

BUGANDA KINGDOM - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POTENTIALS FOR INVESTMENT.

A paper presented by Owek. Thobani, the Minister for Planning Economic Development and Investments in Buganda Kingdom during the Tabaminuka conference in Newjersey (USA) – 31st August 2007.

Current Socio economic situation in Buganda

The current situation among the communities in Buganda is characterised by declining standards of living and quality of life of the people, associated with sharply increasing poverty and helplessness.

This is the summary of the status of the rural masses and urban poor generally in Uganda and particularly in the Buganda Kingdom, which is Uganda's Central Region today.

Buganda Kingdom's current Economic challenge

Despite the progress so far registered at the macro / national level, the condition in Buganda is not good especially in the rural areas whereby most of the communities have not caught up with the trend of progress.

Balance of this situation & lot of resources is not an environmental deterioration as

In this respect, Buganda Kingdom as a cultural institution certainly has a big role to play. The opportunity here is that the Kingdom already has the necessary structures in place, which can be used to solve most of the above socio economic problems.

So far what has been done to address the above situation

In August 2001 His Majesty the Kabaka of Buganda, Ronald Mwaenda Mutebi II launched the 10-year Buganda Kingdom Development Strategy 2001-2010 (BKDS) code named 'The Royal Development Drive (RDD)', at Mukono as part of the 8th Coronation Anniversary.

The overriding aim of the BKDS is to improve the social, economic and cultural livelihoods of the people in Buganda Kingdom region.

Objective of BKDS

The Principal Objective of the BKDS is to achieve sustainable improvement in the living standards and welfare of the people, with the accompanying social discipline by the year 2010.

In 2003, Buganda Development Agency was registered as the development arm of the Kingdom in order to Operationalise the BKDS.

BKDS Components

The BKDS is comprised of four pillars and these are:

- **Social Sector Programs** to promote social development, such as community development, health and education, water and sanitation, Communal work and Voluntary services, and Culture and Heritage.
- **Economic Sector Programs**, to create and expand income-earning opportunities, such as Sustainable Agricultural Development, Investment and Industrial Promotion, and Land as an Investment Asset.
- **Production Support Sector Programs** to facilitate effective implementation of the above two programs, such as Micro-finance, Appropriate Technology Development, skills development, Community Sensitization and Mobilization, Information and Communication Technology.

has been re-established (County, Sub county and parish levels), and Institutions such as Kabaka Foundation, Nabagereka Development Trust, the CBS radio, Buganda Development Agency, BUCADEP, Lubiri Development committee, Buganda Land Board, BKUL, have been established and are operational, and the youths have been mobilised into Mubazambogo, Essuubi Iya Buganda and Buganda Youth councils.

Way forward for Buganda Kingdom's Economic Development and Investments

The rolling Kingdom strategic Plan (2006 / 2009) which was participatory developed by all Kingdom Ministries and other undertakings in July 2006 and which was reviewed in July 2007, highlights the major programs and activities that the Kingdom intends to undertake annually in the remaining period of the 10 year strategy.

However, the 2 major programs include:

1. **Tackling food shortage and poverty from a different perspective with a major objective of increasing quality and quantity of food production:**

First of all and most importantly, Buganda Kingdom must ensure real progress in achieving food and nutrition security. The objective is to achieve 'sustainable food security for all' first then tackle the other ills afterwards. Therefore food production and agricultural activities are paramount, with particular emphasis on nutrition and health for the communities.

The issue of Bio diesel energy and food shortage

The issue of biodiesel has taken prominence in the whole world because it is environmentally friendly, easy to produce and most importantly there is a big fear that oil will run out because of the increased needs.

Bio diesel was first produced by Brazil years ago but nobody noticed and this made Brazil the most experienced producer of biodiesel energy. Currently USA has moved in to making biodiesel from corn. This has resulted in shortages in corn, which has affected the food industry and has increased costs of feeding animals and poultry. This issue is going to put more pressure of looking for extra land for food production to satisfy the world's demand.

Reliable information available indicates that the era of cheap food is over. Gaynor Dyer, an

The need to Focus on agricultural export

Buganda / Uganda's agricultural competitive advantage to eradicate poverty

Because of its strategic location Buganda Kingdom, has fertile land, and untapped water sources which can be used to exploit this opportunity. Therefore the first investment that we need to emphasize to our people is to invest in agriculture.

Uganda as a country and Buganda in particular is proud of its tropical climate. "In the international markets, Uganda's competitive advantage lies in those products which are based on domestically produced inputs raw materials, as well as those which have high value weight ratios such as flowers. Another advantage is that Uganda produces organic foods, which fetch high income.

At regional level, Uganda has a competitive advantage in some agricultural products, making it able to produce surpluses for the regional market; for example, there is a fertile market for agricultural products in the southern Sudan, Rwanda, Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, and Burundi.

To revamp the Agriculture potential and increase household incomes in the Kingdom:

- a. Buganda Kingdom has planned to start an Agricultural demonstration and commercial farm at Jjeza through Buganda Development Agency (BDA) with the Ministry of Agriculture.

The farm will be equipped with modern but affordable agricultural technologies, which can be adopted by the communities, where farmers will be trained so that they can transform from subsistence to agribusiness including irrigation (Refer to full Jjeza project proposal).

The Ministry of Planning, Economic Development together with BDA have already started sensitising communities to utilise the land they have by planting fruit trees on perimeter boundaries of their plots of land, first of all to protect their land and the different species of fruit trees will be a continuous source of income.

The Minister for Planning, Owek. Thobani has already donated one tractor (7 HP Honda tiller) with all the necessary implements – harrow, plough, slasher, pump, and trailer. This tractor which is easy to operate and affordable will also be used on the demonstration farm so that our small scale farmers, can purchase it to ease tilling with hand hoes and other rudimentary implements.

Why start this project?

Unlike other communities in Uganda, which have cattle which they sell to generate income to sustain their family incomes, take children to school, and access basic needs of life, our communities in Buganda have no such permanent source of income.

As mentioned earlier, most of our people are poor and unable to meet their basic needs. One of the major objectives of starting this project is to ensure that our people access funds they need to solve their immediate problems, enhance household incomes and be able to meet the basic needs of life.

The biggest percentage of our people are farmers and small and medium size business entrepreneurs. In Uganda Today, banks and finance companies do not support / lend to small scale farming projects. The Micro Finance Institutions, which lend to other small and medium scale business entrepreneurs, do so at exorbitant interest rates. These two issues have kept many of our people in a vicious cycle of poverty and helplessness.

The major objective of this project will be first and foremost to create confidence from the grassroots people towards Mengo establishment because without the confidence of our people we may be harvesting fruits but destroying the roots. Funds will be disbursed in small bits, and beneficiaries will be requested to deposit their land titles / kibanja certificates with BDA / Buganda Kingdom until when they refund the money.

Through this project, and if funds are available, the Kingdom intends to provide funds for the following:

- Communal boreholes to enable communities access safe and cheap water.
- Give each household iron sheets for thatching houses, plastic tanks and gutters to harvest rainwater. This cheap source of water will also be used to irrigate crops continuously to ensure food security and for other crops.
- Revamp cash generating crops such as low land Arabica coffee for a continuous flow of household incomes (wet processing brings in 30% more income as value added on production), and to revamp the Bananas – to ensure household food security
- Provide palm oil trees which will provide households with oil (excess of which to be sold for income), and the residue to be used as wood fuel (Note: scarcity of firewood and environmental protection).

To participate in this convention, the Ministry and BDA had to seriously debate whether to put the funds in the basket for this project or to come and sensitize fellow Baganda about this project. We felt that the second option was much better. (This is because the Gwankwa Iya Baganda was not in position to raise the funds needed to support the Minister for Planning and the Executive Director for BDA).

The Ministers of Planning on their initiative have raised all the funds that have sponsored 3 people to participate in the Tabankula convention with a purpose of selling this project idea to you and other Baganda living in Diaspora (UK to start with).

Other Kingdom Planned Priority Economic programs for action in the financial year 2007 / 2008

- Immediately protect Kabaka's lake by building a fence around and planting indigenous/endangered species around the lake to promote it to a Ramsar sites status as a tourist site. Special and indigenous species of fish will be put for preservation and education.
- Implement Ntate report which aims at strengthening the financial (income and expenditure) position of the Kingdom.
- Re – establish the Cooperative movement in Buganda to facilitate production and marketing of crops.
- Complete Bulange Plaza through Namukondo Investments, this is in its last stages.
- Start mining the Kingdom natural resources through Buganda Mining Consortium LTD, and develop the - Stone quarry project at Nakanyonyi (Stones will be used as a cheap source of materials to start a real Estate development project for the Kingdom for small and medium house project at Nantabulwa).
- Promote eco tourism and our heritage to target cultural tourism (Construct cultural villages at various heritage sites of the Kingdom. Establish a Buganda museum and archive, promote herbal trees for herbal medicine.
- Develop our markets and landing sites to enhance Kingdom's income base.

Just like before, continue: Naturalization and fund-raising, locally and internationally

Technology for networking,

- Start more modern Primary and secondary and vocational schools.
- Empowering and reinforcing specialized training and skills development for professionals,
- Sports development programs,
- Music Dance and Drama.
- Alter the Mutesesa I Royal University. Construct a modern Kingdom hospital of 2,000 beds and equipping it with modern equipments and facilities.
- Equip the 2 existing Kingdom health centers in Kisinyi and Nsangi with medicine, equipments and personnel, and also start more centers in the other 17 counties to offer HIV counselling, testing, guidance and mitigation services to our communities.

¹ Guyana Dyer, an independent journalist.

² The Republic of Uganda – Ministry of Finance "Competitiveness and Investment Climate Strategy (CICS), 2006 – 2010, pp 5

Please come and Join us in this noble cause to support our Buganda motherland.

Thank you very much

SSABASAJJA KABAKA AWANGAALE