

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF BUNYORO-KITARA KINGDOM AT THE NATIONAL COMMEMORATION OF INTERNATIONAL COFFEE DAY

RUKURATO GARDENS, HOIMA CITY

8 OCTOBER 2026

Protocol Observed,

It is with great honour and humility that I stand before you today as the Chief Guest at this important national commemoration of International Coffee Day, here at the historic Rukurato Gardens in Hoima City, Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom.

Allow me, from the outset, to thank the organisers for choosing Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom to host this important national event. It is a great honour for our Kingdom, but more importantly, it is a recognition of the important contribution that Bunyoro continues to make to Uganda's agricultural, cultural and economic development.

I bring to you warm greetings and best wishes from His Royal Majesty Rukirabasaija Omukama Dr. Solomon Gafabusa Iguru I, Omukama of Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom.

I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, the Kabalega Foundation, the Uganda Coffee Federation, and all other partners for their immense contribution towards the development of Uganda's coffee sector and for making it possible for this year's International Coffee Day commemoration to take place here in Bunyoro-Kitara.

I also wish to recognise and appreciate Dr. Isagara Kisoro James Amooti, Executive Director of Kabalega Foundation, for his leadership in organising the Kabalega Independence Week and for continuously promoting initiatives that connect the legacy of Omukama Cwa II Kabalega with the development aspirations of present and future generations.

COFFEE, WEALTH CREATION AND THE BUNYORO OPPORTUNITY

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we commemorate International Coffee Day, an occasion celebrated annually by the global coffee community, I wish to commend the organisers for choosing the theme:

“Wealth for All: Exploring Opportunities in Coffee in the Bunyoro-Kitara Oil-Rich Sub-Region.”

This theme could not have come at a more appropriate time.

Bunyoro is currently experiencing profound economic transformation. The discovery and development of oil and gas resources have opened a new chapter in the economic history of our

region. Hoima City and the wider Bunyoro region are witnessing increasing investment and activity in infrastructure, trade, hospitality, manufacturing, logistics, tourism and other sectors.

However, as a Kingdom, we must ask ourselves a fundamental question:

How do we ensure that the economic transformation taking place in Bunyoro translates into sustainable wealth and improved livelihoods for ordinary families?

Our answer must be clear: we must invest in our people, agriculture, enterprise and productive land.

Oil is a valuable national resource, but it is finite. Agriculture, when properly organised, commercialised and supported with appropriate technology, can provide sustainable livelihoods for generations.

This is where coffee becomes extremely important.

THE OMUKAMA'S VISION FOR A PROSPEROUS BUNYORO-KITARA

In 2018, His Royal Majesty Omukama Dr. Solomon Gafabusa Iguru I gave us a clear and ambitious vision: to work towards the realisation of his 30-year vision for a prosperous and great Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom.

As the Kingdom Cabinet, we recognised that this vision cannot be achieved merely through plans and speeches. It must be translated into tangible improvements in the lives of our people.

We therefore concluded that improving household incomes and livelihoods must remain at the centre of our development agenda.

One of the key areas identified was agriculture, together with strategic partnerships, enterprise development, skills development and responsible utilisation of our natural resources.

Agriculture remains the backbone of Uganda's economy and the livelihood of the majority of our people. In Bunyoro-Kitara, more than 80 percent of our people are engaged in agriculture and related activities.

Our region is already an important agricultural producer. Bunyoro contributes significantly to Uganda's production of sugar, maize and other agricultural commodities, while our coffee contribution continues to grow.

We therefore have the land, the people and the opportunity.

What we need is to organise ourselves better, embrace modern agricultural practices, improve productivity and connect our farmers to profitable markets.

WHY COFFEE?

Ladies and gentlemen,

In 2020, Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom made a deliberate decision to promote coffee as one of the strategic cash crops capable of transforming household livelihoods across the Kingdom.

There are many reasons for this decision.

First, coffee has a strong connection with our culture.

For generations, coffee has featured in the social and cultural life of the people of Bunyoro. Coffee has been associated with friendship, bonding and traditional practices, including Omukago, our cultural institution of friendship and brotherhood.

Therefore, when we talk about coffee in Bunyoro, we are not speaking about a foreign commodity. We are building upon something that is already connected to our people and our culture.

Second, coffee offers opportunities for farmers at different levels of investment. A farmer can begin on a small scale and gradually expand into commercial production.

With good agronomic practices, proper soil management, improved seedlings, good harvesting and post-harvest handling, coffee can generate substantial income from relatively small pieces of land.

Third, coffee creates opportunities beyond farming.

It supports nursery operators, transporters, processors, traders, exporters, researchers, financial institutions, packaging companies, restaurants, tourism enterprises and many other businesses.

It therefore has the potential to create an entire coffee value chain within Bunyoro.

NO IDLE LAND IN BUNYORO-KITARA

This brings me to one of the Kingdom's most important messages:

We must have no idle land in Bunyoro-Kitara.

Our people must increasingly look at land not simply as an asset to be inherited, but as a productive resource that can generate income, create employment and support families.

The Kingdom has therefore continued to mobilise our people to embrace coffee growing and other productive agricultural activities.

Since the launch of our coffee campaign, Bunyoro has continued to increase its contribution to Uganda's coffee production, currently accounting for approximately 5 percent of national coffee production.

This is encouraging, but we believe we can do much more.

DEMONSTRATION GARDENS AND PARTNERSHIPS

To support this ambition, the Kingdom, working together with partners, has established modern agricultural technology demonstration gardens.

These include the Musaijamukuru Coffee Technology Demonstration Garden in Kikuube, as well as initiatives in Isunga in Kagadi and Bujenje in Masindi.

We appreciate the support and technical partnership of institutions such as NARO, WWF and other development partners that have contributed to these initiatives.

These demonstration gardens are important because our farmers need to see, learn and practically understand modern methods of coffee production.

Our long-term vision is to establish a modern demonstration garden in every county of Bunyoro-Kitara, complete with nursery beds capable of supporting the distribution of improved coffee seedlings to our people.

We therefore call upon Government, development partners, private-sector players, financial institutions, coffee companies and other stakeholders to join hands with Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom in making this vision a reality.

FROM THE FARM TO THE MARKET

Distinguished guests,

The future of coffee in Bunyoro cannot depend on production alone.

We must look at the entire value chain.

We must ask ourselves:

How do we ensure that farmers receive quality seedlings?

How do we improve soil health and farm management?

How do we address pests and diseases?

How do we improve harvesting and post-harvest handling?

How do we promote processing and value addition within Bunyoro?

How do we improve traceability and quality standards?

And, most importantly, how do we ensure that our farmers have access to reliable and profitable markets?

These are questions that require partnerships.

The Government has a critical role to play in policy, research, extension services and infrastructure.

The private sector has a role in investment, processing, marketing and value addition.

Development partners can support technology, capacity building and innovation.

The Kingdom has a role in mobilisation, cultural leadership, community engagement and creating platforms that bring stakeholders together.

And our farmers have the most important role of all: to embrace production and make their land productive.

COFFEE AND THE OIL ECONOMY

Ladies and gentlemen,

The theme of today's celebration rightly places coffee within the context of Bunyoro's oil and gas economy.

We should not look at oil and agriculture as competing sectors.

Instead, we should see them as complementary opportunities.

The development of oil and gas will create demand for food, accommodation, transport, services, construction and other economic activities.

Our people must therefore position themselves to supply this growing market.

We must ensure that the wealth generated by the oil economy stimulates the growth of other sectors, particularly agriculture and agribusiness.

This is how we can build a resilient regional economy.

We should not wait for opportunities to come to our doorsteps. We must prepare our people to participate in them.

YOUTH AND WOMEN IN COFFEE

I wish to particularly call upon our youth and women to look at coffee beyond traditional farming.

Coffee can be an enterprise.

It can be a business.

It can be a source of employment.

It can support innovation and technology.

Our young people can participate in nurseries, mechanisation, processing, branding, packaging, digital marketing, logistics and export.

Our women can participate meaningfully across the coffee value chain, from production to processing and value addition.

We therefore need to change the mindset that agriculture is merely subsistence activity.

Modern agriculture is a business.

KABALEGA'S LEGACY AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are gathered here during Kabalega Independence Week, a period dedicated to remembering the enduring legacy of Omukama Cwa II Kabalega.

Kabalega's legacy is not only about the struggles of the past. It is also about courage, resilience, self-determination, unity and responsibility to future generations.

True independence must also mean the ability of our people to create sustainable livelihoods and participate meaningfully in the economy.

For this reason, promoting coffee growing and enterprise is itself part of the modern expression of Kabalega's legacy.

We must build communities that are productive, innovative and economically empowered.

A CALL FOR PARTNERSHIP

As I conclude, I wish to make a strong appeal to all stakeholders represented here today.

The Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom is open and ready to work with partners who share our vision of transforming the livelihoods of our people.

We call upon Government, coffee companies, development partners, financial institutions, research institutions, investors, farmers' organisations and the private sector to establish strategic partnerships with the Kingdom.

Our objective is simple:

To see a productive Bunyoro-Kitara where no land lies idle, where every household has an opportunity to generate income, where young people can find meaningful employment, where women participate fully in economic activity, and where our agricultural potential is translated into sustainable wealth.

The planned mobilisation and distribution of 100,000 improved coffee seedlings through the Kabalega Independence Week initiative is an important step in this direction.

But it must not end with the distribution of seedlings.

It must become a sustained movement—from the nursery to the farm, from the farm to the factory, from the factory to the market, and ultimately from the market to improved household incomes.

CONCLUSION

Distinguished guests,

As we celebrate International Coffee Day here in Bunyoro-Kitara, let us remember that the coffee tree we plant today is an investment in tomorrow.

It can provide income to a family.

It can educate a child.

It can create employment for a young person.

It can empower a woman.

It can support a business.

It can contribute to Uganda's exports.

And, collectively, it can contribute to the transformation of Bunyoro-Kitara.

Let us therefore embrace coffee not merely as a crop, but as an enterprise, a source of wealth, a vehicle for economic empowerment and a bridge between our cultural heritage and our economic future.

On behalf of His Royal Majesty the Omukama, the Kingdom Cabinet and the people of Bunyoro-Kitara, I once again thank the Government of Uganda, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Kabalega Foundation, Uganda Coffee Federation, our development partners, the private sector, farmers and everyone who has made this celebration possible.

I encourage all of us to work together to make the theme of this year's commemoration a reality:

“Wealth for All: Exploring Opportunities in Coffee in the Bunyoro-Kitara Oil-Rich Sub-Region.”

Let us make Bunyoro a leading centre of coffee production, value addition and agribusiness.

Let us make our land productive.

Let us empower our people.

Let us build a prosperous and great Bunyoro-Kitara.

Long live His Royal Majesty Rukirabasaija Omukama Dr. Solomon Gafabusa Iguru I.

Long live Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom.

Long live Uganda.

For God and My Country.

Thank you very much.