



THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA
OFFICE OF THE LEADER OF OPPOSITION

RESPONSE TO
THE STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS
DELIVERED TO THE 9TH PARLIAMENT ON 7TH JUNE 2012

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**RT. HONOURABLE SPEAKER,
HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT**

A. INTRODUCTION

1. President Museveni delivered his 7th State of the Nation Address to this House and the Nation on Thursday the 7th of June 2012 at the Serena Conference Centre. As a tradition and practice, this year's State of the Nation Address opens the second Session of the 9th Parliament of Uganda. The State of the Nation Address provides an opportunity for a country to hear their Chief Executive outline his Party's/Government political agenda, the proposed policies and new legislation. It is also a ceremonial event that allows the Head of State to review the past session.
2. Rt. Hon. Speaker, a State of the Nation Address is very distinct in nature. In the wisdom of the framers of the 1995 Constitution, under Article 101(1), the State of the Nation Address precedes the Budget and is meant to provide political direction to the national priorities. The State of the Nation Address is therefore an executive duty that portrays Statehood at its best.
3. Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Members, unfortunately, this year's State of the Nation – again - misses the mark and does not meet even the minimum standard expectation of policy review and direction to re-shape and re-cast the future of a nation in dire

need of political, economic & social re-configuration. He simply chose to make passing remarks on the economy, Dr Kizza Besigye, the media, the UPDF and the HIV/AIDS, even without any substantive reference to the legislative agenda of Government for the new session. There was no account of what Government undertook to do even just for the last Financial Year.

4. Rt. Hon. Speaker, as a reminder, in his 2011 Address, the President made certain promises as follows, among others:
 - a. Commit to the rule of law in the management of public affairs (pg 4);
 - b. Transform 3 million Households from subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture; from hand hoe to mechanized production; and from production for household consumption to production for export (pg 10);
 - c. Increase farm production and productivity through use of fertilizers, improved seeds and animal breeds (pg 11); Increase milk processing capacity from 463,000 litres to 710,000 litres per day (pg 12);
 - d. Actualize the phosphate fertilizer production at Sukulu Hills in Tororo (pg 15);
 - e. Build storage capacity for food commodities at the farm level and sub county level (pg 16);
 - f. Establish 18 regional trade information centres to undertake market information dissemination (pg 16);
 - g. Build and commission 19 rural electrification schemes by November 2011 (pg 18);
 - h. Refurbish and restock the Jinja fuel Storage Tanks (pg 21);

- i. Reduce the teacher-pupil ratio to 56:1 in all government schools (pg 22);
 - j. Complete and open Muni University by August 2012 (pg 25);
 - k. Progress on Kasese Airport Development Project and the Terminal Building on Masindi Aerodrome (pg 32);
 - l. Set up the National Data Centre (pg 36);
 - m. Complete the National Land Information System Centre by the end of 2011 (pg 36);
 - n. Legislate and operationalize the Uganda Land Commission as a Statutory Body (pg 37);
 - o. Publish the Judicial Commission of Inquiry Report on the burning of Kasubi Tombs (pg 43);
 - p. Constitute a Committee to investigate political leaders and public officers implicated in corruption-related scandals (pg 46).
5. Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Colleagues, in this year's State of the Nation Address, we expected the President to advise us on which of the above priority areas he had delivered, and if not, what needs to be done. We believe that the President, having realized the embarrassing nature of the chain of false promises made year-in, year-out, avoided giving a report on the touchy undertakings made last year, on which moneys were appropriated. This would have painted a picture of a nation that is getting worse and raised questions as to whether there has

been value for money or whether money was actually spent on these areas.

6. Rt. Hon. Speaker, President Bill Clinton once remarked that *“being a President is like running a cemetery. You have a lot of people under you and nobody is listening. You cannot be sure whether you are taking the right decision because there is nobody opposing or challenging your current thoughts.”* That is why the President derives comfort in churning out promises in various forms, as though he was speaking to a cemetery that will not remember and follow-up what he says. That is why he refused or failed to render an account of his last year’s promises without which, the address was just a report card.
7. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the State of the Nation Address also came at a time when a major report, the **“Poverty Status Report 2012”** had just been released by the Ministry of Finance, in May 2012. I want to interest the Hon. Members to read the report before you debate this year’s budget. It makes important divergent revelations between what the political elite or appointees in the NRM superstructure say or promise and what the situation and the recommendations of the technocrats are. We will highlight only a few of these in the section on the economy below.

8. Rt. Hon. Speaker, our success as a nation is **NOT** measured by how many years we have governed, such as over 26 years, or how many wars we have fought and won. It is measured by the quality of life in the citizenry, and you will agree with me, that most of our countrymen and women, especially in rural areas, live a destitute life - a life of indignity, condemned to humiliating poverty amidst the celebrated economic growth figures of over two and a half decades.
9. Rt. Hon. Speaker, an old woman in Kanungu or Pabbo, for example, who does not understand the fundamentals of economics, can only be smiling if she can put food on her plate. But when you start telling her that the shilling is doing well compared to the previous months, she will ask you what you are talking about given that she sleeps early because of darkness, and pays for medicine because there is none in the nearby health centre.
10. Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Colleagues, the tendency of our President making empty promises year-in, year-out must come to an end. We must actually start to see words transformed into serious action because a nation's success or failure in achieving democracy is judged in part by how well it responds to those at the bottom of the social order. We therefore need a Government

that would treat its citizens equally and is committed to listen to them.

11. Rt. Hon. Speaker, my constitutional duty today is to respond to the President's speech and point out the omissions in the content that should constitute Statehood as we know it in our generation. In doing this, I shall stay away from the many off-the-cuff remarks he makes, because they are largely that - off the cuff.
12. Rt. Hon. Speaker, Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) party as the Official Opposition is constitutionally duty bound to hold the NRM Government accountable for its policies, programs and plans as well as compel it to account for its over 26 years in power. Our audit and score of the last session will therefore address;
 - (i) The Political and Legislative Arena – the state of Governance, Constitutionalism and Rule of Law.
 - (ii) The State of The Economy
 - (iii) Some Important References made
 - (iv) Conclusion and Way Forward

B. THE POLITICAL AND LEGISLATIVE ARENA

13. Rt. Hon. Speaker, in his address to the nation, the President talked about security of both persons and property, brought by the NRM, and in particular, the discipline of the NRA/UPDF. He went ahead to congratulate police for successfully stifling Opposition party activities. In this he was encouraging the Police and Military to mete out more brutality onto the Opposition. However, he did not address himself to the recent killings of business people and prominent Muslims in Kampala. May I remind the President that sustainable peace is not achieved by suffocating dissenting views and/or simply stationing policemen at every locus. It is achieved through respect of people's liberties and equitable allocation of resources.
14. Rt. Hon. Speaker, while the 2005 referendum changed the legal framework for political parties, the envisaged political space has been highly patronized and only utilized for the sole favour of the NRM. Revival of multiparty democracy without the required will from the ruling NRM party to abandon its negative attitude towards other parties still undermines the merits of the multiparty system in Uganda. That is why Government has even refused to operationalize the law for funding Political Parties.
15. Rt. Hon. Speaker, we do not expect the President to heap praises on Opposition, but the Constitution commands him to guarantee unfettered political space for party activities. All he has done is to

misuse state power by curtailing multi-party activities, and to also suffocate and intimidate his own NRM members, for purposes of his regime longevity as opposed to the well-being of Ugandans.

16. Rt. Hon. Speaker, as if that is not bad enough, the NRM legislative agenda for the 2nd session of the 9th Parliament prioritizes the passing of the obnoxious Public Order and Management Bill to legitimize police murder and brutality, further curtailing political party activity and the enjoyment of our constitutional fundamental rights and freedoms. I wish to reiterate that Uganda is effectively under an undeclared state of emergency since the 9th September 2009 Buganda riots. "Preventive Arrests" have become the preferred choice by the Kayihura police. While we could use the numbers to pass this unjust law and let the NRM compel the Opposition to obey, this in itself does not make it binding.
17. Rt. Hon. Speaker, we must remind the House that Grace Ibingira who once championed the infamous detention without trial law (Public Order and Safety Act) was indeed the first victim of the same law he championed. We now remind and warn you that any such draconian laws will definitely catch up with its architects.

In Zambia the Movement for Multi- Party Democracy (MMD) was in power for over 20 years, oppressing the Opposition. Last year, they lost power and the current Government is applying the same laws on them! MMD is pleading with the current Government to amend the laws which they had refused to do when they were in power! This scenario will soon catch up with us here.

18. Rt. Hon. Speaker, even before the draconian Public Order Management Bill is enacted into law, evidence on the ground shows that the police has already assigned itself the responsibility of granting permission to opposition parties as to when, where and how to assemble, yet our constitution is clear on fundamental human rights and freedoms including the right to assemble, associate and demonstrate. This matter has even received judicial interpretation i.e Constitutional Petition No. 9 of 2005, Muwanga Kivumbi vs Attorney General. There is also enough evidence to show that no single opposition party activity passes without tear gas, water cannons, rubber and live bullets, batons, chaos, injuries and the endless blame on the victims of this terror.
19. Rt. Hon. Speaker, we already know that President Museveni, doubtful of the loyalty and discipline of the police, has kept them under constant surveillance and more directly under his control. This has made police act like an enemy force towards civilians,

brutalizing every opposition move to organize, instead of securing lives and property. This shows that we are treading on the path where police is a master card to subdue citizen discontent.

20. Rt. Hon. Speaker, we want to inform the NRM leadership that no repressive Government governs by repression alone, precisely because this renders governance unstable, unacceptable and expensive. As long as there is repression that is sustained for a long time, that pent-up anger explodes. The ground is certainly set for that explosion. While we recognize that our Government has not yet driven us to "absolute despotism", but recent trends indicate that we could be headed in that direction. This has already been shown by the recent study made by Fund for Peace that categorized Uganda under the failed states.
21. Rt. Hon. Speaker, Uganda's history is rich with experience that the exit of any oppressive Government begins with the decay of the core principles on which it was founded. However, for such a Government to exit, some people must first say publicly and loudly, like we are doing now, that something wrong is taking place. Our resolve is that we must rid our nation of all those people who think that anything that offends them should be removed. In doing this, we are energized, by the words of Martin Luther King, who said *"our lives will begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."*

22. Rt. Hon. Speaker, as Bertrand de Jouvenel, the French Philosopher put it, "a society of sheep must in time beget a government of wolves." **Therefore, no amount of force or brutality from either the police or any other force will stop us from exercising our inherent rights.** We shall not allow wolves to take over our motherland! Our advice to the police is that they should not accept to be used to commit crime on anybody's behalf, for they will be individually liable for crimes against the citizenry.
23. Rt. Hon. Speaker, we can no longer remain in blissful silence when fundamental human rights of our citizens are undermined with insensitivity. We know that "preventive arrest" is a classic instance of political power not in accordance with constitutional principles, for it affects human dignity and violates fundamental human rights. We further know that the attempt to silence a man/woman is the greatest honour you can bestow on him/her. It means you recognize his/her superiority to yourself.
24. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the infusion of State structures with NRM Party structures is a distress. Civil Servants, RDCs, Police, Army, Intelligence, Electoral Commission e.t.c are all State Structures **NOT** NRM Party structures. These should not be abused by the NRM. The Electoral Commission should operate as State Structure not NRM structure. We advise State structures to serve all Ugandan citizens equally; otherwise it will boomerang on them in

the near future. Hon. Speaker, I don't know why Ugandans don't learn from history. Freedom is an inherent right, but Ugandans are intimidated during broad day light by these state operatives. For example, there is no any election in Uganda without bloodshed. But, Ugandans are watching and taking note of these individuals, they are taking note of vehicles and guns they use to intimidate them and these persons will sooner or later answer for their sins individually. Hon. Speaker, President Museveni is abusing public funds especially classified expenditures using it for NRM activities, he protects corrupt NRM officials for selfish interest; this should stop.

25. Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Colleagues, it is our responsibility as elected leaders to ensure that Uganda is a State ruled by democratic principles underpinned by human dignity, equality and freedoms; where there is separation of powers, corruption is investigated and wrong doers are equally punished in court and their riches confiscated, and services provided equally to all Ugandans whether in Government or Opposition.
26. In this regard, I intend to present to this August House the following legislation by way of Private Members Bills. They are;
 - i. Constitutional (Amendment) Bill;
 - ii. Presidential Elections (Amendment) Bill;
 - iii. Parliamentary Elections (Amendment) Bill,

- iv. Local Government Elections (Amendment) Bill;
 - v. Electoral Commission (Amendment) Bill;
 - vi. Police Act (Amendment) Bill;
 - vii. Uganda People's Defense Force (Amendment) Bill;
 - viii. Universal Education (Primary & Secondary) Bill;
 - ix. Tertiary Education Loan Bill;
 - x. National Agriculture Development Bank Bill; and
 - xi. A motion for a Resolution to Disband Privatization Unit which is wasting tax payers' money.
27. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the political events of the Great Lakes Region are a big threat to the security and stability of Uganda as a land linked/locked nation. However, the State of the National Address makes no mention of the geo-politics. As we play host to refugees and internally displaced persons, we note with concern that the international security obligations in Somalia and the situation in Southern Sudan, DRC and Rwanda calls for an addendum to the State of the Nation Address.
28. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the current role of the American Africom Program calls for debate in this House as it distorts our sovereignty. In addition, proliferation of small arms in the region with Uganda becoming a transit area for a growing illicit arms and natural resource trade. The nation needs to know the safeguards to such external threats with the discovery of oil precipitating anxiety, but

with no assurances coming out clearly in the State of the Nation Address.

C. THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY

29. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the Ugandan economy returned bad news, and its performance is a source of great worry to every household and business. Inflation has remained a double digit figure at 18.6%, economic growth has declined from 6.7% to 3.2%, and Central Bank lending rate remains high as a constraint to private sector to access finance. This level of growth performance is far below the sub-Saharan average of 5.1%; it is also below the world economic growth average of 3.9%; and it is of course below the Rwandan growth for the same period of 8.8%. This is the balance sheet of President Museveni's first year of 5-year in his **6TH TERM** in Government. That is the bad news summary.
30. Rt. Hon. Speaker, it was very surprising for us, that instead of unequivocally announcing the bad news, the President chose to skirt around and avoided a direct announcement as his Government continues the same cosmetics to fight inflation. He instead preferred to find and drag in other innocent persons such as Dr. Kizza Besigye as scapegoats for his failings. To say that "the Police was able to protect people's property in the markets and shops from looters organized by Dr. Besigye" is very unfortunate

indeed. The President did not tell us anyone who was arrested and charged for looting, and who was organized by Dr. Besigye. Neither has Dr. Besigye been arrested and charged for causing the looting of markets by organizing looters. For the record, Dr. Kizza Besigye is a dignified and respected National and Party leader, who advocates for positive change in people's lives through peaceful means. So, Rt. Hon. Speaker, we demand that this unsubstantiated and wild allegation against Dr. Besigye by the President be expunged from the record of this House.

31. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the President further found solace in blaming it on the Leader of Opposition yet he said this was a high sounding title that has no effect on the economy. By so doing, the President was, firstly, abusing the Constitution, because this title is enshrined in our constitution. But secondly, the President was actually spot-on. He has confirmed that he doesn't take any advice from us, legitimately made for improvement of public services. He did not take our advice to make good Basajjabalaba's Ushs 169 billion, CHOGM Ushs 500+ billion, Dura Cement's Ushs 42.5 billion, Danze's 150billions, ID Project 200billions, State House over 200billions yearly budget, CMB coffee stolen, grabbing of public land, Loans borrowed in trillions to date, Shs. 50 billion stolen in Banana Project in Bushenyi, over 200 billion stolen in NAADS, fake compensations by Ministry of

Justice of over Ushs 500billions, UCB and NYTIL give-away, the list is endless. This stolen money could have been used to make an impact in agriculture, health service, education as well as tame inflation.

32. Rt. Hon. Speaker, there would be no secret State House scholarships, no wasteful jets and no devastation from the nodding syndrome and preventable diseases. To that extent, the President was right because he has ignored our calls for his Government to hold accountable all those who abuse public funds, which would have caused great impact in the lives of ordinary citizens, who pay taxes to run the government.
33. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the NRM Government has collected the highest revenue in Uganda compared to the past Governments, (i.e over Ushs. 11,000 billion per year compared to Ushs. 5billion by the past governments); NRM has ruled longer than the other regimes i.e over 26 years; however, it has performed poorly in terms of development coupled with poor service delivery. These past governments collected less revenue but did tangible developments and provided better services. Take for example, Itojo hospital – when was it built? The Hon. Members who come from that area will attest to the depressing condition this hospital is in now. This is just one of the many infrastructures that were left behind by the previous regimes which have been ruined by the

NRM regime. How about our public Universities? All students were studying for free in the past governments. What went wrong?

34. Rt. Hon. Speaker, having announced the summary of economic performance for the year, allow me make highlights of some very important matters in this regard, knowing that the respective Shadow Ministers will make the necessary detailed sectoral responses, the aggregate of which returned the bad economic news.

Where is the cause of the troubles we have?

35. Rt. Hon. Speaker, we take comfort in the fact that the NRM Government is aware of the gravity of the economic decline and its impact on peace and stability. The background to the budget (BTB) rightly confirms the grim shape of the economy. It notes, *“this disappointing performance is the result of a remarkably volatile year...unusually high levels of inflation and exchange rate volatility had particularly severe implications for the real sector, by undermining business confidence in the industrial and services sectors”* (BTB, pg 20); and *“the temporal lapse in macro-economic stability that characterized the 2011 calendar year was the most important cause of the disappointing growth performance”* (BTB, pg 25)

Which Sector should we focus on?

36. Rt. Hon. Speaker, indeed, the so-called industrial growth fell to 1.1% in 2011/12 from 7.9% the previous year and services growth fell to 3.1% from the celebrated 8.4% of the previous year. Agriculture, instead, returned from a negative growth of 14.6% to a positive 7.2%. The downward spiral and sluggish reversal in Agriculture growth is the result of policy failure in Agriculture and deliberate refusal to listen to our appeals to sink money in the sector as a first priority for an agro-based economy like Uganda. This would in turn address the chronic unemployment problem in the country.
37. Rt. Hon. Speaker, despite Government's belated realization of the importance of agriculture, they still pay lip service to the sector. While the proposed budgetary allocation to the agriculture sector, which is touted as the backbone of the economy, has increased in nominal terms from Shs. 434 billion to Shs. 585.3 billion, but in real terms, it has reduced from 4.5% given last year to 3.8% this year. The combined Agriculture, Water and Environment allocation will also drop from 7.3% last year to 7.2%.
38. Rt. Hon. Speaker, why should such an important sector which employs over 80% of our population, earning nearly ½ of the foreign exchange earnings be continuously underfunded, fluctuating between 3% – 5% in the last 2 decades? Is it still

sustainable to continue blaming poor performance of this sector on drought?

39. Rt. Hon. Speaker, why should Uganda continue to be a net importer with a widening current account deficit, currently amounting to -11.95%, up from -8.1% of GDP in 2008/09? Unless and until we increase our annual budgetary allocation to over 10%, agriculture growth will continue at snail's pace. It is high time we took a leaf from Rwanda which has increased their budgetary allocation to agriculture to over 10% in line with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) MOU, otherwise, this will deny our smallholder farmers access to market and maximum returns.
40. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the success of the agriculture sector was in the past driven by the cooperative movement but this was badly destroyed by the NRM Government. Whereas the United Nations has named 2012 as the International year of Cooperatives, our Government is only paying lip service. Even then, the remaining Cooperative Union, Bugisu Cooperative Union is under threat from Government. We recommend that revival of cooperatives be put high on the agenda to assist rural farmers in marketing their produce. The citizens prefer to see results rather than documents.

41 Rt. Hon. Speaker, the Opposition notes with concern that Uganda has a very young population. Those below 18 years constitute 54% of the entire population. Investing in a young population presents a huge resource challenge to all of us political leaders. Investment in an effective education and skills system is a necessary pre-requisite to the overall development. Uganda must re-tool and re-skill her young population to be competitive in the labour market. In order to move Uganda from the boda boda and roadside chapatti economy it is now, to a vibrant agro-based economy. We therefore recommend:

- a. Implementation of youth oriented agriculture development with agriculture policies that target the youth,
- b. Improvement of traditional methods to attract youth to agriculture through use of mechanized agriculture and appropriate technologies, and
- c. Integration of agriculture in education to change the mindset of our youth to motivate and encourage them to explore untapped opportunities in the agriculture sector.

42. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the **World Ease of Doing Business Report** has consistently ranked Uganda poorly. For 2012, Uganda has been ranked 123rd out of 183 countries, down from 119th last year, and below Rwanda's 45th position. Our deteriorating position results from 4 major weak criteria:

- a. Starting a business, dropped by 7 points
 - b. Resolving insolvency, dropped by 5 points
 - c. Getting credit, dropped by 3 points
 - d. Enforcing contracts, dropped by 3 points
43. Rt. Hon. Speaker, sometimes I feel a little embarrassed that we now have more lessons to learn from Rwanda than they have to learn from us, given our known history. Our small businesses collapse at the same rate as they are formed. Further, the projected investments planned by Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) cannot be realized in full, as much as the expected employment from them. We should stop the habit of promoting foreign investors like Mehtas instead of equipping our own local investors. These so-called foreign investors take out profits made in Uganda while locals re-invest it here. We warn the current leadership upfront, that you are headed for a disaster if you do not streamline the youth funds very quickly. Youth programmes should not be discriminatory basing on Political Parties.
44. Rt. Hon. Speaker, **Corruption and Budget indiscipline** continue to dog this country. What we see is a net effect of irresponsible fiscal stewardship over our money. That is why I appreciate the Hon. Minister for Finance – on being able to say it the way it is. Members, you have to believe her when she says *“recent years have seen inadequate budget discipline... increasing trends in*

supplementary expenditures, additional cash limits, intra-year reallocations, delayed releases and the accrual of domestic arrears". You must believe and support her to clean up this irresponsibility, irrespective of which side you sit.

45. However, we want to remind her that what is going on is more than what she describes. It cannot even be described as corruption or budget indiscipline – it is outright open theft and plunder with impunity. Endemic corruption is one of the factors siphoning funds and stunting economic and social development. It is like a tax on public and private funds, taking away funds that would have been invested in productive sectors to promote economic growth and development. Even the delays in cash releases are caused by lack of cash when required, precisely for the same reasons I have already described.
46. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the main challenge we have in Uganda is not lack of funds but rather lack of accountability. When Government doesn't deliver on its promises, a teacher or health worker does not show up for work, or an unscrupulous middle-man tricks farmers out of their money and nothing happens, people get angry but no action is taken as they have learnt to expect nothing different. To our citizens, the NRM Government has become like rain: when it rains, they are grateful, and when it doesn't, there is nothing they can do.

47. Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Colleagues, if we are to preserve our independence, we must not let our leaders load us with perpetual debt. Our people are tired of wasteful Government programs. They are also angry about the constant spiral of taxes and Government regulations, arrogant bureaucrats and public officials who think all of mankind's problems can be solved by throwing tax payers' money at them.
48. Rt. Hon. Speaker, transport infrastructure is one of the critical catalysts of development as it facilitates access to economic and social services in any country. **Road Transport** in particular, remains the most commonly used means of transporting goods and services. However, the road infrastructure countrywide is in a dilapidated state calling for an urgent review of the much hyped Ten-year Road Master Plan. For a land-linked/locked country such as Uganda, a well-designed, maintained, linked and developed road network is a vital necessity to reduce the cost of transport and bring down the cost of doing business. It is an essential prerequisite for being competitive in the market place. I don't think that the President and his cronies have ever gone out of Uganda, otherwise, if they had, they would copy what they see there and replicate it in Uganda.
49. Rt. Hon. Speaker, most of our rural roads, however, remain impassable with heavy vehicles stuck in several feet of mud, and

passenger vehicles wading through brown stagnant water. In most rural areas, such as Karamoja, Elgon areas and Kanungu where the Prime Minister comes from, most bridges have been washed away and farmers cannot take their produce to the market, with transport fares sky-rocketing. While 1,855.9km of tarmac is proposed for 19 roads countywide, it still refers to the same roads that were on the priority list of the last State of the Nation Address. The question to ask is "Will Uganda ever expand? its tarmacked road network at this speed of the NRM?" What happened to the budget for these same roads passed last Financial Year? Who mis-used/ate the money?

50. Rt. Hon. Speaker, this Parliament passed the Uganda Road Fund Act, 2008 which was aimed at assuring funding for road maintenance. In particular, Section 23 (3) of the said law provides that the *"road user charges shall be remitted directly to the Uganda Road Fund (URF) on a monthly basis"*. The URF is a "Special Account", separate from the Consolidated Fund Account, as provided for in the URF Act and Public Finance and Accountability Act, 2003. The URA collects all these levies for and on behalf of the URF.
51. Rt. Hon. Speaker, politicians in Government are reluctant to relinquish control of the cash flow from road user charges by exploiting Section 14 of the URA Act which specifically directs URA

to deposit all revenues it collects, to the Consolidated Fund (CF). They then take the liberty to allocate and appropriate only some of the said money to the rightful owner, the URF. The balance is spent away as Government wishes. For example, Shs 20 billion was reduced from URF last Financial Year to meet supplementary expenditures of State House. This is very wrong and must be quickly corrected.

52. Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Members, we therefore recommend that before passing this financial year's budget, Parliament should put in place measures that will ring-fence the road user charges and specifically require that they be remitted to a specified Road Fund Account in Bank of Uganda, managed by Uganda Road Fund, a fully-fledged body corporate lawfully created for the purpose. The Minister for Finance must be tasked to table a statutory instrument or bring an amendment to the URA Act, to make it conform to the law and spirit of the Uganda Road Fund Act. An account of all fuel levies collected since commencement of the Uganda Road Fund Act should also be laid before Parliament for scrutiny.
53. Rt. Hon. Speaker, allow me to use this opportunity to put Government on notice that if this money is found to have been unduly diverted to purposes other than road maintenance as lawfully intended, we shall institute public-interest litigation to

challenge Government's continued misuse of the fund, when tax payers continue to perish in road accidents due to the poor maintenance of the roads across the country. In Tanzania, this was challenged and the Road Fund money is now paid directly to the Road Fund Account. It is respected and is doing well. The reason why it is done in reverse here is because of plunder motives, greed, selfishness and nothing else.

54. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the last transport train functioned two decades ago when the Uganda Railways Corporation (URC) wound up its service to the nation. The Rift Valley Railway Consortium (RVR) remains a hoax and continues to systematically strip and vandalize the national URC assets. Further, the last Uganda Airlines plane graced the skies twenty years ago. The state of aerodromes and airfields in the country is not mentioned in this year's State of the Nation Address, neither is progress reported on the Kasese and Masindi projects. Uganda is the only country in the East African region without a national carrier. In addition, the last ship to sail on our lakes, MV Kabalega, sunk ten years ago without replacement leaving Uganda, as a country with numerous water bodies to only operate modern rafts that it calls ferries.
55. Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Colleagues, the 2012 State of the Nation Address does not make mention of the vital need to have

an appropriate mix of transport options to ease transport costs and make Uganda a business destination. With Uganda Airlines, Uganda Railways, wagon ferries and the Road Fund already cannibalized by this Government, doing business with Kampala will largely remain mirage. There is an ongoing battle between conscience and self-interest but at some point, we have to take sides because the hottest place in hell is reserved for those who remain neutral in times of great moral conflict.

Poverty

56. Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Members, the ultimate wish of poor African countries and responsible Governments is to put poverty to the past, and place a smile on the faces of citizens. This is a very important motive of appropriating funds. Public funds are allocated to various sectors for Government to spend towards making life worth living for citizens, but this has not been the case in Uganda. It is dangerous to have a society, the larger part of which feels their stakes in it have been usurped or robbed away, because such a section, where it may exist, will unconsciously want to destroy their very country. But if they feel economically included, then they will want to die for their country.
57. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the recent **Poverty Status Report 2012** is a revealing document, and vindicates us over what we have been

saying here over the last ten years plus. I will just make a small extract from the report for you as below:

	Category/Year	1992/93	2009/10
1(a)	Absolutely poor	9.9 million people	7.5 million
		56.4%	24.5%
1(b)	Non Poor but insecure	5.8 million	13.2 million
		33.4%	42.9%
2	Middle Class	1.8 million	10 million
		10.2%	32.6%

Source: Extract from Poverty Status Report, 2012

58. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the poor are those who are in category 1. You may also wish not to get confused by the nomenclature “non poor but insecure”. This still means poor, because, according to the report, “they are able to meet their basic needs but remain insecure and vulnerable to falling into absolute poverty”. So, these are not really different. The nomenclature was created as a cover, to portray declining poverty, in the same way “public sector management” was created out of “public administration” to try to portray that big government was no longer a big problem onto the treasury, whereas it is.
59. Rt. Hon. Speaker, this extract shows that the number of people wallowing in poverty has increased from 15.5 million (89.8%) in 1992/93 to 20.7million (67.4%) in 2009/10, indicating an additional 5.2million people over the seven-year analysis period. This happened as the economy grew in the 6% range over the period. In our view, this is the litmus test for NRM's stewardship over the

economy. Declining economic growth and rising poverty are very good indicators of what is happening in the Human Development, Infrastructure and Job Creation and Livelihood Sectors. It is the Lowest Common Denominator of all our actions.

60. Rt. Hon. Speaker, while the country's poverty rate has halved over the past decades, in terms of sheer numbers, more Ugandans now live in poverty than in 1986 when President Museveni took over power. These technical revelations now serve to disprove fervent denials by politicians over the past. Poverty is the reason we are here on behalf of our communities. Now, this has returned a negative result. What other story does the President have to tell? In our view, it is now judgment time, because the President has been allowed enough time to explain himself and his stewardship, and the results are up on the wall, for all of us to see. Uganda cannot afford to be in recovery mode for close to 30 years, yet Rwanda has already taken off. Unless, Uganda is for the privileged few who have enriched themselves at the expense of the majority un-privileged Ugandans. Recovery should have ended in 1989.
61. Rt. Hon. Speaker, it is now clearly seen that the economy did very badly in the last year. The problems in the economy can only be attributed to three major causes. These are; **corruption, bad governance and the rising cost of living** which is as a result of the

NRM's poor economic policies. There should, therefore, be no debate over this, or even blaming those who speak out or respond in various ways, about it. The debate must be about how we should accept the truth, get over it, and forge ahead as a country. Our contributions and advice in this regard are always unreserved because we believe this country requires all our minds and hands together, to move forward. This country belongs to all of us despite the different ideologies we believe in; no Ugandan wants to leave in perpetual poverty, which is unfortunately the case for many Ugandans.

Social Sector

Health

62. Rt. Hon. Speaker, a healthy nation is essential for human welfare and to sustain the economic development of any country. It requires Governments to develop a vibrant health finance system to ensure its people receive quality health services and protect them from associated and unnecessary hardships. It is public knowledge that as a country, we have a long list of unmet health care needs, and our public health system continues to suffer from Government's misplaced spending priorities. In fact, our health infrastructure itself is very sick and in dire need of oxygen!

63. Rt. Hon. Speaker, this August House will recall that the NRM health policy was to provide a Health Centre IV at Constituency level bringing the total to a minimum of 215 Health Centers IVs countrywide. The policy also provides for a Health Centre III at every sub-county making a minimum of 1,000 Health Center III facilities. District Hospitals should total 112 with Regional Referral Hospitals.
64. However, their common feature is; inadequate funding, no water, terrible sanitation, no drugs, under-staffing, low morale of health staff e.tc. Our women continue to die during child birth at an average of 16 women a day, both at home and at health facilities. This is clearly evident from my recent oversight visits to several health facilities upcountry, including Kabale, Iganga, Gulu, Tororo, Mulago, Itojo Kasese, Fort Portal, Kisoro, Kanungu, Mbarara, Pader, Atutur, Bugiri, Arua among others.
65. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the health infrastructure lacks preparedness to deal with any health disaster or emergency. Nodding disease in Northern Uganda is a living example of this lack of preparedness. The readiness, durability and resilience of the health infrastructure do not meet the growing health needs of the country. I wish, therefore, to send an early warning signal to the NRM Government that you have not built any capacity over the last quarter of a century of your corrupt rule to handle any epidemic

including HIV/AIDS in spite of the enormous resource flow - both in loans and grants - in the health sector. Primary Health Care (PHC), drug distribution systems, curative and palliative care, lack effective coordination leading to resource waste and failure of the health system. So, what can the NRM Government do for the people of Uganda, with or without money?

66. Rt. Hon. Speaker, those responsible for our health system are often globe-trotting to get the best treatment in the best hospitals where patients are treated quickly, efficiently, hygienically and with respect. Our health system will not improve by just appointing some junior and obscure well paid NRM cadres in State House to go around harassing and lecturing poorly paid but well trained senior medical officers. We can no longer continue to take pride in burying citizens whom we fail to look after when they are in most need of our assistance. We lost and buried Prof. Kakoma, Prof. Ssentenza Kajubi, Prof Nabudere, Hon. Wanedeya, Curthbert Obwangor, Lord Adimola, and just yesterday our colleague Hon. Michael Oromait who waited for 5 hours at a health center with no help and many other Ugandan citizens whose deaths could be avoided. These are clear signs that the Health Care System is in dire need of urgent attention.
67. Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Colleagues, we therefore recommend a universal health system where:

- a. Every citizen enjoys financial protection from prohibitive health care costs and;
- b. Everyone is able to access good health services when they need them.

This is possible; it is a matter of commitment by Government.

Education

68. Rt. Hon. Speaker, education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world. It is universally recognized as one of the fundamental building blocks for human development. However, in Uganda, the misconception attached to the notion of free education has made the parents to relinquish their due responsibility. The question we have to answer as representatives of the people is whether we should shift from improving schools to improving parent's welfare. This is the fundamental question we have to answer.
69. Rt. Hon. Speaker, Government must stop paying lip service to this sector, and proceed to adopt and implement the comprehensive recommendations and proposals the Opposition made in our last year's response to the State of the Nation Address. **Mahatma Gandhi said, the three priorities should be Education, Education, Education**, and you can see where India is today. Instead of concentrating on this sector, we are treating

teachers with disdain, and dishing out school land to supermarkets, denying the schools land for expansion programs necessary to improve quality of education. Shimoni Demonstration School, Kyagwe Road Primary School, Kololo S.S. and East Kololo Primary School are just a few examples.

It is sad to note that all the good old traditional schools like Ntare, Mwiri, Nabumali, Tororo College, Vurra, Boroboro, Nyakasura e.t.c have been destroyed in this regime. The private schools which have bombarded this country in the name of "development" can only be afforded by the few privileged against the majority poor.

It was very unfortunate for Government to promise a pay rise for teachers this financial year, only for the President to threaten that teachers who demand for pay raise should be fired and new ones recruited to replace them. Very sad indeed, it backstabbed our teachers. We refer H. E. the President to his own book "The Mustard Seed" about the science teachers!

70. Rt. Hon. Speaker, before I conclude, allow me make a few comments in response to two other important specific issues mentioned by the President in his State of the Nation Address.

D. SOME IMPORTANT REFERENCES MADE

71. Rt. Hon. Speaker, I already mentioned that because the economy returned bad news for especially the President, he had to find someone to blame for it. But among all those he chose to blame, we are wondering why the Head of State should insult the media, the 4th estate. It is not acceptable for the President to call the media a “*corrupt, irresponsible and unprofessional group*” without naming the people he is particularly angry with and thereby “grouping” the media as a whole and tagging them as such.
72. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the question that begs for an answer is whether the grand corruption that is crippling citizens was caused by the media? Is the media the “group” the President spoke about, when he reportedly told the President of Rwanda that Uganda is full of thieves? Are the media and DJs the ones always implicated by the Auditor General and IGG over massive theft of public funds? It is unfair for the President to engage in diversionary tactics instead of tackling the grand corruption exposed in Government involving high ranking officials. We, therefore, recommend that the Leader of Government Business, on behalf of the President, retracts this unfortunate statement and assault on the media, to pave the way for democratic development.
73. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the President also lamented on the rising prevalence of HIV/Aids, and blamed it wholly on promiscuity. All

the gains made so far are starting to get lost, primarily because of the loss of focus on the matter by our leaders. The reason this is happening, in our view, are the mixed and confused messages the President and his Advisors are sending to the population. At one point, he tells them to produce as many children as possible; after all, China has over 1 billion people, yet is developed. At another point, he tells the youth to rush and get circumcised en-masse, suggesting to them that there are greater chances of surviving HIV infection when exposed, if one is circumcised. With all this mix-up, Rt. Hon. Speaker, what do you expect?

74. Rt. Hon. Speaker, circumcision has always been a matter of customs, traditions and religion, just as it is in Bugisu, Sebei, Kasese and Islam. It has been practiced long before HIV/AIDs came to be known. If circumcision were such a wonder gimmick for HIV prevention, why is there HIV/AIDS in Bugisu, Kasese and Sebei regions? Even if it were that effective, you cannot package the circumcision message in such a dangerous manner. So, someone is misleading the country to commit mass-suicide by enticing the youth into circumcision as a means of surviving HIV. This is murder, and we recommend that the President must get back to the drawing board as the chief PRO.

E. CONCLUSION AND WAY-FORWARD

75. Rt. Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, the State of the Nation Address came at the end of a very difficult year. The President was constrained to swallow it, and he had no other option but to address us. Matters that have kept Ugandans in poverty are now well known. We just need the will on the part of our leaders to tackle them squarely. Someone must decide to put 10%+ of the budget funds into Agriculture for this year. Universal Health Insurance must start yesterday. Someone must punish harshly, or allow to be punished; those caught in corruption acts, and stop scape-goating and delaying this.
76. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the present Government has pushed people too much in the corner. We know the primary concern of NRM leaders is to remain in Government at any cost as miseries of people multiply many-fold since the 2011 elections. Most of our people can no longer afford fuel and the business community is hurt by the increased bank rates, fuel prices and the rising electricity tariffs, but their cries are not heeded to. Our job is not to wait until Government falls into our hands like ripe fruit, but to continue pressing for the desired change.
77. Rt. Hon. Speaker, decency must be restored onto the public treasury. We want to see that public funds are spent only for economic rewards for citizens, not for political expedience. People must be allowed to say and do their will as provided for by

the constitution of Uganda. We demand recommitments and political reforms now, to guarantee that space for Ugandans, and put in place a framework for an independent Electoral Commission. We need to operationalize funding of Political Parties as per the Law.

78. Rt. Hon. Speaker, what Ugandans want is **NOT** the usual sort of empty promises as I have described in para 4 above, because these have become stale. We cannot as a country continue to be kept in an economic intensive care room for over 26 years. It is now time for us to unplug all these tubes and gadgets around us, and walk out of this room to our economic freedom and health, and demand that whoever is making us bleed is made to answer.
79. Rt. Hon. Speaker, the way forward for this nation, is to re-cast her priorities and remove the political, administrative and budget distortions, inconsistencies and contradictions, corruption and waste. Otherwise the 2012 State of the Nation Address can only be characterized and rated as a Moses Golola performance, much hyped and yet non-performing; simply empty talk.
80. Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Colleagues, Steve Jobs, an American businessman, designer and inventor had this to say: *“Your time is limited, so do not waste it living someone else's life. Do not be*

trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Do not let the noise of others' opinions draw out your own inner voice. And most importantly, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary."

81. Rt. Hon. Speaker, I want to thank you as Speaker of this House, for bringing us safely to where we are now, one year down the line. The turbulence in the journey notwithstanding, we are still here together. That is enough testimony of the resilience of Parliament to withstand storms. The Opposition is a strong advocate of Parliamentary independence and autonomy. We will, therefore, continue to do all in our power to ensure that the constitution is respected; that Parliament is respected; that the media is protected to play their professional role as a 4th estate; and that the people's voice is allowed space to thrive.
- I thank you so much – God bless you all.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

**NATHAN NANDALA-MAFABI, MP
LEADER OF OPPOSITION**