



Opening Statement

By

**Honourable Janat B. Mukwaya, Minister of Gender, Labour
and Social Development**

At the

**High-Level Validation Workshop of the Employment
Diagnostic Analysis (EDA) for Ministers, Permanent
Secretaries and the Private Sector**

25 April 2018, Imperial Royale Hotel

Our Guest of Honour – Rt. Hon. General Moses Ali, 1st

Deputy Prime Minister and & Deputy Leader of Government

Business in Parliament – here representing the Rt. Hon. Dr.

Ruhakana Rugunda, Prime Minister of the Republic of

Uganda,

Honorable Cabinet Ministers here present,

Honorable Ministers of State,

Honorable Members of Parliament, Permanent Secretaries,

Heads of various Government Ministries, Departments and

Agencies,

Our dear social partners, ably represented here by NOTU,

COFTU and FUE,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps, and here I take note of the

apology of H. E. Mr. Per Lindgarde, Ambassador of Sweden

to Uganda, but who has agreed to speak at the closing of the

Workshop. I know he's represented at this meeting. Sweden

has been a valuable partner in the EDA exercise, and it is befitting that I take note of this on the onset.

Let me also welcome all our Development partner representatives and Country Directors and Managers,

Mr. Chibebe, ILO Country Director – thank you for the technical support you offered toward this assignment,

Representatives of other international organizations, including the United Nations, Civil Society Organizations and NGOs,

Members of the private sector, and several CEOs here assembled – we thank you for the jobs you are creating for Ugandans,

Members of the press,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the **High-Level Validation Workshop of the Employment Diagnostic Analysis.**

Welcome to this high level event, where there is only one agenda item: **JOBS.**

The Ugandan job market is a matter of serious concern – although I must also hasten to say this is not just a Ugandan problem, but a global one.

Latest figures from the ILO indicate that in 2018, close to 200 million people worldwide are without a job, and in 2019, another 1.3 million will join the ranks of the unemployed.

In Uganda, and a number of other low income countries, what we suffer most from is not only open unemployment.

This is so because wherever you look, you will most certainly find someone doing something, be it tiling the land in their gardens, or seated by the roadside selling some produce, or repairing a bicycle, or cooking *matoke* in a makeshift market,

or drying *mukene* by the lakeshore. The sense one gets is that everyone is busy, hence the underutilization of their labour is not all too obvious. It is when you observe closely and dig deeper into the number of hours worked, the returns from their labour, the productivity associated with this type of work, or their backbreaking work, is when you realize that even those working have a lot of deficiencies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Is this the type of labour market that will help transform Uganda to a middle income status? Definitely not. We need to create a truly 21st Century world of work that readies our country to play in the big league of economic actors as equal partners.

There are a number of decent work deficits that we continue to experience.

Despite toiling for long hours, working people cannot yet meet their basic needs. If work is to be a means of getting out of poverty – if it is meant to be economically liberating - one cannot work and yet continue to be poor year after year. Working poverty levels are unexceptionally high - with the working poor comprising 13 per cent of the total workforce. This is mainly in the agricultural and informal economies, in retail services, in *boda boda* businesses, in our households, the list goes on and on.

Our Guest of Honour,

A particularly but continuing worry is the underutilization of the youth energy and dynamism. With more than twice the adult unemployment rate – which stands at just under 10 per cent, we need a holistic shift in strategy as Uganda's population continues to spiral upwards, if we are to

meaningfully harness our young people's contribution to national development.

Uganda is not short of pro-employment policies. From the Constitution down to Vision 2040 to NDP II to the National Employment Policy to the 23 Strategic Goals of the NRM – the job-friendly policies and programmes are an envy of our neighbours.

Neither are we short of responses toward addressing the employment challenge. We all remember the PAPSCA days in the 1990s. We implemented *entadikwa*. Now *Bona wagagale* is with us. In the Ministry we have the Youth Livelihoods Programme, SAGE and the Women's Economic Empowerment, among others. All these are ways and means of enhancing the citizens' wellbeing.

Much as they do cushion the poor from missed opportunities, there is more that needs to be done. In other words, why do

we continue to experience such challenges in the job market?

You will agree with me that there is a disjointedness in our response as stakeholders. Much as we speak one language, our actions betray us.

To me, employment should mean, and lead to – among other things - the following:-

- 1. enhanced wellbeing through sustainable livelihoods,**
- 2. high and increasing productivity,**
- 3. the gender pay gap should be a thing of the past,**
- 4. wages should equally be increasing in line with productivity and economic performance,**
- 5. no one working should be classified as poor,**
- 6. the youth dividend should be a reality, and not be seen as a challenge,**

7. all workers should belong to trade unions of their choice, where they should have the right to bargain for their salaries, wages and other benefits,
8. right skills for the right job,
9. health, safety, skills upgrading and training must accompany each and every job.

If these were in place, we would not be here talking the employment problem. However as we sit here, we are still far from that dream.

In light of the continuing job market situation, and in line with the NRM manifesto (2016-2021) and the 23 Presidential Guidelines (2016), which reaffirm the commitment to realization of the middle income status my Ministry decided to undertake this massive exercise, the Employment Diagnostics Analysis – EDA. This is nothing new, as we are borrowing from the ILO and also the World Bank.

We noticed that there is a disease. EDA has simply diagnosed the cause of this disease. The disease is called unemployment. Now that we have the diagnosis, I decided to invite you to the hospital ward to help us come up with the prescriptions. You are the brains with the answers – Ugandan homegrown set of solutions. I am glad to be joined here by all of you who have a stake in the employment challenge we are currently experiencing. I believe our many heads, acting as one will enable us all make the right decisions. Together, our task is to prescribe the correct medication that will make the patient get well again. If the patient dies, we are to blame.

It is not my duty here to be prescriptive, I leave that to all us here.

This is a one-day event. I must add that is not enough time for this big topic. However this is just the beginning. At the end of this day, we look forward to your help in crafting a **National**

Multi Sectoral Framework for Inclusive and Job Rich Growth.

This will be the basis for our future actions in this area.

Thank you for joining me. I look forward to hearing from all of you. If this hall doesn't give you the opportunity of doing so, we look forward to continued interaction in the corridors, as well as at the cocktail reception to which all of you are invited later this evening.

Guest of Honour, through you, let me thank His Excellency the President for according us this privileged opportunity to be at the centre of the search for the cure for unemployment. As contained in our NRM Manifesto, we remain committed to giving Ugandans sustainable livelihoods through jobs.

I wish you fruitful deliberations.