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UGANDA WEEKLY FOCUS



Top highlight

UGANDA SECURES €641 MILLION FROM STANDARD CHARTERED TO FINANCE KEY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS



INFORMING MINDS · INSPIRING CHANGE



@UgWeeklyFocus

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The EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to this week's edition of Uganda Weekly Focus. A very happy new month to all our readers! As the year picks up pace, we hope you're keeping up with its rhythm and making the most of the opportunities that lie ahead. We're grateful to our dedicated contributors who continue to share their expertise, and to you, our loyal readers, for your unwavering support.

In this edition, we bring you inspiring and informative stories that reflect Uganda's progress and promise. Here's a glimpse of what you can expect:

More Candidates Sit and Pass the 2025 PLE: The government's continued commitment to free primary education is bearing fruit, with over 800,000 candidates sitting for the exams. Find out how this reflects the success of the Universal Primary Education program and the steps being taken to improve the quality of education.

Standard Chartered's €641 Million Agreement: This landmark financing agreement will fund critical infrastructure projects across Uganda, enhancing the country's energy, water, and transport sectors—key to supporting long-term economic growth.

Makerere University's Historic Graduation: Over 8,400 students are set to graduate in February 2026. Learn about the university's growing role in shaping Uganda's future leaders and innovators, and how it's fostering a research-driven agenda.

We're excited to share these stories with you and much more. Dive in, get inspired, and let's continue to engage with the progress of our nation!

DESTINATION UGANDA WINS “BEST IN SHOW – AFRICA” AT 2026 TRAVEL & ADVENTURE SHOW IN NEW YORK

By Michael Woira,
GCIC – Uganda

New York, USA – Destination Uganda has been crowned “Best in Show – Africa” at the 2026 Travel & Adventure Show in New York, marking a major milestone in the country’s efforts to strengthen its tourism footprint in North America.

The award recognises Uganda’s immersive and experiential showcase, which stood out among African destinations for its creativity, interactivity, and strong storytelling. The achievement was the result of a collective effort led by the Uganda Tourism Board (UTB), working in collaboration with the Embassy of Uganda in Washington, D.C., the Permanent Mission of Uganda in



Ugandan delegates pose with the award certificate

New York, and Uganda’s private sector tourism stakeholders.

Uganda’s presence at the show strategically positioned the country as “The Pearl of Africa”, offering visitors a multi-sensory experience of its tourism potential. Attendees engaged in tastings of Uganda’s premium coffee and Uganda Waragi, explored the country’s landscapes and

wildlife through virtual reality experiences, and interacted with compelling gorilla tourism showcases that highlighted Uganda’s unique biodiversity.

These activations generated high visitor traffic to the Uganda stand, drawing consumers, travel advisors, and media representatives who received first-hand exposure to the country’s adventure, nature-



based, and cultural tourism offerings. The experiential approach not only increased dwell time at the stand but also translated into meaningful conversations and quality leads for Ugandan tour operators.

The Travel & Adventure Show is North America's largest consumer travel event, attracting over 150,000 visitors annually and operating on a

Business-to-Consumer (B2C) model. Uganda's participation in both the Washington, D.C. and New York editions enabled direct engagement with prospective travellers and the travel trade, strengthening tourism business linkages within the United States market.

The United States remains one

of Uganda's key source markets, with Vision 2040 targeting more than 200,000 American visitors annually. Strategic participation in high-impact platforms such as the Travel & Adventure Show continues to play a critical role in driving demand, increasing brand visibility, and deepening Destination Uganda's presence

across North America.

Adding further visibility to Uganda's showcase, renowned American travel journalist and broadcaster Peter Greenberg, producer of the *Hidden Uganda* documentary, visited the Uganda stand during the event. Greenberg encouraged Americans to explore Uganda, describing it as a beautiful destination with great weather and a wide range of diverse experiences.

The “Best in Show – Africa” recognition reinforces Uganda's growing reputation as a world-class tourism destination and underscores the effectiveness of coordinated public and private sector collaboration in positioning the country competitively on the global tourism stage.

GOVERNMENT LEADERS URGED TO DELIVER RESULTS AT 5TH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES MEETING

By Kenson Bugembe,
Uganda Media Centre

“Leadership in government must be judged by outcomes, not activity. Every agency must take collective responsibility for results that improve the lives of citizens.” Ms. Jane Kyarisiima Mwesiga, Deputy Head of Public Service



Uganda's public sector leadership has been urged to strengthen collaboration and focus on measurable results as the 5th Heads of Government Agencies Meeting convened on January 28, 2026.

The quarterly forum, held under the Office of the Prime Minister, brought together top officials from Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to align strategic priorities,

synchronize objectives, and enhance public service delivery. The meeting was held against a backdrop featuring the Coat of Arms of Uganda and the inscription “Office of the Prime Minister, The Republic of Uganda,” highlighting the central coordinating role of the Prime Minister’s Office.

Presiding over the meeting, the Deputy Head of Public Service in

Deputy Head of Public Service in charge of Performance and Service Delivery, Ms. Jane Kyarisiima Mwesiga, with the PS, Ministry of ICT & NG, Dr. Aminah Zawedde and other officials

charge of Performance and Service Delivery, Ms. Jane Kyarisiima Mwesiga, emphasized the importance of accountability and results-driven leadership across government institutions.

“Leadership in government must be judged by outcomes, not activity,” Ms. Mwesiga said. “We must move beyond processes

and focus on what our actions are delivering for citizens. Every agency must take collective responsibility for results that advance national development.”

She called on heads of MDAs to strengthen inter-agency coordination, ensure efficient use of public resources, and maintain a shared commitment to improving service delivery.

The meeting reinforced the Office of the Prime Minister’s mandate to coordinate government business and ensure coherence across institutions. According to participants, the forum provides a platform for reducing duplication, aligning mandates, and resolving cross-cutting implementation challenges.

Communications Commission (UCC), one of the host institutions, underscored the importance of the gathering in advancing government efficiency. In a statement shared on X, UCC noted:

■■■ We are honored to host the 5th Heads of Government Agencies Meeting, bringing together leadership from Ministries, Departments, and Agencies. This forum focuses on strengthening collaboration, aligning strategic priorities, and streamlining service delivery to advance Uganda’s development.”

UCC further highlighted that the quarterly nature of the meetings reinforces coordinated governance, stating:

“The meetings are held every quarter and strengthen the Office of the Prime Minister’s role in promoting effective and efficient service delivery across government.”

Discussions during the session aligned with broader government priorities around transparency,



Deputy Head of Public Service in charge of Performance and Service Delivery, Ms. Jane Kyarasiima Mwesiga, addressing the Officials during the meeting

.....
performance management, and citizen-centered governance, which have been consistently emphasized by the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Public Service.

The event also attracted attention on social media, with official government accounts, including that of the Deputy Head of Public Service, sharing updates and images from the meeting. The online engagement reflected growing public interest in how government agencies are working together to improve service delivery.

Busia | January 29, 2026

GOVERNMENT REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE MINING DURING INSPECTION OF WAGAGAI GOLD MINE IN BUSIA

By David Serumaga,
Uganda Media Centre

“Mining is a key driver of economic growth, but its benefits must be balanced with environmental protection and social responsibility. Every mining operation must uphold the three Ps: Profit, People, and Planet.” Dr. Akankwasa Barirega, Executive Director, NEMA

The Government of Uganda has reaffirmed its commitment to responsible and sustainable mining following a high-level familiarisation inspection of Wagagai Gold Mining's operations in Busia District. The visit was conducted by a joint delegation from the National Environment



Management Authority (NEMA), the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD), and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), led by NEMA Executive Director, Dr. Akankwasa Barirega.

The inspection, held on January 29, 2026, was undertaken ahead of an upcoming training

for Artisanal and Small-scale Mining Groups (ASMGs) in Busia District, aimed at strengthening sustainable mining practices, environmental protection, and social safeguards across the sector.

Speaking during the visit to Wagagai Mining's gold mine, Dr. Barirega emphasized that the engagement reflects government's deliberate efforts to ensure mining contributes to national development without compromising



The delegation posing for a group photo at Wagagai Gold Mine

communities or the environment.

“Mining is a critical driver of economic growth in Uganda, but its benefits must be balanced with environmental protection and social responsibility,” Dr. Barirega said. “All mining operations must uphold the three Ps Profit, People, and Planet. Effective waste and chemical management is not optional; it is essential for sustainable development.”

The inspection was designed to inform and enrich the forthcoming ASMG training by providing firsthand insights into both large-

scale and artisanal mining operations in the district. Officials highlighted the importance of equipping local miners with practical knowledge on environmental management, occupational health, and

regulatory compliance.

As part of the exercise, the delegation also visited small-scale mining sites, including the Landlords and Artisans Gold Miners Association in Tiira Village, Buteba Sub-county. The team



Dr. Akankwasa Barirega addressing stakeholders at Wagagai Gold Mine



NEMA Executive Director Dr. Akankwasa Barirega (centre) leads a multi-agency delegation during a familiarisation inspection of Wagagai Gold Mining operations in Busia District on January 29, 2026

assessed environmental and health safeguards at the site, engaging miners on issues such as pit safety, waste disposal, and chemical use.

Representatives from the planetGOLD programme,

a global initiative supporting mercury-free gold mining, reiterated the urgent need to eliminate mercury use in artisanal mining. They emphasized safer, cleaner gold extraction methods that protect

miners' health and surrounding ecosystems.

Dr. Barirega commended operations such as KACOBA Co. Ltd in Agaata Village for adopting mercury-free practices, while cautioning against environmentally harmful activities including discharging wastewater into rivers and abandoning open mining pits. He encouraged miners to actively seek NEMA's guidance to achieve compliance and improve sustainability.

Wagagai Gold Mining (U)



Limited, a subsidiary of China's Liaoning Hongda Enterprise Group, operates Uganda's first major large-scale gold mine and refinery in the Alupe area of Busia District. Commissioned by President Yoweri Museveni in August 2025, the \$250 million project covers exploration, mining, and refining, producing gold of up to 99.99 percent purity.

With estimated reserves of 25 to 30 million tonnes of ore, the project is expected to create jobs, promote local mineral processing, and support Uganda's strategy to end the export of raw minerals.

Officials noted that while large-scale investments like Wagagai set important benchmarks, Busia remains largely dominated by artisanal and small-scale mining, which continues to face challenges such as mercury use, environmental degradation, and



The joint government delegation touring processing facilities at Wagagai Gold Mine in Busia District ahead of training for Artisanal and Small-scale Mining Groups (ASMGs)

informality. Government-led inspections and capacity-building initiatives are therefore critical in bridging the gap between large-scale and small-scale operations.

Busia is one of Uganda's key gold-producing regions, with mining activities spanning several decades. National programmes, including planetGOLD implemented in partnership with NEMA and supported by international agencies, have been instrumental in promoting mercury reduction, formalization,

and responsible mining practices.

The recent inspection aligns with the Mining and Minerals Act and broader government priorities to ensure the mining sector contributes meaningfully to economic transformation while safeguarding human health, communities, and the environment.

The upcoming ASMG training is expected to further strengthen local capacity and reinforce Uganda's commitment to responsible mineral development.

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY TO GRADUATE OVER 8,400 STUDENTS

By Victor Nimusiima, GCIC – Uganda

“As our students graduate, we encourage them to translate their academic training into practical solutions for society.

Makerere remains committed to producing graduates who are not only academically sound but also ready to compete, innovate, and lead in the marketplace.” Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, Vice Chancellor, Makerere University

Makerere University will hold its 76th Graduation Ceremony from February 24 to 27, 2026, at the University's iconic Freedom Square, marking another major milestone in its contribution to higher education, research, and national development. The ceremonies will



Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe (Centre) presents one of the printed batches of transcripts the Registrar College of Computing and Information Sciences (CoCIS)-Ms. Ruth Iteu Eyoku (2nd Right) as Right to Left: DVCAA-Prof. Sarah Ssali, AR-Prof. Buyinza Mukadasi and Ms. Prossy Nakayiki witness on 28th January 2026

commence daily at 8:30am and are expected to attract graduands, parents, academic leaders, policymakers, development partners, and members of the public.

According to a statement released by the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, the University will confer degrees and award certificates to a total of 8,432 graduands across various academic levels. These include 185 Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) graduates, 2,034 Master's degree recipients, 6,043 Bachelor's degree graduates, 137 Postgraduate Diploma holders, and 33 Diploma awardees.

Prof. Nawangwe noted that the 76th graduation represents a significant leap in graduate training, with the University recording

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY
THE OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC REGISTRAR

76th
Graduation
Ceremony

At the Freedom Square starting at 8:00am

TUESDAY, 24th FEBRUARY, 2026

1. School of Law (SOL)
2. College of Education and External Studies (CEES)
3. College of Computing and Information Sciences (CoCIS)
4. College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES)

WEDNESDAY, 25th FEBRUARY, 2026

1. College of Natural Sciences (CoNAS)
2. College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Bio-Security (CoVAB)
3. College of Health Sciences (CHS)
4. School of Public Health (SPH)

THURSDAY, 26th FEBRUARY, 2026

1. Makerere University Business School (MUBS)
2. College of Business and Management Sciences (CoBAMS)

FRIDAY, 27th FEBRUARY, 2026

1. College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology (CEDAT)
2. College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS)
3. Institute of Gender & Development Studies (IGDS)
4. Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR)

PROF. BUNYIRZA MUKADASI
ACADEMIC REGISTRAR

a 30 percent increase in graduate student output compared to the 75th graduation ceremony. He attributed this growth to Makerere University's strategic emphasis on postgraduate education in line with its research-led agenda.

"This year's graduation reflects Makerere University's deliberate shift toward a research-led agenda, which has resulted in a 30 percent increase in graduate output. By strengthening

postgraduate training, we are building the human capital required to drive innovation, national development, and global competitiveness," Prof. Nawangwe said.

The Vice Chancellor emphasized that the growing number of PhD and Master's graduates positions Makerere as a key driver of research, innovation, and policy influence in Uganda and across the region. He noted that postgraduate training remains critical

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY



UNIVERSITY

PAYMENT OF GRADUATION FEES

for 76th Graduation Ceremony
#Mak76thGrad

Fees

- A Convocation
- B Graduation
- C Certificate
- D Transcript
- E Graduation Gown

Uganda/East Africa

Shs 10,000	US \$ 10
Shs 40,000	US \$ 60
Shs 30,000	US \$ 30
Shs 30,000	US \$ 30
Shs 90,000	US \$ 30
Shs 200,000	US \$ 160

International Students

US \$ 10
US \$ 60
US \$ 30
US \$ 30
US \$ 30
US \$ 160

NOTE:

Graduation fees must be paid as a package totalling to **200,000/-** for Uganda/East Africa & **US \$ 160** for International students respectively.

The graduation gown fees should be paid separately to the Makerere University Endowment Fund Bank account details below:

Account Name: Makerere University Endowment Fund

Account No. 01083553520471 | **Account No.** 220888200011
Bank: DFCU | **Bank:** NCBA Bank

**PhD
GRADUANTS**

All PhD graduates are required to pay a Cylinder fee of Shs. 50,000 + plus graduation gown of Ugx. 600,000 = in addition to other fees.

Prof. Buyinza Mukadasi, Academic Registrar

in addressing complex societal challenges through evidence-based solutions and skilled leadership.

In a move aimed at supporting graduands as they transition into the next phase of their professional lives, Prof. Nawangwe announced that all academic transcripts have been

finalized ahead of the ceremony. The transcripts have been handed over to College Principals and are available for collection from respective colleges even before graduation.

“We have finalized all transcripts ahead of the graduation ceremony and made them available through the

respective colleges to support our graduands as they transition into employment, further studies, and professional life,” he said.

As thousands of students prepare to enter the job market, Makerere University has urged the graduating class to intentionally prepare for an increasingly competitive and dynamic workplace. The University encouraged graduands to go beyond academic qualifications and focus on skills, character, and adaptability.

Graduates were advised to translate their academic training into practical value by clearly demonstrating how their knowledge and skills can solve real-world problems. Building a strong professional identity through well-prepared curricula vitae,

digital portfolios, and professional networks was also emphasized as a critical step in securing employment and career growth.

The University further encouraged graduates to embrace lifelong learning by continuously upgrading their skills through short courses, certifications, and digital competencies that complement their academic training. Networking through alumni associations, mentorship programs, and industry engagements was highlighted as an important pathway to career opportunities.

“Makerere remains committed to producing graduates who are not only academically sound but also ready to compete, innovate, and lead in the marketplace,” Prof. Nawangwe said.

To ensure a smooth and orderly graduation process, the University has outlined key logistical and security

arrangements. Graduands are required to complete all pre-graduation clearances, including tuition and graduation fees, and to confirm that their names appear on the Senate Graduation List. They are also advised to familiarize themselves with the official graduation schedule to know their designated graduation day.

Graduation gowns will be issued starting February 2, 2026, from the University Hall Dining Hall, Monday to Friday between 9:00am and 4:00pm. Graduands must present proof of payment, a valid student number or National Identification Card, and confirmation of appearance on the Senate list to collect their gowns.

Attendance at the graduation venue will be strictly controlled, with

each graduand permitted to invite two guests only. Graduands are advised to arrive at Freedom Square by 7:00am on their graduation day to allow sufficient time for seating arrangements and security checks. The University has issued a list of prohibited items to enhance safety and ensure compliance with security protocols.

Designated parking areas and access points have been established to ease traffic flow and crowd management, while all media personnel covering the ceremony must be pre-accredited through the Makerere University Public Relations Office.

To support graduands and their families, the Academic Registrar’s Office and the Graduation Committee will operate an information desk outside the Senate Building starting February 2, 2026, to handle all graduation-related inquiries.

Kampala, January 30, 2026

MORE CANDIDATES SIT AND PASS 2025 PLE AS GOVERNMENT REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION

By Nanteza Sarah Kyobe,
Uganda Media Centre

“This year’s results demonstrate the continued impact of our efforts to ensure that every child can access quality primary education.”
First Lady Hon. Janet K. Museveni

A total of 817,883 candidates registered for the 2025 Primary Leaving Examination (PLE), marking an increase of 20,439 candidates (2.6%) compared to 2024, according to the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB). Of these, 807,313 candidates sat for the examinations, while 10,570 (1.3%) were absent.

The results were officially released at State House, Nakasero, by the First Lady Hon. Janet K. Museveni who described the outcome



as a reflection of sustained investment in access to basic education, particularly under the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme.

“This year’s results demonstrate the continued impact of our efforts to ensure that every child can access quality primary education,” the First Lady said.

UNEB reported that 63.8% of candidates were UPE beneficiaries, while 36.2% came from

First Lady Janet K. Museveni officially releases the 2025 Primary Leaving Examination results at State House

non-UPE schools. Girls accounted for 52.4% of the candidature, continuing a trend in which more girls than boys complete primary education. While applauding this progress, the First Lady expressed concern over the declining proportion of boys and called for evidence-based research to understand the underlying causes.



First Lady Janet K. Museveni poses for a photo with UNEB Chairperson Prof. Celestino Obua, Executive Director Dan Odongo, and other education officials following the 2025 PLE results release at State House, Nakasero

“While we celebrate these achievements, any drop-out remains a matter for concern. We must understand why some children, particularly boys, are leaving school early,” she noted.

Performance Highlights

- ✓ 91,990 candidates (11.39%) passed in Division One, an increase of 7,689 candidates from 2024.
- ✓ Overall, 7,503 more candidates passed PLE in 2025 than in the previous year, despite a slight dip in cumulative pass percentages.

Candidates performed best in English, followed by Integrated Science and Mathematics, while Social Studies with

Religious Education recorded the weakest performance. UNEB attributed the decline to difficulties in applying



Executive Director Dan Odongo as he presented the results at State House Nakasero

knowledge to real-life situations, a core requirement of the competency-based curriculum.

■■■Our analysis indicates that teachers need significant support to interpret the curriculum effectively and adapt their methods to foster higher-order thinking skills,” said Prof. Celestino Obua, UNEB Chairperson.

The 2025 PLE saw increased participation of learners with special educational needs, with 3,636 candidates registered, up from 3,328 in 2024. Additionally, 101 prison inmates from Luzira Upper and Mbarara Main Prisons sat for the exams. The First Lady praised these initiatives as meaningful pathways for inclusion and rehabilitation.

Despite successes, UNEB raised concerns about examination malpractice, citing bribery, intimidation, and collusion. Results from affected centres have been withheld pending investigations.

The First Lady highlighted government



Prof. Celestino Obua - UNEB Chairperson addresses the press and the Guests during the release of PLE results at State House Nakesero

investments in secondary and vocational education, noting that 204 of 259 planned seed secondary schools have been completed under the UgiFT programme. Learners can also join community polytechnics through the newly established TVET system, providing an alternative pathway equivalent to O-Level education.

■■■We are expanding pathways for learners so that every child who completes primary education has opportunities to continue learning,” she said.

The Senior One selection exercise will take place on February 12-13, 2026, with Term One starting on March 2, 2026.

Executive Director Dan Odongo said, “We are pleased to present the results of the 2025 PLE, conducted under the theme: ‘Embracing Security and Holistic Assessment of Learners in a Dynamic Environment.’”

Prof. Obua added,

“Overall, more candidates have qualified to proceed to the next level than in 2024. Our item analysis shows teachers require capacity-building support, and targeted interventions will continue.”

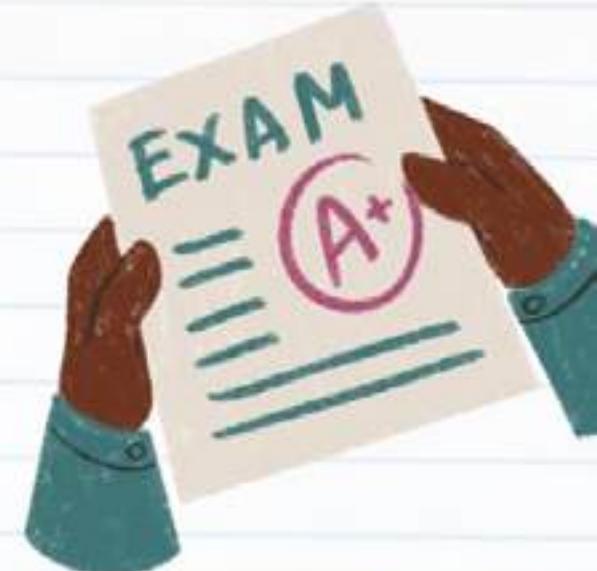
With the release of the results, UNEB and the Ministry of Education reaffirmed their commitment to quality, inclusive, and relevant education for every Ugandan child.



PLE 2025

EXAMINATION RESULTS

- **Registered Candidates:**
817,883 from 15,388 examination centres
- **Gender:**
389,469 boys & 428,324 girls
- **Universal Primary Education:**
522,036 candidates sat from 11,525 centres
- **Non UPE (Private):**
295,847 candidates sat from 3,863 centres
- **Special Needs Candidates:**
3,636 learners with Special Needs were registered (female 48.3% & 51.7% are males).
- **Prison Inmates:**
49 inmates from Luzira and 37 inmates from Mbarara passed the examinations.
- **Total Candidates Passed/Graded:**
730,000 learners
- **Absenteeism:** 1.3%
- Performance:**
Improved Grade 1 pass level compared to 2024

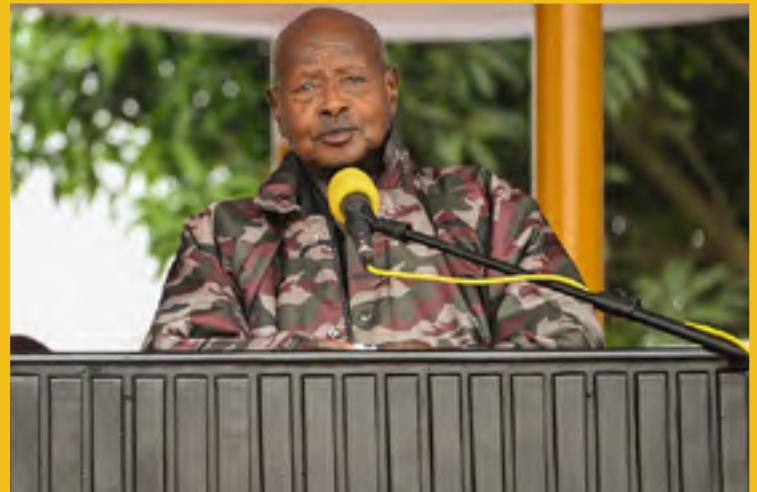


MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION
AND SPORTS



PRESIDENT MUSEVENI CALLS ON LEADERS TO ADDRESS PEOPLE'S PRACTICAL NEEDS AS UPDF ELECTS MPS

President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni who is also the commander-in-Chief of the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) has called on leaders to focus on identifying and solving people's practical needs, saying this has been the guiding philosophy of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) since the 1960s.



The President made the remarks on 28th January, 2026 while presiding over the election of UPDF representatives to Parliament at the Land Forces Headquarters in Bombo.

During the Defence Council Delegates Conference, UPDF officers elected 10 representatives—seven men and three women—to serve in the 12th Parliament.

The elected male representatives include; Lt. Gen. Sam Okiding, who

received 340 votes, Lt. Gen. James Mugira with 303 votes, Lt. Gen. Sam Kavuma with 282 votes, Brig. Gen. Gonyi David with 266 votes, Maj. Gen. Henry Masiko with 251 votes, Maj. Gen. James Kinalwa with 241 votes, and Brig. Gen. Joseph Ssemwanga with 198 votes.

The elected female representatives are Col. Ikiriza Knight, who garnered 307 votes, Col. Meeme Sylvia who got 314 votes, and Col. Nekesa Christine Situma who received 261 votes.

The President addresses the Officers

In his address, President Museveni thanked the UPDF High Command for nominating the officers and reiterated the importance of leaders who are able to identify and work on citizens' solvable needs.

He referenced the Runyankore concept of "okukyenura", which he described as the deliberate identification and resolution of people's practical challenges.

The President reflected



on the NRM's early achievements, noting that by 1996 the Movement had restored discipline within the army, firmly rejected sectarian politics, eliminated shortages of essential commodities, rebuilt infrastructure, and rolled out immunisation against the six killer diseases. He said these interventions earned the NRM massive public support at the time.

He further highlighted the government efforts aimed at uplifting the poor through initiatives such as Entandikwa, Universal Primary Education, army schools, NAADS, Operation Wealth

Creation, and the Parish Development Model, which he said is currently delivering positive results at the grassroots.

The President added that the renewed enthusiasm witnessed around the NRM in the recent elections is a reflection

of these efforts and the peace the movement has maintained.

President Museveni further explained that UPDF representatives in Parliament act as observation posts to identify national issues early and report them to the army leadership, thereby helping to prevent policy mistakes.

He cited the decision by Members of Parliament to increase their salaries as an example of an issue that could have been addressed earlier if such mechanisms were effectively utilized.



Officers exercising their voting right to elect their representative



Officers during the meeting

On the other hand, President Museveni tasked the newly elected UPDF representatives to closely monitor government programmes including the Parish Development Model, free education, road construction and immunisation, while noting that although preventive healthcare has improved, challenges remain in curative services.

On electoral governance, the President reiterated that the long-standing objective of the NRM has been to place Ugandans in charge of their country through one person, one vote by secret ballot. He revealed

that irregularities were detected in the 2021 general elections, including the infiltration of an estimated 2.7 million votes, which informed his insistence on the use of biometric verification systems, although he noted that these had not been fully utilised.

The President emphasized that for the country to remain stable, people in power must allow citizens to freely choose their leaders. He also commended the UPDF and other security agencies for providing security during the recently concluded elections.

The Chairperson of the

Independent Electoral Commission, Justice Simon Byabakama, congratulated UPDF officers for exhibiting discipline throughout the voting process and expressed hope that the same discipline would be exercised in other electoral processes across the country.

He called on all stakeholders to settle down and embrace unity as the election season comes to an end.

During the same ceremony, President Museveni commissioned three officer cadets presented by Maj. Gen. James Kinalwa, Joint Staff Human Resource Management.

The commissioned officers are Bazalaki Timothy, who trained at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University in Sri Lanka, Akoi Moses, and Piloya Vivian, both of whom completed their training in Tanzania.

Victoria, Canada | January 29, 2026

UGANDA ADVANCES COMMUNITY-CENTERED TOURISM AT GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT IN CANADA

By Male Solomon Grace,
GCIC - Uganda

“Sustainable tourism thrives when local communities are empowered as custodians of culture, heritage, and natural resources, and are direct beneficiaries of tourism growth.”

Uganda continues to strengthen its international tourism profile through active participation in the Impact Sustainability Travel & Tourism Summit held in Victoria, Canada. The engagement, undertaken in collaboration with the Uganda High Commission in Canada, reflects Uganda's commitment to advancing sustainable, inclusive, and future-ready tourism.

The summit convenes a wide range of global stakeholders, including



tourism boards, Indigenous tourism leaders, conservation organisations, destination managers, and experts in media and digital technology. The platform provides an opportunity for countries to exchange ideas and align strategies around the evolving demands of global travel.

A central focus of the discussions has been community-led tourism, emphasizing the

importance of placing local communities at the core of tourism development. Delegates underscored that sustainable destinations are built when communities are empowered as custodians of culture, heritage, and natural resources, while also directly benefiting from tourism activities. For Uganda, this approach resonates strongly with national priorities of



inclusive growth, cultural preservation, and local economic development.

The summit also highlighted a growing shift in traveler preferences toward meaningful and authentic experiences. Beyond physical infrastructure, global tourism is increasingly defined by storytelling, cultural exchange, and responsible engagement with host communities. Uganda's rich cultural diversity, heritage, and natural landscapes position the country well to respond to this shift



by offering experiences rooted in authenticity and shared value.

Another key theme

addressed is the emerging role of artificial intelligence in tourism discovery, destination credibility, and traveler



Uganda's delegation, in partnership with the Uganda High Commission in Canada, poses for a photo at the summit

trust. As digital platforms increasingly influence travel decisions, discussions explored how destinations can responsibly leverage AI to enhance visibility, provide accurate information, and strengthen confidence among international travelers. Uganda's participation in these conversations reinforces the importance of shaping a strong, credible digital tourism presence while safeguarding cultural integrity.

Environmental sustainability and conservation remain central to the global

tourism agenda. The summit reaffirmed the need for tourism growth to be balanced with environmental protection and long-term stewardship of natural resources. Uganda's unique ecosystems, wildlife, and protected areas were highlighted as assets that require responsible management to ensure their continued contribution to national development and global biodiversity.

Uganda's engagement at the Impact Sustainability Travel & Tourism Summit underscores a strategic focus on aligning tourism development

with authentic cultural connections, community benefit, environmental sustainability, and technological innovation. These pillars reflect the country's broader vision of positioning tourism as a driver of inclusive development and international cooperation.

Participation in global forums such as this summit enables Uganda to share experiences, learn from international best practices, and strengthen partnerships that support the growth of a resilient and sustainable tourism sector.

As global travel continues to evolve, Uganda remains committed to promoting tourism that delivers lasting value for communities, protects natural heritage, and enhances the country's standing as a responsible and attractive destination.

Kampala, Uganda

UGANDA RANKED THIRD IN AFRICA ON ABSA AFRICA FINANCIAL MARKETS INDEX

By David Serumaga, Uganda Media Centre

“We are working on a mission to build a 500-billion-dollar economy by 2040, anchored on strong financial markets and key enablers.” Dr. Ramathan Ggoobi

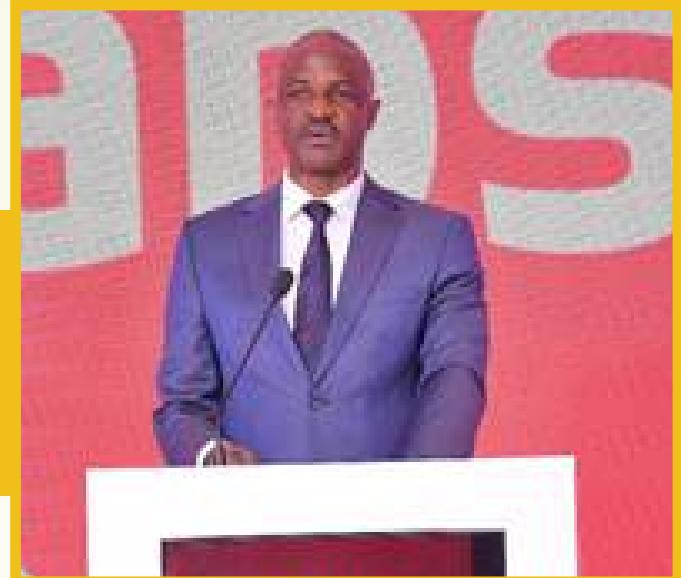
Uganda has been ranked third in Africa on the Absa Africa Financial Markets Index, underscoring the country's growing strength in financial market development and macroeconomic stability.

Speaking at the Absa Africa Financial Markets Index and Economic Outlook Forum held at Sheraton Kampala on Wednesday 28th January, 2026, the Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury (PSST), Dr. Ramathan Ggoobi, said global economies are adjusting to tighter financial conditions, geopolitical tensions, and shifting trade dynamics.

He noted, however, that these challenges also present opportunities, particularly for African economies that have invested in stability, institutional reforms, and deepened markets.

“In this period of uncertainty lie opportunities, especially for economies that have done the hard work of reform. Uganda is determined to be among those economies,” Dr. Ggoobi said.

Dr. Ggoobi, who was the Chief Guest at the forum, revealed that despite global headwinds, Uganda's economy



Dr. Ramathan Ggoobi, Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury, delivers the keynote address at the Absa Africa Financial Markets Index and Economic Outlook Forum at Sheraton Kampala

is projected to grow between 6.5 percent and 7 percent in the current financial year, which is also an election year.

“Uganda is ranked among the fastest-growing economies not just in the region but globally, and this momentum is expected to continue in the medium term,” he said.



Leaders from government, finance, and industry convene to reflect on Africa's financial markets and future growth pathways

He attributed the strong performance to prudent macroeconomic management and sustained structural reforms, particularly in financial markets and regulatory frameworks. As a result, Uganda's nominal Gross Domestic Product is projected to expand to about USD 68.4 billion by June 2026, with income per capita expected to exceed USD 1,399.

Dr. Ggoobi further highlighted key economic



Participants follow proceedings during the Absa Africa Financial Markets Index and Economic Outlook Forum in Kampala

gains, including controlled inflation averaging 3.5 percent, a stable Uganda shilling, rising export earnings, and growth in foreign direct investment, tourism receipts, and

remittances. Turning to the financial sector, the PSST outlined government priorities aimed at deepening markets and supporting long-term growth.



A wide view of the forum session as Uganda's projected economic growth and financial inclusion agenda are discussed

These include rebuilding capital markets to provide long-term debt and equity financing, attracting venture capital to support innovation with lower collateral requirements, and exploring the establishment of a small and medium enterprises-focused stock exchange for firms that do not yet qualify for main-board listings.

He also emphasized the need to further capitalize the Uganda Development Bank to meet growing demand for affordable long-term financing.

“We are working on a mission to build a 500-billion-dollar economy by 2040, and our strategic bets are the ATMS and key enablers,” Dr. Ggoobi said.

On financial inclusion, he said it remains central to Uganda's transformation agenda, citing the Parish Development Model (PDM) as a practical demonstration of inclusive finance. According to Dr. Ggoobi, more than USD 1 billion has been digitally delivered to citizens who were previously unreachable through traditional financial models.

“My message today is simple. Uganda's economic fundamentals are strong, our policy direction is clear, and our opportunities are expanding. The task ahead is to deepen financial markets and sustain momentum through continued reforms and partnerships,” he said.

UGANDA SECURES €641 MILLION FROM STANDARD CHARTERED TO FINANCE KEY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

By Jackie R.N Kasimbi, Uganda Media Centre

“These projects will go a long way in supporting Uganda’s development trajectory by facilitating power evacuation, providing clean water, and improving critical roads that unlock trade, tourism, and local economic activity.” – Hon. Matia Kasaija, Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development

Kampala, 30th January 2026 – The Government of Uganda and Standard Chartered Bank signed a landmark agreement worth EUR 641.1 million (approximately UGX 2.747 trillion) to finance three critical infrastructure projects across the country.



(L-R) Ms. Maria Kiwanuka Board Chairperson, Dalu Ajene, Africa CEO, and Head of Coverage at Standard Chartered Bank, H.E. Maria Håkansson, Swedish Ambassador to Uganda, Matia Kasaija is the current Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, General Katumba Wamala Minister of Works and Transport, Sanjay Rughani – Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Standard Chartered Uganda, and Hon. Matia Kasaija is the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, and Mr. Benjamin Zeityln, British High Commission Uganda

The signing ceremony took place on 30th January, 2026 at the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MOFPED) offices in Kampala.

Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Hon. Matia Kasaija, signed the agreements on behalf of the government, while Sanjay Rughani, CEO, Standard Chartered Bank, signed on behalf of the bank. The event was witnessed by senior government officials including Minister of Energy and Mineral Development Dr. Ruth Nankabirwa, Minister of Water & Environment Hon. Sam Cheptoris, Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury Dr. Ramathan Ggoobi, Swedish Ambassador to Uganda H.E. Maria Håkansson, and other dignitaries.

The financing package will cover three major projects aligned with Uganda's Ten-Fold Growth Strategy, aimed at expanding the economy to USD 500 billion by 2040.



Hon. Matia Kasaija and Sanjay Rughani shake hands to mark the successful signing of the infrastructure financing agreements

A EUR 342.5 million (UGX 1.4 trillion) loan will fund the construction of the 400kV Karuma-Tororo double-circuit power line and the Ntinda substation, enhancing transmission from the Karuma Hydropower Plant. The project is expected to improve electricity reliability for industries and urban centers, create jobs, and position Uganda as a regional energy hub.

“These projects will go a long way in supporting Uganda's development trajectory by facilitating the evacuation of power from Karuma Hydropower Plant to load centers like the

Tororo Industrial Park and supporting regional power trade,” said Hon. Kasaija.

■■■ The water project will provide clean water to target areas and improve people's well-being. The road project will support government initiatives in the oil sector and enhance tourism potential around Lake Albert.”

The financing for this project has been arranged with support from the Swedish Export Credit Agency (EKN) and Swedish Export Credit Corporation (SEK), marking EKN's first transaction in Uganda.

A separate EUR 182.8



Hon. Matia Kasaija, Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, signs the financing agreements on behalf of the Government of Uganda

million (UGX 754.5 billion) loan will fund Phase II of the Strategic Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Project. The project will benefit districts including Nakasongola, Kamuli, Mayuge, Bugweri, and Alebtong, providing water treatment plants and sanitation facilities for an estimated 740,000 people by 2030.

Sanjay Rughani, CEO, said: "As Standard Chartered Bank, we understand that water security, roads, and efficient power transmission enhance resilience and promote inclusive growth. As a bank, we are

committed to financing infrastructure that is economically viable."

The financing has been supported by the Chinese Export Credit Agency, Sinosure.

Standard Chartered will provide a EUR 115.8 million (UGX 486 billion) loan for the construction of the Karugutu-Ntoroko road (56.5km), the Rwebisengo Link (8.2km), and town roads in Ntoroko (3.3km). The upgrades will improve trade routes linking Uganda to the Democratic Republic of Congo, support the oil sector, and boost tourism in the Albertine region.

Dalu Ajene, CEO at Standard Chartered, said: "We are pleased to leverage our on-the-ground presence and trusted partnership with the Government of Uganda to continue supporting its ambitions. This partnership demonstrates how governments and international financial institutions can structure complex, long-tenor financing to deliver projects with lasting

economic and social impact."

The projects are part of Uganda's long-term strategy to grow the economy ten-fold, from USD 53 billion to USD 500 billion by 2040. They are backed by development partners, including Sweden, China, and the Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICEIC).

Hon. Kasaija emphasized the importance of proper implementation:

Having signed these financing agreements, I call upon project implementers, contractors, supervisors, and government agencies to ensure that this financing is put to proper use so Uganda can realize the projects' objectives."

The ceremony highlighted Standard Chartered's commitment to driving economic growth through infrastructure financing, reflecting its leadership in local, regional, and global investment initiatives.

Kampala, Uganda

UGANDA OUTLINES FY 2026/27 BUDGET RESOURCE ENVELOPE, EMPHASIZES FISCAL CONSOLIDATION AND DOMESTIC REVENUE GROWTH

By BillClinton

Our goal is to strengthen domestic resource mobilisation while ensuring that every shilling collected is efficiently deployed to priority sectors that drive economic development."
Minister of Finance, Matia Kasaija

The Government of Uganda has unveiled its preliminary resource envelope and financing strategy for the Financial Year (FY) 2026/27, signaling a period of fiscal consolidation, resource re-prioritisation, and strengthened domestic revenue mobilisation.

At the Budget Framework Paper stage, the total resource envelope for FY 2026/27 is projected at Shs. 69.399 trillion,



down from Shs. 72.376 trillion in FY 2025/26. This reduction reflects deliberate efforts by government to manage public debt, reduce reliance on expensive financing, and align spending with available resources.

Domestic revenues are expected to rise significantly to Shs. 40.090 trillion, compared

Matia Kasaija, Minister of Finance

to Shs. 36.806 trillion in the current fiscal year, highlighting government's continued focus on improving tax administration, compliance, and fostering economic growth.

Minister of Finance, Matia

Kasaija, emphasized the strategic focus on revenue growth, stating,

“Our goal is to strengthen domestic resource mobilisation while ensuring that every shilling collected is efficiently deployed to priority sectors that drive economic development.”

Government discretionary funding, net of arrears clearance, interest payments, and domestic debt repayments, is estimated at Shs. 31.059 trillion, down from Shs. 32.480 trillion in FY 2025/26. This reduction reflects a careful fiscal tightening aimed at balancing service delivery with debt sustainability.

Domestic borrowing is projected to decline to Shs. 8.952 trillion, from Shs. 11.381 trillion in FY 2025/26. Similarly, domestic debt refinancing is expected to reduce to Shs. 9.68 trillion, down from Shs. 10.028 trillion. “These reductions are part of

our deliberate strategy to ease pressure on domestic financial markets and lower interest costs for both government and private sector borrowers,” explained Ramadhan Ggoobi, Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury (PSST).

External budget financing is expected to drop sharply to Shs. 330.97 billion, down from Shs. 2.084 trillion in the previous fiscal year, while external project financing will reduce to Shs. 10.018 trillion from Shs. 11.327 trillion. The decline reflects both reduced external inflows and a strategic shift toward more sustainable financing options.

The FY 2026/27 budget will be financed through a mix of domestic and external resources, including tax revenues, borrowing, and grants. Minister Kasaija added, “We are prioritising concessional financing for social sector projects while exploring innovative financing solutions for infrastructure projects that generate high

economic returns.”

Government also plans to enhance allocative efficiency across sectors and implement strategies to attract increased foreign direct investment. Ggoobi stressed, “By improving revenue performance and deploying resources wisely, we aim to safeguard macroeconomic stability, support economic growth, and strengthen Uganda’s sovereign credit ratings.”

Overall, the FY 2026/27 resource envelope reflects a measured and disciplined fiscal approach. By reducing reliance on debt, prioritising concessional financing, and enhancing domestic revenue mobilisation, the government seeks to sustain economic recovery while ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability.

UGANDANS INVITED TO RUN FOR A CAUSE AS UWA ANNOUNCES WILDLIFE MARATHON 2026

By Male Solomon Grace, GCIC-Uganda



Ugandans are being called upon to lace up their running shoes and stand in solidarity with the families of fallen wildlife rangers as the Uganda Wildlife Authority prepares to host the UWA Wildlife Marathon 2026.

Scheduled for 1st March 2026 at Kitante Primary School in Kamwokya, the marathon is more than a sporting event. It is a national cause aimed at raising support for the education and welfare of children of wildlife rangers who lost their lives in the line of duty while protecting Uganda's rich natural

heritage.

Wildlife rangers are often the unsung heroes of conservation. They work in difficult and sometimes dangerous conditions to safeguard national parks, wildlife reserves, and the ecosystems that support tourism and livelihoods across the country. In the process, some pay the

ultimate price. The UWA Wildlife Marathon seeks to honor this sacrifice in a practical and lasting way by ensuring that the children left behind have access to quality education and a chance at a better future.

Through this initiative, Uganda Wildlife Authority is rallying institutions, organizations, and individuals to turn remembrance into action. Proceeds from the marathon will directly contribute to education support programs for the affected families,

reinforcing the message that the nation does not forget those who gave their lives in service.

The Authority has extended an open invitation to members of the GCOF community, as well as the wider public, to support the marathon through participation, sponsorship, and mobilization of networks. Whether by running, walking, sponsoring a runner, or encouraging others to register, every contribution counts.

Organizers emphasize that the marathon is designed to be inclusive. It welcomes seasoned athletes, casual runners, families, corporate teams, and anyone

willing to stand for conservation and social responsibility. Beyond fundraising, the event is expected to spark conversations around wildlife protection, ranger welfare, and shared national responsibility.

Ugandans are encouraged to view the marathon as an opportunity to give back to those who protect the country's natural treasures and to demonstrate unity around a cause that

touches conservation, education, and human dignity.

As preparations begin, UWA calls upon all well-wishers to mark the date and prepare to be part of a movement that runs not just for fitness, but for legacy, gratitude, and hope.

Kampala, Uganda | January 30, 2026

UGANDA'S ICT ADVANCEMENTS SPOTLIGHTED DURING PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT VISIT

The Uganda Institute of Information and Communications Technology (UICT) yesterday hosted the Parliamentary Committee on ICT & National Guidance for an oversight and verification visit, led by Hon. Tonny Ayoo. The engagement showcased Uganda's growing capacity in digital skills development and innovation.

During the visit, Members of Parliament witnessed a live demonstration of Augmented Virtual Reality (AVR) training. The technology allows UICT to provide immersive, hands-on learning experiences to diverse groups simultaneously, including TVET instructors at Ntinda Vocational Training Institute, farmers in Mayuge District, and secondary school



teachers. According to UICT officials, AVR is a strategic tool that standardizes training quality across institutions while scaling skills development efficiently without

incurring proportional costs.

In addition to the AVR demonstration, MPs toured newly established smart classrooms



equipped with smart screens, advanced audio-visual conferencing tools, and PTZ cameras. The visit also highlighted student innovations incubated at the National ICT Innovation Hub and an ongoing children's robotics workshop, emphasizing the Institute's commitment to nurturing homegrown technology talent from an early age.

Hon. Tonny Ayoo praised the initiatives, noting their potential to transform skills development and drive Uganda's digital economy. "It is

encouraging to see technologies like AVR being leveraged to reach learners across the country. These innovations are critical for equipping our workforce with the skills needed in today's competitive digital landscape," he said.

UICT officials emphasized that integrating modern technologies in vocational and technical education is part of a broader national strategy to strengthen Uganda's ICT sector, promote innovation, and enhance youth employability.

The oversight visit reflects Parliament's continued commitment to monitoring and supporting digital transformation efforts, ensuring that ICT initiatives effectively address the country's development priorities.



A Letter TO FEBRUARY

By Brenda Atugonza

Welcome, February, you sneaky little thing,
I thought January had at least sixty days to cling!

But look at you, showing up so soon,
As if January didn't need a bit more room!

I guess you didn't wait for January to finish its ride,
But hey, I'll forgive you, you're full of pride!
Thank you, January, for taking us through,
Peaceful elections, where democracy shone through!

We voted, we marched, we made our choice,
And the best candidates rose, with their voices loud and
poised.

You gave us our rights, and we exercised them with grace,
Now February, it's your time to take your place!

So, February, let's get the fun rolling,
With laughter, with joy, and moments worth polling!
You may be short, but oh, you're sweet,
With your love and your joy, you can't be beat!



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