



Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) is commemorating five years since it was formed. It has won one accolade after another, including a remark from President Yoweri Museveni that Uganda would be better off if there were 100 more public officials like Jennifer Musisi, the KCCA executive director. **JOHN MASABA delves into events leading to the formation of KCCA.**

In 2009, just before the country was to go to the polls in the 2011 general election, it emerged that the Government was to take over the management of Kampala city.

Coming just months before the polls, the news raised a lot of unease and suspicion from some sections of the public. Nasser Ntege Sebaggala, who was the mayor of Kampala at the time, said the Government was planning to eliminate the Opposition that had consistently been elected into the city leadership.

He said the Government was tired of the continued election of the Opposition leaders in the city and was now moving to make elective posts ceremonial through a law — the KCCA

Act.

Whether or not that was the spirit behind the law, it did not stop Parliament from debating and passing the KCCA bill 2010 into law. Local Government minister Adolf Mwesige tabled the Kampala Capital City Authority Bill in Parliament on June 24, 2009.

The bill, which was assented to on December 28, 2010 effectively changed the way the city was to be managed. Before the law, the city had the mayor as the supreme head. The mayor, helped by the elected councillors from the several divisions of the city, managed the administration and finances in the city.

Former minister in charge of Kampala Beatrice Wabudeya said under the defunct KCC, Kampala was being managed like any other municipality across the country. She told *New Vision*, however, that the Government realised that managing a rapidly growing city was being curtailed under the old law, where Kampala was managed under the local government ministry.

While the city's population was growing, resources available from local government ministry for KCC to manage the growing demands of the city remained very low, Wabudeya said.

Many of the city's problems were evident in the garbage strewn streets. This became a problem for Kampala

mayors, first with Ssebana Kizito and Sebaggala in his last five-year term that ended in 2010 as the public and central government accused them of corruption and incompetence.

The bad roads were also a problem that came to haunt the mayors. In defence, Sebaggala blamed the Government for inadequate release of funds.

Explaining the state of affairs however, Wabudeya, who was the first minister for Kampala when KCCA was formed, defended the Government. She said under the defunct KCC, it was difficult to substantially increase funding because of the law. The establishment could also not be trusted with huge sums of government funds.

**“WHEN KCCA WAS FORMED, FUNDS STARTED FLOWING IN FROM GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL DONORS”**

To break free of such limitations, Wabudeya said the Government decided to turn KCC into an autonomous authority, with more powers.

#### Checks and balances

Indeed according to the Act, administration of Kampala is in the hands of central government, which is represented by the executive director as the accounting officer for all funds sent to the city.

The law also provides for the devolution by the authority functions and services to provide for the Metropolitan physical planning authority and the adjacent districts, unlike under KCC whose powers were limited.

The act clearly lays out the powers and functions of the political wing, headed by the Lord Mayor, the technical wing headed by the executive director and the minister.

For example, the law provides for powers of the minister to veto the decision of the authority in certain circumstances among other provisions in a bid to ensure service delivery is not compromised.

Wabudeya told *New Vision* that checks and balances on the powers of each of the stakeholders in city management as provided by the KCCA Act make it less risky for the huge sums of money

government commits to run city.

While he opposed the takeover of Kampala, Sebaggala told *New Vision* that in hindsight, he was wrong, adding that the Government's decision to take over was timely.

He admitted that during his reign, service delivery was bad but said there is little he could have done because of the limited funding they were receiving at the time.

“When they (central government) removed Kampala from the status of being an entity under local government, funding started flowing in — not only from the Government, but also from foreign institutions, like the World Bank,” he said.

Wabudeya said although the take over of Kampala attracted a lot of debate, the many positive changes resulting from its creation have vindicated the Government.

She said except politics where the political wing under the Lord Mayor, Erias Lukwago, and the technical wing led by executive director Musisi still have issues, the most pressing problems facing the city have been addressed.

“I believe many people, including those who opposed its (KCCA), creation are happy,” Wabudeya said.

She enumerated improved infrastructure, health and streamlined business as some of the areas where KCCA has made huge strides.



The newly-built Wandegeya Market. KCCA has upgraded several markets in the city



A section of Jinja Road. KCCA has tarmacked many roads in Kampala

A KCCA worker doing construction work. Many analysts say the city is now cleaner under KCCA