

The government plans to establish environment and natural resource committees to improve resource management.

BY ANTHONY WESAKA

The government is set to introduce new regulations aimed at strengthening environmental governance and natural resource management at district and urban levels across the country.

The proposed regulations, being developed by the National Environment Management Authority (Nema), seek to operationalise Sections 27, 28 and 29 of the National Environment Act, 2019, which provide for the establishment, functions and financing of District Environment and Natural Resources Committees.

Officials say the regulations will offer a clear framework for implementing environmental laws and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources.

Speaking during a strategic meeting in Kampala last week to discuss the roadmap for completing the regulations, Mr James Muhindo, a senior legal officer at Nema, said the new legal framework would guide the establishment and operation of environment and natural resource committees at district and urban council levels.

"The regulations provide for the establishment of urban and district environment and natural resource committees

Govt drafts laws to tighten environmental protection



People look on as a tractor demolishes their houses in Lubigi wetland last week. PHOTO/NOELINE NABUKENYA

and also define their functions as well as procedures for their operation," he said.

According to the draft regulations, the committees will comprise between 12 and 14 members, including Members of Parliament, district chairpersons, environmental officers, resident district commissioners and other key stake-

holders, supported by a secretariat.

"The committees will ensure that environmental concerns are mainstreamed into all district and urban council plans and projects while promoting sustainable management of natural resources," Mr Muhindo said.

He revealed that the final draft regulations are expected to be completed by

July before being submitted to the Attorney General and the Ministry of Finance for clearance. The regulations are expected to be approved by the Minister of Water by December.

The draft regulations have been developed jointly by Nema, the environmental advocacy organisation Environmental Management for Livelihood Improve-

WHAT LAW SAYS

Under Section 27 of the National Environment Act, every district is required to establish a District Environment and Natural Resources Committee. The law further mandates the minister of Water and Environment to prescribe procedures governing the operation of the committees. Officials say the new regulations will strengthen environmental governance at local levels.

ment Bwaise Facility, and the World Wide Fund for Nature.

Stakeholders at the meeting emphasised the need to involve local communities in environmental conservation efforts if the country is to achieve sustainable management of natural resources.

Mr Robert Bakiika, a technical adviser at the Ministry of Water and Environment, said civic education should be prioritised to help communities understand environmental laws and their responsibilities. "I really believe that if we continue to make our communities understand environmental and climate change terminologies, we will achieve self-compliance, which offers more sustainable solutions," Mr Bakiika said.