

MUSEVENOMICS IN ACTION: UGANDA PRISONS SERVICE'S ROLE IN SOCIOECONOMIC ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION



The Uganda Prison Service (UPS), a government agency under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, is mandated to contribute to the protection and development of society by providing safe, secure, and humane custody of offenders while prioritizing human rights in its correctional programs. Led by the Commissioner General of Prisons, Can. Dr. Johnson Byabashaija, the UPS has undergone significant transformation since 1986, aligning with Uganda's broader national development strategy.

This period of growth has strengthened its role in enhancing security, rehabilitation, and socioeconomic progress, with the goal of transforming every prisoner into a productive, economically viable, and law-abiding citizen. The UPS workforce has seen remarkable expansion, growing from just 2,000 personnel in 1986 to over 14,000 dedicated staff today.

Infrastructure development has been equally impressive, with the number of prison units increasing from 45 in 1986 to 269 across the country. A standout achievement is the construction of a second maximum-security prison in Kitalya, widely regarded as one of the best in the East and Central African region.

Staff housing has also significantly improved, rising from 10% coverage in 1986 to 75% today, with 6,900 permanent houses countrywide. This progress, largely due to a low-cost housing strategy championed by His Excellency, the President of Uganda, enhances staff welfare, reduces financial burdens, boosts morale, and promotes operational efficiency.

To further support staff welfare, the Prison SACCO, with 12,880 members, offers savings, loans, and financial literacy training, empowering staff with affordable credit and economic stability for a secure future. Additionally, the Duty Free Shop service, a government-supported initiative, allows prison staff to purchase essential building materials—such as cement, iron sheets, iron bars, timber, paint, water tanks, and chain links—at reduced prices, free from certain taxes.

The remand prisoner population has decreased from over 65% to below 47% today, reflecting the country's intensified efforts in law enforcement and crime prevention. To support its operations, the Uganda Prison Service's vehicle fleet has grown from just 20 vehicles in 1986 to a modern fleet of 400, including specialized equipment such as 68 tractors, 2 combine harvesters, maize haulers, seed planters, excavators, and bulldozers.

Rehabilitation is a key pillar of the Uganda Prison Service's mission, with over 50,000 inmates benefiting annually from programs designed to reform and reintegrate them into society. These initiatives include functional adult literacy, formal education, vocational training, religious empowerment, and discipline. Consequently, recidivism rates have substantially decreased from 56.6% in 1986 to 13.4% today, among the lowest globally.



Under the innovative "Musevenomics" initiative, the UPS has revitalized its agricultural program, transforming prisons into productive farming hubs. Annually, the service now produces 12,000 metric tons of maize, 290 metric tons of soybeans, 507 metric tons of sunflower, and 1,800 livestock. This agricultural output supports food security and contributes to Uganda's economic growth.

Storage facilities have undergone an overhaul, transitioning from outdated cribs to modern grain processing and storage facilities, locally known as silos. Located primarily at Lugore Prison Farm in the Northern Region and Ruimi Prison Farm in the Western Region, these silos have a combined capacity of 7,000 metric tons.

The Uganda Prison Service has achieved self-sufficiency in uniform production, manufacturing 100% of the uniforms for both staff and prisoners, with surplus stock available. These achievements reflect the UPS's commitment to service delivery, access to justice, and national development.

By successfully implementing presidential directives on production from 2016 through the "Buy Uganda Build Uganda" (BUBU) initiative, prison industries have been revitalized, generating substantial economic value. The service produces furniture, liquid soap, craft, leather, and metal products worth UGX 2.5 billion annually. This acts as an import substitution strategy, yielding benefits such as foreign exchange savings and job creation. Additionally, 2,000 metric tons of maize seeds, valued at UGX 10.5 billion annually, are produced, providing quality seeds to farmers and eliminating adulterated seeds from the market.

Under another directive, 610 metric tons of cotton, valued at UGX 0.9 billion, are produced per year, supporting the development of the local textile industry.

With the visionary leadership of H.E. Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, the Uganda Prison Service continues to set a regional benchmark for correctional services, effectively balancing security, production, rehabilitation, and economic contributions to deliver benefits for all Ugandans.

