

Achieving prosperity and security

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led a group allied with African liberation movements as a university student. When Idi Amin came to power in 1971, Museveni founded the Front for National Salvation, which helped topple Amin in 1979. He then led a protracted five-year peoples' struggle that liberated Uganda in 1986. He is since credited with bringing stability and economic growth to Uganda, subsequently winning multi-party democratic elections to the post in 1996, and in subsequent elections, as the chosen presidential candidate of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) Party. He is also credited with providing peace and security in the region.

The principal aim of the current Ugandan Government has been to create prosperity and ensure security for the people of Uganda.

What does prosperity mean in the modern context? It means that each of our individual families has sufficient income to live a good life, their family members are educated and they are healthy.

The necessary income to achieve this can only come from one or more of five key sectors: commercial agriculture, industry (manufacturing & processing), services (retail, transport, tourism, professional services, etc), ICT and Public Service.

It was with this understanding that our government began to 'defog' the ideological and political situation that was confronted in the 1960s, '70s and early '80s. The question we had to answer was: if the prosperity of families and communities were dependent on markets to buy their goods and services, on good infrastructure and on peace, what, then, should be the ideological principles of a political organisation that could have the capacity to provide a solution to the predicament of the people?

In order to guarantee the prosperity of families and communities, however, we have already seen that the internal Ugandan market is not sufficient. Our prosperity will be greater if our regional partners in Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, Congo, et al buy from us, as they are doing. We have already seen the impact of those markets on our economy and prosperity.

It was also with this realisation that we galvanised our abhorrence of the sectarian ideology of tribalism and religion, the chauvinism against women and the marginalisation of the disabled, the youth, etc. It enabled us to firmly and scientifically distil the first principle of the NRM government from the fog of perceptions that were abundant in Uganda at that time. This is the principle of patriotism, or nationalism, as it is sometimes described.

Our second principle became Pan-Africanism. It is not only patriotism that will guarantee our prosperity but also Pan-Africanism. Then, we identified the third principle of socio-economic transformation. This is indispensable for our society to move from a peasant society based on subsistence farming to a middle-class society of skilled workers as has

happened in Europe over the past 500 years. It is a shame that Africa is, at least, 200 years behind Europe in social metamorphosis. Two stimuli are crucial here: one is education for all. That is why, in 1996, we introduced UPE (Universal Primary Education) and, later on, added USE (Universal Secondary Education). An educated person has more chances, though by no means automatic, of social mobility from the peasantry to either the middle class or the skilled working class.

Agriculture

The agricultural sector has historically been the mainstay of our economy, with most of the production being done at subsistence level. Our goal is to transform this into commercial agriculture. Accordingly, as highlighted in Vision 2040, my government will pursue a two-pronged strategy in agriculture. On the one hand, the government will continue to invest in agricultural inputs and research to promote food security. All agricultural exports will be strictly based on the principle of value addition. The private sector will hence be facilitated to set up appropriate agribusinesses with the key objectives of improving post-harvest handling and value-addition to the raw produce.

Industry

A modern economy cannot depend on agriculture alone. Hence, we must also develop industries and manufacturing. In advanced countries, more jobs are generated from industry than from agriculture, and Uganda will be no exception. In 1987, 378,227 people were employed in services and industries but now 1,718,000 people are employed. In other words, the number of people working in industry has gone up more than fivefold.

Infrastructure

In terms of infrastructure, we have already repaired the 1,200 km of tarmac roads we inherited in 1986 and built another 3,800 km of new tarmac roads. We are now planning and funding the tarmacking of the roads connecting many of our major towns and regions.

With the commissioning of Bujagaali Hydroelectric Dam, there has been an alleviation of power shortages, although the price of electricity is still high.

Our young scientists, graduating from universities, are happily entering the manufacturing field. Our scientists at Makerere are already producing electric vehicles and I have tasked them with working on solar water pumps.

Oil and Gas

By 2017, we hope to start producing the oil for our refinery and export pipeline. We estimate production at an average of 180,000 barrels per day. The income from our petroleum resources will never be used for general expenditure, such as salaries, imports, etc. It will only be used for investing in key infrastructure projects, such as hydroelectric plants and other forms of power generation, standard gauge railways, industrialisation, scientific innovation and research, and high-level science education and technical training. Apart from oil and gas, the government has conducted exploration in many parts of the country and discovered significant quantities of as yet unexploited mineral resources, including iron ore, phosphates, copper, gold, tin, cobalt and many others.

Human Development

Investment and wealth creation must translate into improved quality of life for our people. We have so far performed well in arresting and reversing the declining quality-of-life indicators, and to a considerable extent improved human development in the country.

In pursuit of a prosperous country with prosperous people, we must also be prepared to transform ourselves. We must change the mindsets of our people, from a defeatist self-deprecating type to the highly motivated high-achievers that we envisage will drive our economy over the next 30 years. We must move away from a wasteful culture towards efficiency gains; to a more development-oriented work ethic; and most importantly, from tendencies of misappropriating public resources to a culture of integrity and respect for public property. We cannot afford a business-as-usual approach.

The achievement of high literacy rates (now at an average rate of 77.1 per cent for males and 75.2 per cent for females, making a total average of 76.1 per cent), notwithstanding this, we need to train the Ugandan youth in technical, professional and managerial skills.

Whereas in 1986 we had only 1,209,640 pupils in state schools, we now have 8,459,720 pupils in state and private primary schools. Whereas in 1986, we had 123,589 students in secondary schools, we now have 1,362,739 students in state and private secondary schools. In 1986 we had 5,390 university students. We now have 140,403 students in our state and private

universities. In 1986, we had one university. We now have 32 universities, both state and private. Our society is metamorphosing.

In the health sector we have made progress, which has led to significant improvements in our citizens' health and, more importantly, provides ground for confidence in future gains in general living standards.

Other Sectors

Other sectors that we are strengthening to enable us realise our Vision 2040 include the ICT and tourism sectors.

Peace and Security

I salute the UPDF, the Ugandan Police, the Intelligence services and the vigilance of the population of Uganda for the peace that is now prevailing in every corner of the country. The problem of undisciplined armies had dogged us for far too long. I am, therefore, happy to report that professionalisation of the army has firmly taken shape and we have not only managed to pacify the whole country, but can defend every part of it. We are also now in a position to provide security and military support to our neighbours. It is in this regard that we have gone to Somalia, as the biggest contingent of the African Union force, and have managed to largely pacify that country.

The task of delivering Uganda towards prosperity is not for the President or even the Government alone. This is a shared vision, an embodiment of the aspirations of all Ugandans. We are striving to adopt a more businesslike approach in government, one which will resonate better with the working culture of the private sector.

Uganda in the Commonwealth

We were privileged and most honoured to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2007. As a long-standing member of the Commonwealth of Nations, Uganda supports the Commonwealth's efforts to foster international cooperation, in the context of our shared values, with the goal of improving the lives of over two billion people in its 53 member countries. The theme for the CHOGM 2015 Summit, hosted by Malta, 'The Commonwealth – adding global value', reaffirms the Commonwealth's commitment to find practical solutions and work towards increasing trade, investment, tourism and cultural exchanges, between developed and developing member nations alike. E

This Article includes extracts from HE President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni's 53rd Independence Anniversary Speech.

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