

The eating manifesto: Milking the Ugandan cow without killing it

Uganda bleeds. Rampant corruption is killing the future of our young people, as stolen public funds translate into poor education, vanished job opportunities, and a shrivelled economy that pushes brilliant young minds either into despair or out of the country in search of menial work abroad.

We see the devastation everywhere. Crooked dams crack before commissioning, washed-away roads become death traps within months, and counterfeit medicine reaches public health centres while genuine drugs disappear.

Naturally, public anger boils over. We could soon enter a dangerous, chaotic backlash. The state has responded with sudden crackdowns on some people and a few dramatic arrests, but these moves lack coherence. A selective, reactive approach merely cuts off the visible leaves of a weed while leaving the deep, systemic roots untouched. It creates temporary theatre rather than lasting reform.

So today, let us speak plainly to the corrupt. Let us assume that corruption forms an indelible, unerasable fact of Ugandan life. What responsibility do the corrupt owe to the survival of the host country they feed on? How can they eat smarter, ensure sustainability, and ultimately protect their own long-term interests?

First and foremost, the central weakness of the Ugandan corrupt elite lies in their fragmentation. They operate like chaotic bandits rather than a sophisticated cartel, triggering messy scandals and inviting public wrath. They desperately need organisation.

They can do a few things. While registering the "Corruption Association of Uganda" might attract immediate scrutiny from the remaining clean officials, they could easily adopt a respectable corporate label. They could form "The National Infrastructure Development Network". The official cover for this entity would be "to optimise resource utilisation and streamline public-private partnership efficiencies."

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Alternatively, the group could function as a secret society, the equivalent of a Masonic Lodge for tenders, bound by a strict, unwritten code. To guide operations, this fraternity would require a charter, a modern nod to the old days of the NRM's original 10-Point Programme.

Here is a possible 10-Point Charter for the Sustainable Procurement Fraternity (unofficially, the Eating Manifesto):

1. Thou shalt never, under any circumstances, take more than 51 per cent of a project budget. The ideal operational target should remain between 25 per cent and 35 per cent, ensuring that the road actually gets paved, the school gets a roof, and the project appears complete to the untrained eye.

2. Certain public sectors must remain entirely untouched. Members shall never touch funds earmarked for child immunisation, rural water access, school feeding programmes, antenatal care, or cancer treatment. Dead citizens pay no bribes, and starving children can trigger revolutions.

3. Once the distribution of an appreciation fee has been agreed behind closed doors, no member shall break the covenant. Honour among colleagues forms the bedrock of institutional stability.

4. Eating must become an equal-opportunity enterprise. Members must ensure that elites from every region of Uganda – East, West, North, and Central – and from all genders and religions receive a fair, proportionate share to prevent ethnic resentment

from fracturing the network. For political contributions, give the ruling party 75 per cent, and the opposition 25 per cent – you never know.

5. When a major scandal erupts, or when the President publicly rails against corruption during a national address, all members shall immediately suspend operations until the media cycle shifts and his anger cools.

6. Members shall not flaunt their gains. Convoy fleets, gold-plated mansions, and multi-million-shilling bottles of champagne in nightclubs attract unnecessary attention, which inevitably spills onto social media feeds and investigative blogs.

7. If a member must award an inflated contract to a shell company they own, they must hire competent subcontractors to do the actual work. A building that collapses and kills 10 people creates a public relations disaster that threatens the entire fraternity.

8. Members shall not stash all their accumulated returns in offshore accounts in Dubai or Switzerland. A minimum of 40 per cent of all acquired capital must be reinvested locally in agriculture, real estate, or manufacturing to keep the economy breathing and create basic jobs for restless youth.

9. Every member must contribute a fixed 2.5 per cent levy from procurement gains into a centralised, covert legal-defence fund. This fund would exclusively retain the sharpest legal minds to exploit technicalities, ensuring no member serves actual jail time if a rogue prosecutor becomes ambitious.

10. Any member who violates these rules through reckless, greedy conduct, thereby exposing the network to public fury, shall face swift internal banishment. The fraternity will actively hand that rogue member to anti-corruption authorities as a sacrificial lamb to satisfy the public appetite for justice.

By structuring their illicit activities through this rigid framework, the corrupt would not only secure their stolen wealth for generations but also ensure the Ugandan state remains just viable enough to continue being milked.

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