



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**STATEMENT**

BY  
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AT THE  
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (RIO + 20)

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL  
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**Madam President of the Federative Republic of Brazil,  
Excellencies, Heads of State and Government  
The UN Secretary General,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me to convey to you, Madam President, and through you to the Government and the people of Brazil the profound gratitude of my delegation for the warm welcome and excellent hospitality accorded to us since our arrival in this beautiful country and the City of Rio de Janeiro.

**Madam President,**

This Rio+20 Conference is being held at a critical juncture for humankind. The Outcome document holds the promise of a better future for the present and the coming generations. My delegation extends its appreciation to the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, and his team for their tireless efforts. We also commend Brazil for the strong leadership they provided in trying to bridge the gaps to reach consensus on many of the substantive issues.

Twenty years ago, world leaders gathered here and made sustainable development a global agenda. Today, we are united in renewing our commitment to move the sustainable development agenda forward.

As we look back, we acknowledge the considerable achievements registered at the national, regional and global levels as highlighted in various assessment reports. However, the progress registered has been uneven both within and across regions, sectors and social groups. My region, Africa, has particularly lagged behind on many fronts for a number of reasons, including lacking adequate means of implementation.

**Madam President,**

In Uganda, we have registered significant progress across the three pillars of sustainable development. The economy has more than tripled, with an average growth rate of 6 percent over the last two decades. We have more than halved income poverty, doubled domestic financing of our national budget and increased literacy rates to over 70 per cent. Access to clean and safe water in rural areas increased from below 20 percent in 1990 to 65 percent in 2010 and coverage for household sanitation increased from 57 percent in 2005 to 69 percent in 2010.

We have steadily reduced infant, child and maternal mortality rates though they remain far from the MDG targets. We have put in place a range of legal, policy and institutional frameworks on environment management.

Uganda continues to provide a conducive environment for the active participation and full engagement of the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders as partners in sustainable development. We have also involved the youth by taking into account their views and input, through innovative processes such as U-report which utilizes mobile phone technology.

Despite the above achievements, we are witnessing increasing inequality in incomes and access to resources and opportunities as well as high unemployment rates especially among the youth. As a country, we strongly believe that there can be no sustainable development without the eradication of poverty. The eradication of poverty in Africa is contingent on the continent being able to sustainably produce and trade with itself and with the rest of the world. This requires the necessary resources, infrastructure, technologies, and skills.

**Madam President,**

In our view, the important point of convergence is our strong recognition that sustainable development is not just about environmental damage and resource depletion, but addressing how countries can develop economically and socially while preserving the environment.

We believe that it is time we discarded the outdated growth models and focused our efforts and resources on boosting people's living standards and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. That is what sustainability calls for. It entails supporting people to move out of poverty, providing access to clean energy, water and sanitation, food and nutrition, building better transportation systems and making sure that our communities are resilient in the face of natural disasters.

Addressing these challenges, Madam President, is essential in building the future we want as espoused in this Conference. At the national level, Uganda intends to achieve this through the goal of socio-economic transformation as articulated in our National Development Plan.

The attainment of this goal will require access to sustainable energy, transport infrastructure, regional connectivity and a competitive human resource, among other factors. I wish to thank the UN Secretary-General for including Uganda among the countries that will benefit from the Sustainable Energy for All initiative.

**Madam President,**

At the global level, adequate and timely global support is essential for investment in key sectors to kick-start an effective and inclusive transition towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient economy that will also present substantial economic opportunities for all. This is why Uganda stresses the critical importance of means of Implementation for the Rio+20 Outcome. We call on our partners to honour their commitments.

The global community is gathered here not to engage in “business as usual” but to demonstrate real commitments to sustainable development, including a transition to a green economy. We are also committed to strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development to respond effectively to current and future challenges as well as bridge gaps in implementation. In this regard, I applaud the decision to strengthen ECOSOC, establish an inter-governmental high level political forum on sustainable development, and the strengthening and upgrading of UNEP. Uganda will participate actively in all post Rio+20 processes that will be established to enhance international environmental governance and to help ensure an inclusive and effective institutional framework for sustainable development.

**Madam President,**

I wish to conclude by reiterating Uganda’s commitment to the outcome of this conference. We must focus on achieving full and effective implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and other internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs.

The global population is looking up to this conference to launch actions that will make a measurable difference in their livelihoods, leading to greater prosperity, health and opportunities, and an environment that will continue to support growth and development. We owe it to the present and future generations to deliver this promise.

**I thank you for your attention.**