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THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

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In any correspondence on

This subject please quote No. **GCC205/224/02**

14th September, 2022

Press Release:

RE: Update on Ugandan pavilion at the 59th International Art Exhibition - Venice Biennale – Italy

Venue: Uganda Media Centre

Time: 11am – 12pm

The Media Fraternity,
Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen.

1 It gives me great honor to inform you that Uganda participated in the National Pavilion at the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia 2022 in Italy. The pavilion was entitled “**Radiance, They Dream in Time**” where Uganda was privileged to be participate for the first time since the International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia started. A virtual viewing is also possible via a link on www.ugandapavillion.org

2 The event which started in April 2022 will end on 27th November 2022. The Ugandan Pavilion was officially commissioned on 21st April 2022, by H.E Ambassador

Elizabeth Paula Napeyok, Embassy of Uganda – Italy, and the Country was represented by renowned Ugandans Ms. Acaye Kerunen and Mr. Collin Sekajugo.

- 3 In our effort to reinforce and promote the East African Community integration, we picked Mr. Shaheen Merali from Tanzania though a British citizen as the curator and presenter of the works of Ms. Acaye Kerunen and Mr. Collin at the exhibition.
- 4 Acaye Kerunen's process as a socially engaged artist foregrounds the work of local and regional Ugandan craftswomen, celebrating them as integral collaborators and elevating the artistic practices of local artisans who are the gatekeepers of their local wetlands, drawing upon a sacred and unspoken knowledge of ecological stewardship. By deconstructing utilitarian materials and artisan crafts, Kerunen repositions the work in order to tell new stories and posit new meaning. The act of re-installing these deconstructed materials is a response to the agency of women's work in Africa and an acknowledgment of the role that this artistic labor plays in the climate ecosystem.

5 On the other hand Collin Sekajugo approaches his work from a distinct, aesthetic departure point that resides in his repeated return to pop culture and the omnipresent influence exuded by the global mainstream, conversing and critiquing its many biases across visual, oral and digital cultures. Since 2012, Sekajugo has worked with the manipulation of the common stock image to reveal its inherent biases of entitlement and privilege largely modelled on the Western self. Sekajugo's artistic practice highlights a contemporaneous anthropological reversal of this mainstream culture through the lens of a decidedly African sense for irreverence and play on the ad-hoc. Conceptually, the works of Sekajugo become pure theatre, a hacking of identity that exposes some truths behind these stock images that quietly continue to colonize the entire globe by the weight of their own popularity.

6 As a country we are happy to be part of this International event. We believe that our participation will further strengthen and promote Uganda's bilateral cultural relations as well as promote dialogue with other countries and above all showcase Uganda's rich culture

and tourism. It is also important to note that according to the 2021 UNESCO report on the creative economy, the African cultural products industry employs half a million people and generates \$4.2 billion in income. Africa is poised to have the world's largest working-age population, with 1 billion young people by 2030, In Uganda, over 75 percent of our population is under 35 years of age. This means that job creation is critical and the creative sector presents a smart option to prepare our youth for that future. The Uganda pavilion has indeed done us proud and we need to build on and keep this momentum.

- 7 Uganda's participation was made possible with support of the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development in partnership with STJARNA, Uganda National Cultural Centre and Alliance Francoise among others. We also continue to lobby through dialogue for investment and financing opportunities for the creative sector by the private sector and government. There is after all a valid economic case focusing budgets and expenditure on

the growth of the culture and creative sectors of Uganda.

8 Before I conclude I would like to inform you that we are organizing the biggest cultural festival of the year, the 4th UNCC Annual Arts and Culture Festival, celebrating Uganda at 60, under the theme "Celebrating cultural heritage'. It will run from 7th, 8th and 9th October 2022 at the National Theatre which is the main venue. Other venues, like railway grounds, will also be used at a certain point. Take note that there will be a cultural parade from Wandegeya through Kampala Road to Jinja Road on Saturday, October 8th, 2022. You should not miss being part of such a cultural extravaganza. I call upon all of you to join us and support this festival, financially as well as technically, please reach out to the Executive Director UNCC for details on how you can support this festival.

9 Let me also use this opportunity to tell you about the parish development model, which is one of the many programs of the government's efforts in creating wealth among Ugandans. I encourage you all to embrace it and take advantage of this program.

10 I now take the opportunity to thank the Governments of Uganda, Government of Italy, Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development, Uganda National Cultural Centre, STJARNA, Alliance Francoise, the Curator, and

Uganda's participants Acaye Kerunen and Sekajugo Collins. Special appreciation to the organizers of Venice Biennale for inviting Uganda to participant at this international event. I want to encourage more Ugandans to remain vigilant and seek for more opportunities to promote the Country's rich cultural diversity and artistic works.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

HON, PEACE REGIS MUTUZO

MINISTER OF STATE FOR GENDER & CULTURE AFFAIRS,

MINISTRY OF GENDER LABOUR AND SOCIAL

DEVELOPMENT