

...minister added.

...to Banura's lobby-
ing for equipment from the ministry.
A humble and generous leader

style.

"If heaven is real, Banura has gone
to heaven," the 83-year-old quipped.

community.

out of school because the mother could
not pay fees. He brought the boy into

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BY MICHAEL AGABA

KAMPALA. Uganda has used its debut appearance at the Melbourne International Coffee Expo (MICE) 2026 to position itself as a destination for value addition in the coffee sector and global partnerships.

At the Southern Hemisphere's largest dedicated coffee trade show, which drew 31,708 visitors recently, Ugandan officials displayed various Ugandan Robusta and Arabica coffee varieties and pitched investment opportunities in roasting, branding, packaging, and distribution, segments where officials say significant value remains untapped.

Leading the charge was Uganda's High Commissioner to Australia Dorothy Hyuha Samali, who framed the country's participation as a strategic shift.

"One of our strategic objectives here in Australia is to see that we penetrate the markets of Australia and the major crop, which we have identified, which we are going to promote heavily, is coffee," Ms Huhya said.

"Previously, we've been coming to this exhibition in Melbourne, which is the Melbourne International Coffee Expo, as spectators. We didn't have the capacity to set up the stalls. So I am very happy that the government has now supported us. We are now in a position to participate in full swing," she added.

During engagements at the expo, the

Uganda targets lucrative Australian coffee market



Alternative.

For many years, Uganda's coffee has been part of what the world drinks. The difference now is that we want to be recognised in that cup,"

— Dorothy Hyuha Samali, Uganda's High Commissioner to Australia

ambassador said Uganda has the best investment climate and that its coffee sector is well-regulated to ensure quality produce.

"Uganda must be seen, heard, and understood differently on a global platform of this scale. We are engaging as a serious origin and a serious partner with the capacity, the product, and the people to deliver," she said.

Uganda is already a major player in global coffee. It ranks among the world's top 10 producers and is Africa's second-largest exporter, with the crop supporting more than 1.7 million households.

However, much of its coffee has historically been exported as raw green beans, leaving roasting, branding, and retail profits to be captured abroad. Officials say that is the gap Uganda is now targeting.



Left to Right: Assistant Commissioner for Coffee Quality Assurance Gordon Katwirenabo, Ambassador Dorothy Samalie Hyuha and Serere MP Emmanuel Okabe at the Expo in Australia recently. PHOTO/COURTESY

Speaking at MICE, Mr Gordon Katwirenabo, the Assistant Commissioner for Coffee Quality Assurance and Value Addition, said the government is aligning the entire value chain—from farmers to exporters—to improve quality and increase returns.

"Uganda is home to Robusta coffee. So we have the original test, the original genome and that's how unique this Ro-

busta is for Uganda. So we are very excited on what we are going to offer to the Australian market and we believe it's going to be a springboard for really getting, penetrating the Australian market as far as Ugandan coffee is concerned," he said.

"Uganda is working across the value chain to ensure its coffee meets global quality standards while also delivering

greater value back to the country," told the investors.

He explained that reforms in post-harvest handling, traceability, and quality assurance are already positioning Ugandan coffee more competitively in high-end segments.

A significant share of Uganda's coffee still exits the country unprocessed, presenting opportunities in origin-based roasting, private label coffee production, branding and premium packaging, and speciality coffee aggregation.

With relatively low production costs and a large smallholder base, Uganda offers what officials describe as a "competitive cost structure" with strong margin potential.

At the same time, improving quality—particularly in speciality Arabica from Mount Elgon and Bugisu, and increasingly refined Robusta—has begun to shift perceptions among global buyers. Australia's mature coffee culture and growing demand for traceable, origin-driven coffee made it a strategic entry point for Uganda.

Ugandan coffee is already present in the market, particularly in espresso blends where its Robusta provides body and crema. However, officials say the goal now is visibility and brand recognition.