# 1ST UGANDAN UK CONVENTION

## Summary Report

27th August
London United Kingdom

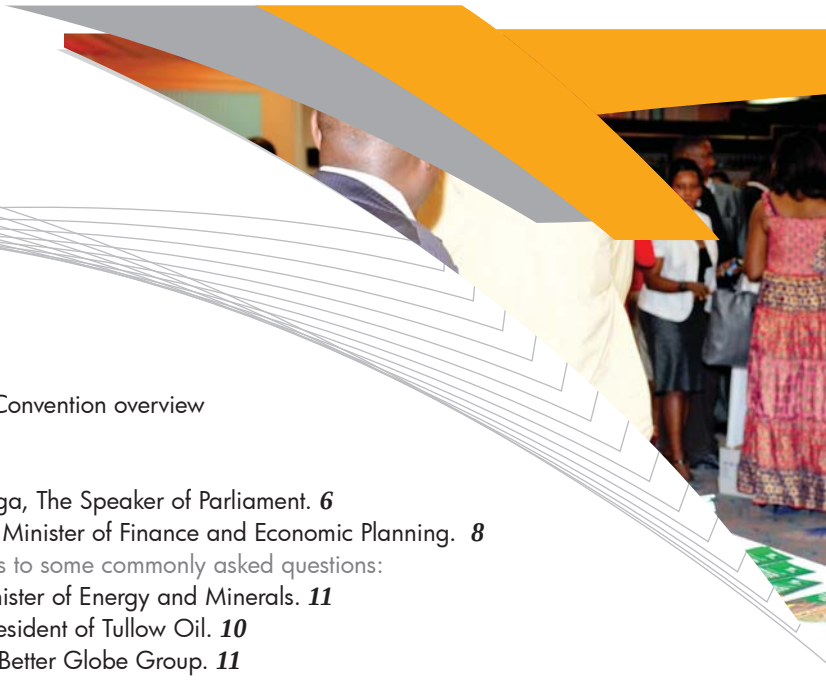
2011

# EMPOWERING Diasporas

www.ugandanconventionuk.org

# BELIEVE IN Diaspora

Unleashing Diaspora potential



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## About the Convention:

Uganda Convention UK's vision is to harness the tremendous skills, expertise and knowledgebase of the Ugandan Diaspora with a view to promote socio-economic and infrastructural development back in Uganda.

## Objectives:

- Promote the exchange of information, research and expertise and encourage new business interaction and relationships
- Identify potential opportunities in Uganda and mobilise Ugandans in the Diaspora to invest back home and increase the role of Ugandan Diaspora in Uganda's development
- Seek investment opportunities in public and private organizations within Uganda, the United Kingdom and Europe and inform Ugandans in the Diaspora
- Utilize the intellectual and financial capital of the Diaspora for the purpose of improving the livelihood of all Ugandans
- Raise awareness of financial services available for small to medium sized businesses in Uganda and the United Kingdom.
- Lobby and influence the Ugandan government to tap into the "vast expertise" of Ugandan professionals in Europe, to hasten Uganda's socio-economic development
- Encourage Ugandans in the Diaspora to promote a positive image of their nation
- Mentor Ugandan youths in the Diaspora to instill in them a sense of nationalism and become responsible citizens
- Create awareness of scholarship programs designed for the development of Uganda
- Inspire and encourage a unity among Ugandans in Europe

# The Convention's overview

The first ever Uganda Convention UK took place on 27th August 2011, at the prestigious Troxy was a truly resounding success. The theme of the Convention was 'Harnessing the potential of the Ugandan Diaspora' and this goal was met on all fronts.

The presentations given on the day by the delegates of the Ugandan government, led by Hon Rebecca Kadaga, Speaker of Parliament, were highly pertaining to the theme, and were delivered as an irresistible invitation for all participants to take fully part in the development of Ugandan affairs in the motherland, and to embrace the many investment opportunities back home, at the same time improving their own prospects.

In addition, all speakers, both from the private sector and the government expressed their most profound appreciation of the Diaspora's willingness to take part in their country's affairs and gave full assurance of the government's support and assistance to help members of the Diaspora with whatever new enterprises or investment they may embark on in Uganda. They were also highly encouraging for the Diaspora not to remain on the sidelines but to participate fully in Uganda's development, even while away from home.

The number of visitors was much higher than was anticipated and turned the event into a hub of business networking, facilitating new contacts, exchange of ideas and experience and generally bringing members of the Diaspora closer together.

The feedback post-event is very positive indeed. There is no doubt that this Convention has served as a steppingstone towards the consolidation of a much closer relationship between the UK Diaspora, the private sector and the Ugandan Government.

No one could walk away from this convention without being inspired to make in some way a positive contribution to the development in Uganda. The future will tell, and there is not a shadow of a doubt that the future for Uganda and the Diaspora does look brighter, thanks to this successful event and thanks to everyone who took part!

**Willy Mutenza**
Chairman
Uganda UK Convention

Tourism and Transport investment opportunity; every major airline now flies to Uganda including Brussels Airlines, in addition to the hundreds of buses that move every day between the capitals in the Great Lake regions. "This high volume of movement and trading", she said, "was an area worth looking at for investment".

Uganda is the best education destination in the Great Lakes region. Uganda has students from Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda, starting from primary level, and would be an ideal location to set up primary and secondary schools and even universities. "Uganda is the destination for Education", she stressed.

The East African Federation will create bigger markets for food products and manufactured goods, Uganda would be at the centre of all these opportunities. Diaspora should be there for the big markets coming up. East African community was still discussing and working towards a common market.

# Rt Hon Rebecca Kadaga

## The Speaker of Parliament

Transcript from her speech at the 1st Ugandan UK Convention

She started her speech with the issue of dual citizenship, which she said used to be a big problem to members of the Diaspora, and assured attendants that they could now apply for Ugandan citizenship again, and that it only entailed to take the oath of allegiance. This dual citizenship also entitles spouses to apply.

She then enumerated a few prominent Ugandans who all returned from the Diaspora to become a success back home, one of these being none other than Hon. Maria Kiwanuka, Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, also present on the day, who was a consultant with the World Bank. She also mentioned two members of the Diaspora who went back home to run in the last elections and were elected Member of Parliament. She reassured the Diaspora that they did not lose out by remaining abroad and invited them warmly to come back home. Her ultimate example was Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf who, after many years in the World Bank, became President of Liberia.

Next, she spoke about the challenges that Uganda recently faced, such as high rate of inflation, high food and commodity prices, which were however not unique to Uganda.

She then whetted the audience's appetite by mentioning the magic word of

*"Uganda is the destination for Education", she stressed.*

'money spinners'. She said that Uganda is the best education destination in the Great Lakes region. Uganda has students from Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda, starting from primary level, and would be an ideal location to set up primary and secondary schools and even universities. "Uganda is the destination for Education", she stressed.

The next investment sector she mentioned was tourism. She stated that every major airline now flies to Uganda including Brussels Airlines which is a Premier sponsor of this Convention, in addition to the hundreds of buses that move every day between the capitals in the Great Lake regions. "This high volume of movement and trading", she said, "was an area worth looking at for investment".

She explained that there were plans to build a dual carriage way between Entebbe and Kampala to speed up the connection between the airport and the capital. Another plan being looked at is the construction of another bridge on the river Nile to ease the congestion.

She went on to talk about agriculture and opportunities available in agro-processing, and that the energy provision would be addressed so that this area of investment would not be impeded.

Real estate was mentioned next as another important growing investment area. She said that housing is still in shortage in Kampala for the middle class and encouraged people to invest their money in that sector.

She then addressed the area of information and communication technology. She said that many Ugandan may well have 3 phone lines each and that since the population was steadily growing, the demands in ICT would also increase, ICT being the fastest growing area in the Ugandan economy.

The East African Federation was next on the agenda, which she said will create bigger markets for food products and manufactured goods, stressing that Uganda would be at the centre of all these opportunities. She invited the Diaspora to 'be there' for the big markets coming up. She explained that the East African community was still discussing and working towards a common market and eventually also a common currency. She especially addressed skilled diasporans who should consider investing the skills they acquired whilst living abroad into the improvement of Uganda.

She concluded by expressing her happiness at attending the event, and that she would be very happy to welcome members of the Diaspora back home, "Let's come and work together. Despite your long absence, you are still part of us and we are part of you. So let's join hands and make the life better for our children and grandchildren".

Uganda and Africa currently present some of the highest returns on capital in the world, with some projects having a ROI of up to 30%. This figure, contrasted very favourably with the recession that the Diaspora had had to face in the UK and other parts of the world.

Attributes and the "I can do it. I am not afraid of anything. I can make it" attitude need to be brought back home. This attitude should position well anyone wishing to exploit the opportunities in Uganda, to bring transformation back home and to themselves.

Ministry of Finance is committed to provide all the necessary help for people to settle back in Uganda or to invest in the country, aiming to provide the necessary infrastructure and policy environment.

# *Hon Maria Kiwanuka,*

## *Minister of Finance and Economic Planning*

Transcript from her speech at the 1st Ugandan UK Convention

She said that the Convention was very timely as developments at home had created many opportunities for members of the Diaspora. Uganda and Africa currently present some of the highest returns on capital in the world, with some projects having a ROI of up to 30%. This figure, she said, contrasted very favourably with the recession that the Diaspora had had to face in the UK and other parts of the world.

She said that the Ugandan Diaspora had special skills and networks, that they were very resilient people who migrated just with skills but still made it, for which she congratulated them, amid loud applause! She explained it was these very skills, attributes and the **"I can do it. I am not afraid of anything. I can make it"** attitude that she wished to be brought back home. This attitude should position well anyone wishing to exploit the opportunities in Uganda, to bring transformation back home and to themselves.

She assured the audience that her Ministry is committed to provide all the necessary help for people to settle back in Uganda or to invest in the country, aiming to provide the necessary infrastructure and policy environment. She said that the reforms had created a vibrant financial sector to provide credits and advice on financial strategies, and also strong telecommunication and transport sectors, which had lowered the costs of doing business in Uganda. She mentioned as an example how MTN and Western Union had joined forces to lower the costs of sending money back home by mobile phone.

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The Ministry of Finance is committed to transparency in the utilization of oil proceeds. The priority will be to invest in physical and human capital so that when the oil runs out, the nation's children and grandchildren will have something to remember it by.

In 2010, Diaspora remittances were estimated at $800 million, playing a crucial role in the economy. This role can be further enhanced by continuing working through organizations such as the Ugandan UK convention, UNAA in North America and some other community organisations.

Next, she highlighted the opportunities available in Uganda:

**OIL SECTOR**

construction of oil refinery, storage facilities and pipelines, distribution of natural gas products, logistics and transportation, marketing of oil products, skills training and capacity building in oil and gas.

**TOURISM**

Provision of accommodation facilities in major tourist parks, beach resorts around the water bodies, especially around Victoria Lake, Hospitality training facilities, marketing efforts worldwide to help promote Uganda globally.

**MANUFACTURE AGRICULTURE HEALTH-FINANCE**

Textile, ceramics, dairy, beef, medical and veterinary drugs, plastics and packaging, fertilisers, seeds implements and paper product; agriculture processing (Uganda's most promising and key strength); commercial fish farming, establishment of commercial seed multiplication centres, poultry, animal and crop farming, value addition through the processing of fruits and vegetables and other agricultural products.

**CONSTRUCTION OF SILOS** would address the lack of storage, which is now forcing farmers to sell their products straight after harvest, at whatever price they can get, to avoid it perishing.

**LEATHER PROCESSING, PLANTING OF TREES,** mining and ITC, establishment of business processing and outsourcing centres, digital paid television, management and transmission of data storage facilities.

**HOUSING SECTOR, ENERGY, FINANCIAL SECTOR,** mortgage facilities, merchant banking, Islamic banking products, leasing finance for example for farm machinery, education, infrastructure, highways maintenance and construction, water transport ferries (more ferries needed to the one currently available), health infrastructure, quality health care at affordable prices and credible health care insurance.

She mentioned that all these investment areas could be entered into on a PPP principle (Public Private Partnership).

She then shared her views on the role of the Diaspora in the Ugandan economy. In 2010, Diaspora remittances were estimated at $800 million, playing a crucial role in the economy. This role can be further enhanced by continuing working through organizations such as the Ugandan UK convention, UNAA in North America and some other community organisations. She suggested forming investment clubs, set up jobs database to help employers in Uganda to identify qualified and experience staff in the Diaspora. Uganda aims to strengthen and modernize the capital markets to make it easier for non-residents to invest in capital markets back home.

She talked about how Uganda plans to utilize the proceeds generated by the petroleum development. The Ministry of Finance is committed to transparency in the utilization of oil proceeds. The priority will be to invest in physical and human capital so that when the oil runs out, the nation's children and grandchildren will have something to remember it by. It will not be used for consumption but only for capital development, such as the new hydropower dam in Karuma and major infrastructure rehabilitation works. A comprehensive policy paper is being worked on with technical input from partners such as Norway, the IMF and the World Bank. This paper will be publically discussed, and presented to parliament for approval.

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70% of Uganda's population is under the age of 25. We are addressing this by putting more emphasis on vocational training, on business and technical skills enhancement rather than going for traditional white collar jobs.

Hon. Maria advised Diasporas forming investment clubs, set up jobs database to help employers in Uganda to identify qualified and experience staff in the Diaspora. Uganda aims to strengthen and modernize the capital markets to make it easier for non-residents to invest in capital markets back home.

Hon. Maria cited that, the right time to go back home is to "listen inside you at the still small voice that will tell you when it is time".

She finished by talking about the youth. 70% of Uganda's population is under the age of 25. Her ministry, she said is addressing this by putting more emphasis on vocational training, on business and technical skills enhancement rather than going for traditional white collar jobs. The ministry is looking to make agriculture more effective and productive and thereby become more attractive as an occupation for young people, instead of driving boda bodas. Agro-processing is encouraged as a job creation tool. This has been started in a small way with some of the commercial banks in Uganda, coming in to assist, and the Diaspora is very welcome to share ideas and suggestion on this matter.

She appealed to the Diaspora to get in touch through their local MPs at home in Uganda, explaining that the dual citizenship would have been approved much sooner if it had passed through a local MP rather than be presented as a matter from abroad. She urged diasporans to come to Parliament through their local MPs

She then talked about the people present being privileged to have been born and brought up in Uganda and now working in the West , saying that their children born in the West do not have the same advantage . This is why the government made sure that the dual citizenship was approved. As the older generation retires and return to Uganda, the children will be left as the workers. What will their views on Uganda be? How is the current Diaspora positioning them to view Uganda? "As the mother country" Hon Minister asked, "or as 'somewhere over there' that Mum and Dad keep on talking about"?

She concluded by saying that the right time to go back home is to "listen inside you at the still small voice that will tell you when it is time".

## Hon Minister's answers to some commonly asked questions:

### What are the measures put in place to stabilise Uganda shilling against the dollar?

She enumerated the 3 major causes for the fluctuating rates. The first one is global, where the financial crisis had now reached Uganda; the events in the Middle East and North Africa which affected oil products, and a global demand for the dollar.

The regional aspect of the problem included a drought and climate change in East Africa that had had an effect, as well as the infrastructure bottleneck that is hitting home. And locally, the farmers received very high demand for their food as a result of the crisis in the horn of Africa.

There are 4 main sources of the dollar: export; foreign direct investment from companies and governments abroad, who through their own problems invest less; remittances on the decrease and lastly an increased demand for imports such as electronics (TVs, cameras, mobile phones) so that imports heavily outweighs exports, factors which all cause loss of dollar reserves.

The role of the Bank of Uganda is to smooth the curve, to sort out the volatility, so that the movement is not so erratic; its role is not to pump dollar into the economy. The rate is determined by the market. The government cannot control the exchange rate, but can only promote and diversify export, so that the export earnings close the gap with the import demand. This is the area where Hon Minister appealed to the Diaspora for assistance, "We must transform our nation from a consuming one with a much higher rate of import to a producing one with a higher rate of export". Value added must be maximized through agricultural productivity, increased agro-processing, and improved skills training and utilization.

### Are there any measures put in place by the government to discourage landlords from making tenants pay in dollars rather than our local currency?

There is no such law in the open economy of Uganda. It would cause unnecessary interference in the business environment. Tenants could be asked if they want the government to control the price at which they sell their products in those landlords' premises. In any case, if landlords were made to charge in shillings, they would be writing contracts for a month or three months rate. In some cases, landlords charge in dollars because they took out loans in dollars and the tenants charge for their product or services in shillings but they change their rates as befits their cash flows.

### Another question put forward was why import duties and clearing taxes were so high.

She explained that import duties in Uganda are determined amongst other factors, at the East Africa Community level. For example, Uganda suffered recently a shortage of sugar and the price shot up by more than 100%. The Ministry of Finance suggested to Cabinet, which approved, to temporarily lift the duty on imported sugar, so that it could fill up the gap and make the price comparable to local sugar. "But we had, as a government, to ask the East African Community to clear this suggestion. This is to show that many of the taxes and duties are fixed by the EAC, in much the same way that what is happening in the UK is fixed at Brussels".

Uganda and the rest of the world was at the discovery of oil in the country , which is estimated at around 200 billion barrels, this figure representing only about 40% of the area explored. Uganda was striving to ensure that this oil becomes a blessing to the country in the true sense, and will be so only if managed in the most transparent and accountable manner.

Opportunities are available in joint ventures, general works and construction, logistical services, geophysical surveys, refining and pipelines development, future chemical industries and capital for the emerging infrastructure, such as refining and transportation of petroleum commodities and products.

Investment in the oil industry was priority number one for the Ugandan government and was ensuring any interested party that the whole industry was being managed in the most transparent and accountable manner, and that investors would get a sound return on their investment.

# Hon Irene Muloni

## Minister of Energy and Minerals

Transcript from her speech at the 1st Ugandan UK Convention

Hon. Muloni started by saying how excited Uganda and the rest of the world was at the discovery of oil in the country , which is estimated at around 200 billion barrels, this figure representing only about 40% of the area explored. She said that Uganda was striving to ensure that this oil becomes a blessing to the country in the true sense, and will be so only if managed in the most transparent and accountable manner.

Uganda is looking forward to maximizing the proceeds from oil so that infrastructure can be built to help develop Uganda's economy and move the country to the next level. In the medium term, the Energy and Mineral sector is looking at increasing the electricity generation capacity and the development of the electricity transmission and distribution network. She did not shy away from admitting that Uganda is still experiencing load shedding but assured the audience that the government was looking at exploiting the hydro potential along the Nile to increase the capacity that is paramount to the development of the economy.

It is planned to increase access to modern energy services through rural electrification and renewable energies, as well as to promote and monitor petroleum exploration and development in order to achieve local production, promote mineral investment through the provision of scientific data and capacity building.

She went on to enumerate the current energy development projects and opportunities back home. The first machine of 50 megawatts at the Bujagali dam is expected to come on line soon. The entire Bujagali dam will be commission next year in April, and is expected to produce 250 megawatts. Karuma hydro power project is expected to produce 600MW, Simba to produce around 100 MW and Ayago Power Station about 600MW, which are all at various stages of development. Each stage is offering opportunities to invest in. Transmission network has further opportunities to offer. The Diaspora can also contribute by entering into PPP, through equity, consultancy, construction work and equipment supply.

She stated that 5 out of the 11 exploration areas in the Albertine Graben have been licensed to international oil companies, and asked where the Ugandans were? She explained that many opportunities were presenting themselves as the first smaller refinery would be operative within 3 years, with an expected production increase within 5 years. New flight charters would be needed, as well as insurance services, civil construction for access road, environmental consultancy, provision of ICT services, security services, catering and camping services.

Further opportunities would be available in joint ventures, general works and construction, logistical services, geophysical surveys, refining and pipelines development, future chemical industries and capital for the emerging infrastructure, such as refining and transportation of petroleum commodities and products,

She concluded by saying that investment in the oil industry was priority number one for the Ugandan government and was ensuring any interested party that the whole industry was being managed in the most transparent and accountable manner, and that investors would get a sound return on their investment.

Uganda is at the dawn of a new era and that this generation is witnessing history in the making. Many successful people who had started to make their mark at a young age, such as Nelson Mandela, Bill Gates from Microsoft and that therefore the young people in the audience would also find an opportunity in Uganda to make a difference.

The economy of Uganda was completely transformed from the one the Diaspora left behind. Despite the comfortable lifestyle some may have in the UK, he suggested that life could be even better by going back home and grasping the opportunities that the oil and gas sector have to offer now.

It is an opportunity of a lifetime for Uganda to set a new standard in Africa. Everyone has seen all the mistakes made by other oil producing African countries. Uganda would not make those same mistakes. "How do you go home? Not by taking a leap of blind leap of faith", he said, "but by making a plan".

# Mr Elly Karuhanga

## President of Tullow Oil

Transcript from his speech at the 1st Ugandan UK Convention

He was the keynote speaker at the Youth forum and also presented a paper on the role of Tullow Oil in Uganda. He said that Uganda is at the dawn of a new era and that this generation is witnessing history in the making.

He enumerated many successful people who had started to make their mark at a young age, such as Nelson Mandela, Museveni, Bill Gates from Microsoft, Steve Jobs from Apple, and that therefore the young people in the audience would also find an opportunity in Uganda to make a difference.

He said that the economy of Uganda was completely transformed from the one the Diaspora left behind. Tullow Oil alone, he said, is looking at putting up about $4 billion dollars in the economy.

If another 5 companies, such as Total, Neptune and others would invest a similar amount (another $10 billion) into the oil and gas sector in Uganda, it would make it the highest investment in East, West, Central and Southern Africa in a long time.

Who, he asked, was going to protect and attend to this money? "Ugandans", he answered, "it will be a transformational statement in the whole region"

Once again he asked the audience, "Where are you"? It is an opportunity of a lifetime for Uganda to set a new standard in Africa. Everyone has seen all the mistakes made by other oil producing African countries, but Mr Karuhanga said that Uganda would not make those same mistakes.

His challenge to the audience was, "How do you go home? Not by taking a leap of blind leap of faith", he said, "but by making a plan".

Despite the comfortable lifestyle some may have in the UK, he suggested that life could be even better by going back home and grasping the opportunities that the oil and gas sector have to offer now.

Solberg Better would like to see World Group, as the biggest tree planting company in the world within 20 years, an achievement that will need a lot of hard work and partners in Uganda as well. It has been highly active in Kenya for the last 6 years and will start in Uganda in a couple of years.

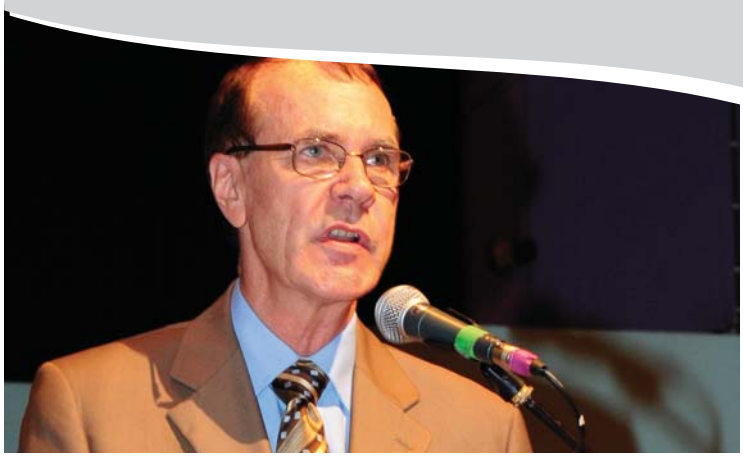
He reiterated again that tourism, ICT and forestry/agriculture were highly favourable investment areas. By investing today, anyone will reap dividends 20 years from now, depending on the type of investment of course. "And when it comes to investing in Africa", he said, "You can just as well skip the rest because Uganda is still the best"!

Better Globe Group is planning building of a tourist resort on a 200 acres plot called Equator City, right on the Equator that will look like a map of Uganda and will showcase virtually everything about the country, culture, people etc.

# Rino Solberg

## CEO of Better Globe Group

Transcript from his speech at the 1st Ugandan UK Convention



Mr. Solberg introduced himself by saying that he was actually half Ugandan, then went on to explain that this was so because his wife was 100% born Ugandan and that simple mathematic made him therefore half Ugandan!

He said that the first time he went to Kampala 25 years ago, the state of the buildings made him think that he should open up a paint factory. The first thing he did with his wife, however was to found the NGO Child Africa, because, he explained, his wife has a passion for children and they saw how the young ones needed help and education. Today, Child Africa has built 2 schools and helps many children. Though Child Africa is not a business Mr Solberg said, it was still a good investment for the future.

To counteract all the negative comments that he was hearing when mentioning Uganda to people (because of Idi Amin) Mr Solberg produced 5000 CDs on Uganda (pre internet era), with the participation of the Ministry of Tourism, investing $250,000 of his own money into the project. He recouped around $150,000 through advertising sold in Uganda. These CDs got sent to 70 countries around the world to promote Uganda. 500 copies were sent to President Museveni who gave them out himself.

Mr Solberg also organized up to 10,000 affordable computers to be bought from Norway to help Uganda enter the computer age.

In 1994, President Museveni visited Norway and Mr Solberg took the opportunity to present him to his nation Norway. Museveni invited him thereafter to come to Uganda to help companies get certified to ISO 9000 standards, which is one of Mr Solberg expert area. 10 years later, he had helped over 100 companies to be certified, and was the one who virtually introduced ISO 9000 to Uganda.

He also started the Success magazine covering areas of personal development, which ran for about 5 years, then moved on to found a magazine called Miti magazine (Miti meaning tree in Swahili), which all about trees and tree planting. Due to the poor reading culture in Uganda, he went on to found another publication called Bingwa (champion in Swahili), given out free of charge to schools in Kenya and Uganda, and any money generated from this project is then used to build schools in Uganda for Child Africa.

But his biggest passion is in tree planting through the Better World Group, which he said he would like to see as the biggest tree planting company in the world within 20 years, an achievement that will need a lot of hard work and partners in Uganda as well. It has been highly active in Kenya for the last 6 years and will start in Uganda in a couple of years.

He also urged participants to look at the site webbizafrica.com, a portal listing all companies in Uganda and other African nations.

In addition, he explained the planned building of a tourist resort on a 200 acres plot called Equator City, right on the Equator that will look like a map of Uganda and will showcase virtually everything about the country, culture, people etc.

He reiterated again that tourism, ICT and forestry / agriculture were highly favourable investment areas. He explained that when people ask him, "when is the best time to invest in Uganda?" he usually answers by asking, "when is the best time to plant a tree"? He said that by investing today, anyone will reap dividends 20 years from now, depending on the type of investment of course. "And when it comes to investing in Africa", he said, "You can just as well skip the rest because Uganda is still the best"!

## *Major General Benon Biraaro*

***Founder and CEO of Lift Uganda Project***

He explained how his project was conceived 10 years earlier, looking for ways to not only eradicate poverty, but also to ensure that the manner to do it would come from Uganda. 30% of the population lives below poverty level; 40% are peasants and another 20% (7 millions Ugandans) of the population are able to do something.

An arrangement was devised to make these 7 million Ugandans contribute every year $2 billion internally, so that the process of industrialization can be started, using national resources. 5 groups were formed out of the 20%: Platinum for those able to invest $2,000 every year, this one being the highest investment. The Gold group is for those able to invest $1,000; Silver Group for an investment of $500, and Bronze group for $100. The registration of the project was challenging, he said, but did get finalized recently and to this day, half a million Ugandan have signed to the project.

He went on to explain how he would mobilize $2 billion. The 250 thousand Ugandans who can be in the platinum category would mobilize £500 million. 750,000 Ugandans can part with $1000, generating another $750 million. A further one million people can pay $500, thereby mobilizing $500 million. And once the project is rolled out, the other lower investment groups would bring in a further $350 million.

**What can the Diaspora do with regard to Lift?**

Lift is looking for strategic partners to invest in tourism, agro-culture, construction, power generation and also centres of excellence, to encourage the too relaxed workforce of Uganda to become more work conscientious, urging people to change their mindset in that regard.

He assured people that Lift was nearly ready to move into the actual implementation phase, and finished his presentation by calling on the best managers from around the world to help manage those £2 billion and implement the programs!

## *Hon. sam Engola*

***Minister of State for Housing***

He started by saying that the opportunity for houses in Uganda is very high. More than one million houses need to built in Uganda at the moment and he appealed to the Diaspora to help the country achieve this target. He also encouraged people to go back home to buy a readymade flat or house, rather than rely on relatives to build a home for them, which they may find will never get done. He listed numerous new built properties for sale that were very affordable for members of the Diaspora and encouraged them to look at various projects offered by the National Housing Corporation (www.nhcc.co.ug).

## *Hon. Christine Aporu*

***Minister of State for Teso Affairs***

She expressed her gratitude at being invited and said that the convention was one way of bringing Ugandans together to participate in the national affairs. She said that the government is looking at the Diaspora as partners in development and that it appreciates the continued support it has given in many ways over the years living away from home. The government recognizes that most, if not all of the Diaspora are people called erroneously 'refugees'.

But analysis shows that it is by choice that people have moved and live in the Diaspora. She urged people to feel free to approach the government to discuss the development of Uganda.

She praised the first Ugandan UK Convention as a great innovation and invention, calling it also a historic occasion and was happy to be able to share her work plan, calling on investors and partners to help with the economic and social development of the Teso region. She mentioned openings in the sectors of infrastructure, the construction of a university which will need lecturers, and a food processing factory.

the DSD is currently implementing a project funded by the World Bank aimed at engaging Diaspora talent in the infrastructure sector, specifically in Energy, Roads and Railways subsectors, with particular focus on the following areas: -

- Energy Sector – to develop staff capacity to manage oil refining and gas processing
- Roads sector – strengthening staff capacity to better handle highway planning and road safety management
- Railways sector – to strengthen staff capacity of Railway Corporation to manage Public Private Partnership.

The Diaspora Desk developed a website to inform the Diaspora about developments and opportunities at home and for the Diaspora to inform Government about their concerns. I appeal to all fellow Ugandans to register and indicate their skills and contacts, which can be used to solicit your expertise whenever required.

## Hon Okello Oryem

*Minister of State for Foreign Affairs*

He started outright by alleviating any fears that the he and his colleague Ministers were attending the convention for politics. "We are here for a win-win situation. There is nothing on the agenda to achieve any political goals at all". He was encouraged to see Ugandans uniting for the common purpose of contributing to the development of their nation and regions.

Hon. Okello urged Ugandans to harness the enormous potentials of the oil discovery in the country and went on to enumerate various programs that were being developed between Uganda and the Diaspora. He named the successful approval and full implementation of dual citizenship for Ugandans, whom he was encouraging to apply. He also mentioned a new project between the Foreign Affairs Ministry and the UNDP that is engaging dialogue between government and the Diaspora to develop strong exchange of information, especially on investment opportunities, such as in the financial markets and estate business. The establishment of a Diaspora bond issued by the government of Uganda will facilitate Diaspora investment in Uganda once the consultancy arrangements are finalized. The Bank of Uganda will welcome the views of the Diaspora on this matter.

He said that investment profiles will be developed in target sectors for medium and small enterprise. The government has also embarked on a program for the development of roads, railway, education, health service and energy. Consultancy is particularly sought from the Diaspora in the infrastructure sector. He further encouraged attendants to make comments on the service delivery of any initiative and urged them to make proposals to the government on issues which they deem are necessary and applicable to Ugandans in the Diaspora.

He concluded by saying that the return on investment in Uganda is positive, inviting the Diaspora to come on board and invest back home now. And since internet banking facilities in Uganda do not require the physical presence of investors, it is very easy to invest in stocks, bonds and shares.

## *Lord Sheikh (House of Lords)*

*Chairman of the Conservative Ethnic Diversity Council*

He urged listeners to become part of the establishment wherever they go, and get a hold in the professional or business organizations in their respec[ tive fields, thus contributing to the ad[ vancement of the professional bodies and get recognition through success. And □uoting □ord □rancis Bacon who said □□hold every man a debtor to his profession□, □ord Sheikh shared his be[ lief that every member of the Diaspora is a debtor to his country of origin.

He went on to e□plain what he thought were the essential ingredients for suc[ cess in business.

1. Build a strong team.
□. Be □nnovativ
□. □ook for new opportunitie
□. Have a vision□
□. □roduce a product that provides value for money and is appropri[ ately priced
□. Have an active marketing strategy
□. Always place great importance on customer care and ensure that standards of service are always high.

To be successful in business, one needs to look at trends and think of making products and services that will be need[ ed. □Be a leader□, he urged, □think of something new, what the trend is going to be□. He recalled how his father used to tell him to follow three principles in life□to be the best in whatever he does, to be magnanimous and charitable and lastly, to always serve the community.

He said that the Diaspora of any for[ eign country tends to do well in the U□, but it must always remember where it comes from and keep affiliations with the mother land. □□our country needs you□, he said forcefully. He reminded everyone that Winston □hurchill con[ sidered Uganda to be □The□earl of Af[ rica□, that Uganda still maintained that lustre and that the Diaspora has a role to play to ensure that the shine is main[ tained and continues to be maintained.

## *Hon Minister Evelyn Anite*

***Youth MP for Northern Uganda***

She mentioned that the northern districts lagged behind because of past political instability, in the areas of education, infrastructure and many other sectors. She invited the Diaspora to help build a sustainable growth in the area; firstly by visiting it and see firsthand what challenges the people are facing. Some cannot even speak English. How could the Diaspora help them learn the language? What has made these people drop out of school?

There are a lot of teenage pregnancies, as early as the age of 9 or 10 and these youngsters are not likely to go back to school. Members of the Diaspora could become mentors to these young people.

Another way to help is through networking, to identify with the people who need help. Also, she asked the audience to draw the attention of British NGOs and donors to the problems Northern Uganda is having, where they may be interested to help. She suggested that the Diaspora could organize more forums engaging on the development of Northern Uganda and urged the youngsters in the audience to join her in taking action for a way forward.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Organiser's of the Ugandan Convention UK

# 2nd UGANDAN UK CONVENTION

# Saturday, 8TH SEPT 2012

**Time: Conference starts at 10.00 - 5pm**
**Concert: 7:00pm - 2am**

## @TROXY

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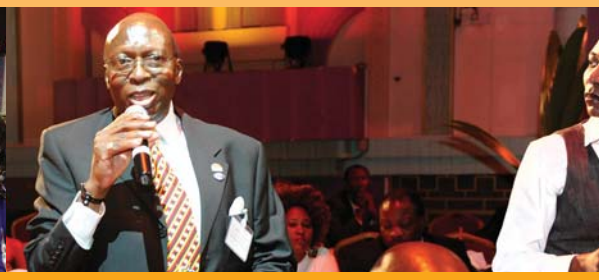
# Action Points and Resolutions

## DIASPORA ONE-STOP BUREAU

After a lot of consultation, the board of the Ugandan UK Convention decided to establish a Diaspora Bureau (One stop Shop) to work as a one-stop shop in Uganda to bridge the gap between the Diaspora, government agencies and the private sector, both in Uganda and the UK. The premises has been bought in Mazima Shopping Mall Nsambya – opposite USA Embassy, shop 192 on Gaba Road.



# Suggestions and Recommendation

Feedback from delegates was generally positive. Delegates commented that they were able to interact not only with other delegates but also the speakers. They strongly suggested that recommendations made at the conference should be followed through by stakeholders and the government and should implement as promised.

It should be known that different reasons to migrate create different types of Diaspora linkages and lead to the formation of different types of Diaspora networks and it is imperative that various types of initiatives are recognized at government level and be supported in various forms.

Consequently, in order to translate diaspora involvement into policies, it may be necessary to address each case separately in very concrete terms to avoid confusing the various individual diaspora initiatives, and to determine who the partners are, their agenda, and the best means of engaging them. It is also very important to note that the government has launched various programmes dedicated to mobilizing diasporas for development purposes. However, these programmes take different forms but face a common challenge: to be recognized as legitimate by diasporas, thus we decided to setup the one stop shop in Uganda to work in partnership with government bodies, the private sector and Diasporas for a fruitful implementation of these programmes.

### Some suggestions were:

- Nominate a Diaspora representative at the Presidential Investors Round Table (PIRT)
- Create a Ministry of Diaspora representing and advocating for policies affecting the Diaspora
- Have a representation in the parliament, hence Diaspora MP
- Regularly publish development and opportunities available in Uganda as a way of promoting incentives for young Diasporas to move back home. Fostering an early interest in a student life will help to deepen their interest and commitment once reaching post-graduation.
- The government should encourage diasporans to invest in formal projects, individually or in groups, and in sectors that will create jobs locally as well as help increase the GDP.

### Land and property rights:

- Diasporas who have lost their citizenship or their spouse who are not Ugandans should have the right to buy land and property under freehold. (In Uganda, only citizens have land ownership rights. The 1995 Constitution does not allow foreigners to own land freehold. They may, however, obtain leases for 49 or 99 years.)

### Financial Services

- Promote Information about tax, e-tax and compliance law to the Diaspora
- Policy on credit and advice on access to finance in Uganda for diasporas willing to invest in Uganda but lack finances. In addition, promote financial literacy /services / dissemination of literature
- Promote the investment opportunities available through LIFT Uganda and liaise closely with LIFT to ensure the full and successful implementation of the initiative as it is a good venture that can work in partnership with the Diaspora bond in the offing. Israel and India have raised $35-40 billion using these bonds and Uganda can do it too!
- Involve Diaspora at the early stage of Diaspora Bonds plans. This will iron out drop-backs that can jeopardise its success and avail comprehensive information about the scheme. Avail contact details of relevant department and personnel in Uganda for interested Diaspora members, either to enquire about the scheme or share their views on it.

There are nevertheless some major limitations to the involvement of Ugandan diasporas in development policies. Many programmes affecting Diasporas are developed without sharing knowledge and resources. There is a need to examine what we know at this stage about engaging diasporas for development and to propose a roadmap for policymakers based on existing evidence.

Diaspora associations like the Ugandan Conventions in America and Europe and others needs to be utilized and also community leaders and consultants.

# Suggestions and Recommendation

### Diaspora Human capital

Brain drain and diasporic human capital are of concern not only in quantitative but also qualitative terms. The government should setup an incentive for all government organizations to give priority of job vacancies to Diasporas as a way to encourage knowledge and skill transfer back home to mitigate the brain drain gap which leaves gaps in the higher segments of the local labour market that cause shortages in sectors most important to the country's socio-economic advancement.

### Investment Opportunities as a way to promote sustainable investment.

Diaspora investments are likely to be an economic decision, generated by self-interest and driven by profit motives, even though a philanthropic element and investments in social projects might also be present. *More emphasis needs to be put on Diaspora investment and encouraging them in tapping into the available opportunities, this will promote more FDI.*

- Have a classification system for the most pressing investment opportunities for the Diaspora and investment opportunities with the highest ROI but needing minimal capital investment that diasporans can afford.
- Formulate a new category and classification of Diaspora investor and reduce the threshold of capital needed to qualify. This is due to the fact that Ugandans in the Diaspora do not have the required capital to qualify as full investors and yet need to tap into the incentives given to other investors.
- Establishing, as an incentive, a Fund to provide grants, loans, technical assistance and support to individual diasporans, networks, and communities for Diaspora-led development projects to be implemented in Uganda.
- Establish a Diaspora bond with high interest rate as way of incentivise and of tapping into Diasporas who are not interested to return but can invest in non-commodity market
- Like The Philippines which launched two governmental programmes: LINKAPIL that channels diasporas' finances towards education, health care projects and micro projects. An identification card is issued to its Diasporas that serves as a visa card and enables remittance transfers at less than GBP 1.65 per transaction (Newland, 2004). The government can also work with a financial institution to come up with a card that can attract lower transaction rates as a way to attract more remittance. The card be accepted by the participating institutions for redemption.
- Allow Diasporas with companies in the west to to bid for tenders to promote competitive and non-discriminatory to all potential providers.

### Local capital (local-to-local programmes)

If encouraged and given information on opportunities people are often inclined to make investments at the local level, usually in the region or locality of origin, where they still have family ties and are familiar with the local context. The government and Investment authority should identify areas of investment specified according to regions in order to promote linkages and, in particular, transfers and investments to the specific areas the diasporas originate from.

### Career opportunities

- Make available a comprehensive list of opportunities such as the program that Diaspora department in partnership with World Bank is spearheading to professionalise some sectors such as roads and railways and need to recruit from the Diaspora.

### Emerging Oil Industry

- The Ministry of Energy and Minerals Rersouces adds a web portal to its website, listing all opportunities available for the short, mid- and long term in the oil industry and list all contacts needed to ensure a clear and speedy communication

### Dual Citizenship

- Most people consulted in the Diaspora suggests having the application fee for dual citizenship waived, or drastically reduced from the $300. The fee is not justified and is a deterrent for people who would wish to apply.
- *The right to vote*; to offer diasporas access to the home country's political decisions and to have their specific interests represented.

### Youth

- Promote youth exchange programs to raise awareness of issues facing Ugandan youth and how the UK youth can assist their Ugandan counterparts or learn from one another especially on good values derived from both culturals.
- Uganda recently established a youth venture capital fund; youth whose parents have dual-citizenship should have its youth access the venture capital fund in Uganda. This will boost Diaspora youth participation in the development and also become an incentive for them to look at Uganda for opportunities.
- The government to support initiatives that acculturate

# Action Points and Resolutions

## DIASPORA ONE-STOP BUREAU

After a lot of consultation, the board of the Ugandan UK Convention decided to establish a Diaspora bureau (One stop Shop) to work as a one-stop shop in Uganda to bridge the gap between the Diaspora, government agencies and the private sector, both in Uganda and the UK.
The premises has been bought in Mazima Shopping Mall Nsambya – opposite USA Embassy, shop 192 on Gaba Road.

nationalistic attitude to Ugandan Diasporan youth so that they feel attached to Uganda. This will position the generation to view Uganda as a mother country, rather, 'a country somewhere over there' that Mum and Dad keep on talking about", as Hon Maria Kiwanuka so aptly quoted.

**Exports Subsidies:**

- Policies and incentives must be developed to cater to the demand for nostalgic products abroad (Matooke etc.) and strengthen the productive capacity and quality standards in the exporting countries.

  While they cater to the demand by migrant communities for products from their home countries, such policy initiatives are also in the interest of business links that span producers and consumers in the respective home and host countries, and can encourage their expansion into other, larger market segments. Established African outlets like in the UK can be utilized like SACOMA at Spitalfield market in London probably one of the biggest wholesaler specializing in East Africa food. Subsidized export credit, insurance and support needs to be given to exporters who are normally are hampered by high air-freight fees.

Even though Ugandans in the Diaspora are interested in getting involved in development projects, major obstacles impede their engagement. Policymakers can identify and address these obstacles by, e.g. lowering transfer costs of remittance, alleviating the bureaucratic burden, simplifying procedures, get rid of dual citizenship fee, identifying investment projects, offering security for business transactions or ensuring the portability of rights. This also implies raising public awareness on these obstacles, as well as clearly defining development priorities and strategies requiring Diaspora involvement.

**A partnership role**

Promoting a conducive environment that encourage joint actions: support and recognition of existing diasporas initiatives, collaborations, alliances with associations, cooperation with regions and districts, collaboration with private institutions, academia, public enterprises and other development stakeholders. Favorable policies affecting Diasporas can play a key role in building such partnerships to achieve policy coherence and good use of available resources.

**A need to:**

- Acknowledge the diversity of diasporas interests and strategies
- "Diaspora(s)" is usually understood as a collective notion, implying organized groups and collective identities. However, the collective facet of the term should not lead to considering diasporas as a homogeneous entity. The heterogeneity of the individuals forming diasporas and the diversity of goals pursued by them are one of the greatest challenges for diaspora policies. This diversity should be fully acknowledged to mitigate the risk of estranging many individuals willing to contribute to the development of their homelands. Narrow and uniform diaspora approaches run the risk of facilitating only one type of diaspora contributions and failing to harness the full potential available in diasporas.
- Build collaboration with diasporas based on realistic objectives, tools and timeframes.

**Recognize the importance of trust, perceptions and images**

- Negative perceptions can be real obstacles to diaspora policy development, given that resentment, distrust, lack of enthusiasm, bitterness, stigmatization or discrimination can equally arise from diasporas. Trust can be strengthened through positive communication and through particular measures responding to diasporas' requests (dual-citizenship rights, property rights, banking needs, infrastructure development, etc.).

# Comments from some Guests

## Job Well done

It is with pleasure I write to applaud you on an impressive and successfully organized first ever Ugandan UK Convention on 27th Aug 2011 in London. It remains outstanding due to the nature in which it was organised and the level of professionalism it has highlighted. The exposure and promotion of Uganda in the Diaspora has taken on a new dimension as the UK Convention clearly identified areas of advancement we as Embassies abroad need to act on as partners.

The diversity and scope of the programme presented us an opportunity as delegates to feel that we stand united in contributing towards the development goals of our country. The most remarkable is how the Convention bridged the gap between Government, Private businesses and Ugandans living in the Diaspora.

It is important for me to acknowledge the presence of a high powered delegation from Uganda led by the House Speaker Rt Hon Rebecca Kadaga. Included were ministers, members of Parliament and business executives whose brilliant presentations became the talk of the day. On the same event, and for the first time ever, you managed to host all the Ugandan Ambassadors in the European zone. It humbles me to mention that this line up has raised the bar of which we cannot aim any lower as partners.

Attending the UK Convention positively impacted me and will stand as a benchmark for how I will in the future have to address the needs of our fellow Ugandans living in the Diaspora.

I once again commend you for a task well executed.

Ambassador M. Ssozi Of Mission, Deputy Head of Mission - Embassy of The Republic Of Uganda - Denmark

## Big Congratulations

The Uganda Convention was a very successful event both in terms of content and outcome. The programme was fantastic and all speakers gave practical and real life examples of what and how the Diaspora can get engaged. The level of information giving from the speakers is such that all attendees would have been better informed and able to make decisions on how they can contribute to Uganda's development and growth agenda. The massive attendance from the Diaspora and high level participation from Uganda demonstrated the value all place on Uganda. I am confident that the event would and will continue to lead to a number of milestones that will outplay itself in the coming days, months and years.

I would like to take the opportunity to say big congratulations to the organisers who have spent considerable resources in bringing a vision to reality, specifically, to Willy Mutenza for his tireless dedication and sacrifice.

Dr Banjoko, Africa Recruit

## Excellent Event

It was an excellent and well attended conference. Congratulations on putting together such a high profile event. I am sure you will be receiving many accolades in the next few days.

Regards

Zain Latif
TLP Capital

## Thank you

Thank you for inviting me to attend the 1st Ugandan Convention.

It was a jam packed event in terms of its excellent speakers, attendance and the material content. For a 1st event it was excellent. You had a good and well trained team helping you with the organisation. Congratulations and well done to all of you.

I hope the Ugandan Ministers, Parliamentarians and the Embassy members appreciate what you have delivered for the people of Uganda.

Regards

Mukesh Naker - Patron - Leicester Asian business Association

## A Community spirit

Beyond a shadow of a doubt, the debut of the first Ugandan UK convention was a success. From the beautiful decorated venue to the day events, it was obvious to all who attended that you put a great time and effort into making this convention event a big success.

On Behalf of all the designers of the Fashion Show, I would like to say thank you for having had the opportunity to showcase at this historic event.

Once again I appreciate all of the work you do in support of our community. They wouldn't be the same without you!

Looking forward to working with you again in the future.

Warmest regards

Maureen Amooti

## Thank you - What a surprise

Comments from Eva Mpagi-Kagwa, upon winning a return flight to Entebbe, courtesy of Brussels Airlines, during the Uganda UK convention 2011 in London

I am so happy to have won this ticket to Entebbe. I had planned to go back home at the end of this year or beginning of next year. God opened doors for me.

I attended the Convention from Nairobi despite having a cold, but I wanted to mix with other people. I thought the event was very good and gave us the opportunity to talk with one another.

Brussels Airlines are my favourite airline anyway. I love their service, which is excellent. The staff is always so polite and helpful and their flight times suit me very well too. I am so happy to have won this ticket!

## Thank you so much

(From the winner of a plot of land, courtesy of Jomayi during the Uganda UK convention 2011 in London)

It came as a shock to win that plot of land and I thank the Almighty for that blessing.
I had thought of putting up my own house but later changed my mind. I am planning to buy 3 adjacent plots to make them 4 so I can put up the Headquarters of St. Stella Foundation, a charity organisation I registered in Uganda to boost free maternal and child health care services in rural Uganda. It is in memory of my mother.

With this plan, I hope to share my joy with many more people. I would like to thank Jomayi Property Consultants and Mr. Willy Mutenza for making this possible and giving me an early step into fulfilling my future plans. Thank you so much.

Elizabeth Lamunu

# UGANDAN UK CONVENTION

Unleashing Diaspora potential

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2nd Ugandan UK Convention 2012 (UCU)
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