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Transport ministry signs ferry license deal

Ferry service bound to boost trade on island

Nominal fee to be paid by users

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In about 18 months from now, Kalangala island dwellers will have access to the mainland for increased trade and other economic interactions, following an agreement signed last week by the Ministry Transport. The deal enables Kalangala Infrastructure Services (KIS) to construct

two state-of-the-art ferries. The ferries will consequently be able to provide the much-needed services between Bukakata and Luku landing sites. "In about 14-18 months Kalangala will be trading with the mainland more often, than has been the practice," the Managing Director of KIS, John Opiro said after signing the agreement. Under the agreement, KIS will enjoy a monopoly for a period of eight years, before another company is allowed to construct another ferry at the Island. Speaking after signing of the agreement, Transport minis-

ter, John Nasasira referred to the development as historic, saying that the islanders will now take a break from the old ferry that seemed to provide more challenges than required services. "This is a historic development for the people of Kalangala because for the last 20 years Kalangala has been relying on the government run ferry which though providing a vital service makes unscheduled voyages, making it inconvenient for the local inhabitants, tourists and business people to plan their crossing times," Mr Nasasira said. According to Mr Opiro, reli-

able scheduled ferry service will not only connect the islanders to the mainland but boost the entire economy of

'In about 14-18 months Kalangala will be trading with mainland more often'

John Opiro
MD, Kalangala Infrastructure Services

the country as the islanders will now actively and regularly be linked with the more prosperous mainland. Under the terms of this li-

cence, government is obliged to inspect the ferry and issue the appropriate annual operator license and ensure that no other operator provides similar services on the same route during the first 8 years. Government will also need to regulate the operator to ensure that he does not overcharge the public and that the services are of a good quality. KIS is however obliged to maintain the ferries in good condition, ensure regular voyages in accordance with the timetable, extend these services to other landing sites and islands where they will be required. The travelers on these ferries will have to pay

a nominal fee which the government may subsidise from time to time. Important to note is that this agreement (transport) will be the final component of an integrated infrastructure development project being developed by KIS on Kalangala. Other components under the implementation agreement signed with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED), to improve the road to Mulabana, generate & supply electricity and develop the islands water supply have already been concluded.