



SEVENTH MANDATE TARGETS INTEGRATION

As the global system fragments, economic nationalism surges and contradictions in the world order deepen daily, Africa faces a stark reality: integration is no longer optional. It is essential for survival.

For this reason,, we congratulate President Museveni upon his re-election and extend our best wishes for a peaceful inauguration and a productive 2026 to 2031 term. Leadership in the present era requires strategic clarity, regional vision and the ability to position one's country within the larger continental future now struggling to emerge.

Uganda enters this new term having made notable gains in infrastructure expansion, regional diplomacy, security stabilisation, energy development and industrial growth. Yet the work ahead remains immense. The next phase of leadership must move decisively toward deeper East African integration and continental competitiveness.

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East Africa's future will not be shaped by speeches about unity. It will be built by systems that make unity real. Chief among these is the long-delayed Standard Gauge Railway (SGR). Extending the SGR from Naivasha through Malaba and Kampala to Rwanda, South Sudan and eastern DR Congo is an economic and geopolitical necessity. Regions that connect internally prosper. Those that stay fragmented become corridors for external powers.

Equally urgent is scrapping non-tariff barriers within the



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East African Community (EAC). Integration cannot coexist with roadblocks, administrative delays, duplicative customs checks and protectionist inefficiencies that punish traders and deter investment. A common market loses credibility when goods move more easily into Africa than across it.

The same applies to telecoms and airspace. East Africans should not pay exorbitant roaming fees

to call neighbours in the same bloc. A unified EAC telecoms framework and harmonised call rates would transform commerce, education, innovation and connection. Unified airspace would boost tourism, logistics and competitiveness.

Language is central to integration. The rise of Kiswahili across the region marks a major cultural and political shift. Its elevation in the African Union shows it has moved from culture to strategic policy. That momentum must be institutionalised.

Integration must serve ordinary people. Unity that does not create jobs, expand opportunity and raise incomes becomes an elite conversation divorced from reality. Industrialisation and value addition are essential. Uganda and the region must stop exporting raw materials and importing finished goods at a premium cost. The future is agro-processing, manufacturing, mineral beneficiation, pharmaceuticals

and tech-driven industries that can employ Africa's growing youth.

As President Museveni has argued, Africa won uhuru: political independence. The next task is umoja: unity. Peace and security remain the foundation. Uganda's relative stability in a turbulent region gives it strategic weight. However, stability must evolve with inclusion, institutional credibility and economic opportunity, especially for a youth whose patience with promises is finite.

The years ahead will test East Africa's commitment. The region must choose either ceremonial integration or transformational change.

President Museveni's seventh mandate comes with expectations of governance and regional statesmanship. The task is to shape a connected, industrialised, self-confident East Africa able to negotiate its future on its own terms. That is the work history demands.