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Uganda is entering a moment that feels less like gradual growth and more like acceleration. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, now holding the chairmanship of the East African Community (EAC), sits at the centre of the region's integration agenda – a role that goes beyond a diplomatic posting to a strategic mandate – and

the Ministry of East African Community Affairs is turning this into an economic reality. The figures are beginning to tell a consistent, unified narrative of an economy growing not only in size but also in structure, ambition and reach. The gross domestic product (GDP) has increased by 8.5% in the second quarter of financial year 2025/26. Over the past 20 years, Uganda's economy has grown sevenfold, rising from \$9.8b in 2005/06 to more than \$68.4b today. GDP per capita has risen from approximately \$570 a decade ago to more than \$1,278, placing the country at the threshold of lower middle-income status. According to the IMF's regional outlook, Uganda has been identified as having one of the highest growth rates within the EAC, averaging 6.9% annually from 1990 to 2009 – a record that compares favourably with Asia's fastest-developing economies.

But beyond the figures, something deeper is shifting. Uganda is no longer simply

growing; it is going beyond its borders. In early 2026, Uganda recorded



President Museveni and Ruto launching SGR in Kisumu, Kenya

a trade surplus with EAC partners, driven by strong export demand from the DR Congo, South Sudan, Rwanda, and Burundi, primarily for agricultural and manufactured goods. The Uganda Securities Exchange all-share index rose 10.3% in February 2026.

Migrant worker arrivals grew by 14.7% in the same month, reflecting the free movement protocols that are producing real cross-border human flows. Headline inflation fell to 2.9% in February 2026, the lowest since the start of the financial year, providing the stable environment that trade and investment require.

This is where Uganda's advantage is becoming clearer: proximity is turning into opportunity, with bigger doors opening. The East African Community, a bloc of over 300 million people, is gradually becoming a functional market space rather

Continued on page 66

UGANDA MAKES BOLD BET ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION

om page 66

an a political aspiration. Goods move more freely than before, and labour mobility is increasing, and regulatory alignment is slowly reducing the friction that once stifled cross-border exchange. Behind this shift towards integration is the co-ordination between national and regional systems to ensure that policies are translated into outcomes. What is described as integration in fact, a series of changes to the systems that exist in East Africa today – a testament to the secret of change is to focus all of one's energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new. Uganda has also invested efforts in co-ordinating with other regional frameworks, such as the Eastern Corridor Integration Projects (NCIPs). Through the CIP, member states are focused on only on transportation systems but also on digital and energy infrastructure. Furthermore, digital



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infrastructure is among the topics being discussed across the region, including the construction of a communications and broadcasting satellite named ClimCam. This satellite was launched to the International Space Station and there is hope that it will eventually expand the capacity of digital communications across

East Africa, particularly in areas that currently lack adequate communications satellite coverage and signal reach.

Another initiative currently being developed by Uganda is its commitment to co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of directives issued by Heads of State to the regions under the NCIP. At the 14th Summit of the NCIP, 21 directives had been issued to the region regarding the ICT cluster alone – a testament to the pace at which Uganda is advancing the digital integration agenda.

Uganda's ten-fold growth strategy sets a target of expanding GDP from \$50b to \$500b by 2040, built on export growth, tourism, minerals, oil and gas, and a knowledge economy powered by science, technology, and innovation. Real GDP growth is projected above 7% this financial year, with oil production beginning in Q4 2026 and peaking at 230,000 barrels per day by 2028.

2.9%

The headline inflation, the lowest recorded since the start of the financial year.

Every strand of that strategy has a regional dimension that the ministry is positioned to activate.

Tourism growth depends on the seamless movement of people across EAC borders. The satellite and Northern Corridor ICT infrastructure connect Uganda's digital ambitions to a regional architecture that multiplies their impact. On export diversification, Uganda has added 31 new products to its export basket, reducing coffee's share from 77% in 1994 to 18% in 2024 – a shift that demands reliable regional markets to absorb that production at scale.

Uganda today sits at a structural inflection point,

with macroeconomic stability holding, growth accelerating, and formalisation deepening. It is also a country increasingly defined by its regional relationships rather than solely by its domestic boundaries. Exports are diversifying, with gold, coffee, and manufactured goods forming a more complex trade profile; new markets are opening across the region; labour mobility is expanding; and investor confidence is rising.

President Museveni's call for Uhuru na Umoja – anchored in unity – at the EAC Summit was more than a philosophical statement. Drawing on the examples of China, India, and South Korea, he argued that large integrated markets drive industrial transformation and that East Africa's fragmented economies are costing the region its potential.

From trade surpluses to initiatives on digital infrastructure, the ministry is where that vision meets implementation. For Uganda's entrepreneurs, traders, investors, and the rural communities awaiting reliable internet access, it is the ministry that makes the EAC's promises real.