

Statement by

**H.E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
President of the Republic of Uganda**

**At the Launch of the UN Sustainable Development
Cooperation Framework for Uganda 2021 – 2025**

State House Entebbe

9th September, 2020

The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda;
Honourable Ministers;
The UN Resident Coordinator, H.E. Rosa Malango;
Uganda's Permanent Representative to the UN;
UN Heads of Agencies and staff;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I greet all those who are gathered here today, virtually and in person to witness the launch of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Uganda for

2021-2025.

I welcome the United Nations commitment and continued support in acceleration of the Sustainable Development Goals and Leave No One Behind in Uganda. I want to appreciate the great collaboration established over the years with the United Nations in Uganda, supporting efforts in governance systems, effective economic management, environmental sustainability and integrated and effective partnerships within the country and across our borders.

The UN has partnered with the Government and other institutions to address humanitarian needs in refugee hosting Districts as well as in response to mudslides, floods and locusts. The UN has been a partner in strengthening health responses, including the fight against Ebola, malaria, Marburg and now COVID-19.

I thank the United Nations and the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator in ensuring that the UN Development System Reform translates into concrete results to achieve 2030 Agenda and to enable stronger collaboration and integrated partnerships as articulated during my strategic dialogue with the UN Country Team in 2019 in Mbale. It jumpstarted the Cooperation Framework consultative process during the launch of the Spotlight initiative, among other initiatives that I was glad to lead.

I want to congratulate the United Nations and appreciate the spirit of partnerships and commitment to ‘The Future We Want, the UN We Need: Reaffirming our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism’. The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework comes at the opportune time to contribute to National Vision 2040 and the Third National Development Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25 (NDP III). I also hope we will further deepen the focus on youth employment, entrepreneurship and education programmes, including access to reproductive health information and services.

The process for Cooperation Framework Development came at a bad time when Covid-19 brought widespread economic, social and human impact. In Uganda, we took early actions in containing the outbreak and flattening the curve of the pandemic. This pandemic has become a test to resilience to many countries and societies. I express appreciation to the United Nations for its critical interventions offered and for the unwavering dedication and support to the Government and People of Uganda in these unprecedented times.

When I met with the UN Leadership in Mbale - July last year, we discussed the Eleven Bottlenecks Africa is facing and how we can work together to address them as follows:

1) Ideological disorientation

These include sectarianism of tribe and religion as well as gender chauvinism. In Africa, this sectarianism has resulted in conflicts and wars which have hindered development in the Continent since independence. Africa should not tolerate those who promote sectarianism and gender chauvinism; that is why Uganda's record on women emancipation is excellent and there is peace in the whole Country. In this context, I was happy to launch the UN-EU Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls.

2) Interference with the Private Sector

In the 1960s and 1970s, there was the mistake on our part of nationalizing private sector assets — banks, shops, farms, etc. This interference with the private sector by policy or by corruption has also been another bottleneck. The private sector is the most efficient engine of growth.

3) Under-developed Infrastructure (electricity, roads, the railway, the telephone, the ICT back bone etc.)

Effective modes of transport, including quality roads, railroads, ports and air transport, enable entrepreneurs to get their goods and services to market in a secure and timely manner and facilitate the movement of workers. Economies also depend on

electricity supplies that are free of interruptions and shortages so that businesses and factories can work unimpeded. Ultimately, a solid and extensive communications network allows for a rapid and free flow of information, which increases overall economic efficiency by helping to ensure that businesses can communicate and decisions are made by economic actors, taking into account all Public-Private available relevant information.

I welcome the advocacy done by the UN that has increased awareness of our conducive environment for business and look forward to continued investment in new infrastructure as we move towards a new economy in these COVID19 times.

4) Weak States, especially the Army, the Police, etc.

Threats to international peace and security often come from the world's weakest States. Such countries can fall prey to and spawn a host of transnational security threats, including terrorism, weapons proliferation, organized crime, infectious diseases, environmental degradation and civil conflicts that spill over borders. On account of defeating the ideological disorientation, it is important to be able to create a strong State, starting with a revolutionary Army. Uganda has and will continue to contribute to peace and stability in the region. Investing in border communities to improve their quality of life will help to ensure that they contribute to security and stability.

5) Fragmented Markets, Market Access and Expansion

The problem of a fragmented African market on account of colonialism – when you produce a product but nobody buys or you do not get enough buyers, you cannot prosper and expand your business. We need a market to absorb what the private and traditional sectors produce. We must have a market to absorb and stimulate production in the economy. In Uganda, we now have a population of 42 million people, but this is not enough market. We are working with our neighbors to integrate within the East African Community (EAC) and have a bigger market of about 180 million people. The Sustainable Development Goals provide us an opportunity to improve the quality of our productions and trade. The UN Cooperation Framework provides an opportunity to link our needs to new financing options for our development aspirations.

6) Lack of industrialization and low Value Addition

On the issue of ending slavery of exporting raw materials, we need to focus on value addition and industrialization by implementing plans to add value to milk, meat, coffee, cotton, tea, fish, vegetable oils, minerals, steel products, sugar, and beverages (such as beer, soda and fruits) etc. Value addition is another important aspect of transformation, ensuring that we produce for the domestic and export market, together with providing employment for our people. I welcome the contribution of the United Nations to the development of investment profiles for key economic sector in the Rwenzori region to improve the access to data for potential investors and

link them to small scale farmers at the Parish level.

7) Under-development of Human Resources (lack of education and poor health)

One of the major handicaps to Africa's social and economic transformation is associated with the inadequacy of its human capital. There is, therefore, an urgent need for concerted and strategic investment in the continent's human resource to turn it into the much-needed human capital to drive forward the planned growth and transformation. The human resource must be healthy, educated and properly skilled. An educated, skilled and healthy workforce is important for the socio-economic development of a country. In this regard, I congratulate the Ugandan health workers who have helped us to manage the spread of COVID-19. We must now adapt new technologies and behaviors in order to reduce the spread further and remain healthy.

8) The under development of Agriculture

Agriculture has been and remains central to Africa's economic growth and poverty reduction. It is a major source of raw materials for the manufacturing sector, a market for non-agricultural output, a source of surplus for investment and a source of employment. Strategic investments for modernization of this sector will transform it into a springboard for socio-economic transformation for Africa. I welcome the progress

made by Ugandans in agriculture and encourage them to see the opportunities to scale up from subsistence to commercial agriculture and industry.

9) The under-development of Services Sector (banking, insurance, tourism, etc.)

Producing services tends to require relatively less natural capital and more human capital than producing agricultural or industrial goods. As a result, demand has grown for more educated workers, prompting countries to invest more in education – an overall benefit to their people. Another benefit of the growing service sector is that by using fewer natural resources than agriculture or industry, it puts less pressure on the local, regional, and global environment. The National Development Plan III while adjusting to the impact of COVID19 provides us with an opportunity to focus on new homegrown technologies in the banking, tourism and other sectors. I look forward to working with the UN to promote and scale up the innovations being developed by our youth. Sustaining our development requires the ability to manufacture new products and services that are environmentally friendly.

10) The attack on Democracy and Governance

Democracy is very cardinal in socio-economic transformation. Absence of democracy in the whole colonial period and during much of the whole post-independence periods has meant that

people's real aspirations and grievances could not be accurately captured. There is growing and almost universal democratization throughout Africa, except for countries where there is still insecurity. An informed democracy requires citizens who are informed of their rights, robust institutions that can protect citizens and systems that ensure everyone can participate. I congratulate Ugandans for working towards having the elections in 2021 and wish to convey my disappointment at those who encouraged violence during the recent primaries. I welcome the technical support provided by the United Nations to both the Electoral Commission and to Civil Society to promote peaceful and efficient elections.

11) Non-responsive Civil Service

The Civil Service is administrative service of a Government to ensure that plans, policies and programmes for transformation are implemented effectively and efficiently. Good governance is a national priority which relies on the war against corruption which I commit to continue to lead.

In Mbale, we discussed how the UN System in Uganda can contribute to resolving the strategic bottlenecks that still impede Africa's transformation, which is the purpose of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I requested the leadership of the UN system in Uganda to pay attention to some key issues including; the needs of youth and women, the role of new technologies in the economy, as well as the need for society to

evolve while preserving positive core values.

I am glad that you heeded my advice and that the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework demonstrates action to collectively, accelerate the SDGs and achieve NDP III.

I want to appreciate the UN's continued support and collaboration with the Government, civil society, Private Sector and other stakeholders in many important areas to achieve universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, promote climate action, facilitate agro-industrialization, support refugees, contribute to food security, nutrition, social services and protection, as well as your work to help roll-out civic education. This is a robust foundation for our new partnership during the next five years. I also welcome your efforts to better align planning and budgeting with NDP III, enhancing the financing landscape, addressing those most affected by the COVID 19, enhancing the production capacity of the Nation by linking factories and industrial parks to vulnerable households, cooperatives and SACOOS, among other ongoing efforts.

The UN remains Uganda's trusted and important partner to deliver on the aspirations of the national and regional commitments to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals and Leave No One Behind.

Both the UN and Government of Uganda are committed to contributing towards the development and social transformation of a society where good governance, observance of human

rights, gender equality; economic prosperity; and effective engagement and participation of people are sustained.

I now take the honour to declare the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Uganda - 2021-2025 launched.

I thank you