



REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

Statement

By

**Hon Sam K. Kutesa
Minister of Foreign Affairs**

**Delivered by
Ambassador Arthur Kafeero**

At

**Regional Consultation of Think Tanks on Implementation of SDGs
for better Health Outcomes in Eastern and Southern Africa**

**Imperial Royale Hotel
Kampala
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**Honourable Minister of State for Health, Dr Joyce Moriku Kaducu
Executive Director, African Centre for Global Health and Social
Transformation, Professor Francis Omaswa
Regional Director, IDRC Canada, Dr Simon Carter
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am honored, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon. Sam Kutesa, to join you at this regional consultation of Think Tanks on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for better health outcomes in Eastern and Southern Africa. Hon Kutesa would have liked to attend but is unable to do so due to urgent engagements.

I would like to commend the African Centre for Global Health and Social Transformation (ACHEST) and the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC) for this important initiative.

Nearly a year ago, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to guide global development efforts over the next 15 years. It was a historic outcome and a fitting culmination of one of the most participatory and inclusive processes in the history of the United Nations.

Hon. Kutesa presided over the UN General Assembly in the 69th session during which the formulation of the SDGs was finalized. The level of participation and enthusiasm from Members States, parliamentarians, local governments, civil society, the private sector, think tanks, academia, women and youth groups, and other stakeholders was unprecedented. The SDGs, as the successor framework to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), are therefore on sound ground in terms of universal ownership.

Throughout the formulation of the 2030 Agenda, one of the resounding messages was the urgent need to eradicate poverty, achieve sustainable development that leaves no one behind, and protect the planet. The SDGs address the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and comprehensive way.

The task we now have is to ensure that the SDGs are implemented in an effective, timely manner for socio-economic transformation and improvement of people's livelihoods. To do so, we need to focus on four important actions or measures, in my view.

First, the SDGs must be integrated into our national and regional development plans. In this regard, Uganda has already incorporated over 76% of the SDGs into the second National Development Plan for the period 2015-2020, as part of Uganda Vision 2040. This is a commendable milestone. We were able to

achieve this through early multi-stakeholder engagement and sensitization when the SDGs were being formulated. At the continental level, the SDGs will be an integral part of the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063 in order to achieve the vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.

Secondly, we have to mobilize the necessary resources, both domestic and external, for implementation of the SDGs. As individual countries strive to scale up funding, development partners and multilateral organizations should fulfill their commitments as agreed upon in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development.

Integrating the SDGs in national development plans will facilitate allocation of resources in national budgets. In the case of Uganda, key sectors such as infrastructure, education, health, tourism, trade and industry as well as agriculture have been allocated increased resources in the budget for financial year 2016/17.

The health sector, for instance, now has 8.9% share of the budget, with an increment of over Ugshs 600bn compared to the previous financial year. While this is still below the target of 15% agreed by African Union Heads of State in the 2001 Abuja Declaration, it is a significant improvement. The challenge is to ensure that resources are optimally utilized to achieve better service delivery and health outcomes. In this regard, this regional consultation provides a valuable opportunity for sharing of views and practical experiences on priority actions that can be taken.

Third, we need a change of mindset so that SDGs are viewed as a holistic agenda, with inter-linkages across the various goals and between domestic and international action. At the national level, this will call for a government-wide approach and not operating in compartments or "silos." In Uganda, SDGs will be implemented through existing structures. As part of its commitment to domesticating the 2030 Agenda, a National Coordination mechanism has been established to steer its implementation, coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister.

As Hon Kutesa has said before, achieving SDG 3 on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages is linked to SDG 7 on ensuring access to modern energy for all, as well as SDGs 9 and 13 on building infrastructure and combating climate change respectively. Similarly, SDG 5 on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls is linked to SDG 1 on ending poverty, SDG 2 on ending hunger, SDG 3 on ensuring healthy lives, SDG 4 on education and SDG 8 on sustainable economic growth and employment. And to achieve all the above goals, we require peaceful and inclusive societies,

access to justice for all, effective and accountable institutions as well as a revitalized Global Partnership envisaged in SDGs 16 and 17 respectively.

Fourth, we have to ensure multi-stakeholder engagement and participation in implementation of the SDGs on the ground as well as in the follow-up and review mechanisms, which will foster greater ownership. The involvement of the civil society, women and youth groups, think tanks, academia, the media, and other stakeholders will be crucial in ensuring successful implementation.

The private sector, which in many African countries contributes over 70% of GDP and employs between 70-90% of the population should also play a greater role through investments in SDG sectors, including health and education.

National parliaments will have a key role to play in terms of resource allocation and oversight, while local governments, municipalities and cities also have important roles in service delivery and thus implementation of the SDGs.

In conclusion, the experiences from the early stages of implementation of the SDGs in Uganda, and many countries in Africa, point to the importance of their integration into national and regional development plans, pursuing a comprehensive approach, and the centrality of engaging multi-stakeholders.

I thank you for your attention.