

We want a Uganda that works for us all

Recently, images of young Ugandans gathered at the farm of President Museveni in Kisozi sparked reflection across the country. Many saw opportunity. Others saw symbolism. I saw a question: if I had that chance to sit across from the President, what would I say? I would not ask for a job. I would not ask for a favour. I would ask for something more fundamental, that Uganda works.

As a young Ugandan, I am deeply concerned about the functionality of public services. Not their existence on paper, but how they actually serve citizens in real life.

Year after year, reports from the Office of the Auditor General of Uganda tell a consistent story: underfunded health centres, incomplete school infrastructure, absentee staff, and public investments that do not deliver value for money. These are not abstract findings. They are lived realities.

In many government health facilities, young mothers still arrive to find no midwife on duty, no essential medicines, and sometimes no electricity. In schools, children sit on dusty floors or study under trees, while teachers struggle without materials or motivation. These are not isolated incidents; they are systemic failures.

Through the work of Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER Uganda), especially its "Reclaiming Public Services" cam-

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paign, these realities have been documented in painful detail. Communities have spoken about walking long distances to health centres only to be turned away. Parents have shared how 'free' education still requires them to pay informal fees. Young people, like myself, are told to dream big, but are given fragile systems to stand on.

One of the most troubling issues is the quiet but growing conflict of interest in public service delivery, particularly in education. Within the Ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda, there are concerns that some regulators are also investors in private schools. This creates a dangerous incentive: when public schools fail, private ones thrive. When oversight weakens, profit margins grow. Because the majority of Ugandans, es-

pecially young people from low-income families, depend on public services. When these services fail, inequality deepens.

Uganda is a young country. Its future is not in speeches or summits, it is in classrooms, health centres, and local government offices. It is about whether public institutions work for ordinary people, not just for those who can afford alternatives.

Fixing public services is not about increasing budgets alone. It is about accountability. It is about eliminating leakages. It is about ensuring that public officials serve the public, not private interests. It is about restoring trust.

If I had that moment at Kisozi, I would say this plainly: Young Ugandans do not want handouts only. We want systems that work. We want schools that teach, hospitals that heal, and institutions that serve with integrity. Because when public services function, dignity is restored. When they fail, hope erodes. And without hope, even the most beautiful country becomes difficult to call home. This is the Uganda we are asking for. A Uganda that works, for all of us.

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