

UGANDA PRISONS SERVICE EXPLORES CLEAN ENERGY PARTNERSHIP WITH TANZANIA'S STAMICO



In a bid to revolutionize clean cooking in its facilities amid rising inmate populations, the Uganda Prisons Service (UPS) is exploring a groundbreaking partnership with Tanzania's State Mining Corporation (STAMICO) to produce and distribute Rafiki Briquettes, an affordable and environmentally sustainable fuel alternative.

The collaboration was spotlighted during a high-level meeting hosted by Uganda's Commissioner General of Prisons, Can. Dr. Johnson Byabashaija, who welcomed STAMICO's Managing Director, Dr. Venance Mwasse. Dr. Byabashaija highlighted the longstanding post-independence ties between Uganda and Tanzania, describing them as a foundation for fruitful future endeavors. "Uganda has enjoyed a very good working relationship with Tanzania since post-independence times," he said, expressing keen interest in joint initiatives that align with environmental conservation goals.

UPS, which has been experimenting with small-scale briquette production in its own facilities, views this venture as a timely opportunity to address escalating energy needs. Dr. Byabashaija emphasized the initiative's potential to safeguard the environment, noting that briquettes could significantly reduce reliance on firewood and charcoal, curbing deforestation and indoor air pollution.

Dr. Mwasse, whose corporation manufactures the innovative Rafiki Briquettes, shared Tanzania's success story to underscore the partnership's promise. He

revealed that 129 prisons across Tanzania have adopted these clean cooking briquettes as a reliable energy-saving solution. "Briquettes are cheaper, more affordable, provide heat for more than four hours, and are both environmentally friendly and user-friendly,"

Dr. Mwase explained, positioning them as the ideal clean energy option for correctional services. Made from refined coal waste sourced from STAMICO's operations, Rafiki Briquettes burn cleaner and longer than traditional fuels, emitting fewer harmful gases and reducing health risks for cooks and inmates alike. This aligns seamlessly with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and Goal 13 (Climate Action), promoting sustainable resource use in resource-strapped public institutions.

The meeting, attended by UPS top management and senior STAMICO executives, culminated in a proposal for a joint venture to tap into Uganda's burgeoning market. Dr. Mwase urged Ugandan citizens to embrace briquettes, citing their proven track record in Tanzanian institutions—from prisons to households—as a model for broader adoption.



A Brief Background on STAMICO:

Tanzania's Pillar of Mineral Innovation Established in 1972 under Tanzania's Public Corporations Act as a wholly state-owned entity, the State Mining Corporation (STAMICO) serves as the nation's gateway to a mineral-driven economy. Headquartered in Dar es Salaam with operations spanning the country—including a state-of-the-art gold refinery in Mwanza—STAMICO's mandate encompasses mineral exploration, mining, processing, refining, and

marketing. It also supports artisanal and small-scale miners through technical services, training, and equipment rental at demonstration centers like those in Mbeya and Geita regions.

Beyond traditional mining, STAMICO has diversified into value-added products, notably Rafiki Briquettes, launched as an eco-friendly cooking fuel derived from coal byproducts at its Kiwira-Songwe coal fields. Recent government backing, including subsidies exceeding 8.6 billion Tanzanian shillings, has scaled production to 20 tonnes daily across facilities in Dodoma and Tabora. In July 2025, STAMICO secured a major rare earth mining license for the Wigu Hill project in Morogoro, reinforcing its role in strategic resource development. Vice-President Dr. Philip Mpango has publicly endorsed Rafiki Briquettes as part of Tanzania's 2034 target for 80% clean cooking adoption, blending economic growth with environmental stewardship.

STAMICO's expertise in low-cost, scalable briquette production—proven in 129 Tanzanian facilities—offers UPS a blueprint for energy efficiency, potentially slashing costs by up to 50% compared to charcoal while burning for over four hours per session.

Environmentally, the partnership combats deforestation, a pressing issue in East Africa, and improves health outcomes by minimizing smoke exposure in communal kitchens. Economically, the joint venture could create jobs, boost local processing of waste materials, and generate revenue through market expansion—directly supporting SDG-aligned reforms. With Tanzania's model already transforming institutions, UPS stands to gain a resilient, green energy backbone that enhances rehabilitation, cuts operational burdens, and fosters regional solidarity.



