

President Museveni's 2018 Independence day speech

Tuesday October 9, 2018

Your Excellencies the Invited Heads of State and Government;
H.E the Vice President;
The Rt. Honourable Speaker of Parliament;
The Hon. Chief Justice;
The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister;
Honourable Ministers;
Honourable Members of Parliament;
Your Excellencies the Ambassadors and High Commissioners;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with great pleasure and honour that I welcome Your Excellencies and all the distinguished guests to this occasion as we mark 56 years of Uganda's independence. I also congratulate Ugandans on the 56th Independence Anniversary of our country.

The colonization and domination of Africa by the imperialist forces remains one of the most significant historical disruptions of Africa's progress. Apart from undermining the right of the Africans to self-determination, the period of colonial rule was characterized by deliberate efforts to destroy indigenous skills, knowledge and technology. Yet all civilization, the world over, has always been built around knowledge, science and technology.

At the time of colonization, Africa had made significant strides in the development of knowledge, science and technology. For example, we already had Geologist cable of discerning rocks with iron or copper. We also had skilled craftsmen who were able to make useful implements from these metals. However, by the time Africa freed herself from the yoke of colonialism, crucial indigenous knowledge had been lost. Today's occasion should, therefore, not be merely a celebration for regaining our freedom but also an opportunity for us to reflect on the internal contradictions that led to the final domination of Africa by imperial forces for several decades.

The Theme of this year's Independence Day celebrations which is; "Standing tall as we celebrate achievements of our 56 years of independence" is relevant not only to our efforts towards consolidating and defending our national independence but also the realization of our vision of transforming the Ugandan society from a peasant to a modern and prosperous country.

When the NRM came to power in 1986, the economy had collapsed due to past tyrannical rulers who did not care about upholding the sovereignty of our motherland. By financial year 2005/2006, our tax revenue collections per annum, were standing at Shs. 2.23 trillion. At that time, an understanding had been reached between some branches of the government and the development partners to the effect that the government of Uganda should concentrate on handling the recurrent budget (salaries, etc.), while the development partners would handle the development budget (roads, electricity, the railways, etc).

That is when I sat down with my NRM colleagues in the Cabinet and the Caucus, in a retreat in Statistics House, to discuss this very serious problem. I proposed to the 2 fora the step of taking on the development budget of the country and also focusing on the roads and electricity. The budget for the

roads was raised from Shs 398 billion to Shs. 3,442 billion. It now stands at Shs. 4,786 billion per annum. The budget for electricity was raised from Shs. 178 billion to Shs. 2,858 billion. It now stands at Shs 2.77 trillion per annum.

These investments in the roads and electricity, along with the earlier decision (2001) of strengthening the Army, are beginning to result in the resumption of our usual high growth rates. This year, for instance, the economy will grow by 5.8% per annum. This will rise to over 7% per annum by the financial year 2019/2020. Indeed, a Centre at Harvard, in the USA, recently predicted that Uganda will be one of the fastest growing economies in the world by 2026 or thereabout.

When we say that the economy is growing reasonably well, we mean that the four sectors are growing well. Indeed, industry grew at 6.2% per annum, services at 7.3%, ICT at 7.9% and agriculture at 3.2%. It is only agriculture that is still growing slowly.

Infrastructure still remains a priority of the NRM government and we are progressing well. For example, the budget for the roads was raised from Shs 398 billion in FY 2005/06 to Shs. 4.786 trillion in FY 2017/18. As a consequence, we now have tarmac roads to almost all the corners of Uganda.

Kampala –Masaka;
Mbarara–Kikagata;
Ishaka–Kagaamba;
Mbarara–Ishaka–Katunguru (on going);
Mpigi–Kanoni–Maddu–Ssembabule–Nyendo;
Jinja–Kamuli;
Iganga–Kaliro;
Musita–Namayingo–Busia;
Mukono–Katosi–Nyenga
Bwaise–Luwero–Kafu–Gulu;
Olwiyi– Koch – Goma –Gulu–Kitgum–Musiingo;
Moroto–Nakapiripirit;
Moroto–Kangole–Katakwi–Soroti;
Matugga–Semuto–Kapeeka;
Hoima – Kaiso–Tonya;
Tororo–Mbale–Soroti;
Mbale–Tirinyi–Nakalama;
Ibaanda–Kamwengye– Fort Portal;
Mubende–Kakumiro–Kagadi–Ndaiga;
Mukono– Kayunga –Kangulumira– Njeru.

All these roads with a total length of 6,027kms have been built or reconstructed solely depending on the Uganda Government Money. Then, there are other roads worked on using either grants from outside or soft loans. Of course, this is also our money because we pay back the loans, with interest, moreover. Each year we pay US\$264 million in order to return the money we borrowed in the past known as debt servicing. Using loans and grants (the latter are only 1% of the two), we have done or are planning to do the following roads:

Karuma–Pakwach–Arua–KobokoRoad;
Gulu–Atiak–Nimule;
Soroti–Dokolo– Lira;
Kasangati–Ziobwe;
Masaka–Mbarara–Kabale–Katuna;
Kabale–Kisoro –Bunagana–Cyanika;
Fort-Portal –Bundibugyo –Busunga;
Kigumba– Masindi – Hoima –Kagadi–Kyenjojo;
Nansana–Busunju–Kiboga– Hoima;
Nyakahita–Kazo–Ibaanda;

Mbale–Magale–Buumbo–Lwakhakha;
Kapchorwa–Bukwo–Suam;
Rwenkunyū–Apach–Lira –Acholibur; etc., etc.

We are getting ready to, first of all, repair and start using the old railway lines to Malaba from Kampala, to Pakwach from Tororo and to Kasese from Kampala. Even using the old line to Mombasa, is cheaper than using the road. With the Standard Gauge now in Nairobi, it costs US\$5 cents per metric tonne transported on the railway compared to US\$ 15 cents per metric tonne transported on the road. With the completed Standard Gauge Railway the rail transport will cost US\$ 8 cents per metric tonne compared to US\$ 21 cents per metric tonne on the road.

However, when we are dealing with the Railway, Electricity and ICT backbone, we must ensure the final price of the utility is competitive because those elements are dangerous cost-pushers. High electricity, transport and internet costs will not allow us to industrialize. Therefore, the cost of money and the structure of ownership should never be allowed to interfere with this strategic aim.

By the same strategy, we have increased electricity generation in the country (the amount of electricity and the transmission of the electricity). In 1986, the electricity being produced in Uganda was a mere 60 mgws. When Karuma, Isimba and Agago (all nearing completion) plus the numerous mini-hydros are completed, our total production will be 2,216 mgws. We are aiming at 17,000 mgws in the next 10 years. We shall develop all the sites on the Nile (such as Ayago, Uhuru, Kiba, Oryang, Murchison etc.). As of today, electricity has been extended to all the districts except for Kotido and Kaabong. The implementation plan for connecting these districts is underway.

Uganda has reached the take-off point. The factories that we have in Uganda are now standing at 4,725. Many factories are in the pipeline for opening. Namanve Industrial Park already has 31 completed, 197 being constructed and 74 in plan for construction. New Industrial Parks are springing up: Kapeeka, Mbale, Tororo, Mbalala, Kaweweeta, Luzira, Jinja etc., etc. The bigger foreign and local investors have already helped us to attract and locate in Uganda 4,026 factories and 8,200 service companies. These employ 600,000 and 1.2 million people, respectively.

During the FY 2017/18, the agriculture sector grew at 3.2%. Among the four leading sectors namely: Industry (which grew at 6.2% per annum), services (at 7.3%) and ICT (at 7.9%); Agriculture registered the least growth in Uganda. Government has laid out the necessary boosters for agriculture and I call upon all Ugandans especially farmers to embrace them. These will be the use of irrigation and fertilizers by more Ugandan farmers than has been the case in previous years.

In this financial year, the NRM Government will work on the following irrigation schemes: Doho phase II in Butalejja District; Mubuku phase II in Kasese District; Wadelai in Nebbi District; Tochi in Oyam District; Ngenge in Oyam District; Atari (Bulambuli and Kween); Katete in Kanungu District; Kawumu in Luwero District; Amagoro (Tororo District); Nabigaga (Kamuli District); Rwimi (Kasese and Kabarole District); Nyimur (Lamwo); Musamya (Kayunga); Kabuyanda (Isingiro); Matanda (Isingiro); and Igogero-Naigombwa (Iganga and Bugiri)

Increased usage of irrigation will put Ugandans in a better position to produce more food for both domestic and export needs. In order to roll-out a global irrigation system for the whole country, we are encouraging industrialists to set up assembly or manufacturing plants for solar-powered water pumps. With the building of our phosphate fertilizer plant in Tororo, which at 2.5kgs per hectare has one of the lowest rates of fertilizer use, will now stir itself up to use more fertilizers.

With the use of NPK, production will go up by 30%. With the use of irrigation, agricultural production will, further, go up by 20%. In other words, fertilizers and irrigation will add an extra 50% in production.

Achievements by Ugandan Scientists are also a major cause for us to stand tall and celebrate. Making use of the Government Innovation Fund, a number of these Scientists have patents for industrial formulae.

These include:

Dr. Murunga who is the brain behind an aggressive food-value addition effort, yielding a range of matooke by products including (a) tooke cookies (b) tooke powder for porridge (c) tooke flour for matooke meal and bread-making (d) matooke chips for snacks (e) matooke flakes for cereal and (f) matooke starch.

The late Dr. Isharaza who is remembered for developing the herbal molluscide from the plant *PhytolaccaDodecandra* (omuhoko) which is used to kill liver-fluke-harboring snails that flourish in cattle-watering wells and infect the animals. Omuhoko was developed into an appropriate formulation for use in cattle-watering dams that, has the added advantage of killing bilharzia-carrying snails. Experts have since confirmed Omuhoko to be a highly effective and environmental friendly molluscide.

The Center for Research in Transportation Technology, at Makerere University has developed the Kayoola Bus Solar concept. The Kayoola bus represents the next generation of public transport for cities within the region. The first of its kind on the African continent, the Kayoola Solar bus relies on lithium-ion batteries to power an electric motor that is coupled to a 2-speed pneumatic shift transmission. This technology serves to conserve the environment and public health.

The population of Uganda has grown at the rate of 3.2% since we came to power in 1986 because of two major factors which are; Security of life and property and better health care for the population, especially immunization. Immunization provided, monitored and administered by government Agencies and ministries has performed the miracle. The population of Uganda has been growing from 14 million in 1986 to 40 million today. This population is projected to be 102 million by 2050 which is 32 years from today. Life expectancy has gone from 43 years to 63 years. I call upon all District Medical Officers and all administrators at all levels and Parliamentary representatives to sensitize our people on hygiene, nutrition, malaria control, behavior change to avoid HIV/AIDS and the use of safe water. These measures would eliminate 80% of all the sicknesses.

The issue of Education and human resource, in my opinion, is already partially dealt with by the large number of our children that have been to school. That is how the literacy rate has gone up from 43% to 75%. We have built new classrooms, expanding the number of classrooms in permanent materials from 40,440 in 1986 to 160,381 in 2018. This is for Government Primary Schools. It does not include the figure of Private Schools which are 6,841 in number. The Government Schools are 12,048. The Government Primary Schools and the Private Primary Schools have a total enrolment of 8,655,924 million. The Government Secondary Schools are 1,086 and Private secondary schools are 2,862

I am proud to note that many of the youth that were not employed are yielding from the skills attained under the Skilling Uganda Program under the Ministry of Labour Gender and social development, The Women Empowerment Program for women groups and the Presidential initiative of Skilling the Girl Child. All these programs will soon be rolled out to all other Ugandan districts and I encourage the youth to participate in them.

4,525 girls have already been assisted to engage in: knitting, shoe-making, weaving, tailoring, bakery and embroidery, while 6 groups have been assisted in furniture-making and 10 in welding. As of now, these groups may be making items for import-substitution.

On the side of stability, I want to assure Ugandans of their security. The country is generally secure and peaceful, save for the persistent threats and incidents as well as violent criminality. Uganda had a lot of challenges even after the NRM took power. Eventually, by 2007, the UPDF totally defeated Kony, ADF, the other rebel groups and disarmed the Karimojong. Some of the terrorists of ADF as well as other criminal elements, seeing that they could not survive in the rural areas, infiltrated into the towns where we had not fully focused in terms of developing intelligence capacity. As a consequence, we had 7 Sheiks assassinated as well as Major Kiggundu, Joan Kagezi, AIGP Kaweesi Susan Magara, Abiliga and Kirumira of recent.

With this new challenge, we put in place mechanism to build the intelligence gathering capacity in the towns and on the highways. We are about to round-off the building of that capacity.

In order to invigorate our services sector, the Government will revive the Uganda Airlines. We have already booked slots for the manufacture of medium and long – distance planes. These will be able to handle the regional and inter-national routes.

With the Uganda Development Bank, we are addressing the question of the cost of money for factories and agriculture. With low electricity costs, low transport costs, low cost of money and with the 10 years tax holidays

The other issue that needs attention is the environment, especially the restoration of the wetlands, preserving the national forests, planting the new commercial forests, not cultivating along the River banks, not allowing cultivation within the 200 metres of the Lake shore and stopping soil erosion by using contours when cultivating in the mountain areas or on the hillsides.

On the issue of service delivery, there is no part of Uganda where there is no branch of the government. There is a government at the district (elected and appointed), there is a government at the sub-county and there is a government at the parish (the Muruka chief). There is no good reason, therefore, why the President and the Central government should be harassed for this whole hierarchy of the structures not doing their job.

The NRM has already negotiated and arranged with our brother and sister Africans to ensure the market integration of Africa (EAC, COMESA, Africa Continental Free Trade Area). These negotiations are aimed at providing capacity for the absorption of the greater supply of goods and services produced by the Ugandans wishing to take advantage of the huge collective market of Africa. We always work with the African countries, the Asian countries, the Latin American countries in the South-south Co-operation.

Finally, I wish to inform you that Uganda is unstoppable, given what we have already done with education, health, infrastructure, electricity, agriculture, innovation, security and other elements already mentioned.

I thank you all.