

MUSEVENI COMMISSIONS WAGAGAI GOLD PROJECT

By Vision Reporter

PPU PHOTO

President Yoweri Museveni has today commissioned the Wagagai gold mining project in Busia district, describing it as a transformative milestone that will end the wasteful export of raw minerals and usher Uganda into a new era of value addition.

During the commissioning, Museveni congratulated Wagagai Mining Uganda Company Limited on establishing the state-of-the-art refinery, capable of producing 99.99% pure gold.

He said for decades, Uganda only exported blister copper, which was not pure enough for direct use and had to be refined abroad before being re-imported.

Museveni said this cycle was a loss to the country and praised Wagagai for being able to purify gold to the 99.99% level.

"I want to thank Wagagai for listening to my message from the beginning and fully processing the gold. Uganda will get more money," he said.

The President cautioned that exporting raw materials amounts to cheating Uganda and urged artisanal miners to work with Wagagai so that their gold can be refined locally instead of being sold unprocessed. He added that refined gold can now be used in jewellery, electronics and other industries.

He thanked Wagagai for being a "residential teacher" by helping others learn from its example. "When you export unprocessed minerals, you are cheating Uganda."

The President thanked the government of China for its continued support to Uganda, citing not only investors such as Wagagai but also infrastructure projects financed through soft loans.

He called on Ugandans to recognise that there is a time for everything,

President Museveni looking at a sample of refined gold produced by Wagagai Gold Mining project in Busia during commissioning of the facility on Saturday. He was flanked by the Chinese envoy to Uganda, Zhang Lizhong (right), Nankabirwa (second-right) and Wagagai MD Tan Jiuchang.

(Scan image using the Vision Digital Experience to watch video)



WAGAGAI MANAGER HAILS GOVERNMENT

Wagagai Mining Uganda's general manager, Tan Jiuchang, said the \$150m (sh533b) investment in Phase I of the project represents the beginning of a larger \$250m (sh888.7b) plan to build Uganda's largest and most technologically advanced gold mine.

Jiuchang expressed gratitude

towards government entities and the Chinese embassy for their support, saying Wagagai's progress in licensing and refining has set a benchmark for Uganda's development. He said the completion of this phase has created over 2000 jobs and aligns with the President's vision of transforming Uganda's economy.

He added that Busia, long known as the cradle of artisanal miners, now has a refinery that will help small-scale miners improve their livelihoods.

Jiuchang urged artisanal miners to embrace registration and collaboration with the refinery, explaining that the project will open opportunities for income and training.

and commended Uganda for fostering a conducive investment environment that has allowed Chinese companies to thrive. He said the project is not only a symbol of the China-Uganda friendship, but also a driver of industrial progress.

Energy and mineral development minister Ruth Nankabirwa said the Wagagai gold mining project reflects the Government's objective of promoting local value addition and job creation.

Located in Alupe, Busia district, Wagagai gold mine covers 9.224sq. km with proven reserves of 30 million tonnes of gold ore at an average grade of 0.8-1 gramme per tonne, supporting 20 years of continuous production. Once at full capacity, the mine will process 5,000 tonnes of ore a day.

and now is the time to utilise natural resources responsibly, stressing that money from non-renewable minerals and oil should be invested in permanent assets such as durable power stations and the railway.

"This mineral money must give us permanent and the most durable assets. In order to wake up in the minerals sector, we must have full value addition for all minerals such as gold, lithium, tin, among others. Why?

Because we get more money, it creates more jobs, and it consumes more electricity," Museveni said.

The Ambassador of China to Uganda, Zhang Lizhong, thanked the President for officiating at the launch