

By Umar Nsubuga

Michael Mulindwa trained as a mechanical engineer. Yet, he says he struggled to fit into his role at his father's motor vehicle garage.

He could not handle some cars, especially those with the latest technology. Their electronics system is more advanced and requires specialised training.

His puzzle was solved at Nakawa Vocational Training Institute. He enrolled for a vocational course in mechatronics and his worries are now history. The relatively new discipline combines both electrical and mechanical systems. The course also infuses elements of robotics, electronics and computer engineering.

This is the first course of its kind in the country and is pioneered by Nakawa Vocational Training Institute, with support from the Japanese government.

This is just one of the many vocational skills whose demand is on the increase because of advancements in technology. Yet, the available labour force, is largely ill-prepared as Mulindwa was.

Multi-national firms are investing millions of dollars, expanding their operations in Uganda.

According to a 2016 World

Vocational training key



Vocational students in class. The education ministry is on a nationwide campaign to sensitise Ugandans about the values of vocational training

system of education placed emphasis on arts. Adding that; consequently, school leavers sought mainly white-collar jobs and educational institutions produced more job seekers than job creators.

It further states that technological changes and industrialisation necessitates adequate skilled manpower to meet the growing demand for skilled labour. This has led to the establishment and improvement of vocational institutions in the country.

There are 146 government-funded vocational institutions and over 800 private vocational training centres. The institutions are equipped to train people in skills essential for higher agricultural productivity, diversification of the economy and industrialisation of the production system.

Many graduates from vocational institutions have set up carpentry workshops and craft shops.

Meanwhile, others work in upcoming industries and many more are targeting the oil and gas sector, especially welders. Many of these will need certification by a competent body in order to

Bank brief, the government has increased its capital investments significantly. In the last four years, capital investments have increased by 126% and nearly doubled from 4.3% to 7.6% of GDP.

Going forward, such investments are expected to

increase in tandem with the aspirations of transformation that are stated in the National Development Plan and the National Vision 2040.

For instance, up to \$9b worth of investment is expected in Uganda's oil sector over the next two

three years. The increased activity in construction and other secondary-tier sectors is expected to stimulate productivity across the entire economic value chain, to drive growth."

Increased investments generally generate more

employment opportunities.

Therefore, the need for skilled workers in different fields, particularly specialised fields like the oil and gas sector, is set to rise significantly.

The document further states that in the past, the

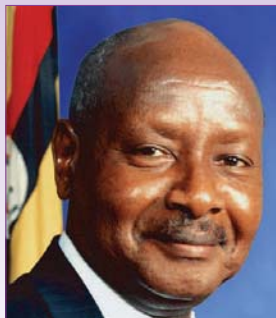


THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL LABOUR DAY



Equal Opportunities Commission



H.E. Gen. Yoweri K. Museveni
The President of the Republic of Uganda

The day is celebrated world over in recognition of the effort workers bring to the development of Nations. They are a critical mass in the economic growth and social construct of every country. The Equal Opportunities Commission joins the global community in commemorating this year's International Labour Day and proudly associates with the National theme: "Promoting Employment through Enhanced Public Infrastructure Investment" and the International theme: "Uniting workers for social and Economic Advancement"



Sylvia Muwebwa Ntambi (Mrs)
Chairperson



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Member



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Member

This augurs well with the National Constitutional obligation of eliminating discrimination and marginalization against any individual or groups of persons by redressing imbalances in society through promoting equal opportunities for all and affirmative action for the vulnerable and marginalised enshrined in both the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda as well as the Equal Opportunities Commission Act, 2007

The Commission envisions "a just and fair society wherein all persons have equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from all spheres of political, economic, social & cultural life".

In this light, the Commission has taken bold steps in ensuring that the right of the workers are protected and their freedoms are not curtailed. We recently

had an inquiry into the welfare and working environment of factory workers in Mayuge Sugar Factory that unearthed and resolved many imbalanced occasioned by those factory workers. This for us was a warning call to other factories that may be running in similar manner to correct such inhumane treatment of workers.

We have further progressively dealt with various complaints reported to the Commission on unfairness in treatment, remuneration and outright discrimination in various entities. These have been in the areas of infringement on workers' rights to health care, occupational safety, labour relations, forming and/or joining a trade union, and access to pension.

Other inventions include conducting studies and audits on the dynamics

of inequalities, discrimination and marginalization within the country; and making policy recommendations to redress the imbalances and promote equal opportunities for all. Some of the studies conducted address salient aspects as salary disparities in the public service; level of access and delivery of health services; accessibility to the built-up environment; the status of women in employment in the public sector and the status of marginalized groups in decision-making processes at all government levels.

We also access compliance to gender and equity provisions under the PFMA Act 2015 to ensure that all government plans and budgets address the development concerns/issues of marginalized populations and disadvantaged areas

for purposes of realizing sustainable inclusive national development.

One of our core roles is to create awareness to State and non-State actors of the importance of including individuals or groups marginalized/discriminated against for any reason in the process of development. We promote the Commission, its mandate and functions; as well as broad development concepts of equal opportunity, affirmative action, gender and equity mainstreaming, inclusive development, human rights and development.

In consonance with the national theme, we are looking forward to seeing more employment opportunities created through enhanced investment in public infrastructure that takes into account the rights and freedoms of the worker.

We congratulate H.E the president, and all the workers in Uganda on the Labour day 2019.

Do visit the commission at our head offices on plot 7, Luthuli Close Bugolobi; or our website: www.eoc.go.ug.

Write to us on info@eoc.go.ug; or call our toll free line: 0800-100440.

Equal Opportunities for All

to end unemployment

qualify to work in the sector. James Mugerwa, the assistant commissioner in charge of vocational education, says vocational skills remain relevant to everyone, regardless of their academic level. It, therefore, goes without saying that everyone should consider undertaking a vocational skill to remain relevant and expand one's horizons.

The directorate, established in 1972, has expanded so as to train more artisans. To facilitate vocational training, the Government has introduced mobile training units and trainer of trainers programmes.

President Yoweri Museveni recently said government is considering setting up a unit within the ministries of works or education, will be mandated to execute the construction of physical infrastructure within schools across Uganda.

Museveni justified the proposal, saying private firms often contracted by institutions of learning to construct these structures are exploitative and only care about making profits. He said by building its own capacity,

the Government will reduce on the costs and improve efficiency.

The president said local communities will determine the locations of the polytechnics. They will be expected to be directly involved in the implementation of the entire programme.

The training programmes will be based on the economic activities and training needs in the area.

The Government is striving to promote appropriate skilled training for communities, to enhance their capacity to create jobs, become more productive, increase production at household and local community levels in a bid to reduce and, eventually, eradicate poverty. There are many idle and unemployed people in villages and urban centres.

Viola Naluwoza director of Lady Valeria Vocational and Business College in Matugga says vocational training is designed to give them skills which can enable them engage in generating income. "The skills acquired also create opportunities for



Students learning how to make metallic water pipes. Vocational training will go a long way in reducing unemployment, especially among the youth, in Uganda

participating in activities such as agro-processing thus providing inter-sectoral development linkages," she says.

The creation of employment and income-generating projects is instrumental in poverty alleviation.

Why technology is a key Through the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET-LEAD) project, institutes look to improve their employment-oriented vocational training management, as well as to disseminate their experience to other BTJET institutions.

Alex Nkayivu, a retired university lecturer, says many industries had acquired new technologies, especially in electro-mechanical systems and in some cases, were employing experts from other countries to operate, maintain and repair the machinery and equipment.

Most job surveys show companies are sponsoring workers for training outside the country, where such technologies exist.

The state minister for higher education, Dr. John Chrysostom Muyingo, says the funding of technical institutions needs to be increased.

Most educationists agree that business, technical and vocational schools should be the rod that strikes a path through the country's sea of unemployment, but it definitely needs more support.

Muyingo notes that the Government intends to increase funding to the new Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board, increase unit costs for capitation grants, scale up the non-formal training programmes and provide instructional materials to Uganda technical colleges for students to do real-life projects as part of their exam requirements.

Mugerwa says Uganda can now address the critical issues to firmly cement efforts to transform itself into a country with a critical mass of skilled people.

Mugerwa says vocational education has the potential to curb the high unemployment rate, since many people will have the skills to start their own jobs and even employ others, a move towards job creation.



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The Board of Directors, Management and Staff of **UEDCL** congratulate H.E the President, Vice President, Prime Minister, the Speaker of Parliament, the entire nation on this **Labour Day** celebration on **1st May 2019**.



H. E. Gen Y.K. Museveni
President of the Republic of Uganda



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Happy Labor Day 2019

"Uniting Workers for Social and Economic Advancement".

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