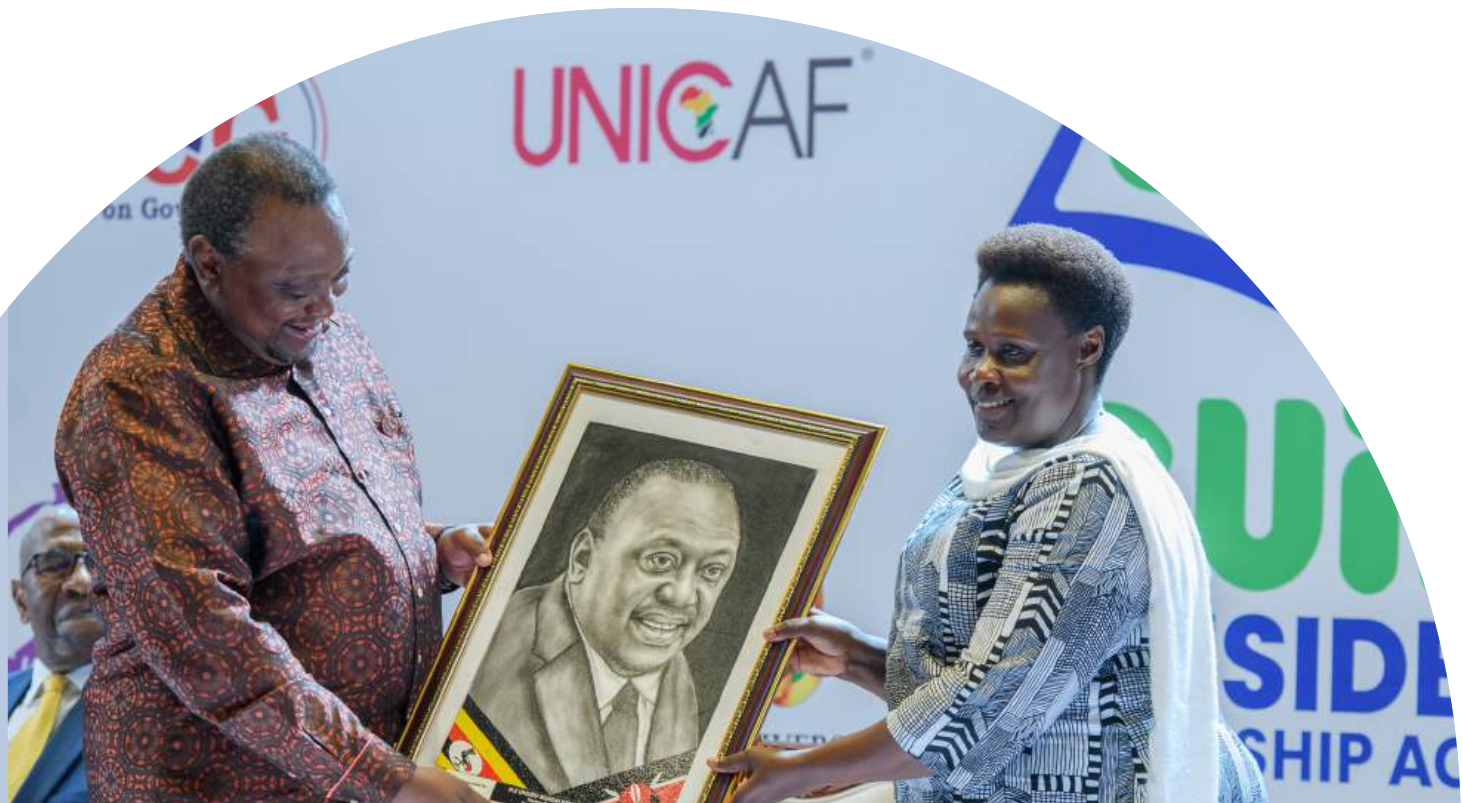




**THE 2ND**  
ANNUAL GUILD  
LEADERS SUMMIT  
**REPORT 2025**



2025



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ANNUAL GUILD  
LEADERS SUMMIT  
**REPORT**

**THURSDAY, 24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2025**

**CTF2, YUSUF LULE AUDITORIUM**

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY - KAMPALA, UGANDA


**THEME:**

*Leadership with Integrity; Building Foundations for  
Good Governance in East Africa.*

**CHIEF GUEST:**

**H.E UHURU MUIGAI KENYATTA**

*Fourth President of the Republic of Kenya*



# ABOUT THE SUMMIT:

The Guild Leaders Summit is a Premier Annual gathering of Student leaders, Policy influencers, Civil society, Academia, and Development partners from across Uganda and the broader East African region.

It is organized by the Guild Presidents Leadership Academy (GPLA) as a platform for nurturing transformative, ethical, and visionary leadership among former and current University student leaders.

First convened in 2024 at Makerere University, the inaugural Summit hosted former President H.E. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete of the United Republic of Tanzania

and set a powerful precedent for youth-led regional dialogue on governance, democratic participation, and leadership development.

Building on that success, the Summit has quickly evolved into a flagship forum where ideas meet action, and where young leaders are empowered to shape the governance and development agenda of their countries and the region at large.

The Summit seeks to harness the energy, innovation, and potential of youth by exposing them to thought leadership, policy perspectives, and collaborative solutions that address the unique challenges facing the East African region today.

It provides a rare space for mentorship, engagement, and solidarity among former and current student leaders and the broader leadership ecosystem.



## VISION:

To be the leading regional platform that empowers student leaders to champion transformative leadership, democratic values, and good governance in East Africa.



## MISSION:

To convene and build the capacity of student leaders through high-level dialogue, mentorship, and knowledge exchange, fostering integrity-driven leadership and constructive youth participation in democratic governance.

# ABOUT GPLA

Guild Presidents Leadership Academy-GPLA is a prestigious leadership development program designed to ensure that outgoing Guild Leaders from Higher Institutions of Learning in East Africa, are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively participate in active governance and public policy processes in the national leadership of the countries, and contribute to, the consolidation and strengthening of their democracies

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# INTRODUCTION

East Africa stands at a crucial crossroads in its journey toward sustainable development, regional integration, and peace-building. While the region has made significant strides in economic growth and collaboration, it continues to face systemic challenges such as corruption, weak governance structures, political instability, and inequality. These challenges not only hinder the region's potential but also threaten the aspirations of its predominantly youthful population.

The inaugural Guild Leaders Summit, held in April 2024 at Makerere University, was a resounding success. It brought together over 1000 young leaders from Universities and Tertiary Institutions across Uganda, with leadership of Student Associations of Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and South Sudan under the theme "Legacy and Leadership Continuum: The Power of Knowledge and Cross-generational Learning." The event was graced by H.E. Jakaya Kikwete, former President of Tanzania, who shared invaluable insights from his leadership journey. His keynote address on fostering peace and development through servant leadership inspired youth leaders to take proactive roles in addressing governance challenges in their communities.

Building on this momentum, the Second Annual Guild Leaders Summit sought to deepen the conversation on leadership with integrity and its critical role in laying strong foundations for good governance. This year, we were privileged to host H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, former President of Kenya, as the Chief Guest. His rich experience in governance, peace-building, and promoting regional unity offer invaluable lessons for young leaders eager to shape a brighter future for East Africa.

The Summit this year brought together over 1,000 Youth leaders, Guild Leaders, and Young Professionals from across East Africa to engage in discussions on leadership, governance, and democratic participation.

This Summit also served as a catalyst for building networks among East African youth leaders to address governance challenges collaboratively. It is rooted in the belief that the solutions to the region's most pressing issues lie in the hands of a united, ethical, and visionary generation of leaders.

This report therefore, gives an insight of the major speeches, conversations and decisions from the summit.

# OBJECTIVES



01

## Promote Leadership with Integrity:

Inspire young leaders to adopt ethical principles and prioritize good governance in their roles.

02

## Foster Regional Collaboration:

Build networks among student leaders across East African Universities to address governance challenges collectively.



03

## Equip Leaders with Practical Skills:

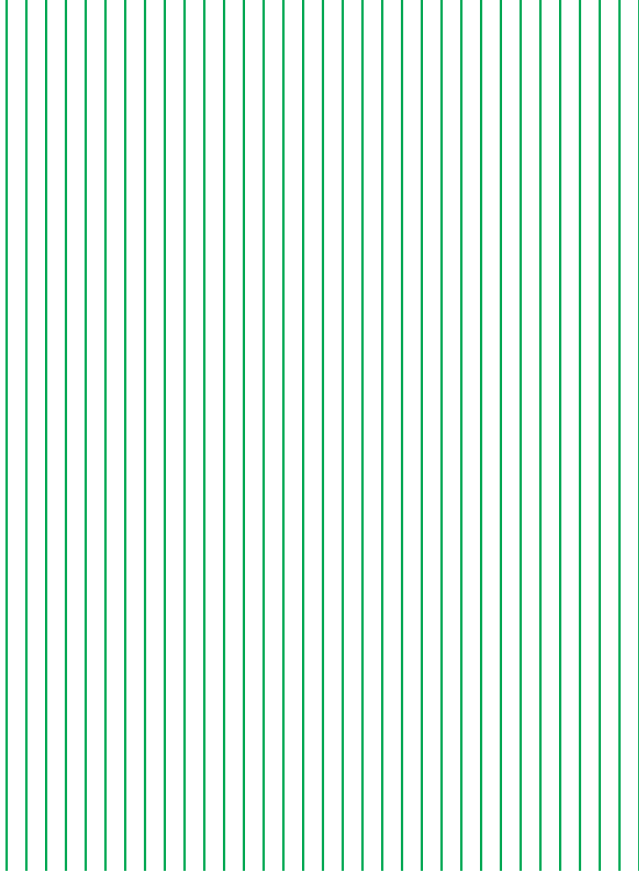
Provide actionable insights on navigating leadership challenges and promoting institutional accountability.

04

## Amplify the Youth Voice:

Create a platform for youth leaders to articulate their perspectives on governance and regional development.





# KEY DISCUSSIONS AND DECISIONS



# JUSTICE SIMON MUGENYI BYABAKAMA

## Chairperson Of The Electoral Commission

*"With your collective vibe, energy and voice, the youth can be influencers of principle, yes you can. The 2026 general elections in Uganda are an opportunity for the youth in Uganda to stand up and show up, the general elections that will follow in other member states creates an opportunity in those countries to stand up and show up, leadership with integrity isn't just about being honest, it is about consistency in what you say and what you do, it is about showing up even when no one is watching and it is about owning the consequences of your actions especially when it is hard.*



The Chairperson commended the Guild Presidents Leadership Academy for having invited him to speak at this Second Annual Guild Leader Summit 2025.

He mentioned that this being his second time to receive such invitation, he was extremely honored and humbled and on behalf of the Electoral Commission.

He commended all the youth both leaders and professionals who were assembled from across the East African Region and Africa at large for their desire to participate and engage in this vital summit.

He went on to commend the senior

peers in our midst, the men and women who have made invaluable contribution to their respective countries at leadership or professional level, it is because of the positive foundations that they laid, that have enabled us to be here I believe.

His lecture on "Youth and Elections; Driving participation and accountability for a democratic future" he mentions is appropriately derived from the theme of this year's summit, "Leadership with integrity, building foundations for good governance in East Africa."

It is therefore, a privilege to stand before a room filled with the heartbeat of our future, young and leaders filled with such vibrant energy, passion, and purpose. Citizens who will shape the democratic landscape of your respective countries

tomorrow, you're the architects of our collective tomorrow as East Africans and Africa in general and today we gather under a powerful theme leadership with integrity, building foundations for good governance in east Africa as we reflect on how we as a generation can derive participation and accountability for a democratic future, remember this, "you're not leaders in waiting but leaders in motion" democracy at its best is not driven from the podiums but the people, Article 1 of our Ugandan Constitution clearly recognizes the inviolability of the peoples sovereignty, it says "All power belongs to the people who shall exercise their sovereignty in accordance with the constitution, all authority in the state emanates from the people of Uganda and the people shall be governed through their will, and consent on who shall govern them and how they shall be governed through regular free and fair elections of their representatives and through referendum" although am not acquainted with the constitutions of the other East African member states, I want to believe the principle of the peoples sovereignty cuts across.

Article 61 of our constitution enjoins the electoral commission of Uganda to conduct free and fair elections so as to give purpose and life to the sovereign power of the people as enshrined in article one above.

However, many have expressed skepticism as whether elections in many parts of Africa are indeed free and fair and such voices have also been heard in Uganda. But, what is a free and fair election? The concept of a free and fair election is not defined in our constitution or any act of parliament.

The supreme court of Uganda in presidential Election petition No.1 of 2001 that made an attempt to define what is a free and fair election and what it comprises and it stated "To ensure that the elections are free and fair, there should be sufficient time for all stages of the election, nominations, and campaigns, voting and counting the votes. Candidates should not be deprived of their right to stand for election and citizens to vote for candidates of their choice through unfair manipulation of the process by electoral officials. There must be a leveling of the ground so that incumbents or government ministers and officials do not have an unfair advantage. The entire election process should have an atmosphere free of intimidation, bribery, violence, coercion or anything intended to subvert the will of the people. The election procedures should guarantee the secrecy of the ballot, accuracy of counting and the announcement of results in a timely manner" the above definition highlights one critical aspect that is the attainment of a free and fair election is an embodiment of the participatory role of every individual or organisation or state agencies who have a role to play in the entire electoral processes within the confines of the law and for the common good of the country.

But democracy is not a spectator sport, you are not mere cheer leaders or gear leaders ,democracy thrives when we all show up ,when we participate, when we question, when we hold power accounta-

ble and when we lead not for applause but with purposes and principle. Your voice, your vote, your values, they all matter, they shape policies, shift cultures and hold power to account.

The youth are called upon to guard against the threats or dangers of our democratic pursuit ,the evils of political corruption that is bribing voters, over commercialization of elections, violence, intolerance, ordering or culminating into acidic hatred of the individuals we perceive as standing in our pursuit of democratic goals or hatred of the entire tribe or clan the individual(s) belong to, we even celebrate when they pass on.

In a world flooded with influencers, what we need are influential people of principle, people who lead not just with charisma but with character, people who not only blindfold others with the failings of the system but who encourage you to look out for the silver lining in the dark cloud, people who understand that credibility is earned slowly but lost instantly.

With your collective vibe, energy and voice, the youth can be influencers of principle, yes you can. The 2026 general elections in Uganda are an opportunity for the youth in Uganda to stand up and show up, the general elections that will follow in other member states creates an opportunity in those countries to stand up and show up , leadership with integrity isn't just about being honest, it is about consistency in what you say and what you do, it is about showing up even when no one is watching and it is about owning the consequences of your actions especially when it is hard.

But in order for all this to have meaning and life, we must be imbued with a mind-set of belonging and responsibility to our respective countries for Uganda's

case, the constitution does not only confer rights and freedoms to a citizen but also imposes duties and obligations namely; to be patriotic and loyal to Uganda and promote its well-being, to engage in gainful work for the good of that individual or citizen, the family and the common good and to contribute to national development ,to contribute to the well-being of the community where that citizen lives, to promote responsible parenthood ,to foster national unity and live in harmony with others, to promote democracy and the rule of law and to acquaint himself/herself with the provisions of the constitution and uphold and defend the constitution and the law.

Real participation begins with each one of us being cognizant of our duties and obligations to our respective countries, taking tangible steps to live, actualize, and intentionally bring to life or reality those duties and obligations. And this can appropriately be summed up in one word, OWNERSHIP. When we live, actualize, and practice those duties and obligations that we are owning them, our country, we must individually cultivate in our psyche a sense of feeling of ownership.

A democratic future we dream of is not guaranteed. It will be won or lost by the choices we make there.

Justice Byabakama paused a question: How can the young people drive participation and accountability?

Firstly, love your country and Africa in general. Let us build linkages of engagement with our fellow youth on issues that are pertinent to the emancipation of our race and our continent. Let's promote value systems, not only discussing football, with a fan of Manchester united in Nigeria and Ghana and so on and so forth.



Secondly, Get to know the journey your country has travelled, nation building is a continuous process as society evolves. What is your contribution? Get informed, stay curious, democracy begins with knowledge, read beyond the headlines, ask tough questions, seek truth not trends Show up and speak out. Whether it is at the ballot box, the public gathering or meeting, or on social media.

Thirdly, Get involved. Your participation amplifies impact. Do not shun elections. Mobilize your fellow youth who are no longer in institutions of learning. To become actively positive in the affairs of their communities and their country.

Fourthly, hold power accountable and hold it your own. While it is easy to point fingers, you should realize that real accountability starts with you. If you want to lead with integrity, start by keeping your own promises.

Fifth, you don't just critique. Do not merely protest, but also propose. Be the generation that not only challenges the system, but re-incarnates or reinvents it. The solution does not lie in mere sloganeering. Let the force of your anger and discontent be channeled into something productive.

Just like the ferocious waters of waterfall are harnessed into a generation of power. When the chorus around you is one of failure, doom and loom, do not join the chorus. Let your voice be one of hope.

When there is general outcry of employment among our youth, let's ask ourselves whether one is able to do something in the prevailing circumstances, outside the formal setup of the employment. We cannot build a democratic future with passive hope. We need active hope.

The kind that organises, listens, learns. The kind that promotes dialogue and constructive engagement. The kind that seeks to promote, preserve and uphold the peace in your country.

True participation is inclusive, continuous and informed. Organise, mobilise and educate others. Most importantly, listen to those with divergent views.

And attempt to change them through persuasion, not confrontation. Remember, peace and stability are critical pillars in guaranteeing investment, business and trade in the country and the East African region. We must therefore make a collective effort to ensure that nothing disrupts the peaceful environment that exists in our countries.

The stability of our countries is crucial to our prosperity, for it allows free movement of goods and people in the respective countries. I implore you to be agents of peace. Be the eternal or perpetual optimist in the midst of the challenges. As the great Shaka Ssali used to say, get better, not better.

Remember, every generation has its peculiarities. By cultivating and evoking resilience and determination, one learns to be innovative despite the internal and external obstacles, and to emerge from all odds to a successful person. Be optimistic even when events and circumstances around you, at the contrary.

Listen, when you lead with integrity, when you demand accountability, and when you participate with purpose, you don't just change the system, you become the system's best hope. When you lead with integrity, you don't just occupy a position, you inspire a generation. You are not just the hope of a democratic future, you are its architects.

In conclusion, let us therefore build a

democratic future where youth participation is not an exception but a norm. Let us demand accountability from others, but from ourselves as well. We should ask our individual selves; am I leaving the values I preach? Am I using my influence to uplift not to dominate? Do I speak the truth even when it is inconvenient? Let us therefore not lead for power but with purpose.

Africa does not need perfect leaders. In any case, we don't have perfect human beings, but principled ones. Let us remember that integrity is not a destination, it is a daily choice. It is doing what is right, even when others are not watching. The future is not something that we inherit, it is something we create. Let your generation not be the generation that watches democracy dim or go on a decline, but let this generation be that rekindles it with integrity, one voice, one vote, and one act of courage at a time.

And with your voice, your values, and your vision, the future of East Africa and Africa is indeed in powerful hands. Let me just comment on one statement of the Guild President of the University of Rwanda made. He made something fundamental.

He said, for those of us who are holding public offices, I think our sense of accountability and integrity should be driven by one factor, or fact, that you are holding a public office for a while. You may cease to be what you are, that public office, but you never cease to be a citizen of that country. And therefore, all our actions, all our decisions we make should be driven by the kind of country we want to come to live in when we cease to hold public office.

I thank you for your kind attention. May God bless you

# H.E SSENTAMU CHURCHIL

## Guild President

### Makerere University 2025-2026

*"To my fellow Guild Presidents and student leaders as I wind up, let this summit not be the end of our conversation but the beginning of a movement. Let us return to our campuses, jurisdictions with renewed purpose to advocate to mobilize and serve with integrity. Let us build bridges across boarders Mr President, share ideas and stand united in diversity because the future of Africa is not to be written by one nation but by the unity of many. "*



Ladies and gentlemen, I join my voice to all the voices that have welcomed you all associating myself to the already established protocol, thank you very much for sparing your time to come and grace this function, the young people in this building are very pleased to have you today.

Your excellencies just like Nelson Mandela said that the youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow, I beg to object that in our current continent the youth of today are the leaders of today.

I equally stand before you today not only as the Guild President of Makerere University but as a representative of the voice, dreams and determination of the youths in Uganda and indeed of East Africa. It's both an honour and a duty to speak at this summit, a gathering of young leaders bound by a shared vision for our nations, continent and our future.

Malcom X said that the future belongs to

those who prepare today, and I believe we are on the right course to prepare for our future. Ladies and gentlemen, we the youth are no longer leaders of tomorrow, we are leaders of today in our universities, communities and households, we are shaping narratives, challenging norms and demanding for better and as we gather here, we are reminded that leadership is not about the titles we hold but the change we create. Makerere University as the oldest and most prestigious institution in the region holds a legacy of producing leaders who have shaped this region and continent at large from heads of state to change makers in each and every sounding field.

But even as we celebrate the past, we must confront the realities of today, our generation faces great challenges ,unemployment continues to undermine our potential, education systems Mr president and Madam Vice President are struggling to adapt to the digital age, mental health is often overlooked and has become a silent crisis and across the region the youth feel unheard in national

policy and decision making processes but we are not here to lament ladies and gentlemen ,we are here to lead and be proprietors of the change we rightly believe in, we call upon our national leaders present through you Madam President to partner with us not only as beneficiaries of development 'let me use this juncture to inform the chairperson of the Electoral Commission that Makerere University does not know ballot papers we use an online system and ask you to accept and meet my cabinet to benchmark the voting process at Makerere that has brought many leaders' we in the long run are co-creators of solutions ,invest not just in infrastructure but in innovation, not just in programs but in people.

To my fellow Guild Presidents and student leaders as I wind up, let this summit not be the end of our conversation but the beginning of a movement. Let us return to our campuses, jurisdictions with renewed purpose to advocate to mobilize and serve with integrity. Let us build bridges across boarders Mr President, share ideas and stand united in diversity because the future of Africa is not to be written by one nation but by the unity of many.

Let me end with the words of Frantz Fanon who said "each generation must out of relative obscurity discover its mission, fulfil it or betray it' Mr president and our guests today, we are not the reincarnated Judas Iscariots of today, but we are leaders like you that are ready to take on our mantle and fulfil our mission,

We build for the future,  
For God and my Country.

# MASESA DEMIANO

## Executive Director - GPLA

*"Our theme this year "Leadership with Integrity: Building Foundations for Good Governance in East Africa" challenges us to return to the roots of leadership, not as a pursuit of privilege but as a call to responsibility in times where corruption, exclusion and instability threaten our region, we must raise leaders whose character is as strong as their voice."*



senting Universities from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Central Africa, South Sudan, this summit is a clear demonstration that East Africa's youth are ready to be together across borders and beyond any differences.

Our theme this year "Leadership with Integrity: Building Foundations for Good Governance in East Africa" challenges us to return to the roots of leadership, not as a pursuit of privilege but as a call to responsibility in times where corruption, exclusion and instability threaten our region, we must raise leaders whose character is as strong as their voice.

As the GPLA, our mission is clear that is "To equip student leaders with values, tools and networks they need to lead not just during their campus days but throughout their careers "

To our partners, sponsors and supporters, thank you. Your investment in this initiative is an investment in the future of East Africa, we especially thank Makerere University for hosting us once again on this prestigious campus, to the Guild Presidents and delegates, this summit is yours, may you listen, learn, connect and be transformed.

Let it be a turning point not only in your leadership journey but in the story you will write for your nations and communities.

Let us go forth and build a region where integrity guides leadership, democracy empowers citizens and lead with purpose.

God bless you all, God bless East Africa.

I welcome you all to the Second Annual Guild Leaders' Summit, 2025 convened here at the historic Makerere University the cradle of African leadership and organised by the Guild Presidents Leadership Academy (GPLA).

Your Excellencies allow me begin by expressing our heartfelt appreciation to his Excellency Uhuru Mwigai Kenyatta our Chief Guest for honouring us with your presence. Your legacy as a Pan-African statesman and advocate for youth development continues to inspire many across the continent. We thank you for your belief in the potential of young people.

To His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, thank you for always championing the voice of youth in Uganda and for supporting platforms like these that have enabled dialogue, reflection and transformation. Your continued presence here today signals the importance of youth in shaping national and regional destiny.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

this summit is born out of an urgent need to provide student leaders with more than just platforms to speak but with skills, mentorship and opportunities to act.

We are cultivating leadership that does not stop at popularity but grows into service, sacrifice and impact. Last year we heard the honour of hosting his Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania at our inaugural summit, the conversations sparked in this auditorium last year have led to real collaborations, mentorship circles, and strengthened the East African Guild Leaders' Network.

This year we continue to build on that legacy (recognized visiting Guild Leaders from across the region) from the Institute of Finance, and Management Student Organisation of Dar-el-salaam, the University of Lay Adventist of Kigali, the University of Rwanda, the University of Kigali, the University of Nairobi, the Adventist University of Central Africa, the east African University of Rwanda, Kepler College-Kigali. With participants repre-

## THE MAKERERE UNIVERSITY GUILD LEADERS DECLARATION

The Declaration was read by Rose Nabwire, 28<sup>th</sup> Guild President Makerere University Business School (MUBS).

### THE MAKERERE UNIVERSITY DECLARATION 2025

*Adopted by the Guild Leaders Summit*

*24<sup>th</sup> April 2025.*

*Makerere University, Kampala.*

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#### Preamble

We, the student leaders from Universities across the East African Community (EAC), gathered at Makerere University for the Guild Leaders Summit 2025 under the esteemed presence of **HE. Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta**, 4<sup>th</sup> President of the Republic of Kenya, **Rt. Hon Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda**-Guild Presidents Leadership Academy Patron, and Hon. Mathew Rukikaire, Member of the Advisory Board, hereby reaffirm our commitment to fostering East African integration. Recognizing the historical, social, cultural, and economic ties that bind us together, we declare our dedication to the vision of a united, prosperous, and stable East African region.

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#### Declaration on East Africa Integration

We, the Guild Presidents and student leaders of East Africa:

##### 1. Affirm Our Role as Young Leaders:

We acknowledge the critical role that youth play in shaping the future of East Africa and commit to actively participating in regional integration efforts, economic development, and social progress. We recognize that the success of integration depends on the active involvement of young people in governance, leadership, and innovation.

##### 2. Commit to Advancing Educational Exchange and Collaboration:

We call for greater collaboration between universities and institutions within the EAC to foster academic exchange programs, joint research initiatives, and harmonization of curricula. We urge our governments and academic institutions to prioritize creating opportunities for students to study, intern, and collaborate across borders within the EAC.

##### 3. Call for Economic Empowerment of Youth:

We emphasize the importance of youth entrepreneurship and innovation in driving East African economic growth. We urge governments, development partners, and the private sector to invest in youth-friendly policies and programs that promote start-ups, access to financing, and mentorship for young entrepreneurs.

##### 4. Promote Regional Mobility and Employment:

We encourage the EAC and member states to implement policies that facilitate the free movement of students, labor, and goods across borders, in line with the EAC Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons. We call for greater access to employment opportunities for young people across the region through regional job creation initiatives and harmonization of employment standards.

##### 5. Uphold Peace and Security in the Region:

We commit to promoting peace, security, and stability in East Africa by actively participating in conflict resolution, civic education, and dialogue initiatives that aim to foster unity and understanding among the region's diverse populations. We call upon EAC member states to work together to resolve conflicts and ensure the safety and security of all citizens.

#### **6. Advance Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:**

We recognize the pivotal role of women in regional integration and call for gender-sensitive policies that empower women and girls, including their access to leadership roles, education, and economic opportunities. We encourage youth leaders to advocate for gender equality in their respective countries and institutions.

#### **7. Support Regional Infrastructure Development:**

We support regional initiatives aimed at improving transport, communication, and digital infrastructure to facilitate easier trade, movement, and connectivity across East Africa. We urge our governments to accelerate the development of critical regional projects, including railways, roads, and internet connectivity, which are essential for integration.

#### **8. Champion Environmental Sustainability:**

We are committed to promoting environmental conservation and climate action across the EAC. We call for youth-led initiatives in climate change adaptation, renewable energy, and conservation, and urge regional governments to integrate sustainable development principles into national and regional policies.

#### **9. Strengthen Civic Participation and Democracy:**

We stand for the promotion of democratic governance, rule of law, and human rights in the East African region. We encourage the active participation of young people in political processes and advocate for transparent, accountable, and inclusive governance at all levels.

#### **10. Engage with Regional Institutions and Bodies:**

We resolve to engage with the East African Community, its organs, and other regional institutions to advance the integration agenda. We commit to working closely with policymakers, civil society, and the private sector to achieve the objectives outlined in the EAC Treaty.

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### **Conclusion**

We, the undersigned Guild Presidents and student leaders, believe in the promise of a united and integrated East Africa. Through this **Makerere University Declaration 2025**, we commit ourselves to being the driving force behind the full realization of the East African integration agenda. We pledge to continue advocating for policies and initiatives that will enable the youth of East Africa to thrive and contribute meaningfully to the region's development.

We urge our governments, regional bodies, and international partners to support these efforts and to work collaboratively toward the shared goal of a prosperous and united East African Community.

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**Adopted on this day, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025, at the Guild Leaders Summit, Makerere University.**

# PROF. BARNABAS NAWANGWE, Vice Chancellor, Makerere University

I welcome you to the mother University which was the first and for a long time the only University in East and Central African Region and your Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta you told me this morning that you didn't know that your father was the first recipient of a Degree from Makerere University.

On 29th June 1963, the University of East Africa was born out of Makerere which had been a college of the University of London, so becoming a full University was on 29th June 1963 when the Chancellor at that time was President Mwalimu Nyerere conferred the first Honorary Degree of Bachelor of Laws to President Jomo Kenyatta. Makerere University has come of age, we were the vanguard of training leaders for Independence almost the entire East African leadership in the struggle for Independence were trained here at Makerere, almost the entire cabinets of the three East African countries, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda were trained at Makerere University and up to now almost the entire Cabinet and Parliament of Uganda are trained at Makerere University.

At that time, Makerere University was training leaders to move our people out of the chains of colonialism and indeed we achieved that, we trained

*"Many people tend to think that all the problems will be solved by politics, it is not true, leaders do not necessarily have to be politicians, leaders are at every stage of life in a community and therefore for us at Makerere University, we are designing our programs, our research to assess the challenges that Africa faces today, these include our very high population growth, climate change which affects Africa worst of all, new emerging diseases, food security, conflict resolution and others."*

leaders to manage our post-independence countries with the challenges we had at the time and I think we did a good job. The challenge is training leaders as in a way his Excellency Ssentamu has said to solve the problems of today. Many people tend to think that all the problems will be solved by politics, it is not true, leaders do not necessarily have to be politicians, leaders are at every stage of life in a community and therefore for us at Makerere University, we are designing our programs, our research to assess the challenges that Africa faces today, these include our very high population growth, climate change which affects Africa worst of all, new emerging diseases, food security, conflict resolution and others.

This is what these young leaders must



address just like Justice Byabakama highlighted. We as Africans must know that nobody is going to come from out there and develop us, we can have friends who give a hand but the responsibility of us transforming our continent, moving our people out of poverty is ours and it is yours, you the young leaders.

I would like to once again welcome you to Makerere University and urge you the leaders to discuss the issues that affect our continent, our region of East Africa with intellect.

I wish you a good day,

Thank you.

# H.E GUILLAUME CHARTRAIN

## Deputy EU Ambassador to Uganda.

It is a great honour for me to speak here today at Makerere University which has produced some of the greatest leaders and minds of this continent as said by the Vice Chancellor today.

It carries more than the symbolic weight for all of us and for me who used to be a student in Kiswahili and East African languages and civilization 20 years ago in France this space resonates with intellectual ambitions and it's where it meets civic responsibility.

This place and gathering speaks to a deeper idea of leadership, one that is rooted in craft, in transmission and in duty, and it's a profound honour to share the stage with such esteemed personalities to try to inspire while continuing to be inspired and that's the core of my speech today.

I want to extend my gratitude to the GPLA, and to GIZ for supporting this event for convening this platform which unites young leaders from across Uganda and East Africa. The very word 'GUILD' also holds deep meaning, historically, guild were associations governed by ethics and skills ,it was community of belonging, community of mutual accountability. Guilds are standards that defend integrity and pass responsibility from one generation to the next. That is your role today you're not only managing student affairs, you are part of a tradition of stewardship, in a day where we have too much for strategy, your role is foundational.

Makerere University, has shaped individuals and later shaped nations. It is fitting that we gather here today to reflect on

*"A good leader is someone who opens the circles. They include vulnerability not out of charity but because it is just, they listen to youth not as symbols but as full actors of governance. They understand diversity not as a threat but as a resilient trend of any ecosystem. Those are core values to us and this is the spirit of the European Union and this is why we stand beside you, not with slogans, not with visibility campaign but with concrete action, as team Europe today represented by the EU delegation and Germany, we support organizations like Faraja and other developments through civil society programs implemented by GIZ, not to speak for youth but to ensure that youth are heard."*

leadership with integrity. This is not a slogan, it's a test for leaders' especially those meant to be in East Africa as you are, and you must be ready to pass it.

So today, I will reflect on five essential elements of leadership with integrity that resonate with what Justice Byabakama presented you with here." Be a leader for what you want to be not for what you want to have."

1.Authenticity- being true to one self and to values; As a student leader you will have to build your own convictions and uphold them and yet you will have to be open to contradiction and to debate. Julius Nyerere, one of the most famous students of Makerere exemplified leadership and common conviction.



tion. Authenticity requires vision and actions and as Mwalimu was walking the ground of this University he absorbed knowledge but more importantly he developed a vision of leadership as service rather than domination, and his words did align in a way that earned him trust and respect, nobody will respect anyone who doesn't respect himself as Nyerere said but the respect of others is worth nothing unless you respect yourself.

This insight captures the essence of authenticity, the alignment of our inner values with our outer actions regardless of who is watching. We live in the age of spectacles, of showing off and speaking loudly yet authentic leadership is quiet, it resists opportunism, it listens before it speaks, it prefers empathy over self-promotion. Leadership with integrity is courage in action, resilience in the face of adversity.

Wangari Mathai, a student of Makerere University courageously empowered communities proving the principle of action even in adversity can inspire transformative change.

It's the little things we do that make the difference, she used to say, it's the way we act when no one is watching. Her courage was not measured in grand gestures but in consistence, principle actions that could make change in the landscape both physical and political ones.

Leadership is not a prize, it's actually a burden, a burden born with discipline. A courageous leader stands firm when expediency reaches compromise, speaks truth when silence would be easier, keep ease or otherwise when dignity is to be safeguarded and saves when self-interest would dictate otherwise.

Great leadership is not marked by grandiosity but by humility and conviction and continuous learning, one of my favourite French orators reminds us that leadership is tasted in moment of defeat where humility enables leaders to listen, to learn and to adapt.

A good leader knows that decision is not made in victory alone and the most meaningful leadership often emerge in moment of loss when resilience not triumph becomes the measure of one's character. True leaders are not infallible, they doubt, they learn, they are shaped by those around them not idolised by them. They understand that to command others, one must first master one's

self. We are taught that the best leaders are not those who seek power but those who are called to it, those who govern not for status for a sense of necessity and justice and as one wonders, when those who are unfit to rule are allowed to lead, it is often because the wise have declined responsibility.

Jomo Kenyatta, whose legacy is represented here today by his son understood the difference between vision and humility, our children may learn about the heroes of the past but our task is to make ourselves architects of the future. This dual vision honouring tradition while building towards tomorrow with humble determination defines the kind of leader East Africa needs today.

Therefore, as you develop your leadership, don't ask yourself who follows you, ask yourself whom you inspire and be sure your example uplifts not shadow the path of others. Integrity basically just enables, inspire greatness in others and quoting Jomo Kenyatta again, "Leadership is a privilege to better the life of others not an opportunity to satisfy personal greed, leadership empowers, it fosters participation and it amplifies people's voices."

The recent recipients of the economic Nobel Prize Daron Acemoglu and James Robinsons have worked for over 20 years on the factors that contribute to the success and to the failure of nations and political systems. They have defined the concept of inclusive societies shaped by individuals and institutions where power circulates and doesn't

concentrate, where institutions serve the people and not protect a few, where economic and political opportunities extend to all communities not just connected elites.

A good leader is someone who opens the circles. They include vulnerability not out of charity but because it is just, they listen to youth not as symbols but as full actors of governance. They understand diversity not as a threat but as a resilient trend of any ecosystem. Those are core values to us and this is the spirit of the European Union and this is why we stand beside you, not with slogans, not with visibility campaign but with concrete action, as team Europe today represented by the EU delegation and Germany, we support organizations like Faraja and other developments through civil society programs implemented by GIZ, not to speak for youth but to ensure that youth are heard.

We have collaborated with the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs in developing the Annual State of the Youth Report 2024 through a countrywide consultative process. With Erasmus, we provide opportunity for young Ugandans and East Africans to study and exchange in Europe ,over 190 students and University staff in 2024 alone and 11 full Master scholarships for joint Masters program.

Through the EU Youth Sounding Board, we invite youth voices into the heart of our decision making, the design stage of our program. We do not patronize youth, we empower them, the EU does not only fund projects, it holds the torch steadily and strategically. Our development cooperation is in line with the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063. Our objective is not to model but to partner and empower towards a more resilient, just and democratic East Africa.

Integrity driven leadership leaves a lasting legacy, it builds solid institutions not individual glories it focuses on long term stability and inclusive governance. Europe's integration

idealize that institutions must endure beyond individual leaders. In Europe we've learnt that integration must not follow conflict, that unity is not a slogan, it's consolidated through work and dedication. East Africa has a chance to do better than us, to anticipate not only react, to create institution that do not aim to create trajectories but that can build on healthy foundation and common purpose. Unity must not be confused with conformity, institutions must present charisma, and rules must supervise leaders that is the lessons of European integration hard earned after our destruction.

East Africa has the chance not to build on ashes, another reflector on the confluence of European and African perspectives on leadership, both traditions value legacy, the long term impact of decision made by our founding fathers and sustained up to today and for tomorrow.

The summit is, more than a gathering, it's a call for actions and am glad that we had the declaration of the guilds today, it was powerful, everyone has the potential if he or she is willing to be a leader, everyone has an inner talent that inspires others. Leadership can take several shapes not only elective or public offices but as elections approach across this region and especially here in Uganda, let us pose on these specific aspects; such as responsibility carries a particular weight that demands acknowledgement, when a citizen steps into public service whether through election or appointment, they assume sacred trust the resources you manage are not your own, the decisions you make will affect not just today but generations to come.

The power you wield belongs not to you but to the people who have entrusted you with it. The ballot does not absolve a leader of duty, it deepens responsibility for election does not bring privilege, it adds obligations.

Do not misuse this truth in the name of culture, context, power and not defending any specific values but undermining them. As Chimamanda Adichie reminds us with piercing clarity, above all do not lie, when we obscure reality for political convenience, we rob citizens of their urgency and ourselves of our moral authority. So yes, leadership can take the shape of engaging in politics but do so without becoming politicized, have convictions without being consumed by them, resist the reduction of leadership to propaganda and to personality, aspire to inspire, to exert authority without brutality, to serve and not to be served, to be accountable and not to be immune from justice. As Guild Presidents you are not only to lead but to elevate others, to create space not only to occupy it and to leave behind institutions stronger than the ones you inherited, so let your leadership be measured not by admiration but the trust you cultivate, not by the visibility you gain but by the voices you amplify and as young African leaders and students from Makerere University, you walk in the footsteps of giants.

Mwalimu Nyerere, in his vision of Ujama, Jomo Kenyatta in his call to Harambe, Nkrumah and his dreams of African unity and many others, the legacy leaves in leaders like President Uhuru here today and reminds us of the continuous journey of leadership across generation.

And as President Kenyatta himself said, leadership is not about elections but the next generation. This profound insight captures a sense what we have discussed today that true leadership looks beyond image, reason and the foundations that will supersede generations that will come after us. The bond you will form here, the conversations you will engage in, the vision you shape together, these form a wave of relationships that can shape the change you need, unity cannot be taken for granted, it must be actively build day by day, relationship by relationship and partners like the European Union will work with you not in-front, not behind but shoulder by shoulder.

We are proud to stand with you, committed to supporting platforms that amplify youth voices and equip you to drive transformative change. The best leaders are those who create conditions for others to thrive. Those who inspire without seeking idolatry and serve without imagining reward.

So lead not for power but for purpose, inspire not to be adored but to awaken, build not for today but for future generations and lead to be not to have.

Thank you



# HON. MATTHEW RUKIKAIRE

## Guild Leaders Summit Advisory Council Member.

*"All efforts are being made to mobilise the leaders of all East African countries to support your efforts for this cause. I have spelt out my vision in a paper which I Presented as keynote speaker at the 100 year of University of Makerere founding two years ago and I repeated some of it at the last summit of the GPLA summit."*



I want to welcome you to this gathering, and I want to extend a special welcome to our chief guest of honour, His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta.

The Kenyatta family has always had a special place in the hearts of Ugandans and continue to enjoy a lot of support and love. Your father's gallant contribution to fight against British colonialism is fresh in our minds.

At another level, for the years between 1981 and 1986 during the bush war, Kenya was a home to the National Resistance Movement external committee of which I was chairman. Nairobi became an NRM base of activities both clandestine and public. The NRM government and the people of Uganda will always remember the support and hospitality extended to the Ugandans who lived in Kenya and many still do and work there.

At a personal level, my family have lived in Kenya for a total of 12 years, where I worked and did some business, and our children grew up and went to school there. So we have fond memories of our life in Kenya and kindly extend our family's gratitude to the people of Kenya.

By the time the three East African countries that is Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda got their independence between 1961-1963, they were more integrated than in their 60 years of independence at the time. It was an irony that the colonial masters brought East Africa closest to integration than the post-independence African leaders have been able to do in those 60 years.

I served as the East African Community representative in Brussels to the European Economic Community and by comparison the East African Economic Integration

was more advanced than the European Economic Community. It was common for me to be asked by officials of the commission to explain how East Africa had achieved that level of integration which was still eluding the Europeans themselves. Among the East African leaders were visionaries who wanted to ignore this contradiction and seize the historic opportunity to build an East African Political Federation founded on the structures created by the British.

The leading proponent of this was Julius Nyerere when he was at that time president of Tanganyika before it became Tanzania supported very vigorously by Tom Mboya from Kenya who had the full support of Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, then prime minister of self-governing Kenya.

Nyerere had offered to delay the Independence of Tanganyika and wait for Kenya and Uganda to become independent so they could federate at the same time. Uganda under Milton Obote procrastinated and offered Buganda's resistance to the federation as a reason to suggest that Uganda was not yet ready to federate with the other states. As a result of that missed historical opportunity, 60 years have been lost, efforts have continued and still continued to move towards the dream of an East African federation but many political obstacles still remain.

I was myself a witness to this visions and frustrations, I happen to have been President of the Students' Guild at Makerere in 1962/63 when the Heads of Government of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda assembled here at Makerere University to inaugurate the University of East Africa and break away from being a college of London University.

Present at this momentous occasion was Julius Nyerere, Milton Obote and James Gichuru who was Minister of Finance in Kenya representing Prime Minister Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. I was their host and shared a platform with them and we pronounced ourselves on the imperative of East African Unity soon to sound hollow by the rapid disintegration of the then existing East African structures.

The students whom I represented were rock-solid supporters of the East African Integration and was the reason that I was overwhelmingly elected by an East African student's constituency because I was a strong advocate of the East African Political Federation.

Once again, the organization of the Guild Presidents Leadership Academy (GPLA) have created yet another opportunity for the people of East Africa and their leaders to contribute to the vision of an East African political federation. At the last summit held on the 15th of April last year, that is 2024, I proposed that the Uganda Summit of the Guild Presidents Leadership Academy be extended to become an East African Organization, and that His Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete,

becomes its patron. This proposal was seconded very strongly by the Patron of the Uganda Chapter, Right Honourable Ruhakana Rugunda, and was adopted by acclamation. Subsequently, the Presidency HE. Jakaya Kikwete, accepted to become the Patron of the East African Organization now in operation, hence the presence of our guest students from other East African Universities who have been introduced to us this morning.

Since then, H.E Jakaya Kikwete has continued to network in support of the establishment of a regional body and already as you can see, he brought His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta on board, we are grateful, Your Excellence for the gesture and commitment to this noble cause exemplified by your presence here as Guest of Honour, thank you very much sir.

Rt. Hon. Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda and I have had meetings with HE President Yoweri Museveni on different occasions and I can say that he is fully in support of what we are trying to do. The forces being mobilised from the young and old to tackle the challenges are up to the task. The young men and women 60 years ago are now the old men and women of today and are united with the young men and women of today in facing these tasks together.

Time doesn't stand still, new generation come and go. When I was Guild President of the Students body here in 1962/63, I was only 23 years old, now I am a man of 87 going on to 88 at the time I was President of the Guild, President Jakaya kikwete was only 13 years old and President Uhuru Kenyatta

was one year old (sorry Sir), President Museveni was about 16 years old and still attending a secondary school at Ntare because I was a successful student at Ntare, I used to be recruited as a student teacher at Ntare and one of my students was President Museveni, who still remembers most of the things I taught him some of which I have forgotten myself and I think that is the reason he is President and I am not.

So, we have a convergence of purpose at this Summit of the old generation at the highest level of leadership and the young generation of leaders looking to become the leaders of tomorrow or today.

All efforts are being made to mobilise the leaders of all East African countries to support your efforts for this cause. I have spelt out my vision in a paper which I Presented as keynote speaker at the 100 year of University of Makerere founding two years ago and I repeated some of it at the last summit of the GPLA summit.

I will not therefore, repeat what I said, instead, I have asked my daughter once again, Eve Mareie Rukikaire Mwine who is a poet to read again a slightly modified poem on East African Community countries in order to continue sensitizing the public to the cause of integration.

We are hoping to translate this poem to Kiswahili and probably into a song so that it can achieve wider circulation.

# Poem

## EAST AFRICA RISING



***Eva Rukikaire Mwine***

I am East Africa.  
I am the remnant of history broken and old glory stolen,  
Partitioned like a pie at a conference table in Berlin,  
My kings and chiefs were handed pen and paper,  
mirrors and gold to relinquish customary hold.  
In the name of civility, they ceded liberty.  
Since then, I have walked for generations across the  
untapped potential of my lands  
Chocked in a white collar, encumbered by the heavy  
weight of ill-fitting imperial boots, dry like a tree  
severed from its ancestral roots.  
But I have survived.  
Today, I am an East Africa Rising.  
I am eight countries integrating and still counting.  
I am over three hundred million people with a  
median age of nineteen.

I am bulging with youthful energy and the world must  
contend with me.  
Like the Grand Inga Dams of the DRC, I am an explo-  
sion of potentiality.  
I am gathering my broken parts, reclaiming the  
amputated limbs of my Congolese forefathers.  
Limbs lost in the cruel harvest of rubber during King  
Leopold's plunder.  
I am contemporary Congo, a priceless aggregation of  
globally coveted wealth.  
I come to the union suspicious of my neighbors but  
trusting the higher ideals and promises of unity.  
I am South Sudan,  
I am armed with the genetics of determination that  
saw the Dinka and the Nuer and other tribes  
Stand through centuries of Arab domination and  
human rights violation.

I am the voice of John De Mabior Garang, who famously said at the comprehensive peace agreement in Nairobi, "Let us move forward with the momentum of history".

I am Rwanda.

Like a phoenix I have risen from the ashes of genocide  
Defying international prescriptions, I soldier on in perfect imperfection,

Championing my history I am recognized globally as a miracle story.

I am Tanzania.

Rooted in the principles of UJAMA, I am detribalized and healthily politicized.

I am Mwalimu Julius Kambage Nyerere; my legacy is an eternal lesson of instruction in the pursuit of African liberty, self-actualization and the preservation of dignity.

Conquering the African conundrum of transition,

I am Ali Hassan Mwinyi, I am Benjamin Mkapa, I am Jakaya Kikwete and I am Samia Suluhu. My institutional headship of the union is indisputably legitimized.

I am Somalia.

A proud pilgrim from Africa's horn, seeking to be reborn

With a history of anarchy, I am war-torn; my many aspirations have been still born.

I come to the union with my warring clans and unfulfilled plans.

I come with the ingenuity of enterprise, a mastery of money and warrior ancestry.

I come with the fear of Allah and the discipline of Sharia.

I am thousands of miles of coastline; I am the union's bridge to the world.

I am Burundi.

The majesty of my drum beat has never been silenced

by the genocidal trauma of ethnic violence.

I come to Arusha, desperately seeking to change the trajectory of my broken story.

I am Uganda.

I have given massive impetus to the reassembly of scattered people.

Domestically, I am a tangible manifestation of grass root integration.

My doors are wide open; my policies accommodative, my people are politicized to be empathetic and receptive.

Regionally, my span is monumental, with my boots on the ground; from the Great Lakes to the Horn my impact has been instrumental.

I am General Yoweri Museveni, Ruhemba Ogwenjura. I have kept the flame burning through the dewy seasons of diminishing political will.

The lens of hindsight and history may portray the long season of my leadership story, as having been necessary for the restoration of lost glory and the mental rehabilitation of the African situation.

I am Kenya.

I wear the scars of historical rebellion like a proud medallion.

I am Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, my charismatic call for Harambee still pierces through the seasons of time, reminding generations about the great commission to fight for African interests, values and traditions.

Energized by the Mau Mau, who shed blood for sovereignty, I am pushing the frontiers of economic emancipation for my people's integrity.

With a skilled and professional workforce,

I am at the vanguard of the regions race to middle income status.

Leading the way for others to follow, I am proving that the union can have a better tomorrow.

I am East Africa Rising.



# RT. HON. DR. RUHAKANA RUGUNDA

## Patron Guild Presidents Leadership Academy

*"So it is imperative that on our part and especially your part as young people to take charge of your affairs of East Africa should be clearly tuned to ensure that the button that has taken so long to hand over in terms of deepening unity, and solidarity of the people of East Africa is actually achieved."*



Protocol observed, ladies and gentlemen, I am extremely happy that the GPLA has been able to invite HE President Uhuru Kenyatta and all student leaders from East Africa and that they responded well.

This is a big achievement because when you get people together they can meaningfully discuss issues that confront them and go ahead and look for solutions to those problems. So you are really on the way to looking for solutions for African problems. I also want to agree with the declaration that was read by one of your representatives calling for free movement of peoples of East Africa, mechanisms for resolving conflicts and also deepening East African Cooperation and Integration. These are very critical points which you share with both the government and the National Resistance Movement and I

believe these are also shared by the people of Kenya, and the leadership of Kenya, and the people of Tanzania and its leadership. In fact in this context, the independence leaders of East Africa, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, Dr. Apollo Milton Obote declared that within a year the three countries of East Africa would be federated it caused a lot of excitement in the population because the population want unity, but when time came unfortunately a different direction was taken.

So it is imperative that on our part and especially your part as young people to take charge of your affairs of East Africa should be clearly tuned to ensure that the button that has taken so long to hand over in terms of deepening unity, and solidarity of the people of East Africa is

actually achieved.

What are the problems of Africa? President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni has written a book about this and many different people have talked about this but when I was reflecting on this, I felt that one area that is under played in terms of problems that Africa has faced is unequal and unbalanced and unfair interaction between Africa and the outside world.

The first major interaction that affected Africa was slavery, and you know what slavery did to our continent, what followed soon was colonialism and again colonialism cut Africa into Micro states about 53 countries and really the real aim for colonialism to do this was first to benefit the Metropolitan and colonising powers.

In order to do this, they had to weaken Africa, make sure there are small places that will not be able to resist and therefore, Africa became a centre of mileage, centre of exploitation and you have heard from the poem read by Eve Rukikaire, there was plunder.

Unfortunately, this disease they injected in us of a divided Africa of balkanisation became a chronic disease, the Africa leaders said we are here, we will respect the colonial borders, they did so with good intentions to avoid unnecessary conflict for territories here and

their but indirectly it also cemented the division that colonialism had brought about.

Therefore, when we are divided we become weak and when we are so many, states become a good recipe for problems, for confrontations for permanent state of conflict and we lose our energies in those problems instead of using our energies into uniting our people and developing our continent as a formidable force that's why am extremely happy that you the student leaders are committing yourselves for deeper East African Integration and Unity because we will definitely be stronger. Kenya may be strongish, Uganda a bit strong, Tanzania but when we are three countries together, we will be very strong and our voice will be heard.

And I believe, this is a solution forward and am glad that the young people are now playing a vanguard role to ensure the actualization of this. It is for your future, it

is the future of generations to come and it is for the future of our continent so that it stops being marginalized for so many centuries so that it is enabled to play its rightful role in global competition that is going on.

Let me also agree with Mathew that there was closer cooperation during the colonial times painfully than now, it is true that you would easily travel to any part of East Africa, use East African currency and many other things. Now the situation has become a little more complicated but am sure our leaders and I here want to salute President Uhuru Kenyatta for being on the vanguard of pushing for deeper East African integration and unity.

He has publicly advocated for that and he has quietly gone out of his way to work for it and incidentally even now when he is not in that big office he continues that crusade to get us together. So when you are calling for deeper cooperation, you're not alone, you're with President Kenyatta and am glad you invited him. When I was a young man in Kabale in 1961-62, I was

one of the few to the 7 men who went to watch Jomo Kenyatta accompanied by John Kapong'e the then Secretary General of Uganda People's Congress visiting Uganda and specifically visiting Kabale wearing his signature cap and that freedom of leaders easily being able to go to any part remote as it may be of East Africa as demonstrated by Jomo Kenyatta then was highly commendable and should be reactivated in order to deepen cooperation in East Africa.

So with those few remarks, it's my great pleasure to take this opportunity to invite Her Excellency the Vice President of the Republic of Uganda who is very committed to the cause of East Africa, security for our people and that's why she has quite an interesting career in the UPDF and therefore, it is my pleasure to request you to come forward and perform your duties in representing His Excellency President Yoweri Museveni.

Thank you so much.

# HE. JESSICA ALUPO

## Vice President of the Republic of Uganda

*I would like to invite all the youth to participate in the social economic transformation of Uganda in those four sectors which I have highlighted because when we do that we enable our country to achieve vision 2040, for the case of Africa vision 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals for the case of the United Nations.*



My role here this afternoon is a very simple one, to relay to you the message of his Excellency the President and thereafter invite HE Uhuru my brother and friend to make his address.

Allow me to welcome His Excellence Uhuru Kenyatta to Uganda and ask all of us to give him a loud round of applause for accepting to create time for this very important ceremony and also travel specifically for this ceremony. We sincerely do appreciate.

Secondly, allow me hail the warm bilateral relationship between our sister countries, the Republic of Kenya and the Republic of Uganda.

I bring all of you warm greetings from his Excellency Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the President of the Republic of Uganda. Let me congratulate all of you the guild presidents on successfully hosting this

very important summit here this afternoon. This is the message of HE the President to you.

The President asked me to share with the youth the three points of the historical mission of the NRM. These include; Strategic security; Nationalism and Prosperity for all.

On wealth creation, Uganda will continue to prioritize the involvement of the youth in the social economic transformation of our country and Uganda has already guided through responsible MDAs that the wealth and jobs are in four sectors;

Commercial agriculture, Manufacturing and Industry, Services and the ICT sector. Your excellence, ladies and gentlemen, Uganda will continue to have an economy which is based on export promotion and import substitution, an economy which is independent, self-sustaining and integrated, and the youth in Uganda are

all welcome and some are already participating in building that economy, an economy which is to lead Uganda to an industrialization status like many countries in Africa are doing.

I would like to invite all the youth to participate in the social economic transformation of Uganda in those four sectors which I have highlighted because when we do that we enable our country to achieve vision 2040, for the case of Africa vision 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals for the case of the United Nations.

Your Excellence, His Excellence the President asked me to use one example that when you produce goods in one part of the country, continent, it should teach all of us to value each other. He specifically asked me to tell you that for the case of Banyankore they produce similar products e.g. Milk, Bananas and the people who the Banyankole need most are those that do not come from Ankole and those who do not produce those similar products because with value addition now those products can be marketed anywhere within Uganda, East Africa and the African market.

I am suggesting that as you the Guild leaders meeting here you must embrace unity, you must embrace the spirit of Pan Africanism, you must embrace the spirit of hard work, because it is very easy

to say what am saying here but more often than not it is a bit difficult to make implementation on a collective level. Let us as the youth involve ourselves in creating wealth, prosperity for the country and prosperity for all of us.

When you come from another part of the country you may be producing another product and therefore, you need other people to buy that product so the first point is very clear your excellence on prosperity and that prosperity should be tagged to where you will find the market. That gives me great pleasure because I recognize the fact that here we have the East African scope which means that when we are looking for market we shall find the market in the East African countries, get the market in COMESA and we shall get the market in the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA).

The second point from HE the President is Strategic Security and here Uganda is looking at the military security, political security, economic security, environmental security and cultural or social security. Your excellence, security is a fundamental pillar, fundamental prerequisite, a bedrock without which economic transformation cannot take place so Uganda will continue to provide all the people of Uganda peace from boarder to boarder.

We all know the history of Uganda. The Hon. Mathew Rukikaire has just told you how he was in Kenya doing special duties in order to liberate Uganda. We all know especially for those who come from northern Uganda the two decade conflict which ravaged social infrastructure, services in that part of

the country. For those of you who come from Karamoja, you know the conflict of cattle wrestling which distorted the development of that region and even the neighbouring area and it even crosses over your excellence to the Pokot of Kenya.

For those of you who come from Kasese you know the intermittent challenges that Uganda has faced over the years from that direction of the country. You can name them until cows come back home including many examples from where I come from in Teso sub region so your excellence am here to assure the youth on behalf of his excellence that Uganda is safe and Uganda will forever be safe for you to make the choice, to make the investment, to produce and get products to the market without ant challenges. Because of that peace we now talk about the country being in the middle income status and progressing to upper middle income status and beyond.

The government of Uganda, your excellence has invested heavily in the youth here including myself. The youth who are here are very healthy because of the government program of immunization for all, that is why we are talking about 80% of the population being below 30 years. Because the Maternal Mortality and Infant Mortality is now history, the killer diseases can hardly kill the young children because of immunization so I want firstly thank the parents for responding to the NRM program of immunization for all.

I call upon all of you to continue listening out and checking out on programmes of government where you as the youth can benefit especially the livelihood programs. Food security fits

well under environmental security. Uganda is very gifted by nature, very beautiful country, fresh water bodies, lake Victoria, Kyoga, some of them shared. Beautiful forests, flora and fauna and I remind the youth to work with corresponding departments of government to ensure that our environment is intact. I know that many of you have tree planting campaigns and reforestation, with an intact environment, we stand to attract high numbers of tourist and that means a lot to our resource envelope and that means a lot to the sustainability of our economy.

On political security your excellence, since the NRM came to power, there is now a government of constitutionalism, the rule of law and democracy. Every five years we go out for an election. I got the message from the panellist here some challenges of election procedures but first and foremost I would like to note that every five years the NRM government guarantees that there is going to be an election as per the constitution so you are the brains, you are the pillars, you are the resource of the country. This is the time that you use dialogue to fix the grey areas which you have noticed and government may have also noticed and I like the method of identifying good mechanisms of working together without creating counterproductive actions. So look at the way you as the youth of East Africa, Uganda can fix those challenges. There is someone who always reminds me when I call him, he says "you see what you can also do, see what you can also do" as we are going back after this summit, lets also think about what we can also do that can also positively impact on the situation that you think is getting out of hand.

We need to work together as East

Africans to avert global challenges, when you are alone, you may have your armed forces but because of what my senior Rt.Hon. Ruhakana Rugunda has just said, you may not manage alone to deal with global challenges if you are an independent country. But once you have a block like the East African block, you can combine the weapons which every country has to have the capacity to deal with global challenges just like the European Union .

Africa was colonized long ago, and Africa should never be colonized again and that's why while here you should speak in terms of projections, how do you want Africa to be in the next five years, ten years, thirty years just like the President and his team projected how Uganda should look like in the liberation struggle and you and I are the beneficiaries of their projection. Who will be the beneficiaries of your projection? And what will they achieve from your projection? Generations must be interconnected, I am happy that in Uganda there is no discrimination based on gender, based on religion, based on tribe and even based on age, that's why His Excellence the President has just celebrated 80 years but all these Bazukulu here are saying they want him again, to vote him next year and they are all voting him, that is the meaning of inter-connectedness of the age groups.

When I was the minister of youth for children affairs, we used to say that we have three categories of youth: The Senior Youth, Elderly Youth and the Youth. So you can now gauge where you belong and that means that even his excellence the president belongs with you in one of the age groups of the youth and I want to thank you for demonstrating confidence in him and the NRM.

Your excellence, finally on Nationalism and Unity, the President has asked that we encourage the youth to love their country and that they should be very enthusiastic in

building their country regardless of the challenges.

The youth are physically strong, the youth have so many miles to walk compared to the old people and therefore, in case of anything you should be the ones preserving what the government has already consolidated in order to build on. With a conference like this, a leader like me will not like to hear about a strike in Makerere University again or any other Universities in the region.

While a Minister of Education, we had many strikes in the Universities, Secondary schools but with summits like these, we think that those kind of counter-productive activities can be averted through other means of sharing with the management of the Universities. So you the youth should preserve what the country has and work hard to build on more and more.

I encourage all of you to connect to each other to meaningfully use those arenas which by law have been created for you so as to appreciate the level in which government has invested in you. Uganda is one of the best investment destinations globally, Uganda remains one of the best tourism destinations globally, that's what you are having as a starting point and we the elders have high expectations in you and please do not disappoint us.

Finally, I would like you to refer to your theme of today "Leadership with Integrity" many of you may be Christians but we have Muslims too, this quote is for all of you "The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom" . Spirituality in Africa is a reality, we are a very God fearing country and in Uganda you can even refer to our motto "FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY" you are the pillars of our country and please remain guided, accept guidance.

When the parent gives you guidance, listen, when the University Administrator gives you guidance listen, when a Political Leader comes to interact with you listen. I know that this age is too much focused on the rights, you have enormous rights as student leaders, the youth, every Ugandan but let me remind you that those rights come with responsibilities I encourage you to walk as team.

Your excellency this meeting has reminded me of the competition I went to in Machakos some time back as a 2nd lieutenant, we went there in games of the army, shooting competitions which is an annual activity just like the senior secondary schools. I strongly support the idea that every year these Guild Presidents and the region should commit to hosting the summit on a rotational level.

I will report to the President that this is one of my recommendations. The leader told me that they rely so much on donations and I told him that we can also make a request to government, to the President and His Excellence Uhuru Kenyatta, may do the same for us that side, so that this Guild Leaders Summit be made an annual and recognized event where you come and share experiences, exchange knowledge, learn from each other. It builds strong connections and deepens the integration. I am prepared to walk with you the journey which you are prepared to take.

Finally I would like to thank the Professor Nawangwe Banabas, thank you for steering our alma mater, it is easy to say that me I am an OG of Makerere, so thank you for steering our institution and all the leaders that have come from the different Countries thank you for coming, stay longer and when you return please send our warm greetings to the other friends and brothers in the EAST AFRICAN region those from beyond Africa the same.



# H.E UHURU MUIGAI KENYATTA

## 4<sup>th</sup> President of the Republic of Kenya

### Guest of Honour

It is an honour to stand here today, to address this very distinguished gathering of young leaders from across the East African region.

I consider the city of Kampala my home away from home, with the beautiful views from the top of Makerere Hill remaining as captivating as when I first set eyes on them many years ago.

I thank you all for the very cheerful and warm welcome. Asanteni sana!

Allow me to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Guild Presidents Leadership Academy for organizing this summit and to Makerere University for hosting us at this esteemed institution. Makerere continues to serve as the furnace upon whose flames the ideologies of many African leaders have been forged.

Ladies and Gentlemen ,

To state that we are living in a tumultuous time will be somewhat of an understatement. The traditional world order to which we have become accustomed to is being upended before our very eyes. The forces of nationalistic politics are fast eroding the foundations of multilateral institutional frameworks, that formed the sub-structure of global geo-politics for many decades.

From the uncertain policies emanating from Washington DC, that are reshaping the rules of global trade, to the all-consuming conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, that risk becoming the nuclei for wider regional conflicts. We are witnessing a watershed moment in the history of the world.



As an African leader, I view these developments from a somewhat broader context beyond the uncertainty of growing global tensions. I recognise that we as Africans are simultaneously besieged by disruption, chaos and confusion on one end and immense opportunity and the promise of prosperity on the other end.

To illustrate further on this statement that seems contradictory on the face of it, I will draw from two examples that you'll find to be familiar. The first is recent suspension of USAID funding primarily directed at developing nations and the second is a glimpse at the direction that European politics is taking and its implications on Africa.

Whereas the stoppage of US led international development aid has had immediate and far-reaching implications on our

fragile healthcare systems, it has also been the much-needed wake up call to our leaders and policy makers. They should recognize that our economies had become woefully dependent on the charity of foreign governments and it is now time to lay the foundations for self-sufficiency.

The sunset of US AID has forced a level of economic policy introspection unseen in Africa for decades. The situation calls for a serious rethink in the developmental priorities of African Governments. Difficult and unfamiliar choices will have to be made going forward.

Our Government's must weigh whether buying bullets to restock their armouries is better use of scarce resources than procuring vaccines and mosquito nets, needed to protect our infants from disease. Prioritisation of expenditure in

the absence of American financed subsidies in the sectors of health and education, means that more attention is going to be paid by citizens to the way governments handle their finances. This will inevitably translate into demands for greater public participation and transparency in public finance management.

In Western Europe, with each passing year more governments are leaning further to the right. The election of populist, nationalist administrations has been catalysed by various factors. Amongst them the high cost of living attributed to the side effects of global shocks and the scramble for stretched social services. Services that must be shared with millions of immigrants flowing in from Eastern Europe, the Middle East and significantly from Africa.

This right leaning scenario has some near-term implications for Africa, the Europeans no longer want to see our immigrant boats laden with young men and women landing on their shores. They are busy enacting laws to ensure that we never set foot in their countries to partake of their resources without proper immigration documents. Our young people will soon have nowhere left to escape to as they run away from the wars and poverty that define much of our continent's present reality.

With nowhere to go but home, with no one to turn to but themselves, our young people will eventually wake up to the fact, that there is no global rescue mission coming to save them. They must act to save themselves from a future of despair. They will have to play their part in reshaping the destinies of the countries of their birth. They will realise that their moment to step onto the stage has arrived.

In both examples that I have drawn from,

there is a clear illustration of the type of challenges that define the moment that we are living in. Conversely, the same examples also provide the perfect Segway for us to explore what opportunities exist for a new generation of young leaders. A generation who will chart a better path for Africa. This is what has brought us together this morning.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we seek to navigate the challenges of our time, let us take a moment to reflect on three questions that will serve to frame the context of our discussion.

Firstly, what does it mean today to be a young African in a world where developed nations are focused inwards, prioritising their national interests over their global responsibilities?

Secondly, what does it mean to be a young African living on a continent that has over 35 non-international armed conflicts taking place, with millions facing displacement and food insecurity as a result?

Lastly, what does it mean to be a young African competing for limited economic opportunities with close to a billion other young Africans?

These are existential questions for you, the young people of Africa and they can't be easily answered without a deeper understanding of how we arrived at this point. With the exception of Ethiopia, most of Africa has a dark colonial past that has in a large part, been shaped by the thinking of post- independence generations.

When the wave of liberation swept across Africa in the early 1960's it heralded new beginnings for us. It was an opportunity to govern ourselves and to determine our own priorities.

As our leaders sought to dismantle the vestiges of colonialism there was widespread optimism that newly independent states would create the environment for their citizens to thrive.

For a moment in time, we lived the dream and savoured the early wins of being our own masters. However, over time, instead of dismantling the colonial legacy, we inherited it and customised it even further to create a new African style of leadership. A style that leaned heavily on patronage, ethnic and religious mobilisation, elitism and favouritism. The result was a quick deterioration in national cohesion, the entrenchment of corruption as a necessary evil, that led to the stagnation of our economies.

These weaknesses exposed our underbellies and left us vulnerable once again to the whims of foreign powers. They have exposed these vulnerabilities in our political constructs to manipulate our development trajectory as Africans. We are almost back to square one.

This is the story of years gone by. It does not have to be how the future will evolve. Now that you have an insight as to how we got here, lets focus our attention on how we get out of this quandary that we find ourselves.

We begin this by tackling the first question. What does it mean today to be a young African in a world where developed nations are focused inwards, prioritising their national interests over their global responsibilities?

Having served as President, I appreciate fully the pressures that elected leaders face on a daily basis, they have to be in tune with the mood and desires of

their voting public and be seen to be directing the Government's energies towards addressing those demands.

Can we therefore really blame the governments of developed nations for responding to the needs of their own citizens above all others?

Instead of lamenting about the inward-looking policies of faraway democracies, shouldn't we instead be asking ourselves why is it that we as African's don't prioritise our own interests above all else? The duty of a responsible government is to discharge its primary mandate of serving the interests of its citizens.

In many nations across Africa, we have somehow managed to invert the order of this relationship. Instead, the citizens are subservient to the Government and are compelled to adjust their behaviour in order to promote the interests of the state, which in many instances are almost indistinguishable from the personal interests of those in power.

As young African leaders, you know as well as I do that this situation is untenable. The economic opportunities you desire in order to live your best lives can only be created by Governments, that are designed to serve their citizens, and not Governments whose only reason for existence is to exploit, manipulate and drain the resources of their countries and citizens for personal gain.

Allow me to remind you once again, there is nobody coming to our rescue and in a world that is becoming more insular, there will soon be nowhere to run to. It is therefore my considered submission that the answer to our first question is that you as young leaders must recognise that this is an independence moment and that you are officially

the freedom fighters of this era. You are last line of defence in the battle to rescue the heart and soul of Africa for the sake of future generations. Your mission is to embrace your civic duty and choose governments that are responsive to your needs.

Young leaders of East Africa, ladies and gentlemen,

Let us now turn to our second question, what does it mean to be a young African living on a continent that has over 35 non-international armed conflicts taking place, with millions facing displacement and food insecurity as a result?

Today in Africa, from the Sahel, the Great lakes to the Horn, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea, over 500 million Africans are caught up in some type of armed conflict or political strife. Inevitably those impacted the most are women, children and the youth.

I talked earlier about how the colonial legacy was replaced in many countries in Africa, by a style of leadership that draws its strength from creating and exploiting societal fissures along religious, racial and/ or ethnic lines as a pretext for the accumulation of economic and political power by a select few.

I hold the view that this is never going to be a stable method of governance for the long term for a number of basic reasons.

Firstly, the corruption that arises from it only serves to undermine public trust and diverts resources from essential services, sowing the seeds of resentment amongst the populace.

Secondly, the politics of ethnicity, favouritism and patronage at the expense of a meritocracy are the quickest ways in which to erode national unity.

Thirdly, personalisation of the State to the

extent that it remains indistinguishable from its leaders, means that the institutions designed to safeguard the continuity of governments, are weakened to the point of irrelevance and the future of the nation is only as strong as the individuals in power.

In all three instances, you end up with large sections of the population that are physically resident within the borders of a country but are psychologically and emotionally disengaged. A people excluded from the role of nation building because they feel like outsiders or bystanders in their own countries. At the root of almost every crisis in our part of the world the common denominator is the absence of inclusive, responsive leadership.

Furthermore, it is essential for you as young leaders to appreciate the fact that these fissure lines that I speak of are visible beyond our continent. As such they have made our Continent a fair game for destructive proxy wars sponsored by nations with significant economic and military strength.

These actors have the strategic intent of using this chaos and confusion perpetuated by self-serving leaders to access our human capital, our mineral wealth and our agricultural potential to grow their own economies at our expense. To compound this further, societies experiencing these levels of internal discontent are susceptible to an even more sinister type of enemy, violent extremist organisations hell bent on disseminating and entrenching their misguided ideologies through violence.

The peace and security crisis that looms over many parts of our continent is a clear and present danger to Africa's long-term viability as a going concern. If we do not find a way to resolve these

conflicts soon, we may have entire generations of young people wiped out as cannon fodder and with them any prospect of uplifting the lives of our people.

Millennials, Gen Z's, Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to state this point once more for emphasis, no one from outside of Africa is coming to save you. In the words of Elridge Cleaver an American writer and civil rights activist. You are either part of the solution or part of the problem. This message holds true today as it did decades ago at the height of America's civil rights movement.

The good news is, never before have I witnessed such a pivotal moment to effect change. All the elements necessary to bring about lasting and irreversible change are within your grasp as young people. What am I saying exactly you may ask?

For starters, the demographics are in your favour, the median age across Africa in 2025 is 19.3 years against a global median age of 30.4 years. This means that over 65% of all Africans are below the age of 25 years. You have the numbers, you have the time and you have the energy to get involved and stay involved in governance discussions until you effect the changes you wish to see. Furthermore, you are beneficiaries of years of investment in education and digital connectivity. You are in essence the first children of the knowledge economy, the true digital natives of Africa.

The democratisation of access to information through the internet means that there are very few secrets left. The asymmetry of information in favour of the Government has always been a tool to manage the perception of populations, this is no longer the case. You know what we know. In many cases you know it better because you have understood how to leverage the

essential tools of today such as artificial intelligence and the power of social media.

Lastly on this point is that over the last 60 years or so, as our countries have developed, so have the living and migration patterns of our citizens. Millions of families have moved from rural towns to large urban settings in search of opportunity and a better life. This migration has created a new generation of non-ethnically homogenous populations across Africa.

The result? Millions of young people born out of intermarriages and unshackled by the negative weight of ethnic identity are slowly becoming the majority. As I alluded to you earlier in my speech never before have there been such ideal conditions to break loose from the generational curse of our forefathers that saw us remain chained to ethnic and cultural differences as a way to distribute wealth and political power.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let us tackle the final of the three existential questions that I posed to you. What does it mean to be a young African competing for limited economic opportunities with close to a billion other young Africans?

We need to see our strength in numbers as Africans. In spite of having the world's youngest population and a market size of over 1.5 billion people. Africa still accounts for less than 2.5% of global trade. We have designed our trade corridors to favour extraction as opposed to intra-African trade. Meaning that it's easier today for East Africans to sell tomatoes and avocados to the European Union than it is to supply our brethren in West Africa.

Similarly, it is easier for an American or

European passport holder to visit African countries visa free than it is for an African to traverse their own continent.

To create economic opportunities for our youth, we need to remove the barriers that prevent the actualisation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement.

We must stop being paranoid about each other and give preferential treatment to African passport holders to visit and do business anywhere on their continent. We must design our transport and logistics infra-structure to point inwards to facilitate more cross-border trade by allowing for the affordable and efficient movement of people, goods and services across our continent.

Closer to home, we need to reflect on our education curricula. Are we training our children for the jobs of the future?

The advancements in technology have rendered many traditional careers irrelevant yet we still spend millions of dollars every year encouraging our children to pursue courses that will lead them to nowhere. Today the world needs doers, people who can get things done. There is a preference of functionality over form.

I would summarise my response to the third question as follows:

One, we must increase our share of global trade as Africans by deliberately focusing on intra-African trade;

Two, we need to evolve our education systems to encourage our youth to be entrepreneurial and tailor our curricula to be fit for purpose in the knowledge economy;



Three, we need to actively influence the adoption of domestic policies on macro-economic management that create a conducive environment for the private sector to thrive.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have always been passionate about the role of our youth in leadership and it is a subject that I can discuss for hours on end. However, I am cognisant that today, we have limited time to exchange these ideas.

I would therefore like to share some perspectives garnered from my 30 years in active politics and my 10 years as a President.

These perspectives delve into the basics of leadership and what I feel are the irreducible minimums that we must all aspire to as leaders in the new world that we are navigating.

Integrity in leadership, this is not merely a moral ideal; it is a practical necessity. It involves the conviction to do right when it is costly and to serve when it is easier to exploit. Integrity builds legitimacy, and legitimacy fosters peace.

Leadership is a journey filled with

challenges and triumphs. Reflecting on my tenure, we faced numerous challenges, including corruption scandals and rising debt levels.

These experiences taught me that humility, listening, and continuous learning are core to ethical leadership.

Courage is an understated quality, but it is something that you shall require in abundance if we are to transcend ethnic mobilization for power, short-term populism and dependency on elite networks. Leadership should be based on vision and competence, not tribal affiliations. Policies should be designed for long-term national benefit, not immediate political gain. Opportunities should be accessible to all, based on merit and hard work.

Focused and determined is what you shall need to be in order to confront the status-quo and compel a shift to a merit-based governance model that values competence over connections, transparency over transactional politics, and places citizens and not politicians at the centre of public service.

Young Leaders of East Africa, Ladies and gentlemen,

As I conclude my remarks, I would like to recognise that universities are not just centres of learning; they are incubators of change. They nurture values, ethics, and civic consciousness.

Guild Presidents and student leaders are not merely representatives of their peers; they are trustees of tomorrow's Africa. Your leadership today will shape the governance structures of our nations tomorrow.

The power of an integrated East Africa lies in shared values, youth-led civic movements, and collaborative governance reforms. I encourage the creation of a cross-border Youth Action Plan for Integrity, as outlined in the Summit agenda. You are the first true East African generation—think beyond borders; think in vision.

For your sake and for the sake of future generations, my call to action for our youth is to lead with conviction, not convenience.

To our institutions I ask you, empower and equip these young leaders meaningfully with the skills and knowledge they need to actualise their potential.

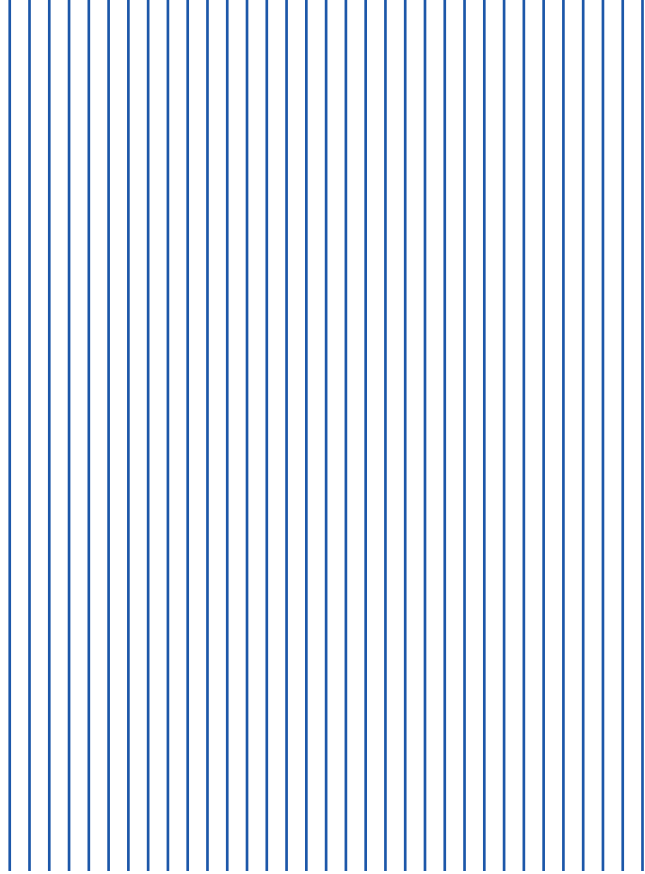
To the development partners present, it is my hope that you shall consciously invest in integrity-driven leadership development.

It is said that history has often been written by the powerful, but the future will be shaped by the principled.

I express hope in this generation's courage, creativity, and conscience. I reiterate support for the GPLA's mission and Makerere University's leadership. Let your voices rise not as echoes of the past, but as the architects of a new dawn—an East Africa that works for all and leaves none behind.

I thank you all for your very kind attention.

May God Bless You and May God Bless our beautiful continent of Africa.



# PANEL DISCUSSIONS

# FIRST PANEL

Topic: “Institutional Accountability:  
The Backbone of Good Governance”



**Moderator:**  
Mr. Hillary Oremo Odwee

**PANELISTS:**

**Eunice Wawuda** - Vice Chairperson, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences University of Nairobi Students Association (UNSA).

**Andrew Mwizerwa** - Guild President, University of Rwanda.

**Isaac Kikumu** - Speaker, Makerere University Guild.

**Peace Augustin** - Guild President, Institute of Finance Management-Dar es Salaam.



**EUNICE WAWUDA**  
Vice Chairperson,  
Faculty of Arts and  
Social Sciences  
University of Nairobi  
Students Association  
(UNSA).

Our Kenyan constitution 2010 is a game changer because it enshrines transparency, accountability and rule of law as national values under Article 10.

We have institutions that are working, we have the Ethics and Integrity Commission at the KICC, we have the Office of the Auditor General, we have the 47 County Governors that are mandated to make sure that public resources are used to serve citizens equitably, laws are upheld impartially and governments are open to public scrutiny.

On the issue of laxity in public offices or rather public institutions, this is a common trend even in Kenya and I believe it's also happening here in Uganda.

So what happens in public institutions, there's a lot of laxity there's a lot of comfort. Public institutions are not like private sector. Private sector are up to the task because of their clear guiding principles .

There is less audit and even if the audit is going to take place, the system is corrupt. No one will tell you the truth. That's why you get into government office and you decide, you know what, I will serve the citizens according to my time. There is no one holding you accountable and that is where accountability comes in.

It is time to speak our voices because we are very powerful and this is what led to the mega protest in Kenya.

The youth were angry and they were asking for accountability. They are taking part in decision making processes in Kenya. They want leaders to be accountable for how they spend our taxes, how they spend their time, and their deliverables.

The issue of accountability is something that should be taken seriously especially by us the future leaders.

Comrades power, Comrades Viva!



**ANDREW MWIZERWA**  
Guild President, University  
of Rwanda.

This habit should be halted. People in the officers should know that they are in offices serving their country. It's on that basis that their serving should be making them proud of their country or the offices they represent not by the position but what they do or did. They should remember that, after all they are as well citizens of that region or country that the institution serves, and that should force them to serve the community, which they would like to live in as citizens or common people.

There is need to create independent oversight bodies for those institutions where they will be liable and asked about their service delivery.

Rule of law should be respected. In that context, there should be serious punishments and which has to be implemented.



## ISAAC KIKUMU

Speaker, Makerere University Guild.

As a Guild Leader at Makerere University, I firmly believe that accountability is the cornerstone of credible and transformative student leadership. It is not merely about answering questions when things go wrong—it is about being transparent, responsible, and responsive in every decision and action taken on behalf of the students we represent. In a time when public trust in leadership is constantly tested, we must set a new standard by ensuring that our mandates are fulfilled with integrity, that resources are managed prudently, and that we remain open to scrutiny. Through accountable leadership, we not only build confidence among our constituents but also prepare ourselves to become ethical stewards of national and regional governance in the future.



## PEACE AUGUSTIN CORNELIUS

Guild President, Institute of Finance Management, Dar es Salaam

There is a need for independent systems that ensure heads of institutions and government offices are held accountable for misconduct—similar to how CEOs in private companies can be overseen and removed by their boards.

Accountability should be embraced as a culture, not a blame game. It's not about pointing fingers, but about building structures that encourage responsibility, growth, and integrity.

Key challenge in East Africa and Africa in general, we often have strong leaders but weak systems. When such leaders leave office, the systems collapse. I strongly believe we must invest in building strong, independent systems so that the direction of our nations is guided not by the strength of one leader, but by the strength and consistency of the system themselves. Whoever occupies the chair should be governed by that system, ensuring stability and progress beyond individual leadership.

# SECOND PANEL

## TOPIC: Youth participation in Governance: Transforming vision into Action.

*(Explore role of students' leaders in influencing policy frameworks.)*



### Moderator: Yvonne Mpambara

#### PANELISTS:

- Don Patrick Bugingo - Guild President MUBS (2015 - 2016)
- Emmanuel Edonu - EU Sounding Board Member
- Ivan Bwowe - Guild President Makerere University (2014-2015)
- Vicky Namugobe - Speaker Youth Parliament





**DON PATRICK BUGINGO**  
Guild President MUBS (2015/2016)

Young people need to be seen not just as beneficiaries of development but the architects of it that's why inclusion should not just be anaesthetic but purposeful. That violence that often comes forth is a result of mere rejection of reality, that young people should be involved and should be in these spaces and even as we exist in these spaces, they cannot lead in spaces where they cannot speak because then of what purpose and what way will you lead so we ought to speak where we lead. There should be freedom of speech and freedom after speech. Violence is what kills that freedom as young people, we ought to remember that as we are building our futures, it might look tense because there might be resistance. violence is a threat from structures that be but remember these leaders should not see the rise of young people as a threat but an opportunity for continuity for the reality of the future we talk about.



**EMMANUEL EDONU**  
EU Sounding Board Member

When we look closely at the demographic dividend of this country and the globe, you realize young people are at the centre of it all and when we look at women who we look at as the vulnerable and marginalized also being half the population, in Ugandan context 50% of total population according to UBOS are women so when violence descends against them, it undermines their potential, scares them away from advocating and speaking together as young people. There is need for us to embrace women in most of our policies because when we implement them, they are apart of the system. We need a very robust and radical mechanism that will help the young people and ladies to ensure that their inclusion is viable and them realizing their potential is very key.



**IVAN BWOWE**  
Guild President  
Makerere University (2014-2015)

You don't have to be youthful to be useful and when it comes to the issue of inclusion of young ladies, I believe we have to recognise how far we've come but also with clear appreciation of where we want to go because if you do not know where you are and where you intend to go then all strategies and tools deployed and employed become futile. 1st Timothy 4:12 instructs us not to despise our youth, we have the best of the best in lady leaders. The onus is on us not to seem to be awarding them as a way of tokenism but to let them thrive. The inclusion and participation of women requires that we as men and boys realize that an empowered lady and a lady in leadership is a treasure to the development of our nation. Being a gender student, I want to use the analogy of a flying bird..if you have a properly functioning bird, then it can go miles and miles but also a giant bird like an eagle if it has a problem with one of its wings, it cannot fly high or if it is high and the problem emerges, it will not feed because the wing contributes to striking prey. Regardless of the situation, we must ensure that we create an enabling environment and this is always an ongoing process. We cannot have everything right today but keep realizing our status and working intentionally to ensure the ladies are on the table, take centre stage in the decisions because whatsoever is decided is for us all.



**VICKY NAMUGOBE**  
Speaker Youth Parliament

The concept of sexual violence must be looked at from where we are coming from and where we are going. I appreciate government for we have a very good constitution. Everyone is equal before the law in Article 21. Then the concept of affirmative action in Article 32. We the women in the African setting have been grouped in a particular circumstance as marginalized therefore, we need to move beyond formal to substantial equity where we are uplifted from one point to another. Through affirmative action, we have women in parliament, on councils, in cabinet but the challenge of sexual violence needs to be addressed. As women coming to occupy spaces what values do we bring on board and what do we stand for? If you stand for something, you are going to be able to fight and resist. Our culture tells us that women are not capable but there are those that are sprouting, what are they doing that you are not doing? Ladies as you come to occupy space, come with a value beyond your sexual body but values. When I stood for election, I faced sexual violence but when one approaches you and they ask how you intend to move from one point to another, I tell them what I stand for, I will not open myself, I will fight against this vice and will follow the process and move from one point to another.

The violence beyond sex is that we ladies fight each other in the space that is shrunk to remove each other and not move in a unified version. Let's work in unison to promote what is ours, when you are voted for go and represent our agenda to see that we get inclusivity in all aspects of life.



# THIRD PANEL

## Topic: Youth and Elections: Driving participation and Accountability for a Democratic future.

*(Analyzing the challenges and opportunities for youth political participation.)*



**Moderator:**  
Ruth Kitamirike

### PANELISTS:

- Rose Nabwire- Guild President MUBS (2025 - 2026)
- Ronald Bills Agaba- Guild Speaker Kyambogo University (2008 - 2009)
- His Worship Matanda Abubaker- Guild President IUIU-Mbale (2013 - 2014)



**Ruth Kitamirike:**

*78% of Ugandans are below 35 years, according to Open Space in 2021, 68% of youth turned up for election a decline from 73% in 2016, why do you think the youth created such a trend, what barriers hindered the youth from participation, and what can be done to ensure that this trend does not happen again in the coming election?*



**HW MATANDA ABUBAKER**  
Guild President IUIU-Mbale (2013 - 2014)

The word apathy has many synonyms but include disinterest, not being zealous and enthusiastic about something. For my generation and the one following me, there is a worrying trend of people becoming apathetic and cynical about everything. When someone loses hope, when someone does not understand the power they have or maybe they have exercised it and it has not worked, they lose hope and we should be concerned because when the energy is not geared towards a democratic process like an election, it means that energy will be applied in an alternative way that we may not like. Working now in the judiciary where I am apolitical, there are things I have observed.

We have not done enough work in decolonizing our governance systems, we are running systems that were imposed on us or we adopted but are not speaking to our people. For example a member of parliament, the primary issue is that from our cultural and the governance system we had in Africa and we have in our communities, when we are electing MPs, our people watch it as a contest between elites on who should go and get privileges and so they feel we can help you win that contest if there is something you exchange for us. In the judiciary, there are movements to decolonize the system for instance by law the language of court is English, we now have rules that allow me to interact with a court user in the local language and I have seen a difference. People speak grater truth in the local language, people will not just deny liability and the trial is very fast but that's just one aspect of the English language. We are now adopting African just systems, we need to ask whether the Parliament and executive is intandem with the values of our people.



**RONALD BILLS AGABA**  
Guild Speaker Kyambogo University  
(2008 - 2009)

Uganda has had the highest turn up for elections in 1996 with 73% of Ugandans turned up to vote and as the youth population bulged to the apex of 2021, the voter turn out shrunk to only 57% and when we ask the things that make young people not show up to vote, the outcome of an election is determined by the people that show up to vote and young people by not showing up to vote they are also making a statement.

There is ignorance from we the people that have heard the privilege to go to school, we must assist institutions like the electoral commission to go to our communities and teach the importance of showing up. The last cause in my view is the fact that democracy seems to be a foreign concept which we have not yet decolonised so that conversations like these are reduced to our dinner tables and homes. Democracy may not be a perfect tool to select our leaders but it's the better choice we have at the moment.



**ROSE NABWIRE**  
Guild President MUBS  
(2025 - 2026)

The low voter participation and turn out is not just a gap in numbers, it is a gap in power, a gap in voices and a gap in representation. Most youth do not participate because they lack enough civic education, my humble appeal to everyone in the room is to participate actively because it is not a favour but expression of your rights so as you participate in the election, make sure you follow up on the accountability. These leaders are given the mandate to lead you, ask them boldly, stand up and ask for transparency, the services they promised and then your vote shall cause a change. And for the democracy we shall be creating a beautiful future for Uganda and East Africa because then we are not side-lining the youth but we are encouraging them to take up the leadership mantles as leaders of not tomorrow but change makers of today.

Dear youth don't wait to be invited to the democracy table, take on the mantle to create a better East Africa.

**SCRIPTURE: PSALMS 90; 12**

Teach me to number my days so that I can apply wisdom.

# RECOMMENDATIONS AND ADVICE NOTES

1.

Instituting a rotational based Annual Summit among the East African member states.

2.

Request Regional Governments to contribute to the resource envelop of the Annual Summit and the activities of the GPLA.

3.

Young people to take on the leadership roles available in their communities so as to effect the changes they desire to see.

4.

Students to take lead on the quest for East African Integration.

## ACTION POINTS

Promote East African Integration.

Strengthen collaboration among Regional Guild Leaders.

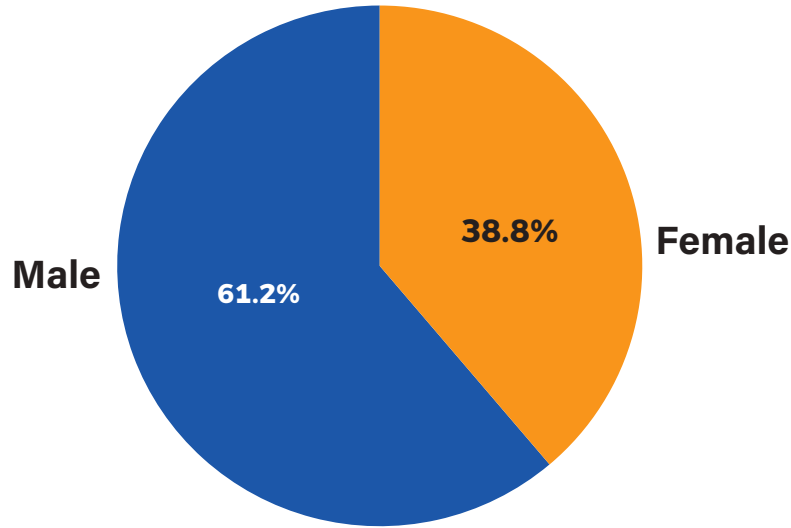
Rotation of the Summit through the Region.

Seeking government financial support.

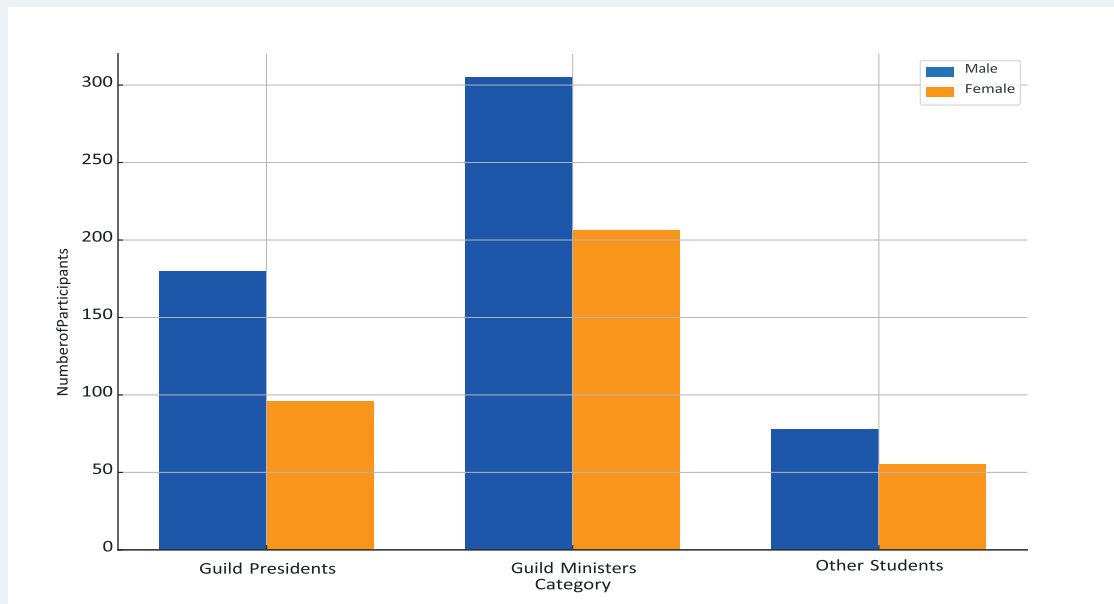
Gazetting the Summit.

# PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Overall Gender Distribution chart at the Guild Leaders Summit (Total : 920)



Gender Distribution at the Second Annual Guild Leaders Summit (Total: 920)



# PICTORIAL



# THE 2ND ANNUAL GUILD LEADERS SUMMIT 2025

## ORGANIZING TEAM



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