



**THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

SPEECH BY

MINISTER FOR GENDER LABOUR AND SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT

HON. JANAT B. MUKWAYA (HAJAT)

ON THE OCCASION OF CELEBRATING  
INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

AT

KAMPIRINGISA NATIONAL REHABILITATION CENTRE  
SPORTS GROUND, MPIGI DISTRICT

12<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2018

- ❖ Your Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda,
- ❖ Your Excellency the Vice President,
- ❖ The Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament,
- ❖ His Lordship, the Chief Justice,
- ❖ The Rt. Hon. Deputy Speaker of Parliament,
- ❖ His Lordship the Deputy Chief Justice
- ❖ The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister,
- ❖ Rt. Honourable Deputy Prime Minister
- ❖ Honourable Ministers and Ministers of State,
- ❖ Honourable Members of Parliament,
- ❖ Your Excellencies the Ambassadors and High Commissioners,
- ❖ Mpigi District Leadership,
- ❖ The Chairperson, National Youth Council
- ❖ The Youth Fraternity
- ❖ Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

  
Your Excellency, I would like to welcome you and everyone here to this year's International Youth Day celebrations. I would like to take this opportunity to salute all the young people on reaching this important day when we mark and celebrate their potential and numerical strength.

Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen, this year the International Youth Day is celebrated under the theme: **“Safe Spaces for youth”**. This theme was selected because the youth need safe physical, civic, public, health, environmental and educational spaces. The youth need safe spaces for leisure, work, supportive relationships and opportunities for belonging in a family and community in order for them to effectively participate in personal and national development.

The theme is in line with global and national policies and programs. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, goal 11, emphasizes the need for provision of space towards inclusive and sustainable urbanization.

In addition, the Uganda National Youth Policy provides an appropriate framework for enabling youth to develop as well as highlights Safe Spaces for Youth in areas of health, education and training, agriculture, environment, culture, sports and recreation, and youth participation.

Furthermore, the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) which is the UN framework for youth development prioritizes the provision of “leisure activities” as essential to the psychological, cognitive and physical development of young people and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) recaps the need for public spaces for youth to enable them to interact with family and have constructive inter-generational dialogue.

Your Excellency, according to National Population Census 2014, Uganda had a total population of approximately 34.9 million of whom 26.7 million (78%) are children and youth aged below 30 years. The youth population (18-30 years) constitute a significant proportion of the total population (22.5%). This population can enhance the transformation of the country if it is empowered to meaningfully participate and spur the human capital base.

To that end, the government has identified sectors with great potential of growth and has invested in programs through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to reconnect the youth to the mainstream development path; such programmes include Youth Livelihood Programme, Youth Venture Capital Fund and

Green Jobs all on the mission to economically empower youth and create wealth. These programs are spaces created to ensure that young people can meaningfully engage with local, national and global stakeholders to impact on the rate of economic progress.

In efforts to enjoy the spaces, the youth should know that safety at these spaces begins with each one of them. The youth are therefore urged to take precaution about their lives and not to venture into unsafe spaces that may otherwise harm them and others.

Your Excellency, during the 9<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Youth Ministers meeting which Uganda successfully organized last year, the Ministers identified the need to professionalize youth work to ensure work space for youth is free of abuse and unfairness. In the same vein, at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2018, Member States were encouraged to have actions that prevent and eliminate sexual and gender-based violence; child, early and forced marriage; and female genital mutilation that are barriers to the development and the full realization of girls' and women's human rights and safety.

Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen it is our collective responsibility to ensure that youth have access to safe spaces. We can achieve this through provision of;

1. Approaches that support mindset change and increase civic competency and enable youth engage in clean governance and income-generating activities.
2. Safe spaces to enable them to interact with family and have **constructive inter- generational dialogue**.
3. Opportunities to participate in sports and other leisure activities in the community;
4. Practices that increase safe peer group interaction and decrease unsafe or confrontational peer interactions.
5. Social inclusion, social engagement and integration, opportunities for socio-cultural identity formation.

Your Excellency Sir, the main highlight of today's International Youth Day celebrations, which is the major reason we invited you to celebrate the day in Kampiringisa, is the Launch of the Uganda Green Incubation Programme – the Songhai Pilot Project.

Your Excellency will recall that in December 2016, you instructed me and my team at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development with support from UNDP and with technical guidance from Prof. Fr. George Nzamuzo to pilot the Songhai Model on any of the available Government Land.

Your Excellency what you just inspected here at Kampiringisa is what we have been able to so far in less than two years and with limited resources. Much, much more Your Excellency can be done here with more resources. Mr. President, the Songhai Pilot Project seeks to address problems of poverty, unemployment and food insecurity especially among the youth. The project will serve as a demonstration centre for farmers and transform them from peasant subsistence farmers to commercial farmers able to produce efficiently and sustainably.

Your Excellency, our people have been using chemicals in an effort to increase food and livestock production but these have not adequately addressed issues of food insecurity and yet have depleted soil fertility, destroyed and polluted the environment. The use of soil organic matter

and soil micro-organisms, integrated pest management ensures that there are no chemicals, wastes and pollution to the environment. With this model, our farmers should produce better and more with less.

The project will largely benefit youth interested to take up commercial agriculture. This is one of the safe spaces for our youth. The project is open to government and non-government actors involved in agriculture and youth development for learning purposes.

Your Excellency, I would like in a very special way to thank UNDP through Ms. Rosa Malango UNDP Resident Coordinator and Ms. Almaz Gebru the UNDP Country Director for their consistent unwavering support towards the establishment of this thrilling model. In the same way, I would like to thank my team from Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and my Permanent Secretary Mr. Pius Bigirimana for a job well done.

Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen we must work together, government, the private sector and youth to provide safe spaces for young people.

With these few remarks, I would like to invite your Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda to address the gathering.

Your Excellency Sir