

Speech

By

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PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA***

At

***The reading of the National Budget –
Financial Year 2025/2026***

Kololo Ceremonial Grounds

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His Excellency the Vice President;

Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament;

All the other leaders, Ladies and Gentlemen.

During the State of the Nation Address, I told you that today, as part of the budget speech, I would address two issues:

The East African Federation and corruption. I will today do exactly that. However, I will dissect the corruption into two:

Corruption for getting money through crooked ways and political corruption, through the use of money, to get political support, not based on principles or policies.

Let me start with the more important question of the political Federation of East Africa and possible other Federations in other parts of Africa. This was a goal pursued by our ancestors starting with the Pan-Africanist pioneers among the Black people in the USA. These were: WB. Dubois, George Padamore, Marcus Garvey, Sylvester Williams, etc. By the mid 1900s, new actors had come on the scene in the persons of Jomo Kenyatta, Nkrumah, Nyerere, Sekou

Toure, Modibo Keita, etc. By 1900, the whole of Africa had shamefully been colonized because our ego – centric and incompetent Kings, had failed to defend us and, instead, were busy fighting fratricidal wars among us. At that time, the slogan for survival was: “*Uhuru na Umoja*” – “Independence and Unity”. Starting with 1912, the Africans in South Africa, took the initiative and started a new anti- colonial force, the ANC.

This marked the beginning of the new African Resistance, led by more informed people. Our resistance was assisted by two other factors that came on the scene during that Century. These were:

The emergence of the Socialist camps of nations-the Soviet Union in 1917, China in 1949, etc; and the fratricidal inter – Imperialist wars of 1914 to 1918 and 1939 to 1945, among the Imperialists. These two factors, on the one hand, meant that the World-wide anti-colonial Movement, including the African anti-Colonial Movement, could receive solidarity from those socialist Countries and, on the other hand, the imperialist Countries had weakened themselves in the process of their greed for World domination.

The World-wide anti-Colonial Movement, on account of these 3 factors, started scoring strategic victories with the Independence of India in 1947, Indonesia in 1945, the defeat of the Kuomintang traitors in China in 1949, etc.

Amazingly, the Imperialists tried, in many cases, to maintain colonial control even after these catastrophes.

The French tried to recolonize Indo-China (Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos) until the Vietnamese defeated them at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. The French were defeated in Algeria. The British faced the *Mau Mau* armed resistance in Kenya and mass resistance throughout the whole of Africa. Here in Uganda, IK. Musaazi, led the mass resistance movement.

On account of these resistance efforts, by 1963, thirty six African Countries had achieved Independence (*Uhuru*). It is these Countries that founded the OAU at Addis Ababa. There was, however, another almost 20 African Countries, that were still under colonial rule.

The African summit, gave an ultimatum to the Imperialists to give Independence to the whole of

Africa peacefully or they would be ejected by force. The Imperialists thought it was mere hot-air. They never paid heed. However, the Africans were serious and able to defeat the Imperialists by force.

By 1974, Samora Machel had defeated the Portuguese Army of 70,000 in Mozambique. Amilcar Cabral and his Colleagues, had defeated the Portuguese Army in Guinea-Bissau. Agostinho Neto, had defeated the Portuguese Army in Angola.

By 1980, Robert Mugabe and Zanla, had defeated Ian Smith in Zimbabwe; 1990 Namibia got Independence; and in 1994, the African majority, defeated the white racists in South Africa. 5 Centuries of Africa's shame of the slave trade and colonialism, should have ended then. We had achieved Independence (Uhuru) in the whole of Africa. The question was: "Where was Umoja – Unity?"

In the meantime, we who were participants in much of this time, had time to diagnose the problem. In that process, we established the 3 historical missions and the four ideological principles.

To establish the missions and the principles, we would start with a question.

Question number one was:

1. “Do the Africans need, deserve and are they entitled to, prosperity like other peoples in the World or are they not so entitled?”

If the answer is: “Yes”, the next question is:

2. “Where does prosperity come from?” Can prosperity sustainably come from begging?” Our answer was “No”. Prosperity can only come from producing a good or a service by an individual, a family, a company, etc and selling it sustainably and with *ekibaro* (assessing the profitability). In that way, you will get income and solve your problems. That, however, raises another question:
3. “Who will sustainably buy our goods or services reliably with predictability?”

When we studied the African tribes, including my own – the Banyankore – Bahorooro – we discovered that intra-tribal trade is either limited or completely absent. Why? It is because these Communities, sometimes, produce similar products. The Banyankore – Bahorooro, for instance, all have milk, beef, bananas, etc. “A” does not buy from “B” and Vice

versa. Therefore, identity, being one tribe, does not necessarily solve the problem of prosperity. Happily, we discovered a ready solution and this was Uganda – that multi-tribal unit. Even in the Colonial times of that small enclave economy, the business complementarities among the tribes were already coming up. I was able to pay for education on account of two categories of actors. Category one, was Amosi Kaguta, my father, who had cattle he had inherited from his ancestors. Hence, those cattle were *enshugyi* (the cattle of *obujjaja* – inherited from ancestors). He could, therefore, sell some of them and pay my school fees. The problem, however, was that there was neither a single Munyankore – Muhorooro cattle trader at that time nor was there a developed beef market in that area of Ntungamo. That is how the second category of rescuers came in. These were two Baganda – Walusimbi – Mpanga and Bukyenya (Bukunya) and a White man, Shear. Walusimbi was buying cattle for the Kampala beef market, Bukyenya for the Mbarara market and Shear for the Kilembe copper Mines workforce. Even at that time, the complementarity among the tribes was becoming clear. Even in the pre-colonial times, the inter-zones

trade, had become clear. Textiles (*emyeenda*), were coming from the Coast in Zanzibar; the glass beads (*enkwaanzi*), were from the same source and so were the guns. Ivory (*emiino*), however, was coming from the Interior of the African continent and so was the salt, the bark cloth, the hoes, etc.

It is this historical mission of the need for prosperity, that led us to discover the first ideological principle of our Movement – Patriotism – Love Uganda. Why? It is because you need it for your prosperity – as a market, among other advantages.

However, learning from the history of other Countries and also seeing what is happening in Uganda once it settled down and started recovering, we discovered that the internal market is not enough. As we speak today, Uganda has got surplus of milk, maize, bananas, beef, sugar, cement, steel products of certain types, etc. Where do we sell these? This is when the NRM asked the Ugandans the following questions:

1. “Have you heard of East Africa?
2. Have you heard of Africa?

3. Why don't you check whether they can buy what we produce and we also buy what they produce? Indeed, East Africa and Africa, are already buying parts of our surpluses.

Otherwise, these sectors would have collapsed by now. That is how, the NRM identified the second ideological principle of Pan-Africanism – Love Africa. Why? It is because you need it for our prosperity. This realization of the need for bigger markets, was not only clear to NRM. Others, before us had realized this. Germany was not one Country until 1871. Germanic speaking people, were divided into 39 Kingdoms of Prussia, Saxony, Bavaria, etc. However, there was a strong business group in Prussia known as junkers, that saw the importance of a United German market. Working with Bismarck, they pushed the Pan-Germanism. France, by 1789, had been a United Kingdom for a long time. There were, however, internal taxes between the provinces of France known as *Gabelle*. Those provinces were fiefdoms of Princes of those areas. The rising French Middle class, the bourgeoisie, could not accept this. Indeed, the removal of these internal taxes, were part of the grievances of the French Revolution.

On these two ideological principles of patriotism and Pan-Africanism, we added social-economic transformation and democracy. This was all to achieve historical mission number one, prosperity for the African people through market integration. We are glad that by 1980, the African leaders had started seeing the importance of market integration as part of the lagos plan of Action. When the NRM took power, we worked with the Wazee Mwinyi, Mkapa and Moi, to revive the EAC that was relaunched on the 30th of November, 1999. The EAC has now expanded to incorporate Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, DRC and Somalia. In addition, we have COMESA and the CFTA (Continental Free Trade Area). We need to remove all the trade barriers and develop infrastructure to facilitate this trade.

However, we also need to ensure that the Countries that are beginning to come up, are assisted. We should never allow trade imbalances among member states to persist.

This will address the historical mission of prosperity. However, we had also identified the second historical mission as that of strategic security. How can Africa

ensure that never again would its people be threatened by anybody having gone through the 5 Centuries of the slave-trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism? Economic integration if it is fully implemented, will address the issue of prosperity.

However, during the 2nd World War, the developed countries of Holland, Belgium, Denmark, France, Norway, etc, became victims of German aggression, their being developed notwithstanding. It was the Soviet Union and, later, the USA and UK that defeated the demonic Hitler. Half a million of Africans took part in that war as did the two and a half million Indians. The highly developed Israel in terms of technology, would find it difficult to survive in that zone without the cover of the United States of America. Some actors in the World, talk of achieving superiority in the four dimensions: Land forces, air-forces, at Sea and in space. Where does this leave Africa?

- I) Are we again to exist or not exist with the permission of others?
- II) Are we only to thrive with the permission of others?

Coming to multi – dimensional strategic security, only four Countries have been to the moon. These are: the USA, Russia, China and India. Can Uganda manage a serious space programme even when it becomes a First World Country? As we tried to answer that question, there was already an answer given by our elders before Independence. This was: “Uhuru na Umoja” - “Freedom and Unity”. The present weaknesses in Africa are partly due to the mistake of arrivism where the leaders preferred to remain “big fishes in small ponds”.

It was only Mwalimu Nyerere of Tanganyika and Mzee Karume of Zanzibar, that consummated the economic and political integration of the two Countries to create Tanzania that has been a great success. Recently, the Union of Tanzania, celebrated 60years. We congratulate our brothers and sisters of Tanzania.

Economic and political integration where possible, are the correct answer to the question of prosperity and strategic security. It handles the two historical missions.

In 1963, we were about to achieve the political Federation of East Africa. You can see the declaration by our leaders. However, along the way, some of them developed cold feet. That is why Mwalimu Nyerere and Mzee Karume, must be hailed as some of the most devoted Africans that have ever lived. You can be sure that if that federation had taken off, so many of the problems that afflicted us, could have been avoided.

Certainly, Amin would never have taken power in Uganda. May be the problems of Rwanda and Burundi, could have been handled differently. The problems of South Sudan and Somalia, could possibly have been handled differently, as would have been the problem of Congo. Why do I say this? Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, under one political authority, would have been so strong that their voice in these matters would have been decisive. I remember, for instance, our leaders then took a stand on the issue of Congo (around 1965).

Soon, however, the states started taking divergent positions which would not have been the case if they

were under one political Authority. We must, again, salute Mwalimu Nyerere and Tanzania because without the support of much of Africa, except for Zambia, Botswana, Algeria, Nasser's Egypt and Guinea-Conakry, they were able to be a reliable rear-base for the anti-colonial Armed struggle that raged in Southern Africa from 1962 to 1994 when South Africa achieved freedom. It is a pity that after victory, we only got Uhuru (Independence) and not Umoja (Unity-especially political integration).

The third historical mission we identified, was the Undugu (brotherhood) of the 1.5bn African people. These people belong to only 4 linguistic Groups. The Niger-Congo (the Bantus and the Kwa); the Nilo-Saharan (the Nilotics, the Cushitic and Sudanic); the Afro-Asiatic (Arabic, Amharic and Tigrinya); and the Khoisan.

Recently, I had a delegation from Congo, but we did not have a French translator. However, there was a Runyoro-Rutooro speaker from Ituri, Tibasiima Ateenyi. I, therefore, spoke in Runyoro and he translated to the rest in French. Apart from the similar interlacustrine (inter-lakes) Bantu and Nilotic

dialects, we have the good luck of Swahili- which is a neutral, non-tribal dialect, developed by our ancestors when they met at the East African Coast to conduct business.

Therefore, the third historical mission is a question:

“Why can’t the responsible political actors use the Undugu (the brotherhood – similarities or linkages) of these people, to create units that support the other two historical missions of prosperity and strategic security?”

With these three historical missions and the four ideological principles, we were able to shape our strategy Vis avis Africa. The strategy that we always commend to our supporters, is to work for the Economic integration of the whole of Africa so as to support the prosperity of the African people and support the additional political integration in the parts of Africa where it is feasible by creating political federations such as the political Federation of East Africa.

Mwalimu Nyerere and ourselves, divulged abit from Mzee Nkrumah and Muammar Gaddafi, who were talking of a continental Government of the whole of

Africa. We did not think that such a target was either feasible or even desirable because the whole of Africa does not possess enough similarities and linkages, to be cohesive, a necessary pre-requisite for political integration. East Africa is and with the use of Swahili, can be very cohesive. The whole of Africa should be one common market. Apart from the Niger-Congo linguistic group that has got a lot of similarities, there are also linkages with, for instance, the Nilo-Saharan group of languages. This is how, amazingly, I discovered that the Somali word for Cow is “Saa”. It is the very word that most of the Bantu dialects in the Great Lakes, use to describe cow-dung – not any other dung. There are a lot of linkages with the Nilotic dialects that we do not have time to go into here.

It is this belief in the 3 historical missions and four ideological principles, that enabled the student Movement of the 1960s to metamorphose into the Armed Front that fought Amin and, eventually, the NRA/NRM. We rejected the sectarian politics of identity of religion, tribes and gender chauvinism. By 1986, we had a force of 20,000 NRA fighters backed by millions of civilians that were only propelled by conviction, not by any mercenary interests. The

majority of the NRA /UPDF, have maintained this. That is why between 1971 and 2021, the NRA – UPDF, was fighting for no pay or for low pay.

Owing to deaths of some of our supporters from natural causes mainly, we started getting some corrupt elements, but a minority and easy to identify and isolate. The spirit of voluntarism, was also strong among the civilians. That is why the NRC, for instance, were getting a low salary and were content. With the CA, we improved the pay knowing that it was a temporary Parliament. However, subsequent Parliaments, made two mistakes.

One was to increase their salary and allowances, thereby departing from the spirit of sacrifice that had been the hall mark of the NRA /UPDF/NRM.

Secondly, a group known as YPA, opportunistically and for cheap popularity, started going round the Country and conducting fund –raising for some cheap popularity projects, schools, etc. I warned them but they could not listen. I did not want to precipitate a crisis when we had problems of Rwanda, Congo, South Sudan, etc. This is, however, why I rejected the call to raise the pay of the President.

Comrades, it is now time to see how to correct these two mistakes. This is because it led the population to believe that the political leaders have a lot of money and must share it with the voters in the form of bribes and endless fund-raising. Although the MPs gave themselves a lot of money, it is not enough to meet these indisciplined demands for bribes and fund-raising. Hence, they end up with debts and some have run from the constituencies.

The Government, through the budgets, is the one that can help the People to solve their problems. Programmes like NAADs, OWC, PDM, Emyooga, etc., have already shown that they can liberate people from poverty. The current Coffee boom, was on account of the Government scientists who developed the improved Clonal Coffee, different from the old variety that people in Bushenyi had abandoned for the Dairy industry. The Dairy industry in the cattle corridor. The Kalangala Palm oil projects, etc. These are projects pushed by the Government, that have transformed people's lives, not petty money from MPs for fund-raising or bribes. The voters need to know that these practices of bribes and fund-raising, are overthrowing the voters' power to elect leaders that

will work with the Central Government to solve their problems such as infrastructure, supervise wealth funds that are being stolen by Parish Chiefs, etc. Do not accept petty money from politicians and throw away your power to elect a leader that can *Kwemerera* (to supervise) the money sent to you through the Parish, fight corruption, etc. Once we solve the political corruption that has paralyzed the populist politicians, it will be easy to fight the corruption of the Public Servants. Why? It is because we have a reliable source for *Kurega* (whistle blowing). These are the people, the victims of the corruption. In the 1960s, we would go to the people. They have all the information.

The big changes that are happening in Uganda, are by the following actors: the NRA/UPDF that liberated the Country and has been ensuring peace ever since; the wealth creators in the four sectors of Agriculture, manufacturing, services and ICT; the Government scientists that make innovations; and the responsible members of the political class that have been supporting the NRM programmes. It is, therefore, not fair for some actors to spoil these great successes.

Some people say that they give bribes because Museveni is always giving the *Khakhi* envelope to members of the population. *Mureekye kutaha amaizi n'ebyoondo* (do not draw water and mud); do not mix up issues. The brown envelopes I give, are part of the ancient traditions here. It is called *okurongoora*. It is the King who does that to the singers, or wrestlers, etc. President is the modern “King”. You are not “Kings”. I have a budget for that. I do not sell my cows to get money to *Kurongoora* singers. *Murekere awo omwenkanonkano* (trying to be like the one who is bigger than you). Fund-raising, was and is premature. The healthy fund-raising is *okusonda*, whereby you make small equal contributions but by many contributors. In the 1950s, Mzee Kaguta, sometimes, would participate in *kusondera* (contribute) for *enjogga* (a potful) of *rwaagwa* (banana alcohol):

At that time, *enjogga* was 5 shillings. 5 people would contribute Sh. 1 each. With the rampant fund – raising, the MP carries the whole burden. It is really extortion but it was instigated by the MPs who created the impression that they had the type of money when they did not have. Even the church leaders and other

elders, should ask those young mistake makers, the following question: “*Naye mwana wange, esente zino zonna, ozigyawa?*” *That is what a responsible parent should ask omwana* (son or daughter) or *omuzukulu* (grand-child) if he/she sees him or her throwing around money. The question is: “My child, from where are you getting all this money that you are throwing around?” The responsible Parents do not accept stolen gifts from their children.

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(*Ssabalwany*i)

