

BLACK MONDAY

Newsletter

Citizen Action Against theft of our money without SHAME!

EDITORIAL

Civic actions and the recent recognition of the role Ugandans MUST play in governing their country beyond voting, has brought to the limelight the burdens that we carry by while our resources are being stolen.

The farmers, and all those who fail to access and eat nutritious food adequate for their health, should join these actions collectively saying ENOUGH is ENOUGH!. The state of hunger and malnutrition in the country is worrying everyone - maybe except those who have "eaten" what would have been eaten by the people; thereby depriving them opportunities and costing Uganda a double burden while the thieves become obese.

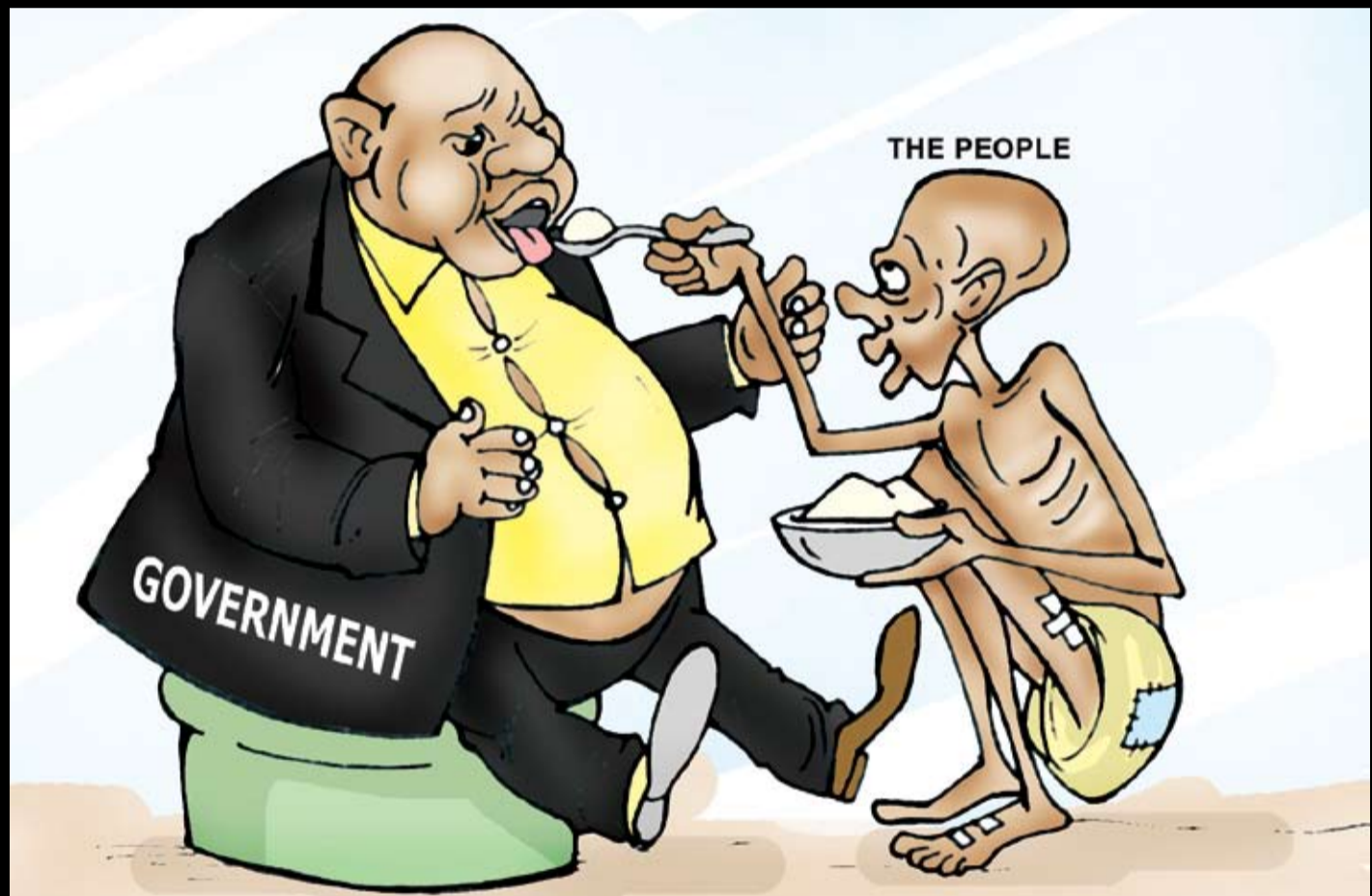
We must know that if our money is put to appropriate use, Uganda may not be boosting 54 per cent adults who were stunted while they were children, a poor workforce reduced by 4% due to child mortality caused by under-nutrition, 7 per cent repetition in school due to stunting, 15 per cent annual mortality. In addition, millions are going hungry, some even dying of starvation in various parts of the country clearly indicating a new form of corruption that must be put right on the spot.

The Black Monday Newsletter this month wishes to bring the untold story of hunger and malnutrition while calling upon all Ugandans to understand that for every shilling stolen you or your relative shall sleep hungry, while the cost is distributed to us all. Hunger and malnutrition sparks off all other forms of poverty – poor education and health, unemployment, wanting investments and lack of dignity.

The only accepted number of hungry and malnourished people is 0. Therefore we cannot wait, we cannot rest, we cannot sleep, we cannot look on until no shilling is stolen and no one is hungry, no child is malnourished and no one is obese. It's your money and your food being stolen and it is your life and country at stake.

— agneskirabo@yahoo.com

Greed fuels hunger



It is undisputable that Uganda is perhaps the most endowed country in Africa, with fertile soils and all year round favourable climate, and now flowing with oil. The country harbours 35% of the whole of Africa's arable land with potential to feed close to 40 % of Africa's population.

Embarrassingly the same country has one out of every three children being stunted and with close to 8 million people, or 27.6 per cent of the population, going to bed hungry every day. For some locations like Karamoja, statistics indicate that shamelessly, close to 80% of the households cannot feed themselves.

This number is on the rise with the increasing population growth rate of 3.2%, one of the highest in the world.

But the problem is not the growing population; it is merely because of the leadership crisis that befell this country - characterised by lack of direction, neglect, drift and fraud.

Leaders in Uganda are just chronically insensitive to the needs of the ordinary people whom they have been elected to

serve. While Ugandans are languishing in abject poverty and hunger, disease and destitution, Ugandan leaders are working out strategies on how to enrich and perpetuate themselves in office.

Acting from a greedy mind, these leaders manage to keep Ugandans on rhetoric, leaving many Ugandans hoping to see the harvest of the unending promises. They will keep waiting until they discover they were duped.

It is a known fact and it has been stated in almost all government documents that agriculture is the backbone of Uganda's economy, providing a livelihood for 75% of Ugandans. As such, one would expect that any committed leader who would want to make a difference for his people would target this sector.

Interestingly, leaders in Uganda continue to accord agriculture the least priority; as far as budgetary commitment is concerned. Since 2000, the Ugandan government has allocated just 2-4 per cent of its national budget to agriculture.

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NOT FOR SALE

Farmers connive with private suppliers to steal NAADS funds

In Magoro sub county, Katakwi district, selected beneficiaries - with support from the village procurement committee - connived with the contracted supplier of goats. During routine monitoring visits by community monitors under the Public Financing for Agriculture project being implemented by ActionAid, it was observed that farmers instead chose to agree to supply themselves their own goats, but signed delivery notes from the supplier acknowledging that the supplier had delivered goats to them.

With this new evidence, as government ponders its new, it might have to go back to the drawing board. Now that the farmers have joined the loot, the whole society is dead. For long policy makers and detectives have been preoccupied with investigating politicians, civil servants and CSOs as key players in public corruption.

Since its inception in 2001, National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) has received considerable amount of criticism from several stakeholders. With millions of shillings allocated to NAADS and accounting to over 60% of total transfers to the ministry of agriculture, cases of theft of NAADS funds have

been reported across the country leading to the disbandment of NAADS by the president in 2007.

As a follow-up on the presidential directive in 2007 to review NAADS implementation and improve its effectiveness and efficiency, several recommendations were made to streamline the procurement process and curb theft. As a result, community based procurement was adopted. This model of procurement was aimed at promoting farmer empowerment through community participation in supplier identification, monitoring and supervision. However, as the scourge of theft of public funds spreads in Uganda, the case from Katakwi shows that communities too have joined the fray.

It seems the struggle against corruption is getting complex with the affected getting into the mix. Government's non-decisiveness and limited political will to demonstrate concrete action against corruption has slowly but surely engulfed everybody to this vice. Many are thinking it is the only way forward for one to survive in the current state of affairs where social service delivery has collapsed, and people seek money to acquire public

services from the private sector.

Going forward, with latest pronouncements by government to review NAADS, it is important for government to urgently recognize that it can no longer choose to ignore calls for robust efforts to combat corruption in public sector as the vice is entering to the farmers. For starters, it is important to note that agriculture is one sector that received less budget allocations in the next financial year 2013/2014 at 3.2% of the national resource envelope. At policy level, CSOs are calling on government to increase budget support to agriculture, and while these efforts must be applauded, the fact that farmers are cheating themselves from the little allocated to the sector is worrying.

But one might not punish farmers, as several reports by Auditor General indicate that millions of shillings are stolen by central government officials while government pays a deaf ear to arrest the situation. Instead, it may be described as act of desperation by farmers to catch something from a sinking boat.

— Francis.Akorikin@actionaid.org

Greed fuels hunger

FROM PAGE 1

While many policies and programs have been put on paper, these have at most only provided the needed propaganda for the politicians to win the hearts of the voters and have not been funded fully.

From the Poverty Eradication Action Plan, Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture, Rural Development Strategy, Prosperity for All, and recently the National Development Plan and its agricultural development strategy and investment plan, all these, albeit good programs on paper, have only received political hype and have not changed much the face of the smallholder farmer. They appear promising, but in reality they are simply empty shells.

The situation has been made worse by the ongoing political capture for components of programs like NAADS for realising political capital and self-enrichment by politicians and the technical elites.

For example the 2008 Auditor general report states that of the 267 billion shillings spent on NAADS, the largest chunk, 169 billion or 63%, of the expenditure was classified as useless.

To make it easy to steal the little resources meant for the poor, which comes most times as support for agricultural development, these greedy thieves usually scatter such funds among many agencies and departments that are not coordinated, thus making it hard for follow the monies.

It's for this reason that Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), has been made toothless, as it cannot provide the oversight role in implementing agricultural development related projects. Out of a total of 683 posts under the ministry, only 47% have been filled while only 6% have been approved for recruitment due to budgetary limitations.

This 'politically imposed impotency' in MAAIF is used to deny the poor of the needed funds to implement programs, and instead an opportu-

nity to run uncoordinated projects in NAADS, the president's office, office of the prime minister, local government among other agencies that do not speak to each other. This makes it easy to siphon the little resources without being noticed.

For now, as farmers continue to cry with hope, the reality is that there is no commitment to do anything to see their welfare improve beyond political hype.

What Uganda needs is for government and leaders to recognise their noble cause to address the plight of farmers and deal with corruption. Uganda needs to build its institutions to work with farmers to roll out the well written programs of agriculture already in place.

For farmers, they should continue working hard and organise themselves into self-help groups to reduce the cost of doing their business, but most of all make their voice heard.

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Plates and Granaries

The plates are dry and empty
The granaries are clean and hollow.
They all look alike
With nothing to fill them,
They yawn with jadedness.

The wind whips them harshly,
Heaping them with debris,
With desperation, they look on
Nothing can make them content;
It is only food that satisfies.

Everyone looks at them with hopelessness
The children are crying,
The women are sobbing,
The men are grumbling,
Their empty stomachs rumbling.
Nothing can satisfy them;
It is only food that fills the empty pangs of
their stomachs.

The people, the plates, the granaries,
They are all helpless.
Neither wind, nor political statements can gratify
them
Not even moot investigation,
All they need is food.
It is food that soothes the soul;
And rekindles their hope!

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Trillions stolen as our children suffer from malnutrition

At three years, Biira's baby cannot stand, her belly is swollen, her hair is brown and she is always sickly, all signs pointing to malnutrition. To make matters worse, Biira's child has never been immunized. She thought that her baby had been bewitched, but when she contacted a medical worker at a nearby clinic, she was told she was malnourished. She was advised to give the baby a balanced diet, but she neither had the necessary foods nor resources.

On 18th June, the prime minister of Uganda Amama Mbabazi launched The Cost of Hunger in Africa, a study that was conducted by the Ugandan government with the support of the African Union Commission, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the UN World Food Programme (WFP)

According to the report, the annual costs associated with child under-nutrition are estimated at 1.8 trillion shillings which is equivalent to 5.6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and will continue to go up if government does not find a solution to malnutrition immediately.

Further one out of every three children in Uganda is stunted, and 82 per cent of the cases of child under-nutrition are never addressed. This translates into an adult population of at least 54 per cent which has suffered from stunting as children with signs of cognitive delays while growing up.

It is also a multi-sectorial challenge. In the education sector, the report estimates that over 134,000 school year repetitions, costing more than \$9.5 million, are associated with child under-nutrition. The



A child is fed on relief food during severe food shortages in northeast Uganda.

situation is more pathetic when we talk about the school dropouts and those who study on empty stomachs. In the health sector, malnutrition costs Uganda an estimated \$254 million in treatment of preventable diseases.

At the launch the prime minister an-

nounced that Uganda had set the target of reducing stunting in under-5 children to 27 per cent from 33 per cent and reducing underweight to 10 per cent. He argued that the targets can be achieved and even surpassed, but the challenge is limited financial investment in nutrition and food

security.

In deed the Government of Uganda has hardly committed funds for nutrition interventions. So far, most of the activities are being implemented through initiatives supported by various development partners and international agencies such as UNICEF, USAID, WHO, WFP etc. This does not demonstrate real commitment from government to tackle the nutrition problem. The multi-sectorial nutrition framework, Uganda Nutrition Action Plan (UNAP), currently in place needs strong political commitment and allocation of adequate resources for its implementation.

So far, over UGX 3 Trillion has been stolen with impunity when our children, mothers and other continue to live such a life of deprivation and indignity. This huge amount of money can help the country avoid the rather apparent situation of malnutrition and hunger. It is of paramount importance that we stop the theft of public resources and re-direct the funds to nutrition and food security.

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BETRAYAL IN PARLIAMENT – THE NOOSE AROUND OUR NECKS

The dust has refused to settle following the sand storm that was kicked up by the chaotic passage of the Public Order Management Bill. And rightly so!

The furore has spilled over from the chamber of Parliament where unparalleled expressions of disgust—from incessant chanting to the ripping apart of call registers—led to the suspension of four MPs; outside the chamber, opinion columns in the media have been punctuated with spirited calls from the civil society (religious leaders, NGOs, the diplomatic corps, political parties, university students, community based organisations as well as professional associations) calling for the unanimous rejection of this legislation.

No other proposed law in Uganda's recent legislative history (except the lifting of presidential term limits; and perhaps the anti-homosexuality and marriage and divorce bills) have roused as strong a collective pushback by various sections of society.

While previous rejection of bad laws has been done in solitude by affected constituencies, the new nature of the resistance against this manifestly unjust law has, out of necessity,

heralded a new dawn; this new dawn is the unprecedented, unapologetic and overt cooperation between the mainstream political actors (MPs, political party leaders) on the one hand and a growing list of civil society organisations.

The fight against the enactment of this apartheid era-like law is a fight that must enlist the support of every Ugandan, whatever their station in life. There is a thin line between the promulgation of this law and the outright declaration of a Stalinist state.

It is a grave threat to the very existence of the Ugandan polity, but the civil society stands a graver and more immediate threat: If media houses, NGOs, particularly those whose designation is advocacy at the domestic, regional and international levels and the burgeoning youth/student movements need to see this enactment as a ban on their activities. The civil society must come to terms with the fact that if they do not resolve to take clear and unequivocal exception to this law, they might as well pack their bags and go home. We must determine to walk the path of our African brothers Ghana, Botswana or Mauritius or descend into the abyss of Zimbabwe and Ethiopia, which are

the only two countries on the African landmass and the world with such draconian legislation.

The implication that this law portends for civil society is that it criminalizes the mandate of media houses, religious leaders, NGOs, student leaders and labour/trade unions. There is no way these components of civil society can comfortably interact with their constituencies/memberships under such an act of Parliament without undue interference from overzealous state actors like the police.

By pitting the state's instruments of coercion against NGOs, the Public Order Management Bill unfortunately diverts the population away from the programs and information (for instance on health and nutrition, governance and the rule of law, etc.) that are being disseminated to the useless and unprovoked running battles that police is wont to engage in.

Arguably, the worst and most objectionable provision in this law is the carte blanche that has been given to police officers to use live ammunition when dispersing any form of gathering. The severity of this provision need not be overemphasized.

Finally, NGOs ought to worry about the un-

canny similarity between the proposed NGO Policy and the Public Order Management Bill: ultimately, if the NGOs say nothing against the Public Order Management Bill, the proposed NGO Policy will be the rope with which NGOs will be hanged because both documents are hewn from the same rock.

The conclusion is therefore inevitable: in totality, the Public Order (mis)Management Bill is a sworn opponent of the progressive forces in Uganda that aspire to work together towards a life of peaceful co-existence, unity and dignity for every Ugandan man, woman and child; we must concertedly defy, speak up against and resist it with whatever peaceful and lawful means there are at our disposal.

This hangman's noose can end up doing one of two things to Civil Society; it can either strangle us to death, or we can individually and collectively take steps to break free from these gallows and instead of sacrificing our inalienable freedoms at the altar of political expediency, hang this law and omit it from our jurisprudence once and for all.

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The 2008 Auditor General report states that of the **267 billion shillings** spent on NAADS from 2001 to 2006. The largest chunk of these funds, **169 billion or 63%**, was classified as useless.



A value for money audit of the performance report submitted by the department of livestock Health and Entomology shows that up to **9 billion shillings** released for vaccinations have been squandered. The Auditor General's reports

for the years 2009/2010 and 2011/12 indicates a dismal performance by the Ministry of Agriculture Animal industry and fisheries (MAAIF) in the vaccination of animals in the past 2 financial years.

STEALING WHILE UGANDANS STARVE



The 2009 Auditor General report indicates that **2.7 billion shillings** was unaccounted for under the NAADS management process.



According to the 2012 Auditor General report, 50% of the 40 billion released for the establishment and management of the **Presidential Initiative on Banana Industrial Development (PIBID)** project remains unaccounted for making a huge loss of **20 billion shillings** to the tax payers. This was a project meant to accelerate the growth of the banana industry in the country in order to fight hunger and poverty.



Trading Uganda's Heritage for Self-interest

The government of Uganda, under pressure from its own scientists and some political vultures, is in final stages of introducing Genetically Modified [GM] crops in the country. GM crops are produced through use of suppressive techniques to artificially transfer genetic material from one organism to another to create alien variants.

Uganda's move puts the country at risk of losing its niche market as a leading exporter of African organic products to Europe and other markets where GM contaminated foods are either not allowed or are highly restricted. Uganda earned 42 million US dollars in 2010/2011 from this market.

But worst of all is that several scientific studies have warned that eating such unnatural foods could pose unique health risks to humans. Many studies done on rats elsewhere indicate that when fed on such foods, the rats had all their internal organs damaged. Rats are used in such tests because their genetic and biological characteristics closely resemble those of humans.

Despite these facts, some Ugandan scientists and their political syndicates are determined to go ahead and tinker with Uganda's genetic diversity and allow our food to be contaminated, just because of the hefty financial deals that are coming with this technological development.

Buoyed by a US \$30 million (close to 75 billion shillings) project, Uganda's scientists have ready trials for a number of GM crops (matooke, cotton, maize and cassava) for release into our food system.

For now, what is holding them and their technological merchants is lack of a law to protect them to do their evil without being held accountable.

As such, they are pushing the passing of the biotechnology and biosafety bill 2012 poised to create an open regulatory regime more sympathetic to genetic modifications and protecting interests of foreign companies.

These scientists, and a number of politicians, have been compromised and are acting under pressure from the multinational biotechnology companies and seed merchants that have funded their trainings and research, paying them monthly cheques, heavy allowances and flying them around the globe.

In their strategy to appear clean, these multinational companies and the philanthropic donors maintain a strong level of influence over the National Agricultural Research Organisation's (NARO) experimental agenda. Under the guise of public-private partnerships they usually identify a promising young Ugandan researcher from graduate school who is offered a fully funded scholarship to complete his or her Ph.D. abroad focusing on biotechnology.

Such scientists are brainwashed to believe the agenda of their piper, and once have completed his or her Ph.D. training, s/he secures



employment working for the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) - usually to work on the same project, with a focus on taking forward specific genetic modification agenda.

In this manner, research scientists are creating experimental breeding programs that reflect donor priorities and concerns, which in turn preserve their highly specialized and well-remunerated positions.

Secondly, promoters of these evil technologies, have organised coordinated 'seeing is believing' tours, in which many suspecting scientists, legislators, influential media persons and famous environmental activists have been flown, with hefty allowances, to USA, South Africa, and other parts of the globe to witness 'first-hand' the success of the GM technology. For example, from 2006 to 2012, six of such fully funded 10 day trips were organised with Ugandan dignitaries to shape their thinking.

In addition, several informal merry making

“ Despite several scientific studies warning that eating unnatural foods could pose unique health risks to humans, some Ugandan scientists and their political syndicates are determined to go ahead and tinker with Uganda's genetic diversity

luncheons - with allowances - have been held in Kampala's glitziest hotels bringing together research scientists, technology regulators, lobbyists and Members of Parliament to 'buy' them into accepting the deceitful technologies at the expense of Uganda's heritage.

In such compromising situations, many of these scientists, although aware of the risks associated with their actions, are forced to justify genetic engineering as the silver bullet to Uganda's food and nutritional problems.

But the reality is that at least one time, they or their children might pay for their sins.

Our prayer is that those legislators that are still sane will shun the biotechnology and biosafety bill in its current shape and focus on a protective law similar to what Tanzania put in place. To avert the whole situation, Uganda must invest in its own agricultural research to define our own agenda.

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Citizens' Demand Note to the Gov't for a Prudent Tax Regime

Anti-corruption and CSO activists made a tax payer's journey on Monday, 17th June, 2013 to Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development offices to deliver a petition to the Minister. Below we bring you the petition which was read to the press at the ministry before some of the activists were arrested.



Leonard Okello addresses the press outside the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development.

We the Citizens of Uganda today the 17th June 2013 deliver to the Hon Minister of Finance Planning and Economic Development the following message as our initial response to her on the 2013-2014 budgets that massively increased taxes on already stretched citizens. Hon Minister, while paying Tax is a patriotic duty that we agree with, it is important to note that this high tax burden budget has been mainly caused by the withdrawal of donors budget support to Uganda because of the high profile theft of public money in government offices that came to light last year.

Consequently increase in taxes must however come with a government cost efficiency strategy of a lean, efficient, effective, theft free government that delivers high quality services to the full satisfaction of the tax payer. Hon Minister, because you are the messenger of government on budget issues we today deliver this Citizens Demand Note to you to take forward to government for urgent action. Our demands are as follows:

1 Immediately Stop the Impunity Associated with The Theft of Public Funds by thoroughly investigating, pros-

ecuting and convicting all thieves of tax money with punitive sanctions including returning our stolen tax money by all persons implicated. Make sure that every Minister under whose docket public money is stolen resigns forthwith.

2 Reduce the Size of Central Government by urgently reviewing and rationalizing the size of central government through: a) reducing Presidential Advisors from 106 to 0; b) reducing the number of Cabinet Ministers from 71 to 17; c) reducing the number of Members of Parliament from 370 to 150; d) disbanding all sector monitoring units, presidential initiatives, etc. in an already overstaffed State House, duplicating the role of ministries and other agencies.

3 Reduce the number of districts from the current 112 to 36 consequently cutting the number of Local Government Councilors, Resident District Commissioners, Chief Administrative Officers and all other government officials serving in local governments. This will reduce the absolute numbers and overall costs of public administration. These Ugandans can be absorbed in productive sectors of the economy.

4 Streamline the overall costs of running government, through an urgent review and rationalization of costs saving strategies in all ministries, departments, parastatals and transparently displaying such information for public scrutiny.

5 Abolish Tax holidays to the so called Foreign Investors at the expense of hardworking Ugandans involved in Small and Medium Enterprises who unfairly shoulder tax burdens. Investors don't need tax holidays but good infrastructure, skilled labour and affordable energy.

6 Stop Tax Evasion by strengthening the capacity of URA to monitor, investigate and take appropriate remedial action against those found culpable under the Laws of Uganda.

7 Invest the savings from the actions above in productive and social services sectors namely health, education, road infrastructure, agriculture, food security, revitalizing the cooperative movement and stopping theft of public funds.

