

EDITOR: On May 12, Uganda, East Africa and the world in general witnessed a historic moment when Yoweri Museveni was sworn in for the record seventh elective presidential term, extending his leadership to 2031.

Several African presidents attended the colourful ceremony held at Kololo Independence Grounds. US President Donald Trump was among the world leaders who sent representatives to witness this memorable function.

Museveni got 71% of the total votes cast during the presidential elections that took place in January. In my earlier articles, I had predicted that he was going to get a landslide victory of over 70%. Museveni last obtained such resounding victory in 1996, when he contested with the late Democratic Party president Paul Ssemogerere. Museveni got 74.3% while Ssemogerere got 23.6%. I am glad my prediction came to pass.

Museveni's victory means a lot for Uganda and the East African region at large. For Uganda, it is a continuation of the National Resistance Movement's infrastructural development, wealth creation, peace and stability, among other achievements. For the East African region, his extended tenure means Uganda will continue to strongly advocate for accelerated economic integration, cross-border infrastructure and regional market expansion.

Museveni's win guarantees the progression of joint East African

Tanzania aimed at cutting the bloc's reliance on imported petroleum.

As a seasoned elder statesman, Museveni's government will continue playing a critical role in regional conflict resolution, all aimed at ensuring that the region is peaceful.

The Museveni administration is credited for its infrastructural push by putting emphasis on industrialisation and large scale public works, including extensive road networks and electricity expansion. Throughout his leadership, Museveni has pushed for wealth creation by encouraging the people to desist from subsistence farming in favour of modern commercial agriculture and business ventures.

The President's push for having an industrialised nation is bearing fruit. According to the Uganda Manufacturers Association, Uganda currently has over 5,000 manufacturing and processing industries.

Any industrialised nation accelerates both economic growth and wealth creation because industrialisation increases production, efficiency and total national output. It allows the country to export high value manufactured goods rather than raw materials, hence improving its balance of trade and foreign currency reserves.



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because these industries have created jobs and skilled labour. This has helped many young people get jobs. Government jobs are very few yet many Ugandans are now educated due to the good policies under the Museveni administration.

This seventh term, Museveni needs to continue attracting more investors so as to have more factories as this will help in technological advancement, improved infrastructure and economic stability. Uganda has offered a favourable environment

protect the investors. This shows how the President is very passionate about investors and industrialisation.

I am glad the President has termed this *kisanja* (term) as "Kisanja no more sleep". He is right because he has worked hard to create several developmental programmes for the country, but they need to be turned into wealth creation programmes. Examples of basic development programmes include good roads and electricity and such projects can be used to create wealth or money into people's pockets. This can be done through commercial agriculture, where elected leaders at all levels need to mobilise the people to move away from subsistence farming to high value, market-oriented products like coffee, dairy, poultry and intensive fruit farming.

The Government also needs to support manufacturers to do value addition by processing raw materials locally like cotton into a finished product for export so as to retain higher profit margins.

In this seventh term, there is a need for the Government to put more resources and emphasis on ICT and innovations to leverage technology, software development and creative arts to tap into digital markets. As another way of empowering the community, the Government needs

literacy. The Emyooga programme partly faced challenges at its inception because some beneficiaries lacked skills on handling the money given to them and ended up misusing it. This one being "Kisanja no more sleep", the Government needs to support agricultural extension workers at the sub-county level under the agriculture ministry. These scientists are responsible for advising farmers, controlling crop and animal diseases and also promoting new agricultural technologies.

Although every sub-county is supposed to have three extension workers, many have only one or two and there are some with none. Some of the extension workers can spend an entire agricultural season without checking on the farmers due to lack of fuel in their motorcycles and that is how farmers, especially those dealing in fish farming, coffee and banana lose out.

Another important area the Government needs to look into is the maintenance of community access roads which are under sub-county local governments. These roads are key in transporting farmer's agricultural produce for better markets yet the sub-counties that are responsible for their maintenance do not have the financial capacity.