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PRESIDENT MUSEVENI COMMISSIONS KAWUMU TANNERY UGANDA TO ADD VALUE TO ANIMAL HIDES AND SKINS

President Yoweri Museveni has today commissioned Kawumu Tannery Uganda, a factory that adds value to animal hides and skins.

Located at Kawumu, Luwero district, the factory processes leather from hides and skins.

Uganda is among the top four exporters of hides and skins from Africa, but barely earns USD 50 million from the process.

While launching the factory, President Museveni said for years, he has been having a war with importation of goods, citing it as one of the reasons he decided to set up a tannery factory in Kawumu.

"The previous governments were used to importing everything. That's the problem with Africans. They even import dead people's hair. Even that takes our money," H.E the President complained.

"Leather is imported, papers are also imported. When we came to Kampala, the milk which was consumed was from Denmark. I was like why don't we use the Balaalo to get us milk from cows and we

make products out it. That's how we stopped milk importation. We also started manufacturing beer, soda etc. from here. The war we have been fighting of late is importation."

President Museveni added that soon he will be declaring a battle on paper importation.

"The problem with importation is that those products are costly. After adding value to hides and skins they get from us, the Italians will export leather at a higher price. We also give out our employment opportunities through importation. Now that we are done with leather importation, our next war is on papers. I don't want us to import papers," he cautioned.

The President also preached about wealth and job creation.

"Development is for us all, fighting poverty starts with you [families]. I want development to move along with wealth creation. Listen to what NRM is preaching. I'm not a man of propaganda, I want you to fight poverty and create wealth. If you can't create wealth, you can't create jobs," the President asserted.

"Kawumu Presidential Demonstration farm, employs 27 people. Just imagine if we had more 1,000 farms like that. How many jobs would be created?" he questioned.

The Prime Minister of Uganda, Hon. Robinah Nabbanja appreciated President Museveni for being an experienced leader who loves and cares for Ugandans. She said it is the reason he is focused on promoting socio-economic transformation of Uganda through industrialisation.

"I laugh at those who don't support Mzee because there are a few people who have his experience. He has developed Uganda because of his experience and exceptional leadership skills," Hon. Nabbanja opined.

The Minister of State for Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, Hon. David Bahati said a few years ago President Museveni promised to solve the issue of leather and now he has done it.

"This factory is an important step in solving the problem of leather especially for the Small Scale enterprises that have been suffering to import it. We want to thank you, Your Excellency for your visionary leadership and we want to thank the State House Comptroller for executing the project," Hon. Bahati said.

"The progress we are making in this country as far as industrialisation is concerned is very huge. All this would not be possible if it was not for your good leadership. We are now able to use our own resources to solve our problems."

On the issue of import substitution and export promotion, Hon. Bahati explained that Uganda should protect its local companies by putting more taxes on imported goods.

The State House Comptroller, Mrs. Jane Barekye disclosed that the whole project whose construction was started in 2020, cost Shs12 billion upon completion.

Kawumu Tannery Uganda seats on 10 acres of land.

"We thank H.E the President for envisioning and supporting industrialisation in Uganda especially through projects like Kawumu Tannery Uganda," Mrs. Barekye said.

She further stated that the East African Community to which Uganda can sell its leather products free of duties has an annual demand of some USD600 million.

"We are now ready to tap into that big market," she assured.

Through Kawumu Tannery Uganda, Mrs. Barekye also boasted that government has managed to fulfill the objective of industrializing Uganda.

"We have succeeded in adding value to animal hides and skins. 1 kg of hides goes for 50 cents when we add value, it generates 2 USD dollars."

She added that they are in final plans to construct a shoemaking factory that will be using leather from the Tannery.

"In two months' time we have employed 90 workers and from these, 50 are permanent workers. In three months to come we shall be producing 10 tons of leather per day that means we are going to double the number of employees. And both factories shall employ over 1,000 workers."

The leather from Kawumu Tannery Uganda can be used to make shoes, belts, handbags, carpets, wallets among other products.

The event was also attended by the Minister for Presidency, Hon. Babirye Milly Babalanda, Minister for Public Service, Hon. Wilson

Muruli Mukasa, Minister for Luwero Triangle, Hon. Alice Kaboyo, State Minister for Finance-General Duties, Hon. Henry Musasizi, State Minister for Microfinance, Hon. Haruna Kasolo, State Minister for Higher Education, Hon. JC Muyingo, Director Manifesto Implementation, Mr. Willis Bashaasha, Parish Development Model National Coordinator, Hon. Ssozi Galabuzi, Presidential Advisors, Members of Parliament among other dignitaries.

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