UGANDA WEEKLY FOCUS

INFORMING MINDS • INSPIRING CHANGE

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SKILLING FOR THE FUTURE: HOW INDUSTRIAL SKILLING HUBS ARE RESHAPING UGANDA'S YOUTH & ECONOMY

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Top highlights

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The EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the 4th Edition of Uganda Weekly Focus. With every edition, we take another meaningful step forward, and it has been truly encouraging to see this publication grow. Thank you for being part of this journey and for allowing us to inform, inspire, and connect with you each week.

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to our dedicated contributors. Thank you for the tremendous work you continue to do.

This edition arrives at a unique moment in our national calendar. While the country is deep into campaign season, the work of nation-building has not slowed down. Across districts and regions, Uganda continues to register real progress in digital transformation, community empowerment, social protection, economic growth, and youth skilling. It is a reminder that even in politically active seasons, the wheels of development keep turning.

Inside this edition, you will find thoughtful stories and timely insights, including:

- A Deep Dive Into Uganda's Digital Public Service Transformation
- Expanded Support for Older Persons Under SAGE
- Inspiring Progress From Industrial Skilling Hubs

Across the country, thousands of young people are graduating with employable skills, accessing start-up capital, and joining the money economy with newfound confidence. Their stories are among the most uplifting features of this edition.

These and more you will find in this edition.

As our readership grows, we warmly invite organisations, small businesses, agencies, and brands to advertise with us. This is a wonderful opportunity to reach readers nationwide, and for now, advertising is completely free.

Thank you for reading, sharing, and supporting this work.

Enjoy the edition.

UGANDA WEEKLY FOCUS

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ADVANCING CITIZEN-CENTRED GOVERNANCE THROUGH DIGITAL INNOVATION

The NITA-U technical team in Hoima City inspecting the Hoima City Stadium site, supporting supervision, NBI connectivity, cybersecurity readiness, and key IT components as part of Uganda's preparations for AFCON 2027

By Fiona Luboga, Communication Officer, Ministry of ICT & NG

Uganda is witnessing a quiet but powerful shift in public service delivery. The long queues, misplaced files and slow manual processes that once defined government offices are steadily giving way to a digitally enabled public service. Guided by national priorities under the Digital Uganda Vision, the Digital Government Strategy, and emerging targets within the NDP IV, government institutions are adopting homegrown digital systems designed to improve efficiency, accuracy, and citizen experience.

Today, entrepreneurs can register businesses in a few days through the Online Business Registration System (OBRS), reducing the cost of starting a business and supporting the national objective of lowering the cost of doing business under NDP IV.

At the community level, the Parish Development Management Information System (PDMIS) has become one of the most impactful tools for inclusive development.

August 2025 — NITA-U Executive Director Dr. Hatwib Mugasa highlights UGPass and its role in strengthening digital authentication and e-signatures in Uganda's digital transformation journey

Linked to NIRA data for verification, PDMIS helps track households, beneficiaries, and fund flows in real time. As of 2025, more than **19.5 million** Ugandans across **9.1 million** households have been registered, supporting **10,594** PDM SACCOs and **217,925** enterprise groups, with over **UGX 3 trillion** tracked through the system. This level of visibility reduces leakage, strengthens accountability, and ensures support reaches intended beneficiaries.

Government records are also undergoing a major transformation through the Electronic Document Management Information System (EDMIS), while the electronic Government Procurement system (eGP) enhances transparency in public procurement an area previously prone to delays and human error. In the education sector, the EMIS platform enables real-time monitoring of school data, supporting quick interventions in areas such as teacher shortages and absenteeism.

In health facilities, Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) are improving continuity of care. A recent study shows that facilities use an average of 4.8 EMR systems, though only 10 percent are interoperable, underscoring the importance of the Digital Government Strategy's call for unified, interoperable systems.

Utilities and tax services have also gone digital. UMEME, NWSC and URA provide online platforms for billing, monitoring, and payments, while URA's EFRIS is improving compliance and reducing revenue loss.

These innovations are steadily building public trust. With cleaner data, faster services and greater transparency, Uganda's digital transformation is reshaping everyday interactions from classrooms and hospitals to parishes and business offices creating a government that is efficient, accountable and truly citizen-centered.

DFCU FOUNDATION PARTNERS WITH ICT MINISTRY TO BOOST DIGITAL SKILLS AND INNOVATION

Dr. Aminah Zawedde (centre) and officials from DFCU Foundation sign a partnership to expand digital skilling and innovation programmes in Uganda

The Ministry of ICT and National Guidance has entered a strategic partnership with the dfcu Foundation to expand digital skilling programmes and strengthen innovation hubs across the country. The collaboration is expected to widen access to digital tools and equip entrepreneurs, learners, and young people with the competencies needed to thrive in Uganda's fast-evolving digital economy.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Permanent Secretary Dr. Aminah Zawedde said the Ministry will receive computers, training support, and other resources to enhance Innovation Hubs and increase participation in the digital space. She noted that limited access to devices remains a major challenge in many communities, where a single computer must often serve dozens of learners.

Under the partnership, dfcu Foundation will provide laptops equipped with the SOMA e-learning platform to support training in digital and entrepreneurial skills. Executive Director Mabel Ndawula reaffirmed the Foundation's

Permanent Secretary Dr. Aminah Zawedde signs the partnership agreement between the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance and the DFCU Foundation

commitment to empowering Ugandans with practical knowledge that strengthens and sustains their enterprises. She added that dfcu Bank will continue to reinforce these efforts through its financial services and ongoing community initiatives.

According to Helena Mayanja, dfcu Bank's Head of Corporate Affairs and Sustainability, the programme will begin with a pilot phase involving 100 refurbished laptops from the bank's internal upgrade cycle, all provided at no cost to the Ministry.

The Ministry will make ICT hubs available for programme activities, offer technical and administrative support, and coordinate the identification of MSMEs to participate. dfcu Foundation will deliver laptops, mentorship, and training in digital and financial literacy, business formalisation, SACCO development, and governance. The Foundation will also digitise training materials and onboard participants onto the SOMA platform.

Both institutions will jointly design capacity-building initiatives, mobilise resources, create mentorship pathways, and apply a shared monitoring framework to track progress. They will also collaborate on public awareness campaigns to showcase innovations and highlight programme results.

Dr. Aminah Zawedde of the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance and DFCU Foundation Executive Director Mabel Ndawula display the signed partnership documents to mark their new digital skilling initiative

Dr. Zawedde described the partnership as a meaningful step toward improving digital inclusion and equipping Ugandans with the skills necessary to compete and succeed in a technology-driven world.

November 20, 2025

GOVERNMENT LOWERS SAGE ELIGIBILITY AGE TO 65, EXPANDS SUPPORT FOR OLDER PERSONS

Minister of State for Elderly Affairs, Hon. Gidudu Mafwabi Dominic, speaks during a press briefing at the Uganda Media Centre

By Peace Ankunda, Public Affairs Assistant, Uganda Media Centre

> **"We have made progress, but beneficiaries must use these opportunities wisely to strengthen their household incomes."**
> **Hon. Gidudu Mafwabi Dominic, Minister of State for Elderly Affairs**

The Government of Uganda has announced a major policy shift aimed at expanding access to social protection for older persons, including a significant reduction in the age requirement for the Senior Citizens Grant under the Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE).

Speaking at the Uganda Media Centre, Hon. Gidudu Mafwabi Dominic, Minister of State for Elderly Affairs, said Cabinet approved lowering the eligibility age from 80 to 65 years starting in the 2026/27 financial year. The decision is expected to increase the number of beneficiaries to over 1 million older persons across the country.

According to the Minister, the Government will allocate an additional UGX 252.16 billion, bringing the total SAGE budget to UGX 373.36 billion in the next financial year. He added that the programme will also clear UGX 20.6 billion in accumulated arrears this financial year.

"We take pride in the strides made through social protection programmes. Lowering the eligibility age ensures our senior citizens live dignified lives and strengthens efforts to improve household incomes," Hon. Gidudu said.

The SAGE programme was first piloted in 15

districts with support from development partners, including UKAid, Irish Aid, and UNICEF. It has since proven effective in improving nutrition, access to health care, education, and community-level productivity. By 2019, the programme had reached over 200,000 beneficiaries and has continued to expand nationwide. Currently, 306,759 older persons receive the monthly cash transfer of UGX 25,000, paid quarterly.

The Minister also announced enhanced support for SEGOP, which targets older persons aged 60 to 79. Since its launch in FY 2022/23, the programme has benefited 13,449 older persons across 181 local governments. An additional UGX 5 billion will be provided to close funding gaps and expand access to income-generating opportunities for frail older persons.

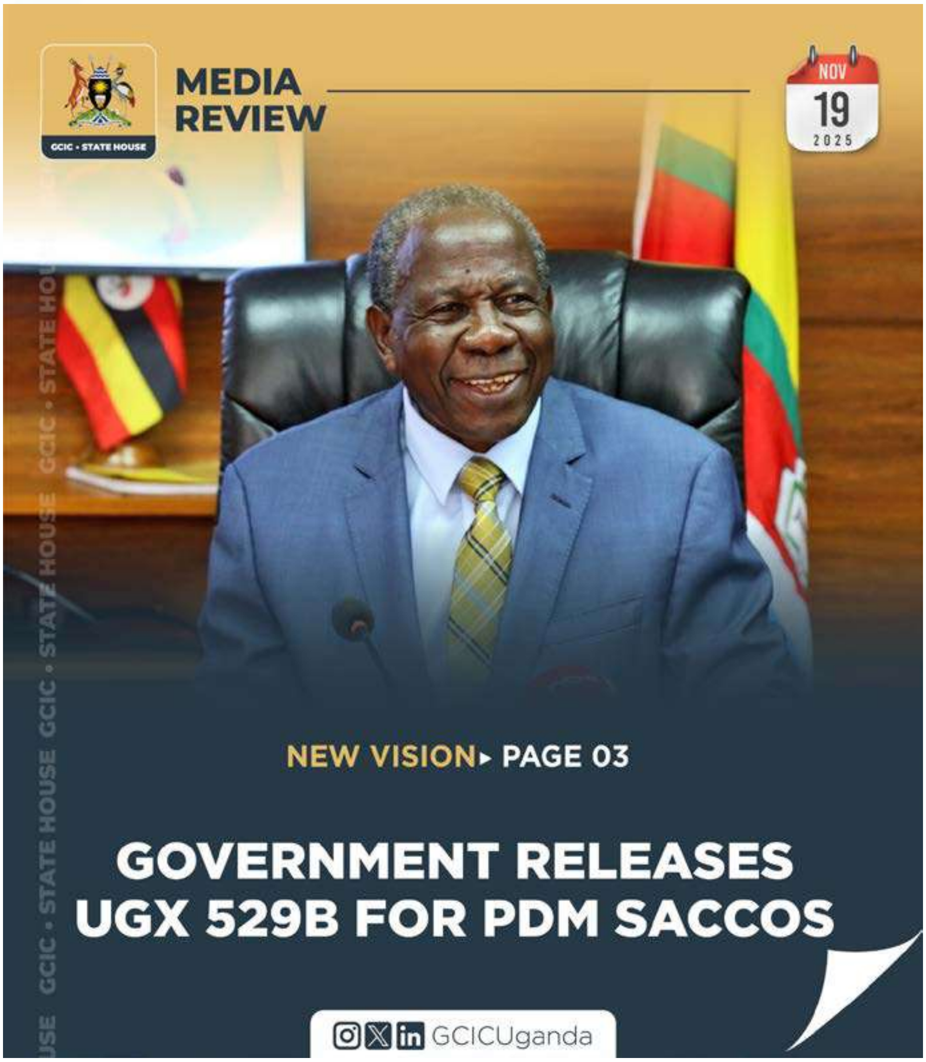
Uganda has also begun extending social cash transfers to elderly refugees using the SAGE model. The programme is operational in Lobule and Bidibidi settlements, reaching 350 beneficiaries, with enrolment ongoing in Rhino and parts of Terego. Coverage is expected to reach 700 elderly refugees.

Hon. Gidudu urged all older persons to register for National IDs, noting that access to SAGE, SEGOP, and other grants requires a National Identification Number for bank account opening. He further encouraged families to maintain peace, safety, and active participation in government programmes to support Uganda's Vision 2040 and the National Development Plan IV.

GOVERNMENT RELEASES UGX 529 BILLION TO BOOST PARISH DEVELOPMENT MODEL

By Sserumaga David

The Government of Uganda released an additional UGX 529 billion to all verified Parish Development Model (PDM) SACCOs, marking another major step in what officials describe as the country's largest grassroots economic empowerment effort to date.



The announcement was made on Tuesday by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, during a media briefing in Kampala where he reaffirmed President Yoweri Museveni's commitment to taking affordable capital directly to the parish level.

According to the Minister, each of the 10,589 PDM SACCOs will receive UGX 50 million beginning immediately, consistent with the programme's biannual disbursement schedule. The new release forms part of the UGX 1.097 trillion allocated in the 2025/26 financial year to deepen production, expand financial inclusion, and strengthen parish-level economic governance.

Government records show that since the programme's inception, a cumulative UGX 3.261 trillion has been transferred to PDM SACCOs across the country. At least 99 percent of these funds have already reached beneficiaries — including farmers, youth, women, persons with disabilities, and small-scale rural entrepreneurs who

have invested heavily in productive enterprises.

The Minister highlighted key investment areas: UGX 385 billion in coffee, UGX 1.1 trillion in food and cash crops, another UGX 1.1 trillion in livestock such as piggery, and UGX 366 billion in poultry. These figures, he said, demonstrate that "the PDM is working" and that households are steadily moving from subsistence to monetary production.

He reiterated government's zero-tolerance stance on corruption, warning that no fees should be charged to beneficiaries accessing PDM loans.

"Anyone who abuses the system will be punished according to the law," he stressed, calling on RDCs, DISOs, Accounting Officers, and SACCO leaders to ensure compliance and proper loan recovery.

The Minister also urged government banks and Wendi agents under Pearl Bank (PostBank) to accelerate outreach efforts, ensuring that no parish is left behind in the shift toward digital and accessible financial services.

"With today's disbursement, PDM moves into a stronger, more impactful phase," he said, officially flagging off the next tranche of capital.

POLICE RESCUE 15 TRAFFICKING VICTIMS, ARREST THREE SUSPECTS IN TORORO

Some of the rescued victims paraded at Bison A Cell in Tororo Municipality, where both the suspects and the victims had been renting rooms while waiting for the promised jobs

By ASP. Faridah Nampiima, Head Media Monitoring Unit, Uganda Police Force

Tororo, Uganda – The Uganda Police Force in Bukedi South Region has rescued 15 victims of Trafficking in Persons and arrested three suspects in a major breakthrough operation in Tororo Municipality.

The case, registered as Tororo CRB 1054/2025, has been under investigation since August 2025. According to the Regional Police PRO, IP Mugwe J. Moses, the operation was triggered by a complaint filed by NO. 41879 Sgt. Omego Francis, the Officer-in-Charge of Western Division Police Station.

On 19 November 2025, Sgt. Omego and his team acted on information that several young people were stranded at Muzuri Guest House. They found three men Omoding Gabriel, Opolot Tom Francis, and Okoli

Suspect Odiope arrived with a bag to collect the remaining payment and was found with 700,000 shillings in cash

Emmanuel who reported that they had been brought to Tororo with promises of employment.

The victims stated that the suspects demanded two million shillings from each person as a fee to secure jobs with a company called “Rock Star Millionaires Team.” Many had already paid between 150,000 and 1.8 million shillings, leaving them financially drained and stranded.

The three victims guided police officers to Bison ‘A’ Cell in Western Division, where 12 other victims had been living in rented rooms for months while waiting for the promised jobs. In total, 15 victims men and women from Kapelebyong, Amuria, Katakwi, Soroti, Serere, and Kumi districts were safely rescued and taken to CPS Tororo.

Police also arrested three suspects identified as: Odiope **Andrew; Engicu Samuel; Acori Michael** all residents of Bison Cell in Tororo. An exhibit of one million shillings, believed to be part of the money collected from the victims, was recovered.

Preliminary investigations show that the suspects recruited the victims from their home districts and transported them to Tororo under false promises of employment. According to the police, the group had been in Tororo for about three months without receiving any job opportunities.

IP Mugwe issued a warning to the public: “We appeal to our people to be very careful with masqueraders who disguise as job providers yet their intentions are different.”

The Uganda Police Force says inquiries are ongoing and further updates will be provided.

SAFEGUARDING UGANDA'S GAINS: WHAT FOUR DECADES OF NRM LEADERSHIP HAVE BUILT

By Sarah Nanteza Kyobe


The Commander-in-Chief inspects UPDF troops, a reminder of the army's continued commitment to peace, discipline, and national stability

The debate around what the National Resistance Movement (NRM) has achieved in four decades of governance has intensified as the country heads toward another election. Our colleagues in the opposition argue that the ruling party has nothing worth safeguarding. While this criticism stems partly from legitimate frustrations about unresolved challenges, it is inaccurate to claim that the past forty years have produced no meaningful progress. Uganda's story is far more complex, and acknowledging achievements does not negate the work that remains.

I was born when the NRM had just taken power, so many of the early transformations were narrated to me through witnesses, historical records, and research. What emerges from that history is undeniable: Uganda of the early 1980s was defined by deep insecurity, crumbling institutions, armed rebellions, and widespread fear. Like many African nations at the time, Uganda was recovering from decades of coups, civil conflict, and economic collapse.

When the NRM assumed power in 1986, one of its first priorities was restoring security. Over the years, it confronted armed groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement, and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), significantly reducing their operational capacity.

A previously predatory military was reformed


Newly upgraded Sebei road networks enhancing transport, safety, and economic activity in the region

into a professional, disciplined, and community-oriented Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF). Unlike earlier armies that were associated with looting and brutality, today's force is widely recognized across the region for its professionalism. UPDF peacekeeping missions in Somalia (AMISOM/ATMIS), the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic have strengthened Uganda's reputation as a key regional stabilizer.

The successful disarmament programme in Karamoja stands out as one of the largest post-conflict stabilization operations in East Africa, reducing cattle rustling and saving countless lives.

Today, Ugandans can travel freely, day or night, across the country. Businesses operate late into the night, and rural–urban mobility is at its highest in decades signs of the stability many now take for granted.

Peace created the foundation for Uganda's modern infrastructure expansion. Over the years, government investment has transformed the country's transport systems road, air, water, and rail.

As of September 2025, Uganda has 6,287 kilometres of paved roads, compared to fewer than 1,000 kilometres in 1986. New highways, oil roads, industrial roads, and border-to-border networks have opened up regions that were once isolated. Restoration of key economic corridors has boosted trade and reduced travel times for communities and businesses.

Uganda's water transport network, once neglected, is steadily being rebuilt. Major port upgrades include Bukasa Port, Port Bell, and the Jinja Pier rehabilitation. The government operates a fleet of 13 national ferries across lakes and rivers. Recent additions such as MV Sigulu and upcoming vessels are improving connectivity for islands and lake-shore districts.

With support from the World Bank, the MV Kaawa cargo ship was restored, strengthening the Port Bell–Mwanza–Kisumu trade triangle and reducing logistics costs for regional commerce.

Uganda's aviation sector has undergone a major transformation. Entebbe International Airport is being expanded to accommodate 3.5 million passengers annually, with a modern passenger terminal and a state-of-the-art cargo centre already in use.

Upcountry aerodromes

MV Sigulu ferry, one of Uganda's newest vessels, improving transport and access for island districts on Lake Victoria

Over the last forty years, Uganda's transport infrastructure has expanded more than at any other time in its post-independence history. Roads, ports, airports, and ferries reflect a long-term investment that continues to shape trade, mobility, and national development.

including Kisoro, Arua, Kasese, and Gulu are being improved to support tourism, agriculture, and regional travel. The second international airport in Hoima is under construction to support oil production, exports, and tourism in the Albertine region.

Uganda Airlines has re-emerged as a national carrier with Airbus A330neos and Bombardier CRJ900s, opening routes to Dubai, Johannesburg, Mumbai, Lagos, and other destinations. Its network expansion has significantly increased passenger traffic and foreign revenue.

These achievements do not mean that all problems are solved. There is still a great deal of work to be done. However, the facts show that the NRM is not merely safeguarding its legacy it aims to consolidate tangible progress that has improved security, connectivity, and national stability.

The writer works with the Uganda Media Centre.

SKILLING FOR THE FUTURE: HOW INDUSTRIAL SKILLING HUBS ARE RESHAPING UGANDA'S YOUTH AND ECONOMY

An aerial of the Bugisu Industial hub in Lukhonge.

By Jackie Mayega, Public Affairs Assistant, Uganda Media Centre

> "We are not just training young people; we are building an army of wealth creators who will transform Uganda's economy."
> President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni

Uganda is quietly undergoing one of the most far-reaching socio-economic transformations in recent years. The Presidential Industrial Skilling Hubs now spread across all regions of the country are emerging as the backbone of a new labour force: practical, confident, productive, and ready for the money economy.

From Eastern to Western Uganda, from the North to the Central region, the story is increasingly the same. Young people who once dropped out of school, struggled with unemployment, or survived on informal labour are today graduating with certified vocational skills, forming enterprises, and joining SACCOs backed by government capital injection. The result is a national movement that is changing households, reshaping regional economies,

Mengo Presidential Industrial hub

Mengo zonal Presidential indistrial hub

and strengthening the country's industrial base.

President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni has positioned skilling as a deliberate pillar of human capital development, arguing that Uganda's transformation requires not only education and good health but also practical skills that match market demands.

Under the Presidential Initiative on Skilling the Youth, 19 Zonal Industrial Skilling Hubs have been constructed, aiming to equip over 12,000 youth annually with hands-on competencies that immediately place them into productive work.

Each learner receives:

- Free accommodation
- Free meals
- Free medical care
- Six months of practical training
- A DIT Level One Vocational Certificate (equivalent to UCE and internationally recognized)

This model ensures that even the most vulnerable young Ugandans get a real chance at economic participation.

What the Hubs Offer Nationwide

Across the hubs, youth are trained in trades that match local and national demand, including:

- Carpentry and joinery
- Tailoring and garment design
- Hairdressing and cosmetology
- Leatherworks and shoe making
- Welding and metal fabrication
- Building and construction
- Baking and confectionery
- Mechanics and vehicle repair

- Electrical installation and maintenance
- Soap, detergent, and candle making

This range is constantly expanding. The President has directed the hubs incorporate weaving, spinning, ceramics, motor mechanics, and food processing to widen opportunities for young entrepreneurs.

While each region has its unique stories, the national trend is clear: the hubs are producing thousands of skilled, employable, and entrepreneurial youth every year.

Examples include:

- One hub in Eastern Uganda has already trained 938 young people across four intakes.
- Another in Sebei has supported 912 youth 470 girls and 442 boys and created 37 jobs directly for instructors and staff.
- A hub in Teso recently reported 712 graduates since 2023, many of whom have opened workshops, salons, bakeries, and welding businesses.
- In the Rwenzori region, one hub enrolled 897 learners in a single intake, supported by district SACCOs for start-up financing.

Mengo zonal Presidential indistrial hub

These numbers reflect only sampled hubs, but they illustrate a much larger national wave of transformation.

Every hub has its own success stories young people who represent what the initiative is achieving across the country.

- Tailors supplying uniforms to schools and shops

Sebei Presidential Industrial hub

Sebei Presidential Industrial hub

- Bakers opening micro-enterprises that serve entire sub-counties
- Construction trainees forming companies and winning community contracts
- Salon owners employing multiple workers and expanding services
- Welders and metal fabricators opening workshops and training others
- Mechanics securing jobs at garages, institutions, and NGOs

Many graduates begin with almost nothing some saving as little as Shs 2,000 but within months of receiving their DIT certificate and start-up capital, they are running businesses, hiring others, and contributing to local economies.

For example, a trainee in the Rwenzori region used her savings to buy a sewing machine, and today supplies uniforms to multiple schools and has even started constructing rental units.

Another beneficiary from Karamoja now owns a bakery employing four people and saving Shs450,000 monthly after receiving skilling and Presidential start-up support.

To ensure that skills translate into income, the President injected Shs8.8 billion into Skilling Hub SACCOs across the country, with each SACCO receiving Shs50 million to support graduates with affordable capital.

The State House Comptroller has cautioned leaders nationwide to safeguard this money, emphasizing accountability, fairness, and transparency so that the project remains a permanent pillar for youth empowerment.

Sebei Presidential Industrial hub

Sebei Presidential Industrial hub

Why Skilling is Now Uganda's Most Powerful Equalizer

Across all regions, three powerful outcomes have emerged:

1. Youth are entering the money economy quickly. Graduates are beginning to earn within weeks of completing their training, using their new skills to start small businesses, take on local jobs, and join the money economy much faster than traditional pathways allow.
2. The program targets the most vulnerable. School dropouts, single mothers, and unemployed youth who once had no options are now accessing free training, certification, and a real chance to rebuild their lives through practical skills.
3. Household incomes are rising. Many graduates can now contribute to rent, school fees, food, and even small investments. Families are experiencing better stability, improved wellbeing, and greater hope for the future.

The President summarised this national mission clearly during a recent commissioning: "We are not just training; we are launching an army of job creators."

The Presidential Industrial Skilling Hubs are engines of local manufacturing, anchors of the Buy Uganda Build Uganda (BUBU) agenda, and catalysts for a generation that is shifting from survival to productivity.

Skills are changing lives. Skills are supporting families.
Skills are building Uganda's future.

THE POWER OF EVERY UGANDAN VOTE

By Fiona Luboga Communication Officer – Ministry of ICT and National Guidance

Every ballot carries a story. In 2026, millions of Ugandans will write the next chapter, each vote becoming a declaration of hope, power, and responsibility. One choice can shape an entire nation.

Anticipation is growing across the country. The Electoral Commission projects over 22 million registered voters for 2026, the highest number in Uganda's history. With the population now estimated at 45.9 million according to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), the upcoming elections stand as a defining moment for our democracy.

"Widespread participation gives legitimacy to leadership and confidence to citizens," notes Justice Simon Byabakama, Chairperson of the Electoral Commission.

When Ugandans turn out in large numbers, they do more than choose leaders. They collectively affirm the values and priorities that should guide national progress.

The power of the ballot also lies in its ability to unify. On election day, a farmer in Gulu, a teacher in Masaka, a nurse in Mbale, and a student in Kampala share the same right and responsibility. That shared act builds equality and trust, reminding us that democracy thrives when everyone participates.

High voter turnout influences more than election outcomes. It shapes the policies that affect daily life. When citizens from all backgrounds participate, governance becomes more inclusive, and leaders are compelled to prioritise the needs of the many rather than the privileged few.

Youth participation will be especially critical. Nearly three-quarters of Ugandans are under 35. Their choices will set the tone and direction of the elections, driving innovation, accountability, and transparency. Civic education campaigns on campuses, online platforms, and through youth forums aim to equip them with the understanding needed to vote wisely.

Women and marginalised groups also hold a central place in this promise. Inclusive voter education efforts, through community dialogues, radio programs, and local workshops, ensure that diverse voices shape national priorities. With UBOS reporting literacy levels above 76 percent, more citizens are empowered to participate meaningfully and hold leaders to account.

The promise of the ballot is simple when citizens show up, democracy grows stronger. Every vote matters. Every voice contributes to Uganda's direction. Our future depends not only on who we elect, but on the awareness and engagement each voter brings to the ballot box.

UGANDA IS LANDLOCKED, NOT LOCKED OUT

By ASP Farida Nampiima, Head, Media Monitoring Unit – UPF

> **“Landlocked countries are not confined; they are protected by global rights to trade, transit, and exploration.”**

When President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni recently remarked that the Indian Ocean “belongs to him and to Ugandans as well,” some laughed, while others read it as political rhetoric. Yet behind the humour lies a solid principle of international law: landlocked countries do have legally recognised rights to access the oceans and to participate fully in global domains such as outer space.

Uganda, like the 43 other landlocked states worldwide, is not confined by geography. Under modern international law, it enjoys guaranteed rights to transit, maritime access, the freedoms of the high seas, and participation in the global commons.

The foundation of these rights is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1982). Part X of the Convention (Articles 124–132) explicitly protects landlocked countries. Uganda is therefore legally entitled to reach the sea through roads, railways, waterways, and pipelines. This access is not a favour from coastal neighbours; it is an international obligation. Likewise, Kenya and Tanzania must allow the movement of Uganda’s goods on fair and non-discriminatory terms. Landlocked states also enjoy equal rights on the high seas, including navigation, marine research, and laying submarine cables.

Other instruments reinforce these protections, such as the 1965 New York Convention, the 1921 Barcelona Convention, and WTO GATT Article V, which prohibits discrimination against goods in transit.

Uganda’s use of the ports of Mombasa and Dar es Salaam therefore rests on global commitments, not goodwill.

Beyond ocean access, President Museveni’s remark touches on the principle that global commons oceans, airspace, and outer space are shared by all humanity. The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 states that outer space “shall be the province of all mankind,” meaning no state may claim sovereignty over celestial bodies and all nations, including landlocked ones, may explore space freely.

Uganda’s launch of PearlAfricaSat-1 in 2022 affirmed this right, opening doors in agriculture, communication, security, and climate science.

For a developing country, these rights are not symbolic; they shape trade, technology, and competitiveness. Geography may define borders, but it does not define destiny. In truth, being landlocked has never meant being locked out.

UGANDA SET TO LAUNCH NATIONAL SELF-RELIANCE INDEX

By David Sserumaga, Public Affairs Assistant, Uganda Media Centre

Uganda is set to unveil a major milestone in its refugee response framework with the launch of the Uganda Self-Reliance Index (UG-SRI) on Thursday, 27 November. The tool, developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development with support from the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), is expected to set a new national standard for measuring the self-reliance of refugees and host communities.

Addressing the press ahead of the launch, Ms. Genevieve Chicoine, Head of Programme for WFP Uganda, commended the Government of Uganda for its commitment to strengthening accountability and improving outcomes for the country's large refugee population. Uganda hosts the largest number of refugees in Africa, and WFP remains a key partner in both humanitarian support and long-term resilience programming.

"Our goal has always been to align with the Government's priorities," Ms. Chicoine said. “WFP works within national frameworks, especially the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, to provide food, nutrition, and livelihood support that helps communities transition from dependency to self-reliance.”

She noted that while promoting self-reliance has always been central to Uganda’s refugee response, accurately measuring progress has been difficult. Different organisations used different tools, resulting in indicators that could not be compared across programmes or locations.

“Imagine one NGO working in West Nile and another in the South West,” she explained. “Both support refugee livelihoods, but with different measurement tools. Without harmonisation, we cannot accurately track progress or understand where interventions are most effective.”

The need for a unified framework gained momentum during the 2023 Global Refugee Forum in Geneva, where Uganda committed to developing national minimum standard indicators for self-reliance. WFP matched this pledge by offering technical and financial assistance, co-chairing the Self-Reliance Reference Group, and working alongside ministries, agencies, and development partners to develop the tool.

From 2023 to date, this multi-stakeholder effort culminated in the creation of the Uganda Self-Reliance Index an evidence-based, government-led framework that will guide all actors involved in refugee and host-community programming.

Ms. Chicoine emphasized that the UG-SRI is more than a technical tool; it is a game-changer for accountability and programme quality.

“It ensures that all partners measure the same outcomes, allowing for accurate assessments, better decision-making, and improved service delivery,” she said. “WFP reaffirms its commitment to support the Government and partners in operationalizing the index.”

Hon. Peace Mutuuzo, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development called on all agencies and organisations working with refugees and host communities to adopt the UG-SRI, describing it as a crucial step toward unified reporting and stronger impact.

As Uganda prepares for the official launch next week, government and development partners are optimistic that the new index will strengthen the country’s reputation as a global leader in progressive refugee management. “Together, we are advancing a shared vision of resilience and dignity for refugees and host communities in Uganda,” Ms. Chicoine concluded.

UGANDA STEPS INTO A NEW ERA OF PROGRESS

By Billclinton

Uganda enters 2025 with cautious but undeniable optimism. Across security, the economy, education, health, tourism, and infrastructure, the country is posting signs of momentum supported by disciplined policy and renewed investment. A look at the latest government and statistical reports shows a nation quietly reorganizing itself for long-term transformation.

National security remains a cornerstone of Uganda's development strategy. For FY 2025/26, Parliament allocated UGX 3.737 trillion to defence, including UGX 1.701 trillion for recurrent needs and UGX 2.036 trillion for capital investments. These funds strengthen defence capabilities, modernise infrastructure, and enhance research and local production. A secure environment continues to anchor Uganda's economic and social progress.

Uganda's economy remains resilient. Real GDP grew by 6.3 percent in FY 2024/25, outpacing the previous year. Inflation has been kept in check, averaging 3.5 percent for headline inflation and 3.9 percent for core inflation both within the government's 5 percent target.

The shilling has also held firm, appreciating by 0.5 percent in July 2025 to UGX 3,586.57 per USD, supported by remittances, exports, and offshore investments. Early indicators for FY 2025/26 are strong: the CIEA climbed to 178.58 in May, and the PMI stood at 55.6 in June, signalling robust private-sector activity. Growth for the new fiscal year is projected at around 7 percent.

Roads and transport continue to command a major share of the national budget. Major upgrades — including the Kampala Roads & Bridges Project, the KCCA 87 km upgrade, and the AfDB-supported Busega–Mpigi Expressway promise to ease congestion and accelerate mobility. Uganda's tarmacked network now stands at 6,287.6 km, cutting travel times dramatically. However, funding shortfalls remain a risk, with 27 major projects slowed and a UGX 5.2 trillion debt to contractors threatening timelines.

The education sector received UGX 5.04 trillion for FY 2025/26, with increased focus on ICT, EMIS, and TVET skills to prepare a job-ready workforce. In health, the government allocated UGX 262.88 billion in Q1 releases, though analysts warn that per-capita spending remains low and absorption challenges hinder full impact.

Tourism is rebounding impressively, with 1.37 million visitors in 2024 and revenues hitting UGX 4.8 trillion. The sector now supports over 803,000 jobs. Government investments in sports stadiums, high-altitude centres, and creative-industry infrastructure signal a shift towards diversifying Uganda's economic engines.

UGANDA'S BPO REVOLUTION: DRIVING JOBS, INNOVATION, AND DIGITAL GROWTH

Col. Edith Nakalema engages BPO investors on strategies to leapfrog Uganda's outsourcing sector during a high-level meeting in January 2025

By Fiona Luboga, Communication Officer – Ministry of ICT and National Guidance

"Uganda's BPO sector is becoming one of the country's most promising engines for youth employment and digital innovation." Dr. Amiinah Zawedde

Uganda's Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector is emerging as a powerful engine for job creation, digital innovation, and economic transformation. Anchored on the National BPO Policy launched in February 2025, the Government is positioning the country as a competitive regional outsourcing hub that leverages ICTs to deliver services, attract investment, and expand opportunities for young people. The Policy emphasises stimulating job creation, enhancing efficiency, and strengthening Uganda's global competitiveness through a well-structured outsourcing ecosystem.

A cornerstone of this

growth is the Ministry's comprehensive framework that guides talent development, market access, certification standards, and infrastructure expansion. The Policy recognises Uganda's strategic advantages: a young and educated population, competitive labour costs, and an enabling legal environment including data protection, electronic transactions, and cyber laws which gives international clients confidence in Uganda as an outsourcing destination.

Practical progress is already visible. The national BPO database now records 243 registered companies, with 50 actively delivering services in customer support, IT-enabled operations, and digital freelancing. The Business Matching Platform (BizLink), launched in June 2025, connects Ugandan firms and professionals to regional and global markets, expanding opportunities for youth-led enterprises. As a result, the sector has generated more than 10,205 direct jobs and 15,000 indirect jobs, with a target of 150,000 by 2030.

Infrastructure investments such as the National ICT Innovation Hub in Kampala and regional hubs at Kabale, Soroti, and Muni universities reflect the Policy's commitment to regionally distributed BPO infrastructure and digital skilling capacity. The Policy explicitly guides the establishment of BPO parks, promotion of public–private partnerships, and development of skilling frameworks to prepare Ugandans for global service delivery.

Local companies are demonstrating strong competitiveness. Firms such as Helpware, Maarifasasa, Exquisite Solutions, Techdom Digital Solutions, Sumic IT Solutions, Ibabaza Media,

Kolaborate, Waape, and Refactory Academy are exporting services in software development, digital media, cloud support, and AI-assisted operations. These successes are further strengthened by international partnerships such as the Uganda Japan Connect Project, JICA collaborations, and engagements under the UK Trade Partnerships Programme.

Economically, Uganda's BPO sector has generated over USD 100 million in revenue and continues to contribute to GDP through growing exports, digital payments, and technology adoption. Socially, it offers inclusive pathways for women, youth, and persons with disabilities reflecting the Policy's emphasis on gender equity and nationwide opportunity distribution.

With clear policy direction, expanding infrastructure, and rising global visibility, Uganda is steadily becoming a preferred destination for Business Process Outsourcing. Continued investment in skills, innovation, responsible AI adoption, and global marketing will consolidate Uganda's position as a leading hub for digital services in Africa.

UGANDA'S PEACEFUL CAMPAIGNS EXPOSE THOSE WHO THRIVED ON CHAOS

By David Serumaga

Uganda has now entered the seventh week of presidential campaigns, and the first full week of parliamentary campaigns. So far, what we are witnessing is nothing short of a global gold-standard in peaceful elections. Apart from a few isolated incidents which must be addressed firmly the country is experiencing one of the calmest and most orderly campaign seasons in recent history. Some have even labelled it a "boring election" simply because it lacks the usual chaos and confrontations.

But those who call it boring are, in my view, the very individuals who have historically benefitted from violence. In previous elections, security forces spent enormous resources containing riots and disorder. This time, however, the new campaign approach seems to have left them puzzled and perhaps disappointed.

In the past, election-related violence was the perfect magnet for international media houses. Disturbing images and dramatic headlines dominated global news. Today, with campaigns largely calm and incident-free, the same journalists are struggling to find something "exciting" to broadcast. Many of those already in the country reportedly wake up, test their cameras just to prevent rust, then pack them away again.

With little political drama to document, some foreign correspondents have instead turned into enthusiastic tourists, visiting Uganda's beautiful attractions and sharing positive images of the Pearl of Africa. For once, Uganda's story is not being defined by conflict.

Another interesting outcome may be seen after the elections. A number of NGOs that thrive on narratives of instability may face difficulties securing funding. Donors who prefer to support conflict-related programming may find Uganda's new environment "too peaceful" for their usual priorities.

For some opposition candidates and their digital operatives, this calm campaign season is a strategic loss. In the last election, the National Unity Platform presidential candidate built a manifesto of grievance amplified by repeated mistakes from certain security officers. The mishandling of situations provided him with endless footage that later won him international recognition.

This time, if events continue on the current trajectory, Bobi Wine may not even have ten minutes of drama to package for his funders. He anticipated this challenge, which perhaps explains his attempt to import tension by involving Kenya's well-known chaos specialists, Bob Njagi and Nicholas Oyoo. Fortunately, Uganda's intelligence services acted swiftly in Kireka during their involvement in Hon. Kyagulanyi's activities.

It is both embarrassing and reckless that these two Kenyan nationals felt compelled to meddle in the internal politics of a sovereign state. Under different diplomatic conditions, they would have faced the full force of Uganda's law. Instead, in the spirit of good neighbourliness, they were released and returned home. Let them be reminded: Uganda has no market for imported or exported violence.

At home, supporters from all political camps must resist the temptation to disrupt this unprecedented calm. Any individual acts of indiscipline or confrontation must be condemned without hesitation.

NRM supporters, in particular, should avoid reacting emotionally to Kyagulanyi's movements or crowds. Whether he gathers ten or a thousand people, it should not provoke hostility. Any unnecessary provocation merely gives him material to remain newsworthy before an international press corps that has already lost interest.

With only two months to go, the responsibility is ours to safeguard this atmosphere and let the people's will be expressed at the ballot.

The writer works with the Uganda Media Centre and is also a student of law.

WHY 2026 ALREADY FAVORS THE NRM

As the presidential campaign trail enters its eighth week, NRM flagbearer Yoweri Tibuhaburwa Kaguta Museveni continues to stand out as the leading contender, anchored firmly on a message of peace, stability, national achievement, and wealth creation. His campaign remains focused on consolidating the transformational gains Ugandans have made individually and collectively over the last four decades. Health, education and wealth-for-all remain the pillars of his message.

By Hon. Ofwono Opondo, MP-elect for Older Persons, Eastern Region

The NRM's political footing is already unmistakable and the numbers tell the story even more clearly. According to the latest constituency breakdown, the NRM enters this election cycle with 499 parliamentary seats, the highest of any political group by a decisive margin. The nearest challenger, NUP, fields 292 candidates, while FDC trails with only 194. In addition, a significant bloc of 730 Independents leaning toward NRM further widens the party's advantage, making the NRM the only political organisation with both national spread and structural depth. Out of a total 2,555 candidates contesting across 15 sub-regions, NRM remains the only party with full geographic penetration from Buganda's 81 constituencies to Karamoja's 22 and West Nile's 39.

It is within this context that the declaration of eleven unopposed NRM MPs, including myself representing Older Persons in the Eastern Region covering Busoga, Bukedi, Bugisu, Sebei and Teso, becomes even more significant. These uncontested victories are not mere political anecdotes they reflect a field where the party enjoys unmatched trust and organisational dominance. Whatever noise, theatrics or manufactured drama fills the airwaves is nothing more than background chatter in a democratic season where the numbers, structures, and public confidence overwhelmingly favour the NRM.

The reception for Museveni across Teso, Karamoja, Bugisu, Sebei and Bukedi much like earlier in Lango, Acholi and West Nile speaks for itself. Without exaggeration, all indicators point to another decisive NRM victory in January 2026. Even so, NRM

Hon. Ofwono Opondo receives the party flag from the President as he prepares to represent Older Persons in the Eastern Region in the 12th Parliament come 2026.

mobilisers must continue engaging communities, strengthening the ground and ensuring high voter turnout on polling day, January 15.

The opposition, on the other hand, appears bound by a single thread of anti-Museveni rhetoric. Mugisha Muntu (ANT), Mubarak Munyagwa and Elton Joseph Mabirizi remain politically adrift. Were it not for the bare minimum required to stay visible, their campaigns would already have folded. Nathan Nandala Mafabi (FDC) and Robert Kyagulanyi (NUP) seem to be surviving only on media stunts and the hope for controversy. In the absence of police confrontations often provoked deliberately to earn headlines both their rallies have been unusually subdued.

Ironically, the political calm has left some civic groups, foreign missions and media houses perplexed. With no tear gas, no dramatic arrests and no running battles, they find little to sensationalize. A few now whisper that the campaigns are “dull,” simply because Uganda is experiencing the calm and order expected of a mature democracy. Security agencies must continue to safeguard that stability.

Kyagulanyi, for his part, is still peddling the illusion that success is effortless an appealing but deceptive message for some young people. The difference today is that Ugandans have observed him long enough since 2021, and his influence has waned. Many now view the idea of him replacing President Museveni as a sign of NRM failure, not national progress.

Mugisha Muntu despite his disciplined reputation and long military and political career has failed to gain credible traction. It remains unclear what he represents in this election, and at this rate he may find himself trailing behind Nandala Mafabi, his former rival in FDC.

As Museveni completes his tour of Bukedi, the signs remain clear: the region stands firmly with the NRM, and 2026 will likely follow the established pattern of overwhelming support.

WHY UGANDA REMAINS AFRICA'S MOST ATTRACTIVE DESTINATION FOR TOURISM AND INVESTMENT IN 2025–2026

"With stability, clear incentives, and global confidence rising, Uganda has become Africa's most rewarding place to invest." — H.E. Lisa Chesney MBE, British High Commissioner to Uganda

Uganda's position as one of Africa's most attractive destinations for both tourism and investment has been reaffirmed by global rankings and major international awards received in 2024 and 2025. As the December peak season approaches, the country is emerging as the region's most promising hub for travel, business expansion, and long-term investment.

In 2024, Uganda was named the Best Investment Destination in Africa at the 13th Global Annual Investment Meeting (AIM) Investment Awards in Abu Dhabi an achievement driven by the country's strong foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, policy reforms, and commitment to green economic growth. Uganda also ranked as the most attractive economy to invest in within the East African Community and third on the continent according to the 2023 Africa Risk-Reward Index by Oxford Economics.

Latest data shows that FDI inflows reached US$3.3 billion in 2024, propelled by major commitments in solar energy, industrial parks, nature-based carbon removal projects, and mineral development. The economy is forecast to grow by at least 7% in FY 2025/26, supported by stable inflation and a strong currency.

Uganda's competitive edge is strengthened by its policy environment. Investors enjoy a 10-year corporate income tax holiday, VAT and duty exemptions on equipment, and a growing network of industrial and free zones. The Uganda Investment Authority's One-Stop Centre provides fast-tracked business registration and licensing, significantly reducing bureaucratic delays.

To enhance confidence among investors, the State House Investors Protection Unit (SHIPU) led by Col. Edith Nakalema has been instrumental in resolving investor challenges, expediting access to land, power connections, environmental approvals, and tax incentive activation. During a recent meeting with the British High Commissioner to Uganda, H.E Lisa Chesney MBE, Col. Nakalema emphasized SHIPU's mandate to simplify government processes and eliminate losses arising from delays and corruption.

High Commissioner to Uganda Lisa Chesneyon at the SHIPU headquarters in Nakasero on the 11st August 2025. Photo by PPU/Tony Rujuta

Meanwhile, Uganda remains one of Africa's top-rated tourism destinations. December 2025 and 2026 are expected to attract record numbers of visitors drawn by the country's famed mountain gorillas, the Nile, the Rwenzori Mountains, serene lakes, world-class birding sites, expanding hotel infrastructure, and improved transport networks across Sebei, Kigezi, Bunyoro, Karamoja, and the Albertine region.

Uganda's strategic location further offers access to a continental market of over 1.4 billion consumers through the AfCFTA, alongside EAC and COMESA regional markets.

With the digital transformation of government systems, removal from the FATF grey list, continued global recognition, and rising investor confidence, Uganda stands out as the ideal destination for both holidaymakers and long-term investors in 2025 and 2026.

40 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS PEACE: WHAT IT MEANS FOR ORDINARY UGANDANS

By Male Solomon, Government Citizen Interaction Centre

When I think about the meaning of peace, I don't think soldiers, weapons or powerful parades. I think of a boy I met in Karamoja last year. His name was Lokiru.

When I met Lokiru, he was standing at a newly repaired borehole, his school uniform dusty from the long walk home. He couldn't have been older than 10. I I struck up a conversation and asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up, he smiled with the kind of confidence only peace can give a child.

"I want to be a pilot," he said, without hesitation. Then he added softly, "My father never went to school because there was fighting. But now we study with no interruptions, in peace"

That one sentence carried 40 years of Uganda's journey.

For children like Lokiru, peace is not a political slogan. It is the background noise of their entire childhood. It is school every morning, not gunshots at dawn. It is laughter in a trading centre that once emptied at 5pm. It is mothers fetching water without fear, traders moving freely, tourists returning, and communities building futures instead of burying possibilities.

We often discuss peace in abstract terms, but for ordinary Ugandans, its meaning is deeply personal.

For the farmer in Rushere, peace is the reason milk coolers run every day and his harvest finds a market. Without stability, the dairy miracle the President described would never exist no 65,500 litres collected daily, no new town rising from three shops to hundreds of permanent buildings.

For the woman running a salon in Mbale, peace is the reason she can take a loan, open a stall, and expect customers tomorrow. Uncertainty kills small businesses long before bullets do.

For the young Bazzukulu in Kampala learning coding, peace is why ICT jobs now stretch beyond borders accountants, designers and developers earning from Europe and America because the internet is stable, the country is stable, and life is predictable enough to plan.

For the taxi driver who once feared night routes, peace is why he can work an extra shift and pay his children's school dues on time.

For the generation of our grandparents, who survived the chaos of the 70s and early 80s, peace is simply the quiet. It is dignity of sleeping without listening for footsteps and the relief of watching grandchildren grow up in a world they could only dream of.

The Manifesto calls peace "the foundation of prosperity" not out of theory, but because the lived experience of millions of Ugandans proves it daily.
Tourism collapses without peace.
Connectivity suffers.
Financial investments shrink and then close.
Even the most gifted children lose their future before it begins.

Forty years of stability have not solved everything, but they have opened doors to possibilities never before imagined.

When you travel from West Nile to Kigezi, from Acholi to Bugisu, you see something powerful. A people planning their future; from farmers irrigating, to full market stalls. Now, communities are saving together. young people investing in technology and dreaming new dreams. Entire communities shifting from survival to aspiration. You cannot dream in chaos.
But Uganda is dreaming again.

The story of peace is not the story of government alone it is the story of every family that has used stability as a ladder out of poverty, every parent confident their child will reach adulthood, every entrepreneur opening shop without fear.

As I left Karamoja that day, I kept thinking about that boy, Lokiru. His confidence. His ambition. His innocence.

Forty years ago, a Ugandan child's greatest wish was simply to survive.
Today, a child's dream is to fly planes.

That is what peace means.
That is what we must protect.

EC'S BYABAKAMA MUGENYI URGED: STAY RESOLUTE, IGNORE POLITICAL BLACKMAIL

By Obed K. Katureebe, Ag. Executive Director, Uganda Media Centre

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, known worldwide as Lenin, once described political blackmail as "the threat of exposing, or actually exposing, true though more often invented stories to cause an opponent political damage, to slander him, or to deprive him of the ability to participate in political activity." His words again find relevance as Uganda's Independent Electoral Commission (EC) endures a wave of unwarranted hostility.

The latest political uproar followed the EC's declaration of Hon. Phiona Nyamutoro as MP-elect for Nebbi District, unopposed, on November 13, 2026. Her challenger, Ms. Mercy Rebecca Abedican of the National Unity Platform (NUP), had her nomination nullified after evidence revealed forged signatures among her nominators.

A petition from one of Nyamutoro's supporters triggered the inquiry. Several nominators listed by Abedican denied ever endorsing her, with some confirming their signatures were forged. One of them, Godfrey Ongeria, testified before the EC Tribunal that he never nominated Abedican and was, in fact, an NRM supporter. The evidence was

Phiona Nyamutoro after being declared as unopposed

overwhelming, leaving the EC Tribunal with no lawful option but to cancel her nomination.

Predictably, the decision sparked outrage among NUP-leaning activists and commentators who repeatedly insist that the EC favours the ruling NRM. Yet the facts betray this claim.

Only days earlier, on November 5, the EC declared Mr. Ofwono Opondo unopposed after his opponent, Mr. Mpande Joram Kigenyi of the Democratic Party (DP), conceded following similar accusations of forgery. Kigenyi had obtained fraudulent signatures from ten nominators. The same rules were applied consistently, regardless of political affiliation.

Article 61(1)(f) of the Constitution empowers the EC to hear and determine election-related complaints before and during polling. The Commission is not merely allowed, but obliged, to act when evidence of fraud emerges. Ignoring forged signatures would amount to violating the law.

Sadly, an unhealthy political culture has taken root in Uganda. Some aspirants and supporters now employ blackmail to dodge legal requirements, then present themselves as victims when caught. Anyone seeking public office must meet the integrity standards set by the EC. Those who cannot should not demand sympathy.

Much of the criticism dominating radios, television shows, and online spaces is driven by individuals who thrive on disorder. Under the guise of “analysis,” they spread indiscipline, conspiracy theories, and emotional theatrics that do nothing to advance national progress.

This chorus of manufactured outrage is designed to bully institutions into abandoning their legal responsibilities. The media should begin to deny airtime to such actors whose only contribution is noise and confusion.

Uganda urgently needs a renewed political culture rooted in diligence, integrity, and respect for the law. All political actors government, opposition, and civil society must meet the same legal standards.

The Electoral Commission must therefore remain resolute. It must ignore political blackmail, enforce the rules consistently, and continue safeguarding electoral integrity without fear or favour.

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES 4TH EITI ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Hon. Amos Lugoloobi, Minister of State for Planning, joins stakeholders and officials for a group photo after launching Uganda's 4th EITI Report in Kampala

Uganda has taken another major step in strengthening transparency and accountability in the extractive sector with the launch of its Fourth Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) Report for the Financial Year 2022/23.

The report was officially unveiled on 20th November, 2025 by the Minister of State for Planning, Hon. Amos Lugoloobi, who emphasized that the findings reflect Uganda's growing commitment to openness as the country prepares for commercial oil production.

Covering the period 1st July 2022 to 30th June 2023, the report details activities in the oil, gas, and mining sectors, providing a full account of reconciled payments made by extractive companies and the corresponding revenues received by government agencies. It further assesses economic contributions, production trends, sector performance, and offers key policy recommendations designed to strengthen governance, investment confidence, and sustainability.

Hon. Lugoloobi noted that the publication of the report is not merely an exercise in maintaining global compliance, but a sign of Uganda's firm commitment to building stronger domestic

Hon. Amos Lugoloobi, Minister of State for Planning, signs the cover of Uganda's 4th EITI Report during its official launch in Kampala, as officials look on

Participants attend the launch of Uganda's 4th EITI Report in Kampala

investor decision-making, and equip the public with reliable data on how Uganda's extractive resources are governed. It also comes at a time when investment in oil and mining is expanding, making transparency a crucial ingredient for long-term economic transformation.

With the release of this report, Uganda reaffirms its commitment to

systems.

"Transparency is not only a guardrail against corruption but a catalyst for investment and a foundation for inclusive growth," he said.

The Minister added that the EITI framework continues to play a critical role in shaping public debate, improving public finance management, and ensuring that citizens benefit from the country's natural resources.

Uganda joined the EITI in 2020, and since then, the initiative has enhanced information-sharing, accountability standards,

Delegates follow proceedings during the launch of Uganda's 4th EITI Report in Kampala

and sector-wide monitoring key pillars as the country accelerates progress towards first oil.

The 4th EITI Report is expected to guide policymakers, support

responsible resource management and positions itself as a regional model for extractive sector governance.

MUSEVENI FLAGS OFF CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BUSOGA KINGDOM HEADQUARTERS

By Billclinton

> "Development is ours, but wealth is mine and my household."
> President Museveni

BUGEMBE, JINJA CITY — President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni yesterday 21st November, 2025, presided over the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Busoga Kingdom Headquarters, marking a defining moment in the evolving partnership between the central government and Obwa Kyabazinga Bwa Busoga. The launch took place shortly before the President concluded his Busoga campaign trail at Kyabazinga Stadium, where he reaffirmed the NRM's development record.

Busoga's political history has oscillated between unity and disruption. Before colonial rule, the Basoga lived under autonomous principalities until the early 20th century, when centralized authority emerged with the establishment of the "Isebantu Kyabazinga" in 1918–19. By 1962, Busoga enjoyed semi-federal status and stood as Uganda's industrial engine its capital, Jinja, hosting 70 percent of the nation's industries.

That progress was shattered in 1967 when President Milton Obote abolished cultural institutions. Decades of political instability and administrative fragmentation followed. The NRM government revived the idea of cultural institutions in 1986, leading to constitutional restoration in 1995. These institutions were assigned cultural rather than political roles, repositioning them as custodians of unity and heritage.

The new Busoga Kingdom Headquarters is designed as a modern governance and development centre. According to Deputy Presidential Press Secretary Hajj Faruk Kirunda, the facility will host youth empowerment programs, cultural preservation initiatives, and coordinate development efforts across the 11 districts that constitute Busoga.

Preliminary estimates place the cost of the complex at Shs 80 billion, covering the administration block, commercial buildings, external works, installations, and furniture. An additional Shs 50 billion is earmarked for the Cultural Village, museum, media stations, recreational facilities, and essential infrastructure, including high-voltage power, water, sewerage, and ICT systems.

Officials emphasize that the project will support Busoga's 11-point development agenda, a strategic blueprint aimed at fighting poverty, improving governance, and stimulating investment in a historically vibrant but economically struggling region.

President Museveni commended Kyabazinga William Gabula Nadiope IV for championing peace, unity, and modernization within the kingdom. In a previous message, the President said: "I wish you many more prosperous and healthy years as you continue to steer the Kingdom towards greater heights."

President Museveni reviews the architectural plan for the new Busoga Kingdom Headquarters as kingdom and government officials look on


President Yoweri Museveni unveils the foundation stone for the new Busoga Kingdom Headquarters in Bugembe, Jinja City

Addressing supporters during his final Busoga rally, Museveni stressed the NRM's "seven key contributions" peace, development, wealth creation, job creation, service delivery, economic integration, and East African unity.

> "The first contribution is peace and security," he said, recalling a time when rebel groups like Lakwena's reached as far as Magamaga. "Now there is peace in the whole of Uganda."

He later emphasized that wealth creation is a household responsibility, not to be confused with government development projects. "No one sleeps on the road. Development is ours, but wealth is mine and my household," he told residents.

The President also highlighted skilling centres and the Parish Development Model (PDM) as key tools for transforming household incomes, telling urban residents that even city dwellers can tap into commercial farming and small enterprises.

The groundbreaking ceremony also drew senior leaders who highlighted the region's development needs. First Deputy Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga renewed her call for an industrial park in Busoga, saying land in Budondo is available. She also urged faster construction of the Jinja Expressway, arguing that the current traffic situation "slows down business."

Former Vice President Dr. Specioza Wandira Kazibwe called for more skilling centres to address illiteracy, while local leaders highlighted persistent gaps such as inadequate markets and the absence of a city general hospital.

For many in Busoga, the launch of the new headquarters coming after the restoration of the Kyabazinga's palace at Igenge represents renewed hope. Years of unemployment, income stagnation, and unfulfilled infrastructure promises have weighed heavily on households. The headquarters project is therefore seen as a commitment to restoring pride, strengthening cultural identity, and unlocking economic potential.

As cultural leaders, government officials, and community members witnessed the ceremony, the message resonated clearly: Busoga's cultural heritage can serve as a foundation for modern development, and its partnership with the state may chart a new course for prosperity.

UGANDA HOSTS AFRICA INDUSTRIALIZATION DAY 2025, PRESIDENT MUSEVENI CALLS FOR A "NEW AFRICA OF PRODUCTION AND INNOVATION"

Kampala, Uganda – November 20, 2025

On 20th November, 2025, Uganda marked Africa Industrialization Day 2025 with a call from President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni for African nations to accelerate industrial transformation, close global economic gaps, and build a continent rooted in production, innovation, and regional integration.

The commemoration was officially opened by H.E. Vice President Maj. (Rtd) Jessica Alupo, who represented President Museveni at the high-level ceremony held on the margins of Africa Industrialization Week (AIW) 2025 in Kampala.

Delivering the President's remarks, the Vice President announced that Uganda was "deeply honoured" to host this year's continental reflections on industrialization at a time when industrial development "continues to define the prosperity of nations."

In his message, President Museveni placed Africa's industrial journey within a wider global context, tracing the historical path of industrialization from Britain and Europe to America, Japan, the Asian Tigers, and more recently China.

He contrasted this global progress with Africa's current economic standing.

> "With a GDP of about USD 2.8 trillion in 2024, Africa still lags far behind the United States, China, and Europe," he noted, adding that this gap "must be addressed by this conference."

The President urged African policymakers, private sector leaders, and development partners to build "a new Africa based on production, export orientation, regional integration and innovation."

Crowning the commemorations was the Innovation Awards and Gala Dinner hosted by media personality Samson Kasumba. The awards recognized outstanding contributors to Africa's industrial growth, entrepreneurship, and cooperative excellence.

Key highlights included:

AWIP Awards

Organized by the African Women in Processing (AWIP), awards were extended to:

- African Union, for hosting the first Women Industrialization Park (received by Ms. Ron Osman)
- Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, represented by Gen. Wilson Mbadi

Industrial Enablers Awards went to:

- Universal Properties
- Ortus Capital Africa

Industrial Developers Ally Awards recognized:

- Longan Women in Processing Forum, Schengen District
- National Enterprise Corporation
- Uganda Industrial Research Institute

Coop360 Innovation Awards

Presented by The Uhuru Institute, following a year-long assessment of cooperatives:

- **Winner**: Gomi Multipurpose Cooperative
- **1st Runner-Up**: Kigarama People's SACCO
- **2nd Runner-Up**: URA SACCO

Why Africa Industrialization Day Matters

Africa Industrialization Day, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1989, raises global awareness about Africa's industrial potential and challenges. It serves as a reminder that:

- Industrialization drives inclusive economic growth
- Industry expands employment opportunities
- Modern technologies enhance productivity and competitiveness
- Strong industrial linkages help economies withstand external shocks

Running from November 17–21 at Speke Resort Munyonyo, the Africa Industrialization Week (AIW) 2025 convened over 500 delegates from across the continent under the theme: “Transforming Africa’s Economy through Sustainable Industrialization, Regional Integration and Innovation.”

The week featured:

- High-level panel discussions
- Exhibitions of value-added products
- Investor matchmaking sessions
- The 4th African Women in Processing Forum
- The 1st African Youth Start-ups Forum
- The Africa Manufacturing Investment Forum

These platforms emphasized building value chains, enhancing manufacturing, promoting youth innovation, and accelerating AfCFTA implementation.

In line with Agenda 2063, leaders highlighted the need for a coordinated African approach to industrial transformation. The United Nations Secretary-General, in his Africa Industrialization Day message, stressed the importance of:

- Green and digital industrial growth
- Strengthened regional markets
- Reforming global financial systems
- Expanding opportunities for youth and women

With significant growth from almost zero factories to more than 50,000 under President Museveni’s leadership, Uganda showcased its progress as a model for inclusive industrialization, innovation, and policy coherence.

Citizens cast their votes in presidential and parliamentary polls, on February 18, 2016 at the Nasuti polling station in Mukono District. Photo Credit: ISAAC KASAMANI/AFP/Getty Images

UGANDA WEEKLY FOCUS

Informing Minds Inspiring Change

VOTER EDUCATION SERIES

UNDERSTANDING CAMPAIGN RULES: WHAT EVERY VOTER SHOULD KNOW DURING THE 2026 RACE

With campaign activities now fully underway across the country, Ugandans are witnessing rallies, door-to-door mobilisation, media messages, and intense political competition. But behind the colour and excitement lies a structured legal framework that ensures campaigns remain peaceful, fair, and issue-based. This week's Voter Education Series focuses on campaign-period rules what candidates must do, cannot do, and what voters should expect.

1. **What Campaigns Are Allowed to Do**

The Electoral Commission permits candidates to use a wide range of methods to reach voters, including rallies, meetings, radio and TV shows, posters, and social media.

However, these activities must operate within the law to protect all stakeholders. Campaigns are expected to remain:

- Truthful
- Non-violent
- Non-sectarian
- Respectful of competing candidates
- Mindful of public order

These standards appear across all EC campaign guidelines for presidential, parliamentary, and local government elections.

2. **What Campaigns Must Not Do**

All three sets of guidelines (Presidential, Parliamentary, Local Government) contain identical prohibitions on conduct that threatens peace or fairness. These include:

a) **Sectarian, tribal, or religious campaigning**

Candidates are prohibited from using symbols, colours, or statements that promote tribal, religious, or ethnic divisions.

b) **Using abusive, false, or malicious statements**

It is illegal to spread false information, use insulting language, or ridicule another candidate including via private electronic media such as radio, TV, internet, and social media.

c) **Violence, intimidation, or obstruction**

No candidate or supporter may threaten, compel, or interfere with a voter's free choice. Threats, forced withdrawals, or organised groups trained for intimidation are expressly criminalised.

d) **Bribery and vote buying**

Giving or offering money, gifts, handouts, or favours to influence a voter's choice is illegal at all levels. Receiving such gifts is also an offence

3. **Use of Media and Government Resources**

a) **Media Use**

Candidates may use private electronic media, but are strictly prohibited from using it to:

- Defame opponents
- Spread falsehoods
- Mobilise sectarian sentiment

Media houses are equally forbidden from hosting or disseminating prohibited content.

b) **Government or Public Resources**

A minister or public officer running for office must not use government facilities for campaigning except as allowed by law. This rule protects fairness and prevents incumbents from gaining undue advantage.

4. **What Voters Should Watch For**

During campaign season, voters play a major oversight role. Citizens should:

- Attend rallies to listen, not fight.
- Report cases of bribery,

intimidation, or hate speech.

- Demand issue-based messaging service delivery, jobs, education, infrastructure, governance.
- Beware of misinformation, especially on social media.
- Respect divergent opinions. Democracy thrives on choice, not hostility.

Campaigns are meant to give voters an informed basis for decision-making. When they deteriorate into abuse, bribery, or tribal attacks, the entire democratic process is weakened.

5. **Why These Rules Matter**

The purpose of campaign guidelines is simple:

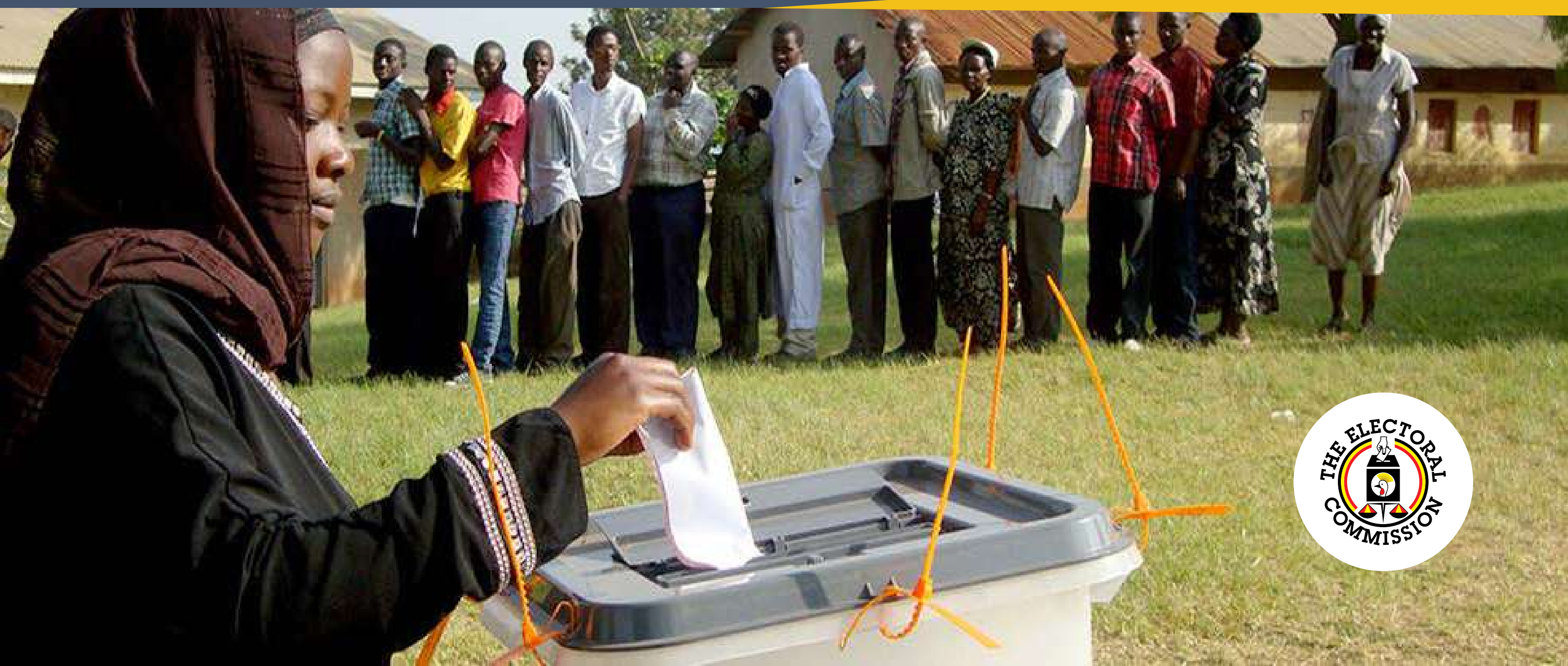
- Level the playing field
- Protect the voter's free will
- Promote peaceful competition
- Guard national unity
- Ensure credible elections before the first ballot is cast

A lawful campaign period is the foundation of a legitimate election.

Next Week in Vol. 5: Understanding Polling Day Rights & Responsibilities

- **What Voters Must Expect,**
- **What Is Allowed, and**
- **What Is Prohibited Inside a Polling Station.**

IT IS YOUR RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN ALL THE ELECTORAL ACTIVITIES LIKE REGISTRATION, UPDATE, DISPLAY, NOMINATIONS AND POLLING EXERCISES



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