



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

SPEECH BY

HON. GENERAL EDWARD KATUMBA WAMALA

MINISTER OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT

AT

LAUNCH OF CoST UGANDA 4<sup>TH</sup> ASSURANCE  
REPORT

ON

FEBRUARY 10, 2021

AT

PROTEA HOTEL, KAMPALA

- Honorable Ministers
- Ambassadors and Heads of Delegations
- Hon. Members of Parliament
- Permanent Secretaries
- Heads of Government Agencies and Departments
- Engineer-in-Chief, Ministry of Works and Transport
- Stakeholders in the National Construction Industry
- Representatives of CoST International
- Senior Staff of the CoST Secretariat, Uganda
- Senior Government Officials
- Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Government of Uganda, I thank you all for coming to witness today's launch of the 4<sup>th</sup> Assurance Report, which is titled **"Ray of Sunshine"**. I am informed that the report is based on studies conducted on infrastructure projects, which are being implemented across the Country in the key Government sectors of Health, Education, Water and Environment; and Works and Transport.

As you are already aware, infrastructure development in this Country is guided by the Vision 2040, the National Development Plan (NDP) III and the Government Manifesto for this period from 2020 to 2025. As stipulated by one of the key objectives of the NDP III, Government will continue to consolidate and increase the stock and quality of productive infrastructure development such as roads, railways, power, water supply and sewerage disposal.

This high-level meeting has brought together key players from Government and the private sector to dialogue on fair business practices that will enable the provision of infrastructure in a more efficient, and effective manner with promotion of transparency in public infrastructure investment. It is therefore important that given the level of investment in infrastructure by Government of Uganda, high quality infrastructure is planned, developed and maintained to ensure that the Ugandan tax payers get value for money.

I also wish to thank CoST Uganda for all the good work that you are doing in our Country and all the Stakeholders for rendering them all the necessary support. The Assurance Process Reports prepared by CoST provide independent project implementation monitoring mechanisms, which will undoubtedly enhance quality assurance and quality control in infrastructure projects.

It is for the quest for development of high-quality infrastructure in this Country that my Ministry embraced the services of CoST Uganda in 2017, and accepted be the champion. I would like to assure you of continued maximum cooperation and support from my Ministry. The Ministry will also continue engaging other Government MDAs involved in infrastructure development to extend maximum cooperation to CoST Uganda.

Back to the 4<sup>th</sup> Assurance Report, I am informed that in 2020, twenty-three (23) projects were assured compared to thirteen (13) projects in 2019. The projects were from eight high spending Procurement Entities (PEs), which included the Ministries of Health,

Education & Sports, Works and Transport, Water and Environment, UNRA, KCCA, Wakiso District and National Water and Sewerage Corporation, among others. The coverage of the projects has increased. Overall disclosure and participation have also increased in 2020 as compared to 2019. The increase in disclosure is a sign of a growing culture of transparency and better appreciation of the mission of CoST Uganda.

This report further highlights gaps and issues among others associated with the surveyed projects which are; lack of a standard disclosure templates and regulatory guidelines for disclosure of infrastructure data, low participation of the private sector especially local firms, gross time and cost overruns, theft of road signage, delays in procurement, limited compliance with the procurement guidelines especially on local content, limited adherence to construction quality and management and the issues of limited planning. My Ministry will work with CoST Uganda and all other stakeholders to close the gaps identified.

I wish to congratulate all stakeholders and CoST Uganda that participated in the assurance process, for having achieved this milestone amidst the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic. This report is an example that, even in crisis situations, transparency is possible and even more critical.

I wish to assure you that the Ministry attaches a lot of importance to your findings and recommendations and we shall do every possible, within our means, to make improvements in the planning, design, procurement and management of infrastructure projects by promoting Open Contracting for Infrastructure Data Standard (OC4IDS).

I am pleased to note the achievements of CoST Uganda in the year 2020 and wish to commend CoST International for the launch of Infrastructure Transparency index. I am informed that Uganda will be among the first four pilot countries for participation in this greater initiative.

The NRM Government fully supports the principles of fair business practices and transparency when handling matters that concern the public and indeed public resources. There is no doubt therefore that the entire Government leadership up to the highest level is in support of independent monitoring of public infrastructure projects, as long as the findings and recommendations are used for purposes of continuous improvement.

On behalf of Government, I advise CoST Uganda to ensure that they operate as legal entity in Uganda since several civil society organizations continue being found on the wrong side of the law. They should be registered properly with the Uganda Registration Services Bureau and/or the NGO Board, with a clear organizational structure and also act ethically and professionally in the performance of their activities.

We also promise to work with PPDA through Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to ensure that the Infrastructure Data Standards are mainstreamed in the Government Procurement Portal and within the policy framework as a measure of better infrastructure performance and transparency.

Once again, I take this opportunity to thank CoST Uganda for the good work.

It is now my pleasure and humble duty to launch this **4<sup>th</sup> Assurance Report** and urge all stakeholders to use this report in improving the delivery of infrastructure projects in our Country.

**I wish you all a Happy and Prosperous New Year (2021).**

**For God and My Country.**