THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA OFFICE OF THE LEADER OF OPPOSITION RESPONSE TO THE STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS DELIVERED TO THE 9TH PARLIAMENT ON 6TH JUNE 2013

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Rt. Honourable Speaker

Hon. Members of Parliament

A. INTRODUCTION

1. It is my duty and honour, on behalf of the entire opposition and the voiceless, to address you, in response to the State of the Nation Address delivered by H.E. the President to this August House on Thursday the 6th of June 2013.

2. But first, allow me recall our fallen brothers and sisters of this House, comrades who toiled with us here, and have since departed from us during last year. Hon Cerina Nebanda Arioru and Hon Dr. Stephen Malinga were fighters who did their part, and we will particularly miss them in this August House, for what they were and what they stood for. Therefore, through you, Hon Speaker, I request that we stand up and observe a moment of silence in respect of our fallen colleagues. (Silence…. May their souls rest in peace)

3. Hon Speaker and colleagues, I thank you so much, and I call upon us to always stick together, in both hard times as well as good times. If we do not appreciate ourselves, no one will, especially during times of need. That is why H.E. the President didn’t have time for such “nonsense”, during his address to Ugandans. So, let’s pick some lessons as we serve our country.

4. Hon Speaker, in the wisdom of the framers of the 1995 Constitution, the State of Nation Address is a mechanism for promoting accountability and good governance. They meant it to define the character of the nation and the desire to build a better society for all the people of Uganda. It was meant to be a bold plan to be implemented by all actors, according to the timetable laid down by the Head of State.

5. It is therefore a promissory note to the nation by the president, stipulating government policy and challenges facing the nation for the coming twelve months and beyond. This gives him/her an opportunity to deliver programs that will help deal with challenges that confront citizens. The State of Nation Address should be an honest analysis of the crisis we face, showing where we are coming from, where we are going and how we will reach there.

6. Hon Speaker, unfortunately, that Stately-occasion has been greatly watered down. It has lost its original intention and meaning to many of us and Ugandans at large. It has since turned into an occasion without constitutional accountability and governance import. The President now takes it as his time to show people and remind them, how far he and a few others have come as entities, rather than
telling us what is in store for our children. It is a time for posturing and showing-off colours, rather than accounting and envisioning. That is why, for many ‘serious’ people, that occasion has become a golden opportunity to sleep away! That is why we, in the opposition, sometimes prefer to walk away, rather than pretend to be attending to some serious business, whereas not.

7. Hon Speaker, this year, the President showed total disregard to the problems facing our nation. We expected the head of state to tell the nation, how far his government had gone to fulfill the numerous pledges; but he did not. For example, the President had vowed to:

i). Distribute money in a kiyekera (guerilla) way to tarmac the 19 roads under category A on the UNRA list. This was to be enhanced by borrowing from NSSF or Foreign Banks

ii). Table a law to punish severely those who endanger our future on account of corruption, selfishness and opportunism

iii). Substantially increase development spending against recurrent expenditure

8. Rt. Hon Speaker, no such account was given. Instead, people accused with criminal greed were simply handed ridiculous sentences while they walk away with tax payers’ money scot-free. Just like the like President Museveni’s Kiremba cow, Uganda is now heavily infested by ticks and jiggers, who have taken it upon themselves to dig into every public penny as if this country was their paternal estate.

9. Hon. Speaker, to put the record straight, for the last 7 years, the Ugandan economy has been characterized by;

i). Poor service delivery, evidenced in critical sectors such as Health, Education and Agriculture, leading to mass unemployment and insecurity in the country.

ii). Increased corruption and accumulation of wealth by a few individuals at the expense of national building; iii). Underdeveloped private sector, with only 25% of our population engaged in the formal sector while the rest remain in the informal sector;

iv). Unprecedented rise in wealth disparities, with benefits of economic growth going disproportionately to the wealthiest 20% of the population, leading to heightened levels of poverty, hunger, school drop-outs and unemployment;

v). Declining performance in the agriculture sector, yet it contributes 20% of GDP, 48% of export earnings, provides the bulk of raw materials for industry, and employs over 73% of the population[1][1].

10. The signs and symptoms of the difficulties we face are manifested in different ways. The recent loss of lives of many poor Ugandans on the Northern bypass, trying to scoop fuel for survival, is just one example of the tough times citizens face. May their souls rest in eternal peace!

B. THE POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY
11. Hon. Speaker, the President spent good time on national security, ranked it high among the major issues on his desk. The NRM-led government defines security in terms of acquisition of sophisticated arms, storage of large quantities of teargas and muzzling of independent voices. They believe that with those in place, citizens will have peace, and be able to have good sleep. That is why Defense was previously allocated UGX 947.993 billion in FY 2011/12, and another UGX 913.959 billion in FY 2012/13. Health, on the other hand, received a meager UGX 217.377 billion in FY 2011/12 and only UGX 268.151 billion in FY 2012/13. While State House got 204.4 billion in FY 2012/13

12. Rt. Hon Speaker and Colleagues, the youth have said they are tired of sleeping; they have grown and got married; and that they now need jobs to take care of their families. There is also growing discontent amongst the population for want of equity, relevant education and an economy that sees all citizens through the same lenses. But the NRM-led government insists that Ugandans must clap for the security, peace and the sleep, never mind that the same are now being reversed through military policing and economic denial.

13. Rt. Hon. Speaker, Uganda Police continues to take supplementary allocations in each schedule brought to Parliament. Yet, at least 30,000 police officers live in terrible conditions we have described before. In November 2012, wives of policemen residing in Kireka, Mbuya and Naguru barracks attempted to demonstrate against these conditions demanding better services, but their own husbands were forced to brutalise their wives and stripped them naked. The situation today has not changed. So, we question any talk about security, when our own police officers have no security for themselves and families.

14. Rt. Hon Speaker, the President bundles all this in what he calls ideological disorientation, yet the same NRM-led government is the party responsible for this. There is enough evidence showing ministers, legislators, and many others, dressed in army fatigue undergoing systematic ideological disorientation in Kyankwanzi, as if they belong to a communist dictatorship! By the time they return to Kampala, most of them will have abandoned, and sworn never to try again, all the critical thinking they went with.

15. Hon Speaker, state institutions in this country have been stripped off their legitimacy and denied the mandated functionalities intended in the constitution. Several run-ins between Parliament and the executive are clear testimony to this – whether on Parliamentary recalls or approval of budgets and appointments; the courts have been raided by the military; court orders are disregarded; The Treasury has become a private purse of a few individuals; Bank of Uganda is now valued at ~750billion shillings, implying that BOU is under liquidation. During the FY 2011/12 B.O.U made a loss of UGX600 billion. This year the projection is even worse. Imagine! Where is this country heading? As if that is not enough tragedy, Kampala City Council Authority (KCCA) is being run like someone’s private quarters, in total disregard of the laws. Where are the systems, transparency and institutional frameworks? Why shouldn’t the NRM-led government allow these institutions to function properly? Why should the military be involved in the running of constitutionally mandated Institutions, including meddling in elections? Why does the NRM government fear true democracy? When the President stakes his own
dead body on national issues, that confirms to you how personal interests have overthrown the constitution of Uganda.

16. Rt. Hon. Speaker, we continue to witness violation of media rights in this country, where police and other security agencies continue to abuse and suppress Media freedoms. On 20th May 2013, two major media houses were raided by police and closed down for 10 days and declared ”crime scenes”. Their crime was to publish a letter from General Sejusa that was requesting for an inquiry into the alleged plot to kill senior officers opposed to the “Muchoozi Project”. Journalists who protested the closure of these newspapers and radio stations were tear-gassed. So, where is the difference between Amin’s 1970’s and these times, which supposedly ushered in a fundamental change?

17. Hon Speaker, the ills of this country will not go by just wishing them away or by the mere passage of time. They need action. Corruption does not need a special address from the President. It needs action. Politically-backed fraudsters and swindlers must be smoked out. Why should they be allowed to masquerade as whistle blowers? If indeed the NRM has handled bigger problems than a bunch of public servants, why has this sickness refused to cure? This government has lost moral authority to lead due to the long list of corruption scandals and electoral frauds that have mired its rule.

18. Hon Speaker, that is why we agree with the Deputy Speaker; Hon Jacob Oulanya, who, while addressing NRM cadres in Nwoya District recently, is quoted to have said:

“The war against corruption in Uganda cannot be won because the Government lacks legitimacy to fight it and that corruption has become so endemic, and is an accepted way of life, that even the police, IGG and the courts of law are unable to stop it”

19. Well said, Hon Deputy Speaker, but our concern is, if a strategy or policy does not work, why has this government not changed its strategy in fighting corruption? Our belief is that this is impossible, because those that should change it have gotten too entangled in the game, and the solution cannot lie among them. And whoever fronts alternatives must first flee and leave the country, before they can speak, and brew political uncertainty for the country. We will not accept this.

20. Electoral Reforms - Rt. Hon. Speaker, we are moving towards 2016 general elections. The elections we have had in this country since 1996 have been disputed, hostile elections characterized by rigging and violence. This country yearns for general elections in which all Ugandans have confidence right from the start. A general elections held under laws acceptable to most Ugandans and conducted by Electoral Commission that enjoys the trust of the country and not seen as partisan and agents of the President or the ruling party. The situation obtaining in the country calls for constitutional and electoral reforms. We wish to give notice that very soon we shall table on the floor of the House some Electoral Reforms proposals.

21. LC1 Elections – Rt. Hon. Speaker, the Office of the LCI is very important in the administration of our villages. But for over ten years now, these offices have not been occupied legally. The terms of the occupants expired in 2000. It is disturbing to us that the President does not see this matter as worth
mentioning in his State of the Nation Address. We need to be told when LCI elections are going to be held.

C. ECONOMY

22. Rt. Hon Speaker, I will not spend my time on the flowery figures given by the President. First, we have sufficiently dealt with the correct figures in our previous responses. The President’s figures will never mean anything if he does not address himself to the problem of inequality, poverty and unemployment. The evidence of the state of the economy can be found in the markets, streets and gardens. This is where the vast majority of Ugandans, including most of those who voted for the NRM Government, are found.

23. Hon Speaker and colleagues, in the past, we have exposed lavish expenditure in State House, and the practice of employing NRM campaigners as Presidential advisors and assistants at the expense of regular Government employees such as teachers, nurses, doctors, soldiers, police and prison officers and other public servants, who are left to survive on the salaries of 2000 in 2013. We have shown you injustice and inequality, such as where NRM party caucuses are held at State House, at the cost of all citizens. This impunity goes on, oblivious of the failing levels of basic services delivery.

24. Hon Speaker, therefore, we refuse to be diverted in this debate by meaningless data. Economic growth with figures, which are not evident on the face of citizens, is empty growth. Government must remember that a poverty stricken populace is very dangerous and is a recipe for generational unrest. We must focus on programs that address poverty, rather than experimenting on poor people as if they were guinea pigs. White elephant programs such as Entandikwa, Kulembeka, Bonabaggagawale, and now money in sacks, will not help Ugandans.

D. POPULATION CENSUS

25. Rt. Hon. Speaker, for the last 13 years, government has failed to carry out population census which is a key determinant in proper national planning. This is deliberate, so that managers of this government can have freewill to do what they please, rather than being exposed by grim poverty demographic realities. We demand for an immediate population census to guide national planning.

E. AGRICULTURE

26. Hon. Speaker, in the past 10 years of the NRM government, agriculture has been growing at an annual growth rate of 1-3% compared with an annual population growth of 3.3% over the same period. This trend creates a food insecure population due to decreasing productivity. In our previous responses, we gave comprehensive proposals to improve agriculture and move Uganda forward. We do not want to repeat them in this response because that record is there, for members and Government to refer to. But it is shameful that people today still die of hunger, while many children are malnourished and stunted.

27. Hon Speaker and colleagues, we must stop burying our heads in the sand and restore cooperatives. We must advocate for inclusive growth which is agricultural growth, employment generation and
poverty reduction; improve the social sector (education and health) and reduces regional and other disparities. SACCOs and NAADS are nothing beyond NRM campaign tools. The so-called services-led economic growth will not lead us anywhere unless they are properly anchored and linked with the sector, which is still a backbone of this economy. NAADS was a milk cow for NRM and we demand for forensic audit for NAADS to expose the mega corruption scandal of the century!

F. INVESTMENT AND BUSINESS

28. Hon Speaker, the President again threatened to cause an amendment to the Investment Code to criminalize malicious sabotage of investments in Uganda. Rather than run into legislation, the President should weigh-in on his cronies who keep manipulating investors. What the investors want is to work where there is less interference by the state and an assurance of political stability for them to put their huge sums of money.

29. Hon Speaker, the cost of doing business in Uganda has remained high and became worse recently, as reported by the recent Global Competitiveness Report 2012-2013. Uganda is ranked for ease of starting business at 144th position, compared to Kenya at 126th, Tanzania at 113th and Rwanda at the 8th position.

30. Hon Speaker, this is what we have sown by our own acts. Our business environment is riddled with corruption, nepotism, frequent clump downs of the media houses, and other interferences at the highest levels. The cadre police have consistently announced the presence of terrorists, and imminent attacks from them, by parading all sorts of military hardware on road junctions. These and many other gimmicks only serve as disincentives to foreign investors who prefer investing in the peaceful countries.

G. ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

31. Hon Speaker, once again the President emphasized the need for energy and infrastructure as critical for development. However, his proposals were not SMART at all. The President says; Karuma will be build (600mgws); Ayago will be built (392mgws); Kiba will be built (388mgws) and Isimba will be built (188mgws); and the railway will be built. When will these be built? What are the committed timeframes and resources? How can the whole President give out a US$3 billion Karuma Project to one company without competitive bidding? Isn’t this corruption of the highest order? How will he fight corruption when he is the same person encouraging it?

32. Hon Speaker, while the roads sector has taken a lion’s share of the budget for the last four years, our roads remain in a sorrow state, even after the longest serving Minister of the sector was removed. This year, the President only says some of the roads will be built by use of our own resources and others by financing from outside. What does such a statement mean to the peasant from Kanungu whose only bridge that connects him/her to the outside world collapsed in May 2012? OR the peasants from Butambala, Kibale and Mukono Districts where the Mpigi-Maddu, Kyenjojo-Hoima and Mukono-Katosi roads respectively, have appeared on the lists of the roads to be tarmacked for the last 10 years? We believe these allocations are ceremonial allocations to enable the President and his people to access that money for other purposes.
F. UNEMPLOYMENT

33. Hon Speaker, Uganda is characterized by a young unemployed population. Just as the President admitted while speaking at the Golden Jubilee celebrations at Kololo, youth unemployment now stands at over 83%. This is not only a security risk, but also the cause of massive poverty the country wallows in.

34. Hon Speaker, whereas government recognizes this problem, no tangible interventions have been put in place. Government has instead hoodwinked the youth with a youth venture capital fund whose accountability we are yet to get. The President is known to have resorted to carrying money in sacks and paper bags to distribute to the youth himself. The President also one time dreamt of a student’s grant scheme, as a solution to unemployment – and he announced it. How can student loan-bonding create employment for the youth? How can you ask a youth to produce a land title before getting a loan when his/her parents have never owned a land title?

35. Hon. Speaker, for the last decade of UPE, young people are being taught to cram 20% of their curriculum in order to pass exams. What is needed in our view is greater training in entrepreneurship. Government should partner with successful entrepreneurs to talk to and inspire the youth. In addition, we should ease financial access for them, and celebrate business role models, instead of war heroes.

G. EMPTY VISIONS

36. We have seen many pledges in Vision 2020, 2025, 2030 and now 2040. In vision 2020, Uganda’s target was to eliminate the river blindness disease in the selected districts by 2015, and the rest of the country. Vision 2030 promised to turn around the fortunes of five million productive Ugandans to ensure they earn UGX 20 million annually. Today, it is vision 2040, projecting to transform Uganda from a peasant to a modern and prosperous country within 30 years by:

i). Establishing a hi-tech ICT city modeled on Silicon valley in the United States

ii). Building five strategic cities in Hoima, Nakasongola, Fortportal, Moroto and Jinja

iii). Building four international airports

iv). Establishing an iron ore plant in Muko, Kabale

v). Establishing large irrigation schemes in various parts of the country

vi). Re-establishing the phosphate industry in Tororo

vii). Building a standard gauge railway with high speed trains, possibly underground, like those in the UK;

viii). Building nuclear power plants in Uganda;

ix). Building multi-lane national road network
37. After nearly 30 years in power, the NRM now recognizes that Uganda is still a peasant country, and that it now requests for another 30 years to transform it into a modern and prosperous country. This is the sad reality of the fundamental change! Ugandans need to be told the truth. Ugandans are never involved in this business of dreaming, just like the National Development Plan, which has now fallen in the footsteps. What happened to the UGX20 million per year per household promised in 2006?

H. SOCIAL SECTOR

38. Rt. Hon Speaker, health and education play a vital role in improving productivity and economic growth. Education is widely agreed to affect economic outcomes. It is also agreed that health affects education. The wealth of any nation can be measured by the health status of its citizens. Whenever families lack money, it is health and education that are the first to be given up. Since the two are interrelated and are important contributors to economic growth, government must invest in them adequately.

39. However, in his address, the President suggested that the challenge in the health sector is attributable to male midwives, forgetting that in the current system, where thousands of doctors and nurses positions are unfilled, patients are increasingly turning to private facilities and witch doctors.

40. Hon Speaker, when the President proposed to slap an 18% VAT on water, he forgot that we had a reason for removing it in the first place. It is a matter of health, sanitation and rights. Government must seriously review this proposal. Health policies must be revisited to address the chronic problem of shortage and remuneration of health workers. It makes no sense to continue constructing structures without personnel, equipment and drugs.

41. Hon Speaker, Uganda has been at the forefront of pushing for the EAC. But without quality education, Ugandans will not reap the benefits that will accrue from the EAC and other regional and global partnerships. Youth education must be strategically remodeled to make it relevant to this century and beyond.

I. NATIONAL POWER AND THE NATIONAL AGENDA

42. Hon Speaker, as I come to the conclusion of this statement, I wish to mention this:

43. Firstly: We must remind ourselves that “power belongs to the people”. It is our responsibility, as Parliament, to ensure that this power remains with them. It is delegated to us by our electorate to be used for purposes that promote their good, not anybody’s good. We must use it to allocate resources without fear or favour. We must expose those who misuse these powers. We have to ensure that Government departments responsible for delivering services have resources and enabling legal and implementation frameworks.

44. Hon Speaker and colleagues, we can only do this when we refuse to be bullied into silence; when we refuse to act victims; and when we define ourselves; rather than allowing others to define our lives.
45. Hon Speaker and colleagues, you were elected to represent your constituents. However, it would appear some of us here have turned their allegiances to their party leaders, even when it contradicts with the interests of their electorates. We don’t want to see, in the upcoming budget debates and appropriations, members backtracking on matters that are close to the hearts of citizens, as though the Holy Spirit has appeared to them. This will be neglect of duty at its highest, and we hope we stand the test of time. We should remain energized by the words of Martin Luther King who said; “Some of us who have already began to break the silence of the might, have found that the calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak. We must speak with humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak”. That is where national power lies.

46. Secondly: Many of us here are just about to waste away our time. Our time here is meant to add value and cause change in the wellbeing of citizens. However, our view as the opposition is that as a country, we are getting off-track, and have lost our course. There is, therefore, an urgent need to retable the national agenda for fresh validation. There are things we must rethink, and this House must lead in rekindling the debate around these matters:

(i) Parliament – Rt. Hon. Speaker, there are things that are happening in the Appointments Committee which are causing concern to the public and on this side of the House. The frequent visits and meetings with the President are undermining the independence and credibility of the Appointments Committee and Parliament as a whole. The President should be advised to let Parliament perform its duties without influence and manipulation. Appointments Committee is a Vetting Committee not rubber stamp for the President. We request the President to leave the Committee do its work following the laws of Uganda which we have all sworn to uphold. It would be wrong for us as Parliament to also bend laws for purposes of pleasing the President. The public will hold us accountable.

(ii) State House and President’s Office staffing
We have noted that there are many staff on the list of State House and Office of the President who are not doing any work but just serving NRM party interests. These are in the names of Presidential Advisors/Assistants; for example, Prof E. Mushemeza of the Electoral Commission of NRM, Councillor Santa Oketa what do they have to do with public service staffing? This is abuse of office and corruption. In due course we shall present the list of such people who are paid illegally from the tax payers’ money.

(iii) Funding of Political Parties – We passed the Political Organizations Act in 2005 to fund the political parties. Up to now, seven (7) years this has not been operationalized. This is total lack of commitment to democracy. Other political parties have been suffocated while the NRM Party is being funded indirectly through State House. We demand that funding of political parties be implemented immediately this financial year.

(iv) National Policy Vs Implementation: There is an observed mismatch between policy setting and their implementation. Some policies that are intrinsically good have been deliberately mis-applied on the ground. A few example might be useful here:
(a) Decentralization: The aim of the Constitution and the Local Government Act (LGA: 1997) was to improve service delivery through the transfer of decision making power to the Local Governments. But, has this power been effectively transferred? Do Local Governments actually determine their priorities? Why does central government continue to set indicative planning figures for Local Governments? Why is it that only about 20% of national budgets are directly sent to Local Governments, yet that is where over 80% of the population lives? Is this decentralization real devolution of powers, or is it a mere delegation of central government functions and directives to Local Governments? Why is government increasingly recentralizing some of the functions? Has service delivery improved under the so-called decentralization?

Rt. Hon Speaker you have carried out a number of Parliamentary Outreach in different parts of this country, you are a witness to what pain Local Governments are going through regarding this re-centralization.

(b) Affirmative Action: While the objective was to “remove women from the kitchen”, women have remained glued to the kitchen. As soon as the few women who were making the loudest noise were given seats in Parliament and cabinet, the traditional woman has remained the ultimate bearer of the effects of economic mismanagement. What we have earned is bigger government. Matters critical to the common woman, such as health and water, are receiving lip-service. To date, 16 women still die in labour. Beyond garnering votes from them, where are deliberate and effective programmes to lift the plight of the rural woman? We talk about gender aggregation and analysis in budgeting; does just the number of women attending a village meeting lift their standards of living, even when they do not open their mouths at those meetings? Moreover, there is also need to rethink the Affirmative Action seats in Parliament. In a country where districts are born every other day, is it still tenable to have district women representatives? There is need to use another efficient and cost effective formula that can ensure women representation and participation.

(c) Cooperatives, Health, Education and Privatization: We killed cooperatives and started SACCOs. To date, SACCOs that were massively started using public funds at the sub-county levels have miserably collapsed. We removed user fees in health centers (and yet these assisted health workers), and we promised to fund health. Today, you have no gloves in health units. We offloaded public corporations to the private sector, so that they can be better managed. Today, they receive the greatest selective tax waivers and capital injections as if they are still public enterprises — at the cost of whimpering citizens. We killed the railway system and buried it under RVR. Now we are talking about high speed underground trains for Uganda. UPE was a good policy, but reduced into a campaign tool. That is why Netherlands withdrew from the sector, because there were no tangible results as per original intended purpose. So, in other words, what are we saying as a country, regarding our policy intentions and implementation? We must rethink and retable these matters for national discussion.

(ii) National Value System: Why is there a great wave of moral decadence in Uganda? Someone steals public funds, and people are just unbothered, while others are cheering on. The leaders are participating in the loot. The youth have no sense of direction from their leaders. What is morally acceptable and morally wrong has remained elusive to young people because there is no sense of
direction. In traditional society, the sense of shame was deeply enrooted. Where has this vanished in Uganda? Who is leading the task of conserving our traditional values that kept society together for all time, which ensured that society prospers equitably? The bigger ills of society today, emanate from eradication of these core values.

(iii) Constitutionalism: The 1995 constitution provides for National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy. It provides for democracy and observation of human rights. It provides for rights and responsibilities of citizens, and of the state. It provides for balanced and equitable development. It provides for accountability and dignity of person. Our view is that these principles have been grossly defied and defiled by people who are in power. Constitutionalism has been thrown out through the window. Respect of the rights of citizens to vote according to their will, and to move freely have been encumbered. We need a national conversation and review of these undertakings.

45. Therefore: Hon Speaker and Colleagues, we want to encourage you to start an open debate over these matters because if we do not, we will phase-off from this Parliament and positions of leadership without causing the desired change in the lives of Ugandans. We warn you.

J. CONCLUSION

46. Hon Speaker, in her book, Laying Ghosts to Rest, Maphele Ramphele said, “Successful people are those who make and admit mistakes rather than those who fail to confront failure”. We need to acknowledge where we have fallen short as a nation and get enough determination to take corrective action as Ugandans. It is against this background that we call upon government to change its work-methods.

47. Hon Speaker, it is not enough for government to keep saying they are doing their best. That is not what they were put in office for. Government must simply deliver services. It must change its expenditure priorities from stock-piling tear gas to scaling up resources in the agricultural sector. Government must do more research and training, it must focus on basic agro based industries and scale up marketing of the farmers’ produce. While farmers will smile with more money in their pockets, government will also smile with an expanded tax base. Remember, this is not the same thing as heaping additional taxes on the same people who are already suffering a heavy tax load.

48. Hon Speaker, government should respect and pay teachers. They must pay health workers. People need access to clean water, protection from draughts and other disasters. Think and act outside the box. Develop the true will and urge to serve Ugandans. Abandon greed for once, and remember the poor and down-trodden. We have been honest with you in the past and shared with you our thoughts. This country can be fixed, it is not too late. The templates, and our views how to fix it, we have given them to you. If you refuse to hear us, you will stand and answer for all these matters, and you won’t blame us.

49. We challenge members and government to start a new debate on where this country is going. National Policy, National Values and Constitutionalism are under severe threat. We must rethink our priorities and recommit to the rule of law and good governance. The insatiable appetite by police to clobber, intimidate, humiliate and muzzle opposition is bad. Hon Speaker, we want to remind all those
behind these heinous acts against the opposition that everything that goes up and up, always comes down. It has an end, and it shall come to pass.

50. On our part as Parliament, we must use the oversight function mandated of this House to cause change in peoples’ lives. That power is clearly stipulated in the 1995 constitution. If we fold our hands, we will become the biggest traitor to Ugandans, in our view.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

Nathan Nandala-Mafabi, MP LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION