

Speech

By

***H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
President of the Republic of Uganda***

At the

***33rd African Union for Housing Finance Conference
2017***

17th October, 2017

Hon. Ministers

Hon. Members of Parliament

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I greet you and welcome you to the 33rd African Union for Housing Finance Conference. On behalf of the people of Uganda, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have journeyed from your respective countries to come for this conference. It is indeed my pleasure to welcome you to Uganda, the “Pearl of Africa.”

Let me begin by extending my appreciation to the organizers of this conference; The Secretariat of the African Union for Housing Finance, the Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa; the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban

Development, the hosting institutions led by; Housing Finance Bank, Bank of Uganda the National Housing and Construction Company, the Capital Markets Authority of Uganda, and all the participating institutions in the public and private sector represented here today. I commend you all for holding this dialogue on housing, which is a basic human necessity and a critical component of social economic transformation for the nations of Africa.

This dialogue highlights the commitment and continued efforts of my government towards the growth and prosperity of our country and demonstrates the cordial relations we enjoy with partner states across Africa, as we strive along the path to gain middle income status as a nation.

Uganda like many African countries is experiencing rapid social-economic growth in terms of population increase at a rate of 3.2 percent per annum and economic growth at a rate of 6.6 percent for the last twenty years. Our country is also rapidly urbanizing at a rate of 5% per annum and it is

estimated that by 2050, Uganda will be among the most urbanized countries in Africa and Kampala the capital city becoming a mega city hosting more than 10 million people. While this is good news for our national growth and transformation agenda, it also presents a new set of challenges that we must address in order to capitalise on this growth opportunity as follows;

1. We must address the proliferation of unplanned human settlements which lead to the mushrooming of slum dwellings;
2. We must find ways of reducing the cost of housing that is being driven by a rise in the prices of rent and materials required to build a home;
3. We must address the shortage of professionals in the housing sector such as Architects, Valuers, Surveyors and Engineers which also affects the quality of the housing stock in the country;
4. We must continue addressing the inadequate legal and land tenure systems that affect the security of tenure for

the masses of the population and inhibit the effective use of land across the country.

5. And finally, we must address the high cost of finance and the barriers to credit, which make financing a home difficult and out of reach for a large number of people.

My Government is committed to tackling these challenges and over the years, we have made progress in resolving some of these issues. Between 1991 and 2014, the number of households roofed with iron sheets nearly doubled from 38 percent to 69 percent, while the number of houses roofed with temporary materials such as grass thatch went down by nearly half of what it was in 1991 from 54 percent to 29 percent according to the most recent census data.

We have also digitized our land registry and strengthened the legal frameworks for land tenure to enhance and recognize the rights of our citizens on the ownership and use of land. Furthermore, my Government has committed to capitalise Housing Finance Bank and the National Housing

and Construction Company to ensure that more Ugandans have access to mortgage finance and affordable homes in well planned neighborhoods.

From an African perspective, Africa is urbanizing at a rate of 3.5 percent per annum over the past two decades and African cities are among the fastest growing in the developing world according to UN Habitat. Currently, about 40 percent of the continent's one billion people live in cities or towns and it is also estimated that by 2030, about 50 percent of the continents population will be urbanized, with some African cities hosting as much as 85 percent of their country's populations.

From this perspective, you can clearly see that the challenges of housing are the same across the continent. Therefore as Heads of States in the African Union, we have committed to the Africa Agenda 2063 which is a road map and a shared strategic framework for inclusive growth and sustainable development towards creating the Africa we

want to see by 2063. The first ten year implementation plan 2013 to 2023 outlines specific actions that countries should undertake towards achieving this vision however, I want to focus your attention on the actions that affect the housing sector.

For the housing sector, we committed to the creation of modern and liveable habitats with access to basic services and set targets for the ten year strategic period as follows;

1. To reduce our national housing deficits by at least 10%.
2. To reduce the proportion of people living without access to safe drinking water and sanitation services by 95%.
3. To increase access to electricity and the internet by 50%
4. To develop detailed plans of rapid transport systems for all cities that have more the 2 million inhabitants,
5. To recycle at least 50% of the total urban waste and;
6. To reduce slums by at least 10%.

I am glad to see that the theme for this year's conference is focusing on housing as a value chain as opposed to housing as a commodity, because housing affects every sphere of society across Africa be it political, social or economic and therefore any meaningful intervention towards the sector must be addressed in a concerted manner, together with all the actors in the housing value chain. I am also glad to see that the delegates of this conference represent a cross section of stakeholders in the public and private sector who are responsible for implementing the housing agenda across the continent. Therefore, I call upon you to dialogue and galvanize the efforts of Government to grow the housing sector for the prosperity and transformation of our African economies.

As I end my remarks, I would like you to know that Uganda has a mild climate and an abundance of bio-diversity of flora and fauna due to our geographical location. I take this opportunity to invite each one of you to visit the tourist

attractions of Uganda before you journey back to your respective countries.

I thank you and wish you fruitful deliberations over the next three days as you chart a way for the betterment of the housing sector across Africa, and I hereby declare this conference open.

17th October 2017

- **Kampala Serena Hotel.**