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2011 UGANDA DECIDES

Hoima mayoral race hots up with live debate

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Hoima

Three candidates vying for the Hoima Municipality mayoral seat on Friday engaged in a public debate with the candidates fighting to convince voters that they are the best to lead the newly-created municipality.

FDC's national trade and industry secretary, Mr Francis Atugonza, is battling to retain his seat after Hoima Town Council, which he chaired, was elevated to a municipal status in July, 2010.

Mr Atugonza faces challenges from Mr David Kaboyo (Ind), a former Hoima TC chairman, who lost in the NRM primaries and Ms Mary Mugasa (NRM), hitherto the council's education secretary.

The mayoral debate was organised by Panos Institute in Eastern Africa with funding from Danida and attracted many people in Hoima town on Friday.

Issues of concern

"This is one of the several rural radio debates we have had under the Deepening Democracy Programme and in this political season, we have focused on issues that affect voters and an analysis of candidates' manifestos," Mr Hamuza Kitakule, the regional editor of the Rural Radio debate project under Panos Eastern Africa, said.



HOT RACE: (L-R) Mr Kaboyo, Mr Atugonza and Ms Mugasa during the live debate on Friday. PHOTO BY FRANCIS MUGERWA

The topic of the debate was, "In your view as a mayoral candidate of Hoima Municipality, what are the key issues affecting the development of this area and what strategies to be put in place to achieve development?"

Mr Kaboyo said his deep links with ruling government, will make it easier for him to lobby for services and projects.

"When you compare Masindi Municipality and Hoima Municipality, we are behind because the leadership existing here does not have good networks in the NRM government," he said.

Mr Atugonza said he has

good financial management of taxpayers' money, which has resulted in improved service delivery in Hoima town.

He said the health centres and schools will be improved to offer better services to the people of Hoima.

Signing MoU with NRM

Asked by voters whether he is willing to sign a memorandum of understanding with NRM if he won the mayor ship, Atugonza promised to do so.

"I will sign it. I have no problem with that, but the question is who signs it? Is it the councillors or the mayor? We shall consult the law on that when it

comes up," he said.

Ms Mugasa promised clean leadership in Hoima and said there has been a leadership crisis in Hoima town.

"I will sensitise people on their roles and responsibilities and government programmes using *bimeeza* (local debates)," she said.

She promised to upgrade all roads in Hoima as detailed in the NRM manifesto, saying the ruling party "is going to build enough hospitals and equip them with enough drugs".

She said she has already lobbied for aid to traders whose houses were gutted by fire in Kiryateete suburb.