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## Uganda: Amuru Sugar Project Will Bring Development to North

BY MAYUR MADHVANI, 9 FEBRUARY 2012

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### OPINION

The sugar project in Amuru District has been conceived primarily on the basis that any sugar producer requires land for cultivating sugarcane both by estate and outgrower farmers.

After examining various areas in Uganda, it was found that the land located in Amuru District, south of Zoka Forest, had no inhabitants and was at one time many years ago, deemed as a national park, but was de-gazetted over 40 years ago. This land currently is totally free of inhabitants and in an extremely isolated area.

If this area is developed into a sugar estate, this would create employment for over 7,000 to 8,000 individuals and would additionally give a livelihood to approximately 7,000 outgrower farmers and their families. The model would be similar to Kakira Sugar Limited where we have the same number of employees and the number of farmers is around 8,000. Kakira Sugar Limited currently supports the livelihood of approx. 100,000 individuals in the area.

This Amuru sugar project is a joint venture between the Madhvani Group and the Government of Uganda who would hold shares at the initial stage on behalf of the public and the people of Amuru.

This project would benefit all the stakeholders and there will, of course, be consultations and cooperation between all parties to see how this project can move forward in the fastest possible way, benefiting all concerned. There has never been and will never be an attitude of "bulldozing". The insinuation as reported recently in some papers is incorrect and does not reflect the spirit of this important project for northern Uganda and the country at large.

We hope to seriously work closely with all stakeholders and develop the project that will be a landmark in northern Uganda for all citizens who will positively benefit from this project, which will emulate the Kakira Sugar Limited model.

The outgrower farmers at Kakira are being paid approximately Shs8 billion per month by way of cane payments. This in turn can be seen in how the area surrounding Kakira for miles and miles is progressing. The cane payment made at Amuru will translate into enormous development within 50 to 100 km of the sugar factory and will improve the standard of living and livelihood of thousands of individuals in Amuru District, as is

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the case in Busoga where Kakira Sugar Limited is located. A similar development is planned for Amuru District.

Kakira Sugar Limited has embarked on a programme for renewable energy. Kakira Sugar Limited already generates 22 MW of power and sells on a 24-hour basis 12MW - 13 MW to the main grid. Soon, by the end of this year, Kakira Sugar will generate 50 MW of power of which 30 MW will be supplied to the national grid on a regular basis and 20 MW will be used for the company's sugar factory and estate.

The same model will be emulated at Amuru Sugar Project where initially over 10 MW of power will be generated from bagasse (sugarcane fibre) and electric power will be supplied to the main grid in Amuru District for the benefit of the general public, through UETCL.

The Madhvani Group has held in depth consultations with Amuru District Land Board on this project and it is only after considerable consultations and assurances that there are no inhabitants on the land concerned, that the initial 10,000 ha of land has been set aside in this isolated area where this sugar project will be located.

We again repeat, reports in the press that thousands of residents can lose their land are false and really do not reflect the factual position on the ground. The proposed land for the Amuru Sugar project is currently totally free of inhabitants and is extremely isolated with no infrastructure such as electricity, water or proper roads.

*Mr Madhvani is the joint Managing Director, Kakira Sugar Limited*

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