



Kabaka Mutebi prepares to carve roast beef to serve his subjects during his 24th coronation anniversary at Buweekula county offices in Mubende district yesterday. He is flanked by Nnabagereka Sylvia Nagginda (second-right), Katikkiro Peter Mayiga (left) and Princess Christine Agnes Nabaloga (right). Photo by Stephen Musoke

Govt calls for Mengo views on land

By Andrew Ssenyonga

The Government has welcomed Buganda kingdom's views on the Constitutional (amendment) Bill, 2017 in which government seeks to amend the land law.

Prime Minister Ruhakana Rugunda, during the 24th Kabaka's coronation celebrations in Buweekula, Mubende district yesterday, said the Government is currently receiving views on the proposed amendments.

"We are more than happy to receive any views which will improve the proposed amendments. It is the right time that Buganda Kingdom presents their views," he said in response to statements from the kingdom's prime minister, Charles Peter Mayiga.

The proposed Bill seeks to amend Article 26 of the Constitution to allow the Government to acquire land or property upon adequate compensation as assessed by the government valuer, while any resolution of disputes for additional payment claimed by the owner is ongoing.

Rugunda explained that the proposed amendments were premised on the bureaucratic tendencies involved in compensation of the project-affected persons, which tend to stall projects.

"They are intended to shorten the processes involved by allowing the Government to start the projects, pending negotiations over compensations with the affected persons," he said.

His remarks came after Mayiga had said, the amendments will leave Ugandans at the mercy of losing their land to corrupt government officials without being compensated.

"Any shift from the current laws, would be a human rights violation of depriving people of their source of livelihood," Mayiga said.

"We appreciate the infrastructural and other developmental projects by the Government, but the land should be acquired after an agreement with the owners," he said.

Mayiga also proposed a special adjudication court for land compensation for expeditious disposal of land cases.



Mutebi receives gifts from Salim Saleh (in grey suit), Prime Minister Rugunda (seated, right) and Yoweri Museveni at the function

"Any shift from the current laws would be a human rights violation." Mayiga

Agriculture and animal husbandry is a magic bullet to Uganda's transformation in Mayiga's view. However, farming can only flourish with possession of land.

According to Mayiga, "Some people do not understand why land is a cornerstone in Buganda, but it is because, land sustains life."

This year's celebrations at the Ssaza grounds were held under the theme "Protection and use of land for the development of Buganda and Uganda."

The monarch urged the public to embark on the fight of the HIV/AIDS scourge.

"We had gained momentum in the fight against the AIDS scourge through the sensitisation of our people, but, recently, we have slowed down. There is a need to re-energise the efforts to

fight the vice," he advised.

In his message read by Rugunda, President Yoweri Museveni reminded Ugandans of the importance of language and culture, saying it was important for development.

"Remember to preserve our heritage for the future generation or else it faces extinction," Museveni said.

Highlighting the significance of the return of traditional kingdoms in 1993, Museveni said the celebrations are a grand manifestation of the fruits of democracy and good governance enjoyed by the people of Uganda.

"Today's function is historic because your cultural institution had been unjustifiably abolished, together with other traditional cultural institutions of Uganda in 1967. This was done by politicians who did not know or care about the value of culture and cultural identity of the African people."

The NRM opened the door of restoring traditional cultural institutions, having been attacked and abolished during the political upheavals of 1966-1967," Museveni said.

Observing that the fete was an opportunity to remind people of their heritage, Museveni urged the traditional leaders to ensure that local

languages and cultures are preserved. The President also observed that with the revival of cultural roots, Uganda is proud of her heritage.

"Our kingdoms are much older than the political unit - Uganda. Their role in the history of Uganda is, therefore, of great importance," he said.

Museveni also reminisced on his meeting with the Kabaka in London in 1981, at the late Prof. Yusuf Lule's house.

"I told you that the traditional institutions in Uganda would be restored, if the people concerned so wished and the institutions contributed to patriotism in Uganda, pan-Africanism within Africa and modernisation," Museveni said.

He also commended Kabaka's leadership and partnership with the Government in ensuring that the people support government programmes for peace and development.

Operation Wealth Creation

The chief co-ordinator of Operation Wealth Creation (OWC), Gen. Caleb Akwandanaho, aka Salim Saleh, asked the Government to streamline the mandate of the programme for the benefit of the people.

"We have a challenge at village level where three people are fighting for the inputs; there is local government, cultural leaders and religious leaders; once the programme is operational, we will be able to deliver well-ordinated services," he said.

General Saleh, who is also the senior presidential advisor on defence and security, hailed the partnership between Buganda Cultural and Development Foundation and OWC, and in efforts to revive the coffee industry.

In the campaign to improve household income, Saleh asked the Kabaka to fight polygamy in Buganda, saying it was a challenge to development because it depletes resources.

He later gave the Kabaka some literature on OWC and the wrapped box, which he said contained some precious gift.

Highlights

The Kabaka recognised and posed for photographs with teachers who taught him while at primary school days in Buweekula.

He also donated a number of pairs of shoes to pupils of Kaweri Model Primary School, where he studied.

Crowds lined the roads to receive the Kabaka as his entourage drove to Ssaza grounds from the Buweekula palace.

With a crown on his head, Kabaka donning a kanzu (tunic) under a bark cloth and leopard's skin was accompanied by the Nnabagereka, Sylvia Nagginda and several royals.

To kickstart the celebrations, the Kabaka, joined a group of men to sound the royal drums in a synchronised rhythm. He was later carried shoulder high to his throne. Next to his pavilion was a tent for special guests who included Rugunda, Saleh, Kwar Adhola Moses Steven Owori and a delegation from Bunyoro kingdom.

Born on April 13, 1955, Mutebi is the 36th Kabaka of Buganda. He was enthroned king on July 31, 1993 at the kingdom's coronation site at Naggalabi, Budo as heir of his father Sir Edward Mutesa II.