

Launch of National Roadmap for Sustainable Development Goals

October 23, 2018 | Office of the President

Statement by Mr. Joakim Parker (USAID Mission Director)

on behalf of the Local Development Partners' Group

As Prepared for Delivery

Right Honorable Prime Minister Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda,
Honorable Ministers present,
Excellences Ambassadors, Heads of Missions and UN Agencies,
Representative from Civil Society and the Private Sector,
Government Officials,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the Local Development Partners' Group, I would like to commend the Government on the progress made on delivering the 2030 Agenda. The Agenda 2030, through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a global call for action to end poverty and achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

It is no secret that Uganda played an important role in the process leading up to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, including through the leadership of Honorable Samuel Kutesa as President of the General Assembly.

Today's launch of the National Roadmap for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represents yet another milestone that demonstrates the Government's commitment to deliver on this important agenda.

The Roadmap provides a useful framework to guide the Government's efforts to implement the SDGs by identifying actions that will strengthen planning and coordination; financing and resource mobilization; data quality, M&E and reporting; as well as advocacy and communication. Undoubtedly, these are critical areas of focus, and we look forward to working with you in this regard.

The next important step will be to mainstream SDG implementation across Government through the work of Ministries, Departments and Agencies. The SDGs need to inform the strategic discussions, prioritization and actions at the sector level. In fact, the Government could even consider assigning line ministries to lead implementation, monitoring and reporting on specific SDGs relevant to their mandate. This could be one way of ensuring that the SDGs seamlessly becomes an integral part of our work in the joint Sector Working Groups, during our joint annual reviews, and—not to forget—as part of the preparation of the National Budget, which is underway as we speak.

Right Honorable Prime Minister:

Uganda was taking important steps to bring the SDGs to life even before they were adopted, notably by integrating them in the second National Development Plan and thereby translating them into nationally owned and country-led development strategies. Like the SDGs, the NDP II sets out an ambitious agenda that requires commitment and leadership at all levels of Government and amongst its partners.

The NDP II is currently undergoing its mid-term review, and from what we hear, implementation progress has been mixed. This has also come out in the Government's Annual Performance Review ('the GAPR'), and it is becoming clear that much more must be done to deliver the anticipated results in the NDP II in order to meet the needs and expectations of Ugandans.

In that regard, we would welcome further attention to ensuring that Uganda's rapidly increasing population becomes the engine that will drive development and growth, promote shared prosperity, and end poverty.

Achieving key SDGs, such as the SDGs on 'Good Health and Wellbeing' (#3), 'Quality Education' (#4), 'Gender Equality' (#5), 'Reduced Inequalities' (#10), Decent work and Economic Growth (#8) and 'Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions' (#16), requires strong government leadership and more domestic resourcing. According to the World Bank's Human Capital Index, a child born in Uganda today will be 38 percent as productive when she grows up as she could be if she enjoyed complete education and full health.

And so, there is need for prioritizing investments in social sectors to reverse the stagnating or even declining performance on key human capital indicators. As it is, more than one-fourth of on-budget spending on health, education and social development comes from development partners. In health, government spending is a mere 17 percent of total health spending, which is neither sufficient nor sustainable.

We fully appreciate that realizing Uganda's development aspirations involves strict prioritization and difficult trade-offs. But the continuously declining budget allocation to social sectors—which is now much lower than the East African countries' average—is a serious concern.

We all agree that Uganda's future depends on a healthy and educated population, and Uganda simply cannot afford not to invest more in its young population.

Right Honorable Prime Minister:

Development partners provide very substantial support to the Government's development agenda – both through on-budget and off-budget support. Over the last decade, we (i.e. OECD partners) have provided close to 10 billion dollars in Official Development Assistance to Uganda. And rest assured that we continue to support Uganda to achieve national targets and the SDGs.

But achieving the Agenda 2030 will also require new resource mobilization and financing strategies. For instance, there are significant untapped financing resources within the private

sector, nongovernmental actors, and private philanthropy. And the Government needs to effectively leverage such sources of financing, for instance by promoting public-private partnerships and sustainable investments. Your development partners can support this effort.

There is also significant scope for improving domestic resource mobilization. Last year, Uganda collected only around 14 percent of GDP, which is lower than most of the countries in the region.

We therefore welcome the Government's commitment to increasing domestic resource mobilization. In fact, several development partners are currently working with the Ministry of Finance to prepare a new Domestic Revenue Mobilization Strategy. We expect that this will help to identify options for broadening the tax base and integrating the informal sector into the economy as called for in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for Financing for Development.

Meanwhile, as much as additional financial resources may be needed to spur inclusive and sustainable growth in Uganda, there is also scope for using available resources more efficiently to achieve greater impact.

No matter if we're talking about investing in infrastructure or social sectors, such investments must be well-prioritized and consulted, competitively tendered and well-managed, and maintained once completed. We welcome the Government's renewed attention to improve implementation performance and public investment management, as well as addressing accountability challenges, and we remain ready to support the Government in this regard.

Right Honorable Prime Minister:

On behalf of the Local Development Partners' Group, let me end by expressing our appreciation of your attention to bringing the SDGs to life in Uganda. We commend you on achievements so far, and we stand ready to continue supporting your efforts. Let us work together to make sure that no one is left behind!

Thank you.