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## **PRESIDENT MUSEVENI COMMITS TO SUPPORT KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY AS HE MEETS UGANDAN SCIENTISTS**

President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni on Thursday 10th August 2023 met a group of Ugandan Scientists at State House Entebbe.

During the meeting, the two parties deliberated on the best ways to promote local science projects that would in turn steer socio-economic transformation in the country.

President Museveni assured the scientists of the government's commitment to support them.

“Now, we have already spent on social services, education and health. That is how our population has grown and that is how we have been able to get people like you (scientists). On social services, even if we keep where we are, then add on some elements of infrastructure especially electricity, roads and railway. Then agriculture and this new economy of knowledge,” H.E Museveni said.

“For the new economy, Kiira Motors needs Shs524bn so they can produce 5,000 buses a year, for the modernised banana industry, we now need Shs45bn, for the vaccines- Shs25bn, for anti-ticks

we need Shs13bn and Prof. Ogwang needs Shs11bn. This is not more than Shs700bn. Really here, we should not waste time, we should start on this new capacity that will give us a new base of development,” he added.

On their part, the team led by the Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Dr. Monica Musenero informed the President that there's a need to fast track the implementation of pathfinder projects because they have a positive impact on the country's economy.

“Your Excellency, we need to complete and functionalize the vital infrastructure because the operationalization of science really has a big impact on the economy. It has been growing but there were gaps in the infrastructure. We also need to have an adequate innovation fund because it keeps the fire of innovation in the community burning hence the new ideas that enable us to develop,” Dr. Musenero said.

The Minister further told the President that as scientists they need to have a conducive, coordinated and regulatory environment that would help them innovate and fully market their products.

The pathfinder projects include among others, the Kiira Motors Corporation (KMC) and Prof. Florence Muranga's Presidential Initiative on Banana Industrial Development (PIBID).

Dr. Musenero noted that these projects have paved the way for the development of science, technology and innovation in the country. She added that they have also helped them to develop the basic human resource that understands how science is applied.

“Kiira Motors seeks to lead Uganda to become a net source and no longer just a consumer for E-mobility. It also seeks to create an incentive innovation that will enable us to develop the automotive value chain in the country by providing off take and prioritising electric vehicles to mass transit especially at this point when the world is talking about the energy transition from petroleum to electric. It is very strategic, and it gives a country a head-start in our region and the continent at large,” she added.

We are using USD620 million to import largely used vehicles. So KMC will help us to reduce this import bill by locally manufacturing environmentally friendly vehicles and we are beginning by prioritising mass transit solutions.”

On the other hand, she explained that the knowledge-based economy will partly help Uganda to promote import substitution and export potential.

**ENDS**

