



Tuesday August 5, 2025

## **H.E THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON STRATEGIC BUDGETING AND PRIORITIZATION OF KEY SECTORS**

Fellow Ugandans, especially the Bazzukulu, greetings.

I would like to, again, remind you of the mistake of kumemerera (Kumansamansa, ngwidu, scattering thin something). People who refuse to grasp the rich experience of the NRA, end up plunging us into mistakes that should have been avoided.

Among the mistakes, I had to deal with was the mistake of okumemerera while budgeting- trying to be everywhere at the same time and ending up being nowhere; trying to do everything at the same time and ending up doing nothing properly.

The NRA/UPDF has always succeeded because of the strategy of kamu kamu gw'emugaanda (one by one makes a bundle). Up to now, you find some of our soldiers in Maama ingiya pole grass-huts. Why? We had to choose between having lethal weapons and enough personnel on the one hand and having only posh barracks and individual cars for officers on the other hand, as was the case in the earlier governments of Uganda.

Just before the coup of 1971 of Amin, I had seen some of my schoolmates at Ntare who had joined the small completely inadequate Uganda Army in terms of equipment and personnel, driving personal cars acquired by soft loans from the government. One of them was driving a Jaguar, a very expensive, British made car of that time.

However, this strategy of one thing at a time, was not shared by the wider government among the politicians and Civil Servants. That is why we have had to deal with Teachers' strikes for higher pay, etc., while their country was still recovering from total collapse.

The Banyankore say: "Kifukya mutima, ngu enju yasya, ati munyarire mbyame." This translates as: "A stupid man was told that his house was on fire, then he told people to prepare a bed for him to sleep". Sleep where, the house is on fire? When the house is burning up, the priority is to put out the fire.

While we always peck what we can swallow (enkoko eshoonda aki eramire- the hen pecks what it can swallow), in the Army, the wider Government, especially after 1996 with the influx in Parliament of careerists looking for quick enrichment, you get People who think that a hen can swallow a rat. Hence, with a small budget, you get People trying to do a thousand efforts at ago.

What was the consequence of this? By 2005, Uganda was getting into a crisis because the development budget of the government was mainly being funded by donors. Yet, the donors were bothering very little, with the pressures we were facing.

The big shame of depending on external support for all development projects, was shown by 3 situations: the reconstruction of the Kampala-Masaka tarmac road that had reached its end of life; the reconstruction of the Kampala- Mityana road that had also reached its end of life; and the electricity line from corner Kilak to Patongo-Kalongo-Abim, etc.

This is just to pick a few examples. The donors had promised to do all these 3. However, last minute, they all changed their plans. No, they can no longer do them. Instead, one would do the Masaka-Mbarara-Kabale portion, but not the Kampala-Masaka portion.

What is the purpose of doing the Masaka-Kabale but not the Kampala- Masaka? It is the one that leads to the other two. We had already done the Fort-Portal-Mubende-Mityana with barter trade with the Yugoslavs.

The one who was supposed to do the power line in the North, had changed his mind. My reaction was: “Etajugirwe Nyoko, kwobona ekireengye, oti nariire – A cow which is not part of your mother’s bride-price (enjugano), even if they give you a hoof, you say that “I have already eaten well.””

I told our People to forget about the donors and we build our country ourselves relying on our scarce resources and the NRA strategy of Kamwe Kamwe nigwo mugaanda.

Of course, by 2005, our revenue collections were beginning to increase. The main problem was, however, okumemerera (scattering) the resources on all the sectors. This is when I put my

foot down and I said: “Henceforth, it will be electricity and roads first and the rest later.”

The budget for roads, beginning 2008 increased to 1.08 trillion for the first time in the history of Uganda. While that of electricity was also increased to 1.3 trillion. The budget for the two critical sectors increased to 4.62 trillion and 2.37 trillion in 2017 respectively. Actually, allocation for roads jumped to 6.4 trillion in the year 2019 and that of electricity was increased to 3 trillion in the same year.

The budget of the roads was sh 374.14 billion and we raised it to sh 4.467 trillion per year. That of electricity was sh 133.47 billion and we raised it to sh 2.393 trillion per year. I insisted that it should be like that thereafter.

Apparently, the budget of the roads rose to sh 4.457 trillion per year in the financial year 2018/19. On account of that emphasis on electricity and the roads, we overcame the electricity black-outs that had gripped Uganda, starting with 2005.

The Energy Fund money helped us to kick-start Bujagali. It helped us to take electricity to Kitgum, Patongo, Kalongo, Moroto, Bundibugyo, etc., etc. Indeed, today all

the districts of Uganda have electricity from the Central grid except for Buvuma and Obongi districts.

With the roads, we were not only able to do the Kampala -Masaka and the Kampala-Mityana sections using our own money, but we did many more new roads- tarmacked. Those included: Soroti-Moroto; Olwiyo – Anaka-Gulu- Kitgum- Musiingo (247 kms);



Mbarara-Kikagata; Lyantonde -Kazo-Ibaanda-Kamwengye-Fort-Portal that the donors had abandoned because a Chinese had slept with a local girl; Musita-Mayuge-Namayingo-Busia; Mpigi-Kisozi-Ssembabule-Masaka; Nansana- Busunju-Kiboga-Hoima; Mubende- Kakumiro-Kagadi; etc., etc.

Having fought the anti-Kumemerera battle of 2005 and registered good results, I assumed everybody had understood the culture of akwaata empola, atuuka wala (the one who is not over ambitious goes far). Recently, however, I have noticed that our road sectors are now in three categories.

Category one: are the very good brand-new roads such as the clock Tower Road; the refurbished Kampala- Entebbe Road; the Kampala – Gulu road that is still in good condition; the good roads in Karamoja; the good roads in Bunyoro; the very good Municipal roads in Masaka, Hoima, Mubende, Gulu, etc., etc.

Category two: however, are the important roads like Mityana-Mubende-Kyenjojo; Mukono-Jinja; Ibaanda- Mbarara; Mbarara-Ishaka; etc., that were very good but have now deteriorated because of under-budgeting for the road sector that has been allowed to creep back.

Also, some of the central government murram roads are in a bad condition, such as the road between Busunju- Sekanyonyi-Mityana.

The third category are the Local Government roads where the Local Government planners do not use the sh. 1.3bn for road maintenance well.

Where that money is used well, the murram roads are excellent. In my West Nile tour, I drove on a good road in Obongi District. In my Bukedi tour, I drove on good murram roads: Kadama- Kibuku to Buseta road; Budaka-Butaleja-Namutumba road; Pallisa-Kamuge-Bulangira-Butebo road.

When I checked with the budget of the Ministry of Works, it is now standing at Ug. Sh 5.912 trillion. However, this figure includes the Standard Gauge Railway, the Uganda Airlines, etc.

The road sector alone needs Ug. Sh 3.21 trillion to maintain our tarmac and murram roads in excellent condition. I have instructed the Ministry of Works and the whole Government to rectify that situation.

Very soon, you will see a lot of activity on the following roads: Mityana-Mubende-Kyenjojo; Ibaanda-Mbarara; Ishaka-Mbarara; Mukono-Lugazi-Jinja; Kikoroongo-Mpondwe; Nebbi- Arua; Ntungamo- Rukungiri; etc. These are old tarmac roads being rehabilitated.

However, we are going to start on new roads such as: Jinja-Budondo-Mbulamuti-Kamuli; Bwizibweera- Nsiika- Nyakashaka- Nyakabirizi; etc., etc. In the manifesto, these roads will be clearly laid out.

What is the lesson? Owabiinga Ibiri, imutsiga (if two animals jump out of the bush and you try to spear both of them at a go, both of them will escape). Concentrate on one as if you did not see the other one and you will succeed.

Targeting the creation of cities, new districts, higher pay for Civil Servants, etc., before you put aside adequate money for roads, electricity, security, wealth creation, etc., is bad planning.

Listen to the NRA/UPDF strategy.

I have, however, also heard of some stories that there may be inflation of costs in some of the roads. Stay tuned on this channel. We may get some additional information.

Signed:

**YOWERI K. MUSEVENI**  
**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

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