

By Martin Kitubi

**F**asi fasi is a word you often hear in downtown Kampala, as casual labourers jostle for a right of way for their bicycles or wheelbarrows. Yet, there have been no substantive policies to regulate their movement.

Several experts have recommended for a law and or policy that would guide and control such kind of transport in the country. Their prayers have finally been answered, with the formulation of the non-motorised transport policy (NMT).

### Policy package

According to the works and transport ministry, the policy is designated to raise the profile of NMT elements within planning, designing and construction of road infrastructure in the country.

The policy also known as active transport and human-powered transportation includes walking and cycling.

It also includes other variants such as small-wheeled transport such as push scooters, skates, cycle rickshaws and wheelchair travel.

These modes of transport both recreation and transportation and are especially important for short trips of about seven kilometers, which take up the largest share of the urban trips.

According to the German Development Agency (GIZ), the NMT can be stimulated by a policy package consisting of investments in facilities, awareness campaigns, smart urban planning.

It can also be enhanced through improved public transport and disincentives for the use of motorised private vehicles.

According the works and transport ministry, the policy is under pilot by Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) and later it will be rolled out nationwide. The ministry has also held regional consultations, decisions in both East Africa and Northern Africa to check how effectively the policy will work in the country. As part of the policy, KCCA has embarked on establishment and improvement of sidewalks, crosswalks, paths, bicycle lanes and networks. Currently, a number of KCCA roads under construction, those which were recently completed have provisions for sidewalks and bicycle lanes.

However, under the new arrangement it will require KCCA to develop a public bicycle system for instance automated bicycle rental system designed to provide efficient mobility for short urban trips.

This is also looked at another way to control traffic, congestion in urban centres.

Under the policy, the country will develop pedestrian

# Govt polishes walking, cycling regulations



The non-motorised transport policy will streamline walking and cycling in towns

oriented land use and building design, increase road and path connectivity, with special non motorised shortcuts.

For the country to improve the NMT, the country will be required to ensure traffic calming, streetscape improvements, traffic speed reductions, vehicle restrictions and space reallocation.

In addition, the country will be required to ensure safety education and sensitisation, law enforcement Safety education, law enforcement and encouragement programmes.

The other in fracture needed under the new policy include, bicycle parking, bicycle integration in transit systems for instance racks in metro or on bus.

It will also require the country to address security concerns of pedestrians and cyclists, review congestion pricing, vehicle parking policies and fuel taxes.

### The objective

The primary objective of the policy is to increase the recognition of NMT as one of the key transport modes and essential component of public transport.

Increase and recognise walking and cycling in transport, planning, design, and infrastructure provision, provide a safe infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.

It's also intended to mainstream resources for NMT in agencies financial planning, develop and adopt universal design standards.

**THE POLICY WILL ALSO ENHANCE RECOGNITION OF EQUAL RIGHTS TO ALL ROAD USERS.**

The policy will also lead to improvement in regulation and enforcement to enhance safety for pedestrians and cyclists, provide guidelines for the inclusion of NMT needs within transport projects.

The other objectives of the policy include providing an over-arching advocacy document for the Government both to consider and approve.

In addition, the policy will improve the physical infrastructure of roads, cities and urban centers roads and road maintenance.

It will also enhance recognition of equal rights to all road users, promotion of gender equality and equity in road transport

Above all it will enhance recognition of the importance of walking and bicycling as non-polluting, sustainable, environmentally friendly and healthy transport options.

It will also promote Non-motorised transport technologies for instance bicycle designs suitable for users, readily available and

affordable.

### NMT pilot in Kampala

According to KCCA, the policy will be piloted in a number of roads with support from Goudappel Coffeng, UNEP, UN-HABITAT, Goudappel Africa and IGANGA foundation of the Netherlands carried.

Recently named a number of roads that will be under Non-Motorised Transport these include Namirembe road-Luwum Street Corridor and part of some neighbouring streets.

All together these will cover a total length of about 3.5km.

The deal also involves converting one of the existing vehicular lanes into 2 bicycle lanes on the section of Namirembe Road from Bakuli to Kisenyi road and on Luwum Street from Burton Street to Entebbe road.

It includes establishment of a new pedestrian zone with pedestrian areas, bicycle facilities, greenery in the area around the old taxi park.

According to the plan which was designed in 2016, the NMT route will improve and stimulate travel by sustainable modes. In addition, the proposed changes by KCCA to the function of taxi parks will galvanise the usage of the route. It will lead to integration with Bus Rapid Transit in the near future will ease accessibility to the CBD and could potentially lead to the growth of linked NMT facilities.

### Threats to NMT

At the 2016 Conclave on Clear Air Action Conference, Moses Mulengani the then assistant commissioner of policy analysis at the ministry said policy is likely to face some challenges.

They include inadequate funding for public consultation and marketing, land acquisition, provision of land for shared spaces, footways and particularly cycle lanes beyond the pilot route.

According to report by Mulengani, some roads required expansion and there were settlements which KCCA needed to compensate.

Other challenges cited by Mulengani include provision of safe bicycle parking, clearing existing footways of clutter, cycle lanes to replace street parking spaces.

Others threats to the policy include cycle lanes and footways to claim space on access roads (4-5metres wide on average), provision of continuous pedestrian, cycle and shared routes, people cross from wherever it is convenient.

He also concluded that NMT Road users are very prone to accidents.

### Background

In 2011, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Ministry of Works and Transport realised the need to develop a policy for NMT.

The intention of the policy was to raise the profile of NMT within planning and programming for transport in general. This was developed after establishing that walking, cycling space was limited and or even nonexistence along most roads.

The government and the partners also established that there was lack of quality public spaces to and around the city transport terminals and unsafe environment.

Others reasons were unsafe environment, streets with no clean air (polluted), need for social inclusion, narrow streets shared with road side parking.

Other factors included road footways often encroached on by vendors, lack of bicycle lanes, inadequate provision of guardrails, poor road signage is generally.

### Other laws, policies

There a number of key policies, bills and regulations which were proposed by the works and transport ministry to improve the sector.

Others include National

Transport and Logistic Policy and Strategy (draft) intended to improve the efficiency and safety of transport in order to facilitate economic and social development.

This will be achieved through creation and maintenance of an integrated and sustainable transport system in Uganda.

The draft was submitted and discussed by the contract management committee on June 8, 2018. The ministry also held stakeholders consultative meeting with three regional consultations still pending.

The ministry is also proposed policy guidelines on gender mainstreaming in the transport sector with main purpose to ensure that the travel and transport infrastructure and services provided by the sector to respond to gender needs.

In addition, the ministry also proposed policy guidelines on HIV/Aids mainstreaming in the sector to ensure that the transport infrastructure, services provided by the sector to respond to the scourge.

Both policies were approved in 2008 and are currently under review.

The other key policy guidelines include those on people with disabilities with emphasis on those in the transport sector.

The policy intends to ensure that the travel and transport infrastructure and services provided by the sector to respond to disabilities needs. This was also approved in 2008.

Under laws they include Building Control Act 2013 aimed at consolidating, harmonizing and amending the law relating to erection of buildings, and also provide building standards.

The Engineering Registration (amendment) Act 1969 aimed at strengthening regulatory framework for practice of engineering in the country under appropriate code of conduct.

According the works ministry, the Bill was sent to the solicitor General's office.

Others include the Traffic and Safety (amendment) Bill 2018 with a number of objectives among others to strengthen the management of road transport services and road safety in Uganda.

On May 30, 2018, the First Parliament Counsel cleared the Bill with issuance of a certificate of compliance and a cabinet memo forwarding the amendment Bill to cabinet has been finalised.