

According to KCCA, raw sewage has been found flowing directly into open road drainage channels, contaminating the work sites and nearby water sources.

Authorities have called on residents to report such incidents, warning that the practice poses a serious danger to both public health and the longevity of the roads under construction.

KCCA deputy executive



Kenbert Kaganzi (pointing), the contract manager at DOTT Services, showing Buzeki and other officials the ongoing construction works on Lower Kololo Terrace in Kampala Central, during the monitoring and inspection of construction works on 10 roads in Kampala city on Wednesday

director Moses Kigenyi said the problem is most prevalent in the Kisenyi area in Kampala Central division, where four roads, including Erisa Nkonyonyo Road, are currently under construction and are at the drainage installation stage.

"We need to support communities by working closely with National Water and Sewerage Corporation and the National Environment Management Authority to relocate sewage lines so that we avoid direct discharge into storm drains," Kigenyi said.

He warned that allowing sewage to flow into storm water channels exposes residents to preventable disease outbreaks, adding that KCCA is committed

to ensuring that the issue is addressed before construction progresses further.

During the inspection in Kisenyi, officials observed several illegal sewage connections feeding directly into drainage channels under construction.

In some cases, underground sewer lines were seen running close to the road works, releasing waste into open trenches.

SCOPE OF ROAD WORKS

The inspection covered 10 roads, with a total length of 14.65km, currently under construction by DOTT Services at a cost of sh92b, funded by the Government.

The roads are located in Kampala Central and Rubaga divisions. They include Lower Kololo Terrace, Erisa Nkonyonyo Road, Church Road, Church Lane, Naava Road, Nkula Road, Mapeera Road, Miracle Centre Access Road, Kabaka's Lake Road and Nachwa Road.

UPGRADE OF 80 CITY ROADS

Construction of the roads began last year and is expected to be completed within this year. The projects form part of phase I of KCCA's three-year plan to upgrade 80 city roads at an estimated cost of sh500b.

Kigenyi said earlier challenges related to land acquisition, particularly on Church Land

RESIDENTS SPEAK OUT

Some residents welcomed the road works, but raised concerns about design and implementation.

Ali Ogutu, a resident of Kasato zone in Kisenyi, said the newly constructed road appeared narrower than the old one, which could affect transportation of goods.

"This road is used by heavy trucks supplying factories. The contractors should take advantage of the road reserve and construct a wider road," he said.

Salongo Charles Zziwa, another resident of Kasato zone, urged KCCA to construct smaller tributary drainage channels, saying their absence contributes to flooding, which damages homes and roads.

in Kisenyi, had been resolved, allowing construction to resume smoothly.

"We still have some issues with forward maintenance by the contractor, but we have put sufficient pressure on them and we believe this will be resolved," he said.

Kigenyi added that by the end of the year, Kampala is expected to gain an additional 14km of fully tarmacked roads with asphalt bases, significantly improving mobility within the city.

While inspecting Lower Kololo Terrace Road, Buzeki stressed that all roads must include clearly demarcated cycling lanes and pedestrian walkways upon completion.

She also directed DOTT Services to install

underground ducts large enough to accommodate all utility cables currently hanging overhead along roads under construction.

HEALTH RISKS

The KCCA boss insisted that Kampala's modern city standards require all cables to be placed underground to improve safety and the city's beauty. In Kisenyi, engineers expressed concern over the health risks posed to construction workers.

"Our teams are constructing drainage channels, but residents are releasing sewage into the same channels. When approached, some deny responsibility. This puts the health of our workers at serious risk," said one engineer.