

**EIGHT COMPANIES TO START DIRECT INVESTMENT IN DUBAI**

# Uganda reaps big at the concluded Dubai Expo 2020

The Dubai Expo 2020 was officially closed on March 31, 2022 after running for six months. It needs to be noted that the Expo was initially planned for 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020 to 10<sup>th</sup> April 2021; however, due to the COVID-19 which was declared a pandemic by World Health Organization (WHO) on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the Expo was postponed for twelve (12) months and hence held on the above-mentioned dates.

The Republic of Uganda joined 192 nations and organizations to participate in Dubai Expo 2020. The theme of the Expo was "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future" which had three (3) sub-themes: "Opportunity", "Sustainability" and "Mobility". Uganda participated as Thematic District Participant under the "Opportunity" on invitation by the Government of UAE, the host.

Statistics from the Expo Media office of Dubai indicated that over 24 million visitors were registered over the 6 months period. The Uganda Pavilion registered an average of 40,000 visitors per week over the 6 months, with Thursday to Saturday being the peak days. Some of the high-profile visitors included; H.E. the President of the Republic of Uganda, Prime Minister of Uganda and over 15 Ministers, UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and the Ruler of Dubai, the UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Kyabazinga of Busoga, Members of Uganda Parliament among others.

**The objectives of Uganda's participation in Dubai Expo 2020 were five-fold:**

- 1) To attract investors and hence Foreign Direct Investment (FDIs) into sectors of interest. A total of Seventy-Seven (77) projects were profiled for promotion in Agriculture and Agro-Processing, Tourism, Infrastructure, Energy, ICT, Oil & Gas, Mining, Healthcare, Real Estate, Manufacturing amongst others.
- 2) To promote trade between Uganda, the greater Middle East and entire world. The priority products were; beverages crops (e.g. coffee, tea, cocoa etc); fish & fish products, fruits, vegetables, and spices (horticulture); grains; dairy product; and other food products such as dried fruits, herbs and spices.
- 3) To promote Uganda as a preferred tourism destination. "Explore Uganda, The Pearl of Africa" was one of the top three destinations that won international recognition at the Expo as a premium tourist destination. Example of success in this area is that EMAAR Group, a premium Dubai based tourism promotion conglomerate plans to set up an Emirate City in proximity of one of the national parks in Uganda.
- 4) To promote innovation and knowledge exchange for job creation in Uganda. This campaign included highlighting the opportunities available for business process outsourcing (BPOs), innovations by young Ugandan entrepreneurs and promoted Uganda as potential innovation hub in East African region. The Ministry of ICT and National Guidance is engaged with Abacus Cambridge Partners Middle East Ltd. to actualize this initiative of business process outsourcing.
- 5) To enhance bilateral relations with the Government of UAE, the host and the other participating countries of interest to Uganda. To actualize this objective, H.E. the President of Uganda, Gen Yoweri Kaguta Museveni held bilateral meetings with the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Commander of the UAE Armed Forces; the UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai.

**It can be noted that the key target outcome for Uganda at Dubai Expo 2020 was investments worth at least US\$3 billion by the end of the six-month period. Examples of this investment commitment that have already been made are as follows:-**

- Elite Agro LLC signed an Investment MOU with Uganda to establish Seven (7) tea processing factories in the districts of: Bushenyi, Kyenjojo, Sheema, Buhwejuu, Kisoro, Rukiga and Zombo.
- G42 Company signed an investment MOU to set up a vaccines factory in Mukono.



*H.E meeting His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan-the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Commander of the UAE Armed forces during his official visit to the UAE to preside over the Uganda National day at the Dubai Expo 2020.*



*H.E with His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid AlMaktoum the UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai at the Ugandan pavilion.*

- Global Gases Group Company signed an MOU to establish oxygen and LPG plants in the county.
- AMEA Power Limited signed an MOU to construct a 20MW solar plant in Arua and 200MW hybrid (solar and wind) plant in Karamoja.
- General Petroleum Lubricants' factory in Namanve.
- STREIT Group is setting up an armored car factory in Nakasongola.
- Otaiba Group is to work in the oil and gas sector.
- Emirates National Group – public transport.
- Lilavati Hospital – 100 bed world class hospital.
- DP World is to redevelop and modernize the Jinja and Port Bell ports.

Besides the commitments and MOU's that were signed during the Expo, in addition a number of export deals were signed of at least US\$ One Billion (\$1bn) of products such as: crops, vegetables, beef, dairy products and precious metals amongst others.

**Other key achievements at the Expo that can be highlighted as follows:**

- Launch of Uganda Airlines flights to Dubai in the first week of the Expo.
- Opening up the Embassy Liaison office in Dubai which has now been upgraded to a Consulate.
- Launch of a maiden flight of Air Arabia from Sharjah with daily flights to Uganda.
- Order to supply 50 metric tons of dried kidney beans per month by Gulf Fields Trading.



*L-R, Hon. Jeje Odongo, Rt. Hon. Rukia Nakadama and Hon. Betty Amongi at the Ugandan- UAE Expo Convention.*



*Kyabazinga of Busoga Kingdom- His Royal Highness William Gabula Nadiupe IV, pays a courtesy call at the Ugandan Embassy after visiting the Dubai Expo 2020.*



*3rd Deputy Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Rukia Nakadama and Minister of Foreign Affairs- Gen. Jeje Odongo touring the Ugandan Pavilion.*



*Ndere Troupe performing at the Ugandan Pavilion.*



- Order to supply 1000 beef cows per month.
- Order by Dubai DMCC for the supply of coffee and tea.

It is worth noting that these objectives were guided by the stipulations and recommendations of NDP III, Vision 2040 and NRM Manifesto 2021-2026.

Our participation at the Expo wouldn't have been successful without the full support by H.E. the President who led the Uganda delegation for the Expo opening and presided over the Uganda National Day. I wish to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that has been so supportive since 2015 when Uganda registered participation. Special thanks to: The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development that facilitated our participation; Parliament of Uganda; Ministry of Trade,

Industry and Cooperatives; Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries; Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities; Ministry of ICT and National Guidance; Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development; Ministry of Science, Innovation and Technology; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Works and Transport; Uganda Export Promotions Board that has been the leading coordination agency, UJA, UTB, UCDA, UIRI, UDC, UMA, Private Sector Foundation, UNCC, the media especially UBC, UNBS, NTV, the Vision Group, the Daily Monitor, and local radios. Most importantly, I wish to extend sincere appreciation to the Government of the United Arab Emirates that offered unlimited support for our successful participation.

**By: H.E. Ambassador Zaake W. Kibedi**



*Special envoy Rt. Hon Ruhakana Rugunda and wife at the Ugandan Pavilion.*



*UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai - His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid AlMaktoum at the Ugandan Pavilion.*