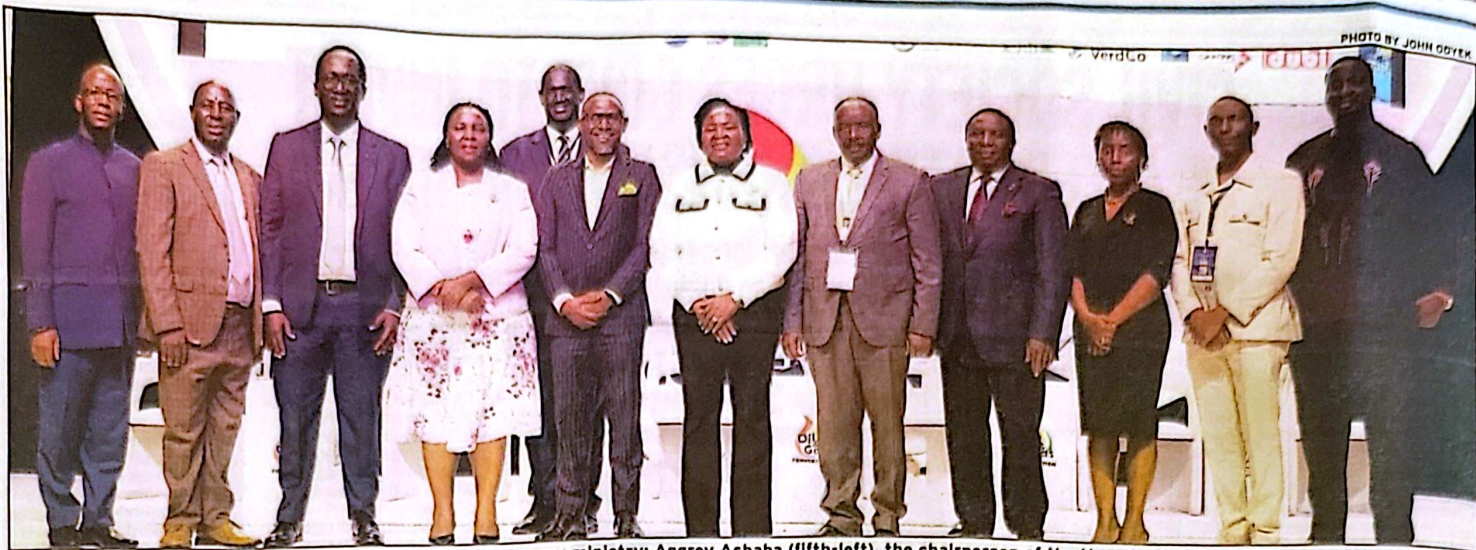




Irene Batebe (fourth-left), the permanent secretary of the energy ministry; Aggrey Ashaba (fifth-left), the chairperson of the Uganda Chamber of Energy and Minerals governing council and Nankabirwa (sixth-right); with other officials during the 11th Annual Oil and Gas Convention at Speke Resort Munyonyo in Kampala, recently

By John Odyek

OIL-LINKED INDUSTRIES TO DRIVE MANUFACTURING, VALUE ADDITION

The Government is prioritising industries arising out of the oil and gas sector through projects that include the refinery and Kabalega Industrial Park, which are aimed at keeping more value within the country. Such as industries include petrochemicals, fertilisers and manufacturing.

The Government aims to anchor industrial growth on petroleum-related industries rather than crude exports alone.

President Yoweri Museveni said this in a speech read during the recent 11th Annual Oil and Gas Convention at Speke Resort Munyonyo in Kampala. It was organised by the Uganda Chamber of Energy and Minerals under the theme: *First Oil: Fulfilling the Promise, Forging the Future*.

Energy minister Ruth Nankabirwa Ssentamu read the message on behalf of Museveni. The President said the country is deliberately positioning the sector for long-term industrialisation.

"Petroleum must drive value addition within the country, not just crude oil export," he said. The refinery and Kabalega Industrial Park are expected to play a central role in this shift, creating opportunities while reducing reliance on imports and increasing domestic processing capacity.

"This confirms Government's position that oil and gas are not an end in themselves, but a strategic catalyst for transformation," Museveni said.

He added that this approach would expand the size of the economy through agro-industrialisation, mineral-based industries and technology-driven growth.

"The petroleum sector will provide energy and raw materials for industry, support infrastructure that boosts tourism and trade and drive industrialisation through manufacturing," the President said.



Ambassador Ombeni Sefue

Beyond industrial development, the Government highlighted the importance of efficient logistics, infrastructure and supply chains to support the transition into a production and operations phase. This includes strengthening co-ordination across upstream and downstream segments to ensure sustainable sector growth.

"As Uganda moves from building infrastructure to operating and maintaining it, the opportunities ahead are sustained and generational," Museveni said.

The downstream petroleum sector also remains a key focus, with authorities reaffirming their commitment to maintaining fuel supply stability as well as price predictability through stronger regulation and partnerships with private players.

Recent policy reforms, including the National Petroleum Policy 2025 and the Petroleum Supply (Amendment) Act, 2023, are designed to align the

sector with emerging realities such as value addition, regional integration and the global energy transition.

The Government is encouraging private-sector participation, saying the next phase of the industry will be driven by services, technology and the expansion of local enterprises supporting oil and gas operations.

REGIONAL TRANSFORMATION

Ambassador Ombeni Sefue, the board chairperson of the Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation, said: "When we speak of first oil, we refer not just to Uganda's oil evacuation; we herald a regional awakening. We are broadening the horizons of what is achievable, the boundaries of the possible."

"An African proverb says, 'leaning against a full granary will not help a hungry man'. For too long, Africa has leaned against the full granary of its abundant resources, hungry, watching as others siphoned it. This must end."

However, Sefue said in the final analysis, the region's legacy will not be defined by the amount of resources extracted, but by the value added to them, the impact created, the transformations engendered and the future built together.

"Uganda's journey demonstrates the incredible potential that emerges when leadership, policy and collaboration come together. It has instilled significant confidence in our region's ability to effectively execute complex energy projects, attract global investment and establish enduring institutions. In doing so,

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

Uganda is positioning itself as a regional energy and industrial hub, leveraging strategic infrastructure such as the crude oil pipeline, refinery and industrial parks to support trade and investment across East and Central Africa.

However, President Yoweri Museveni cautioned that achieving these ambitions will depend on disciplined implementation, policy consistency and sustained investment in human capital and infrastructure.

With petroleum resources seen as finite, the Government emphasised the need to channel oil revenues into long-term national development, including industrial diversification, innovation and skills development.

As the sector evolves, Uganda's focus is increasingly turning to how oil can catalyse broader economic transformation through industries, jobs and enterprise growth that extend well beyond the fields.

Uganda has ignited a promise that extends far beyond its borders," Sefue said.

"But fulfilling that promise requires more than production; it requires integration. The future we seek cannot be built within borders; it must be built across them. Co-

operation, rather than competition, is what will unlock Africa's abundant potential. And that is why those who do not wish Africa well will keep on plotting to ensure Africa does not unite or co-operate across borders".

"Let us elevate our ambition. Let us see Uganda not only as a producer, but as a catalyst for regional transformation. Let us see Tanzania as a pillar of integration and Mozambique and Namibia as strategic anchors in a shared continental future. Above all, let us see our region not as separate markets, but as one integrated energy system capable of competing and thriving on the global stage," he said.

Sefue added that energy security demands more than production. It demands integration of infrastructure, markets, policies and partnerships. He said it requires transforming resources into industries, investments into jobs, and projects into platforms for long-term prosperity, not in silos, but as a unified region with a shared purpose.

Sefue said ultimately, energy security is not about oil or gas alone. It is about stability, about opportunity and about the future we create for our people. It is about ensuring that our economies are powered, our industries are competitive and our citizens benefit meaningfully from the resources we develop.

"Fulfilling the promise is about delivering real impact, and forging the future is about building systems that will sustain generations," he said.