

President Museveni observing a carpenter at work during his tour of Kawempe division yesterday. PPU photo

Museveni to send five carpenters to China for skills

NO IMPORTS

The President noted that the Government was committed to doing away with importation of furniture from China

By Henry Sekanjako

President Yoweri Museveni has asked furniture manufacturers in Kampala to identify five carpenters for specialised training in modern furniture making in China.

According to Museveni, the carpenters will be selected from the already established roadside furniture makers in the areas of Kubbiri Wandegeya, Nsambya on Ggaba road and Kireka, among other notable furniture workshops in Kampala.

"I want you to identify five people, one from each furniture manufacturing group. We shall take them to China, for a study tour," Museveni said.

The President made the remarks yesterday at Makerere University Primary School on Bombo Road, during the launch of the Kubbiri Furniture Makers' Development Initiative.

Addressing furniture manufacturers, Museveni noted that the Government was committed to promoting the furniture industry in Uganda, to do away with importation from China.

"By importing furniture from China, we are rendering our youth jobless and instead providing jobs to the Chinese children. Everything we are buying, including shoes and clothes is from China. We are only making them rich, yet our children are jobless," he explained.

Museveni has in the recent past directed all government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) to stop importing furniture such as chairs and tables, to promote the country's policy on Buy Uganda, Build Uganda (BUBU).

Showroom

To develop the furniture industry in the country, the President reiterated that the Government would acquire land in Entebbe, for the establishment of a modern showroom for furniture manufacturers in the country.

Museveni also pledged to avail land to Kubbiri Furniture Makers' Development Initiative for a permanent working station.

Currently, the group, which comprises 1,500 members, operates in the open, subjecting their furniture to rain and dust.

"We want a permanent place, where we can settle and work. Right now we face challenges of rain, the scorching sun and because of this, many of our members have left," Godfrey Kizito the chairman, told the President.

Sh377m support

To boost the furniture makers' group, the President handed over a sh100m dummy cheque as working capital to Kubbiri Carpenters Association SACCOS, which is run by the Kubbiri Furniture Makers' Development Initiative.

The President also bought furniture machinery for the group, worth sh220m, and a second-hand vehicle, worth sh57m, to help the furniture makers transport their raw materials.

"One day I was passing here and I saw chairs, some covered with polythene bags. I stopped and asked the people around, who showed me the chairman of these furniture makers'. I interacted with him and here we are today," Museveni explained.

The team commended the President for the donations, which they said will enable them grow their business, better their economic status and also employ other Ugandans.

Other groups

The President has in the recent past supported various furniture groups such as the Nsambya Carpentry and Crafts SACCOS, which he boosted with a donation of sh270m to improve their socio-economic welfare.

Besides furniture, the President has also supported other groups in Najjera and Katwe, which deal in metal fabrication.

The President noted that he would continue supporting different furniture maker and metal fabricaors in the country for job creation and promotion of locally made products.

"I have already seen another furniture-making group in Kireka on Jinja Road; I am soon reaching out to them. We can work together to get this country out of the slavery of importing things like bags, chairs and shoes," Museveni said.

The President bashed the residents of Kampala for voting Opposition local leaders, whom he said are responsible for their suffering. He said he was not aware that local governments were not supporting entrepreneurs such as furniture makers to better their trade.

UPE schools

Away from furniture, the President, who was hosted at Makerere University Primary School, a government-aided primary school , under the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme, said the Government would revamp all UPE schools in Kampala to ensure quality education.

The President was shocked to learn that Makerere University Primary School among other UPE schools in Kampala, were in a sorry state.

"I am going to make a report about this school to the Government. Its state in terms of structures does not befit a Kampala school," Museveni noted.

Inquiring from Kampala Minister Beti Kamya on the number of UPE schools in Kampala, Museveni said he would liaise with the education ministry to ensure that all UPE schools in Kampala are rehabilitated.

According to Kamya, who had accompanied the President, there are 79 UPE schools in Kampala.

"These schools are good for families in Kampala whose income is low; pupils can walk to and from these schools because they are near their homes. I am going to look into this matter," Museveni pledged.

Security

At the same meeting, Kamya reported to the President how the continued fights in the transport sector in Kampala were becoming a security threat to the people of Kampala.

Citing the Saturday incident where the Century and Bodaboda 2010 fought in Nateete, Kamya noted that the local authorities, including the Police had failed to handle the matter, thus the need for Museveni's intervention.

"Your Excellency, there is increasing insecurity in Kampala, especially in the transport sector people are beating each other and almost killing themselves; it has now gone beyond Police," Kamya reported.

In response, the President promised to address the matter, saying he would sort out those trying to cause confusion and threatening security in the city and around the country.



Museveni interacts with Joelia Nankumba after buying her furniture as other carpenters look on at Kubbiri, Makerere. Photo by Juliet Kasirye

A SUCCESS STORY

One of the past beneficiaries, Saddam Moses Muleke, the chairman Nsambya Carpentry and Crafts SACCOS, testified that as a result of the President's aid, the Nsambya carpentry and crafts group has ventured into value-addition for their products.

"We have since acquired modern machinery which we use to add value to our furniture. We also get many youth seeking training," Muleke said.

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