

**OPENING STATEMENT**

**BY**

**THE PERMANENT SECRETARY  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, UGANDA**

**AT THE 11<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE  
JOINT PERMANENT COMMISSION (JPC)**

**BETWEEN**

**REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

**AND**

**REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**

**23<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2023**

*Check against delivery*

**Hon. Clementine Mukeke,**

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda and **Head of the Rwanda delegation,**

Directors,  
Ambassadors,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be here in Kigali for the 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the Rwanda-Uganda Joint Permanent Commission (JPC) where we shall be taking stock of the status of implementation of the decisions of the previous JPC. We shall as well commit ourselves to implementing agreed actionable areas, for the benefit of our peoples, countries and the region.

On behalf of my delegation, I thank you, Madam Co-chair, the Government and the people of the Republic of Rwanda for the warm reception and hospitality you have accorded to us since our arrival in this beautiful and clean city of Kigali, Rwanda. I also thank you for the excellent preparations for this meeting.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our countries' warm and cordial relations are rooted in the shared and cherished history built on the social, cultural and blood relations of our people. These deep relations have over the years enabled us to build and strengthen our political, diplomatic and bilateral relations – as exemplified in regular high-level bilateral visits between our countries.

It is on that basis that we have met in this JPC framework, to continue our engagements, which will further strengthen our relations, for our common good.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is long since we last held a JPC - the last one having been held in 2012 in Kampala. This JPC comes at the backdrop of the meeting of our respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in Kigali last year. At this meeting, it was agreed that our countries should review and track the implementation status of the agreed decisions of the 10<sup>th</sup> JPC, consider status of our bilateral cooperation and consult each other on the Northern Corridor Integration Projects.

I have been briefed that the meeting of delegations of our Senior Officials have discussed and reached agreement on most of the issues on the agenda. I wish therefore, to thank them for their tireless efforts and dedication towards making this JPC a success.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

You will recall that the volume of our bilateral trade, at its peak, was approximately worth USD 350M per year.

My delegation firmly believes that this JPC framework should continue to be used as a tool to deepen our cooperation and enhance trade and investment between our two countries.

It is also imperative that we use the JPC to create more cooperation mechanisms to increase the volume our bilateral trade and investment and deepen our engagements in various areas.

In that regard, I take note of the various Memoranda of Understanding (MoUS) that have been negotiated, concluded and readied for signature during this JPC. I commend the senior officials for concluding discussions and urge those responsible, to pursue the timely conclusion of the respective countries' internal approval processes, to enable signature.

I firmly believe that the MoUs, when fully implemented, will enable us to achieve our desired objectives.

**For instance**, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- **The MoU on Diplomatic and Political Consultations** between our Foreign Ministries will establish a formal framework for our continuous bilateral engagement on all matters of mutual interest to our countries, at the regional and international level, including on peace and security, global and multilateral economic affairs, among others.
- The **MoU on cooperation on Migration matters** will facilitate our combined efforts to eliminate irregular migration across our common borders, combat transnational crime within our territories as well as facilitate the free movement of our peoples. This will further enhance bilateral trade and investment.
- Likewise, the **MoUs on Cooperation in Justice and Constitutionalism** as well as the one on **Mutual Legal Assistance** provide us the framework for sharing of knowledge on law reform processes, joint capacity building for our legal practitioners, exchange of evidence to aid prosecution of crimes, among others.

I also take note that there are a number of MoUs for Cooperation in other fields still under consideration; the MoU between our police services, one on Education and the others. I urge you to also conclude these in due time.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Another issue that our Ministers directed us to consider are the Northern Corridor Integration Project activities.

**On this, I wish start by commending our leaders, for their vision and wisdom to establish this cooperation framework to enable us jointly develop and implement infrastructure that link our countries.**

NCIP framework has resulted in tangible results under this notably; operationalization of one Network Area (ONA, the East African Tourist Visa and movement of people using their respective National Identification Cards. These successes have drastically reduced the cost of movement and doing business for our people.

Given the benefits accruing from the implementation of the NCIP projects, it is imperative that revitalization of discussion on the NCIPs is placed high on the agenda of our countries.

Excellencies,

Investing in infrastructure links between our countries and within the region is critical to unlocking our region's economic potential. By prioritizing the development of cross-border roads, railways, waterways, aviation, and ICTs, we can reduce the cost of doing business, increase trade, and stimulate economic growth – which is also integral to the attainment of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Therefore, let us work together to revitalize the NCIPs framework and come up with detailed plans for infrastructure development with a focus on:

- securing the financing needed to make it a reality,
- the Standard Gauge Railway
- operationalization of the Mbarara –Mirama – Shango Transmission line Uganda,
- Trade in power purchase
- Cross-border interconnectivity (Fibre cable) between Uganda and Rwanda.
- Designation of Uganda Airlines Route to Rwanda.
- Uganda, therefore requests Rwanda to strongly consider hosting the 15th NCIP Summit as soon as convenient.

Excellency,

I once again, thank you and the Government of the Republic of Rwanda for hosting my delegation in this serene environment and for making this very important meeting possible and look forward to its successful conclusion.

I thank you

Merci Beaucoup

Murakoze Cyane