



REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

ADDRESS

BY

**H.E YOWERI KAGUTA MUSEVENI
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

AT THE

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 76TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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**President of the UN General Assembly;
Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;
Secretary-General of United Nations;
Distinguished delegates;
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Mr. President,

I congratulate you on your election as President of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly and assure you of Uganda's unwavering support. I commend H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir for his transformational leadership of the 75th Session, especially during such challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I would also like to congratulate the Secretary-General, H.E. António Guterres, upon his re-appointment for the second term and thank him for his devotion to the work of the United Nations. Your re-election is a demonstration of the confidence that member states have in your leadership. I commiserate with all countries on the enormous lives lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Uganda welcomes the theme of the 76th Session of the General Assembly. The United Nations is the appropriate forum to speak with a common voice on sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This Session is a timely reminder of the urgent need for effective multilateral action to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to realize our vision, shared principles and commitments, to end poverty in all its dimensions and ensure **"no one is left behind."** As we celebrate the 76th anniversary of the United Nations, it requires a revitalized United Nations that is fit for addressing global challenges that face us today. In this regard, Uganda reiterates its commitment to multilateralism. We believe that by working together, we can better respond to global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change and their consequences.

Mr. President,

Uganda, like other countries, has had to respond to the unprecedented and multi-faceted effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Uganda's approach has been to prioritize the protection of human life. To ensure a sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery, the Government has taken deliberate and targeted decisions to continue strengthening the capacities of the national health system and other key sectors of the economy to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic adequately.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences can only be effectively responded to if we act collectively. In this regard, we appreciate the efforts of some individual states, various international and regional organisations, particularly the United Nations, African Union, European Union, G20, World Health Organisation, International Monetary Fund, World Bank Group and others, in supporting Countries to respond to the pandemic. We see vaccination of all as the best way to address the pandemic. We now know that restricting the ability to get vaccines affects the ability to control the pandemic and prevents new variants from emerging.

Therefore, we call for more action to ensure that at the centre of a global recovery, equitable, affordable access for all to safe, quality, efficacious, effective, accessible and affordable COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics. We commend the Secretary General's efforts for his continued advocacy and active engagement on equitable access to vaccines.

On the other side, we find that the actions by some to hold vaccines at the expense of poor Countries, also referred to as *vaccine nationalism*, is wrong, but a good lesson for developing Countries that don't want to innovate. It is good because it wakes up those that are asleep, waiting to be saved by others.

Uganda is progressing in searching for cures and vaccines, which will be achieved in a few years. We are developing a vaccine with our own funding and the help that we need is for raw materials for the vaccines. Therefore, we invite interested partners to support us with the raw materials.

Mr. President,

Uganda reaffirms her commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its entirety and to achieving 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as we commence the decade of action and delivery of Sustainable Development. We have realized now more than ever, the urgent need to accelerate our progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a pillar in our national response to the multi-faceted impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as we build back better and strive to achieve the overarching 2030 Agenda goal of eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions.

The COVID-19 reinforces the pre-existing obstacles to realizing the Goals, structural inequalities, gaps, systematic challenges and risks. We firmly believe that the successful implementation of our Third National Development Plan (NDP III) under the theme “**Sustainable industrialization for inclusive growth, employment and wealth creation**” is critical in achieving 17 SDGs.

Uganda has implemented an inclusive process to ensure that the people own the SDG agenda, starting with the national coordination arrangements. As a result, the Government fully mainstreamed the SDGs, identifying key accelerators, for instance, Industry, Governance and Environment, based on their relative return on investment.

As Uganda advances the implementation of its plans, it is committed to ensuring no one is left behind. The Government has put in place

laws and policies to support the inclusion of vulnerable persons. For instance, the Public Finance Management Act (2017) ensures gender and equity responsive budgeting. In addition, the Government increased funding to livelihood and special grants for youth and women. Now with the new Parish Development Model, which started in the financial year 2020/21, the SDGs will be much more localized, monitored and reported on up to the lowest level, thus "**Leaving No One Behind.**" The Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment program has also improved social security and reduced vulnerabilities for older persons aged 65 years.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted Uganda's progress in some sectors but has also given impetus to the Country's industrialization drive. The toll that the pandemic has had on jobs, hitherto promising sectors could significantly impact efforts to reduce poverty, vulnerability and inequality. However, it has awakened the discourse on how Uganda builds its systems to generate the required resilience to withstand such shocks.

As the Government fast-tracks progress on the 2030 Agenda, it has embraced the global wave of digital transformation, which presents significant opportunities. However, whereas the 2030 Agenda is strongly anchored on environmental integrity and sustainability, there are increasing effects of climate change reducing Uganda's natural capital. Therefore, the 3rd National development Plan sets out ambitious climate actions through the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

Mr. President,

Setting our path towards the full realization of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement requires that we urgently address climate change, one of the greatest challenges to humanity. We continue to witness the enormous loss of lives and property due to climate

change-related disasters globally. All of us are susceptible to these climate change disasters. We, therefore, stress the need to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty through bold multilateral actions by all. Uganda continues to experience prolonged droughts, melting of ice caps at its highest mountain, Mt. Ruwenzori, floods, erratic rainfall and landslides.

Recently, Uganda experienced impacts of intensive and prolonged droughts and rainfall, severely impacting lives and livelihoods. We share Lake Victoria, The second largest freshwater lake, with the brotherly Countries of Kenya and Tanzania. The lake's water level in Uganda is measured at a place in the city of Jinja and the lowest level of water ever recorded was in 1923, when it was 10.28metres. Before that, the highest level recorded had been on January 1 in 1918; the record showed 11.89metres and the subsequent high-level record was on May 16, 1964, when the water level reached 13.41 metres.

However, since last year, the water level in the lake has been going up. On May 19, 2020, the water level reached the new record level of 13.49metres. Since that time, the water level has remained above 13 meters. Therefore, we have asked the people who settled too close to the Lakeshores to move away from the Lake Shores. Staying 200 meters from the Lakeshore is the wise, correct and useful thing to do.

Uganda, despite being a less contributor to climate change, is taking deliberate and targeted actions to address climate change through investments in climate adaptation and mitigation measures such as increasing access and consumption of clean energy to enhance production, and increasing forest and wetland cover, among others in line with our ambitious Nationally, Determined Contributions. However, mobilization of means of implementation for climate change remains crucial as urgent action is required to significantly reduce

emissions, adapt to the adverse effects and reduce the impacts of climate change.

We commend the Green Climate Fund for its commitment to a 50:50 balance between mitigation and adaptation in its portfolio and ensure that at least 50% of adaptation funding goes to particularly vulnerable countries, including LDCs, SIDS (Small Island Developing States) and African States. In this context, Uganda reiterates its commitment to support bold action proposals at the 26th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change scheduled in the United Kingdom from November 1-12, 2021, in the areas of mitigation, adaptation and finance. We, therefore, call on the developed Countries to fulfill their financial commitment in line with the Paris Agreement to provide 100 billion US Dollars annually by 2020 to assist developing Country Parties with respect to both mitigation and adaptation with a concrete roadmap.

As we concluded the UN Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020, the assessment on the progress towards the global biodiversity targets indicated insufficient results. Uganda, just like most Countries, continues to experience biodiversity loss to the extent that some wildlife and other living species are now in danger of extinction. Cognizant of this urgency, Uganda with support of the international community, has taken specific bold action measures that include inter alia: mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation and restoration in our national development policies and priorities as highlighted in our National Development Plan 111 for Financial Years 2020/2021-2024/2025 and Vision 2040; restoration of 64,000 hectares of degraded wetlands to benefit 4 million farmers with a target regaining our 1994 of 15.6% wetland coverage by 2030; re-forestation and afforestation of over 200,000 hectares and we have prioritized more tree planting to ensure that Uganda's forest coverage increases from 12.4% in 2015 to 24% by 2030; strengthening the public-private sector and non-state actors' engagement; demarcation of boundaries

of critical wetlands and central forest reserves to prevent encroachment; strengthening the legal and institutional framework to address the challenge of illegal wildlife trade and poaching such as repealing the Wild life Act Chapter. 200 in 2019 with the Uganda Wildlife Act, 2019, that provides for the conservation and sustainable management of wildlife and; enforcement of fishing regulations to address the challenge of illegal and unregulated fishing. Uganda has acted decisively to fulfill the commitment made during the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations in September, 2015 to protect the planet from degradation.

Mr. President,

Countries in the global south have continued to stand in solidarity with their global counterparts even during the COVID-19 pandemic by offering appropriate support to enable them adequately respond to the pandemic. Their actions are in line with the principles of South-South Cooperation and support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, Uganda will continue to strengthen South-South and Triangular Cooperation within the United Nations. As the Third South Summit host, I reiterate Uganda's commitment to host the Summit and look forward to welcoming my fellow G77/China leaders to Kampala, Uganda, on suitable dates in 2022/3.

Mr. President,

The predicament of Countries in special situations particularly, the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), continues to-date. The evidence from the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs (IPoA) implementation overall assessment indicates insufficient progress

towards achieving its overarching goal of half of the LDCs graduating by 2020. Uganda, like other Least Developed Countries, has continued to face numerous challenges during IPoA implementation that include, among other things: limited productive capacities, limited funding, insufficient physical infrastructure, commodity price volatility, climate change, biodiversity loss and disasters. Notwithstanding the structural constraints to development faced by LDCs, Uganda has registered progress in implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action, in particular, national paved road network increased; accessibility to electricity and innovations as well as the use of mobile technology for financial transactions increased. In addition, primary school enrollment (including gender parity in primary education) increased; maternal and infant mortality rates decreased and prevalence and incidence rates of HIV/AIDS reduced.

We should, therefore, during the Fifth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries, agree on the next Programme of Action that calls for a more enhanced, renewed and strengthened global partnership to support graduation and smooth transition of LDCs as agreed upon at major UN Conferences and Summits. In our view, this Programme should contain robust means of implementation to support the LDCs inadequately addressing the existing structural constraints, particularly limited productive capacities, inadequate funding, high debt level, commodity price volatility, as well as emerging challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss and disasters. In addition, the Programme should contain a robust follow-up and monitoring framework at all levels to track its timely and full implementation.

Mr. President,

Terrorism continues to constitute one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. Terrorism and violent extremism continue to bring death and suffering to innocent people. Terrorist groups such as Daesh, Al-Qaida, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and the

Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) continue to inflict death and devastation. The international community must adapt to this changing landscape. We must be unwavering in our resolve to combat terrorism and Uganda, will continue to support and actively participate in global and regional counter-terrorism efforts.

Mr. President,

Our development and transformation cannot take place without peace and security – these are prerequisites for socio-economic transformation. We should continue to give attention to supporting a peaceful environment, thus enabling us to concentrate on our growth and development. The UN should continue to support conflict prevention and resolution initiatives undertaken by regional and sub-regional organizations like the African Union (AU) and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). This partnership should be based on the division of labour and burden sharing, complementarity and mutual respect. We should continue to encourage and strengthen this partnership.

We continue to face serious challenges to peace and security in our region; Uganda continues to support and advance peace and security efforts in the region. We remain actively involved in regional initiatives such as those of the AU, IGAD, EAC, ICGLR and are encouraged by the progress that we continue to make. Uganda is committed to continuing working with our international partners in supporting the counter-terrorism and stabilization efforts in Somalia, the political transition in Sudan, implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement in South Sudan and the elimination of terrorist and other negative forces in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. President,

This Assembly made a historic pledge during the World Summit held in 2005. A commitment to strengthening the United Nations with a view to enhancing its authority and efficiency. This cannot happen without the reform of the UN Security Council. The need to reform the UN Security Council is now more urgent and imperative than ever before. Uganda supports the comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council. The present geopolitical realities are compelling for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council to make way for equitable representation.

Africa, with more than one billion citizens and over seventy percent of issues on the agenda of the Council, continues to suffer the historical injustice of having no representation at all in the Permanent category of the Security Council and being under-represented in the non-Permanent category. It is time that we address this long-standing injustice and imbalance perpetuated in the present configuration of the Security Council without any further delay.

The Common African Position on the reform of the UN Security Council, as enunciated in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration, continues to garner wide support of the UN membership. Therefore, it is imperative that Member states expeditiously work towards achieving progress in the negotiations on reform in the context of the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) so that Africa can assume its rightful place in the Security Council.

Mr. President,

All countries are duty-bound to promote and protect human rights under international law and the United Nations Charter. Therefore, we must continue to address the promotion and protection of human rights without politicizing the issue of human rights. Uganda remains committed to fulfilling its human rights obligation in accordance with its constitution and international law. Our commitment is from the

firm belief that it is suitable for our people, drawn from the bad experience and lessons from our history of dictatorship. In this context, Uganda will be voluntarily reviewed during the 40th Session of the Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, scheduled from January to February 2022.

Mr. President,

The predicament of refugees continues to this day. Uganda has maintained its open-door policy on refugees and currently, the country hosts over 1.4 million refugees, the largest number in Africa. It is in line with this spirit, that recently we took another deliberate step to assist those in distress from Afghanistan. Our approach to refugees is anchored in our belief that no one chooses to flee their country or be a refugee and if they do, they must be treated with dignity and kindness in their times of need.

However, the circumstances of the refugees and host communities pose enormous challenges for the national authorities, which need to be addressed as part of international solidarity. We, therefore, continue to call for more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world's refugees consistent with international commitments.

I thank you for your attention.