



GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA

UGANDA'S POSITION PAPER ON RIO+20

PREAMBLE

- a. **Appreciative** of the milestones set in the 1992 Earth Summit and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (2002) while at the same time concerned about the considerable implementation gaps and challenges related therewith,
- b. **Enjoins** and **associates** itself to the African Consensus Statement to the Rio+20,
- c. **Mindful** of Uganda's 5 year National Development Plan and the long term National Vision 2030 that are guiding the transition to a green economy,
- d. **Aware** of the challenges of climate change, threats to oceans, seas, fresh water resources; biodiversity and food security,
- e. **Recognizing** the unprecedented rise in population growth and joblessness especially amongst the youth which is a challenge to the future livelihoods and living standards,
- f. **Mindful** of the much needed participation and constructive engagement of intergovernmental agencies, the private sector and civil society organizations at national, regional and international level in attaining sustainable development,

Uganda,

1. Welcomes the decision of the UN General Assembly in Resolution No. 64/236 to convene the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) to focus on the green economy in the context of sustainable development, poverty eradication, and institutional framework for sustainable development.
2. Calls on Rio+20 to focus on intergovernmental processes and country efforts towards eradicating poverty, creating an equitable society as well as sustainable management of natural resources.
3. Underscores the importance of renewed political commitment and the need for countries to work together towards achieving Sustainable Development.
4. Wishes to see more progress on implementation of sustainable development programmes, fast tracking the mechanism of technology transfer backed by long term, new and additional, predictable and adequate funding channeled through existing country mechanisms.

Performance Report

5. In line with the principle of the integration of the three pillars of Sustainable Development Uganda's sustained record of strong economic growth, legal and institutional reforms, and progressive regional partnerships has delivered significant milestones along the Sustainable Development agenda: GDP has nearly tripled since 1992 with a corresponding reduction in head count poverty from 56 percent in 1992 to 24.5 percent in 2010, an increase in the share of the budget funded from domestic tax revenue from 31.7 percent in 1992 to over 70 percent in 2010 and a transformation in the structure of GDP with the share of agriculture declining from about 70 percent in 1990 to 22.5 percent in 2010 and that of services doubling to more than 50 percent.
6. With regard to the social pillar, life expectancy has improved from 48.1 years in 1991 to 51 years in 2010, adult literacy has risen by 71 percent in 2011 with primary school enrollment rates tripling from about 2.7 million in 1996 to 8.2 million 2009 and gender parity being attained

within the primary sub-sector of the education system. However, challenges persist with regard to the quality of education and other dimensions of equity. Access to safe water in rural areas increased from under 20 percent in 1990 to 65 percent in 2010. Household sanitation improved steadily with a proportion of households with safe sanitation facilities increasing from 57 per cent in 2005 to 69 per cent in 2009. Performance on child and maternal health has, however, been less impressive. Infant mortality declined marginally from 81 in 1995 to 76 in 2005, while maternal mortality reduced from 506 to 435 over the same period

7. In respect to the environmental pillar, as a result of the 1992 Rio Conference, Uganda developed and implemented a range of legal, policy and institutional frameworks on environment, water, wetlands, forests, range lands, lands, fisheries, climate change, biodiversity, oil and gas governance and management. The National Environment Management Authority, an umbrella regulatory agency, was created in 1995. The impact of these governance and management reforms is gaining traction though slowly, as depicted by the limited data on environmental indicators. The proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected increased from 13 percent in 1990 to 16 percent in 2010. The share of land covered by forests though declined from 25 percent in 1990 to 18 percent in 2006. The rate of biodiversity loss in the country was calculated in 2004 to be 10 – 11 percent per decade. With the adoption of the Public Private Partnerships and collaborative community management approaches, there is a progressive move towards reversing biodiversity loss.
8. Uganda shares in the recognition by the Africa region that governance is a vital pillar of Sustainable Development. In this vein Uganda has pursued measures to promote democratic and accountable governance, namely: introducing and entrenching a decentralization policy, implementing participatory planning and budgeting approaches, promoting transparency in public management, conducting regular elections at national and local levels, strengthening the rule of law, and voluntarily acceding to the African Peer Review Mechanism. In addition, Uganda is actively participating in regional integration endeavours and is

contributing to regional and international peace missions under the mandates of the African Union and the United Nations.

The Green Economy, Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction

9. Uganda's aspiration is to accelerate socio-economic transformation to achieve its national vision of a transformed Ugandan society from a peasant to a modern and prosperous country by 2035. Our goal in the medium term is to transition into a middle income country status by 2017. We recognize that the attainment of this ambition is dependent on how we can sustainably capitalize on our natural and human capital.
10. Uganda's economy is heavily reliant on natural capital. Our population is largely young with the youth constituting 70 percent of it, and 85 percent being rural-based. Uganda's development pathway, therefore, lies in sustainably transforming and adding value to its natural and human capital. This calls for sustaining the asset base on which the economy and livelihoods security rely, and enhancing labourforce productivity through the application of science, technology and innovation.
11. We, therefore, concur with the UNEP understanding of a green economy as one that results into improved human wellbeing and social equity while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. It is driven by public and private investments and results into growth in income and employment, reduced carbon emissions and pollution, energy and resource efficiency and prevents the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.
12. We call on the conference to take up the position of green growth being a path to efficient utilization of natural capital to bring about development and to diversify income and livelihood opportunities beyond the primary production sectors. We specifically call for emphasis to be placed on the promotion of green investment in the sectors of; agriculture, water, waste management, forestry, energy, tourism, transport and education.

13. We also call on the conference to uphold the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in advancing the realization of past development commitments, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This is specifically with respect to the transfer of technologies for the transition to modern production methods, financing for development, capacity building, and reform of the world trade regime.

Institutional Framework for Sustainable development

14. The presence and effective operation of institutions serves to promote the common interests of the present and future generations in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.
15. Uganda upholds the right of nation states to self determination and believes in the principles people-centered development. In light of this, we call upon the conference to reinvigorate support and respect for national democratic and accountable governance processes, the rule of law and the planning processes associated with determination of national development objectives. We accordingly call for the re-affirmation of the principles of the Paris declaration on aid effectiveness and those of the Accra Agenda for Action. We urge the conference to expedite support for the establishment and promotion of National Councils for Sustainable Development.
16. At regional level, Uganda affirms the maintenance of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as Africa's Sustainable Development framework. We recognise that NEPAD requires revitalization of its implementation frameworks and we call on the conference to lend its support to this cause. We emphasize the need to expand the Africa Peer Review Mechanism process to include the monitoring and evaluation of the balanced integration of the three pillars of Sustainable Development.
17. We equally stress the need for a strategic and proactive framework for rapidly responding to shocks arising from the increasing natural disasters and new challenges such as migration, piracy and trafficking, as it impacts on the achievement of Sustainable Development.

18. Recognizing the trans-boundary nature of some of the natural resource pertinent to sustainable development, we call on the conference to support and strengthen sub-regional initiatives for trans-boundary natural resource management. This also applies to the globally common environment and natural resource mechanisms including the Kyoto protocol and its successor mechanism, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).
19. We acknowledge the role so far played by United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development (UNCSD) and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in focusing international attention on the Sustainable Development agenda. We however believe that there is need for effective global framework for coordinating international action on Sustainable Development. We therefore recommend the establishment of a specific global institution to spearhead the coordination of international action on Sustainable Development based on the review of the current framework.
20. With respect to international environmental governance in the context of Sustainable Development, we uphold the Africa Union position as contained in the Malabo declaration, to transform UNEP into a specialized international institution for environment based in Nairobi, Kenya. We therefore enjoin the conference to support this transformation of UNEP for greater operational presence and impact in member countries.

Means of Implementation

21. In line with the key elements of the main means of implementation outlined in the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action on aid effectiveness, and the Istanbul Plan of Action for Least Developed Countries, Uganda pledges its commitment to pursue the following objectives with the support of the international community:
 - a) to **strengthen our institutional, legal and policy frameworks** to support its transformation in line with the principles of Sustainable Development.

- b) to **strengthen our participation in and contribution to regional integration initiatives and blocs** such as the African Union (AU), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the East African Community (EAC).
- c) to **increase our efforts to mobilize local and international resources** necessary to facilitate our transition to a green economy. These will include technological, financial and human resources, through initiatives such as public-private partnerships.
- d) to progressively **reform our education systems and curricula** to enhance the knowledge and skill-base necessary for Sustainable Development.
- e) to **pursue measures to increase access to technology** in line with the Bali Declaration.
- f) to **invest in the development of integrated national and regional infrastructure** as spelt out in our National Development Plan to further enhance regional trade.

Uganda is confident that Rio+20 will act as a unique opportunity for the world to advance the principle of a green economy. We believe that the conference will meet its objective of securing renewed political commitment for Sustainable Development and will pave way for greater public participation, public-private partnerships and provide a roadmap for addressing new and emerging challenges. We express our appreciation to the UNCSO for its continued support and look forward to participating in the conference.

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