

Countrymen, Countrywomen and the Bazukulu

Congratulations on finishing the challenging years of 2020, 2021 and 2022. I wish you a happy and prosperous 2023.

Starting with the 23rd of December, 2022, to the 7th of January, 2023, I was at Rwakitura and Kisozi. I only went out of my two homes thrice during that time: the 28th when I met farmers and leaders of Kiruhura and Kazo districts, the 29th when I visited the young coffee farmer and processor (value adder), Tugume of Kajara and the 30th, when I attended the Silver Jubilee celebrations of two priests in Katakwi. During those two weeks, I was, again, addressing three issues that are part of the factors that maintain poverty in our population.

These are: especially for livestock (cattle, goats, chicken, etc), the carrying capacity of the land (e.g. per acre for cattle), Development (*enkulakulana, entunguuka*) vs wealth (*obugaiga, obugagga, lonyo, abarr*); and destructive inheritance practices.

Land carrying capacity

Starting with 1966, our student group, joined other development-minded Ugandans (e.g. the born again Christians, VP. John Babiiha, etc), to decampaign nomadism in the cattle corridor and to promote the spraying or dipping of the cattle and goats to kill ticks that were

causing the four cattle killer diseases of: East Coast Fever (*amashuyo, amakebe*), anaplasmosis (*kashaanku*), babesiosis (*omusito*) and heart-water (*kizengyerera*). Those families who listened to our advice prospered, mortality of cattle declined and their herds increased. However, with the increase of population and private land ownership replacing the ancient communal, free-ranging pastoralism, new challenges emerged. When the NRM came to power in 1986, we found that the unsensitized, poorly led or unled cattle corridor families, could not address the new challenges that came with increased herds on account of less mortality, smaller pieces of private land in the place of the ancient communal grazing that was only possible because of the sparse populations. Big herds in small portions of land, meant overgrazing — which would, then, result into emaciated cattle (*emikaraata*) and even death. But when you try to only keep the number equal to the size of your land, the number per year that you can sell cannot be enough to cope with the increased expenditure necessitated by the need to build better homes, pay school fees, acquire easier means of transport, etc. The families had a crisis of affordability of life. That is how we, again, came in to help them diagnose the problem and prescribe a solution.

To get both the diagnosis and prescription, we had to start with the question: “What is the carrying capacity per acre per annum of the land in the cattle corridor?”

The answer, at the time, by the Vets was: “One adult cow, needed 3 acres of well cleared pastureland to get enough food in a year.” This now meant that with the young calves, you could manage to accommodate a total of 300 cows in a square mile in a year. The problem, however, was that many families did not have a square mile of land. Although the land fragmentation in the cattle corridor is not as bad as in other parts of the country even today (on account of our campaign), still many families did not have a square mile per family.

What if you have 30 acres or less? If you have 30 acres, you can, then, only afford to keep 10 cows, the Ankole type, many of which are not carefully selected for milk and are more needed for beef. With 10 cows, you can only sell 2 per year, which gives you sh.2 million according to today’s prices. In a herd, you can only sell 20%, for the herd to continue multiplying.

After this analysis, I was sure that many of the Ankole long-horn cattle, excellent for beef and the best in the world, are not yet safe economics for the small holder of land that is less than a square mile, if you are still using the free-range method (*okuseetura*), even if the land is bush-cleared, (removing acacia *hohii*—*obugando*, *Cymbopogon afronadus*—*omuteete* etc). There are high milkers among the Ankole long-horn. I have the Ankole long-horns that can give more than 20litres of milk per day, even when they are

grazing free-range. However, on account of colonialism and the colonial agents that never bothered with our rich heritage, those genetic lines were not identified and promoted. It is we, the resistance fighters, that rubbished the colonial nonsense and insisted on the valuableness of the Sanga cow (Ankole long horns), that have been able to isolate these lines and we are trying to multiply them and make them available to the world at the right time.

In the meantime, it was necessary that the small holders in the cattle corridor, should shift to the already well-selected fresian breeds that were generally giving more milk although of a poorer quality (less fat content –*omwiitsi*, etc.). This meant that the one of 30 acres, keeping 10 fresian cattle on a free-range basis, will have 3 cows milking at any time with each giving 20 litres, which means 60 litres. The home consumes 10 and sells 50 at Shs. 1,000 per litre. That means, Shs. 50,000 per day and it means Shs. 18 million per year. Compare the Shs. 18million with the Shs 2 million per year for the beef.

All this, is without any artificial feeds – just on free range-*kuseetura*. This farmer has not yet added other activities – such as crops (fruits), goat rearing etc.

With this advice, families shifted massively to milk production from the fresians while the richer farmers continued with the research or rather the concentration of the existing genes of the Sanga high-milkers.

This mere shift in the enterprise selection, caused huge changes in the quality of life in the cattle corridor. People went from the grass-thatched houses to brick and iron sheet houses (*mabaati*), put solar power in those houses, harvested rain-water from the roof-tops, bought cars, paid for university students on the self-sponsorship courses etc. That is better than where they were.

However, I am convinced that, even then, we are under-utilizing the land. Dr. Ademun Commissioner Veterinary Services, has guided us that, if we plant grass deliberately, instead of Okusigaiganisa (you be the one to do it) God, one acre of pasture can support 8 fresian cattle in a year and 12 Ankole long-horn in a year. That would transform the economics of the families. The one of the 30 acres, would not only keep the 10 as in the free-ranging (*kuseetura*) but 240, if he uses the whole land.

If one third of these are milking at any one time, that would mean 80 in number and each giving 20 litres, would give us 1,600 litres and shs. 1.6 million per day and shs 584 million per year. Some of our people, like Nyakaana of Rwengajju near Fort Portal, are already doing this using just one acre initially, after they listened to my message.

This was one of the issues I was addressing while at Rwakitura, both at our own farm and also talking to other farmers. This maximum returns per unit of land used is not only applicable to cattle. Look at Nyakaana's 6,000 hens,

producing 120 trays of eggs per day. How about Dr. Sebunya Kibirige's contribution to us through the development of a more high-yielding clonal coffee plant that could give us 5 times more coffee than the old variety? Dr. Muranga has taught us that we can get 53 metric tonnes from one hectare compared to the 5.3 metric tonnes the farmers in the neighboring villages are getting per hectare.

Development vs Wealth

The second issue I addressed during this holiday, was the issue of development (*entunguuka, enkulakulana, dongo lobo, apolu, etc*) vs wealth (*obugaiga, obugaga, lonyo, abarr, lonyi*). The actual medicine against poverty (*obwooro, obwaavu, can, etc*) is wealth and not development. Why? This is because development is for all of us. It only provides a base from which each family must solve their problem of poverty. A good tarmac road will enable us to sell our products easily to the market and we solve our poverty problems.

The research results by Dr. Sebunya, Dr. Muranga, etc. that show that we can get more coffee and bananas from one acre, constitutes development in our crop science. It will only eradicate poverty when the individual families or companies, take the improved planting material, plant it, look after it well, harvest bigger yields and get more money that poverty will be eradicated from the homes. It is, therefore, most annoying for me, to sit in meetings and hear unserious

leaders endlessly talk about roads, health centers, schools etc. and never talk about wealth in the homes. A country like the USA became wealthy because many families understood the importance of family wealth. You take families like Cargill who made wealth through agro-business, Henry Ford, who made wealth through industry, etc.

Cargill, for instance, started with his business in the year 1884 in Agri-business and their wealth is now USD 45 bn, almost equal to the forex-based GDP of Uganda today. Therefore, when political leaders, cultural leaders, academicians, etc., do not talk about wealth and only talk about development and welfare, it is not correct and I told everybody at Katakwi.

Destructive inheritance practices

The last issue I dealt with, these two weeks, was the one of inheritance, especially, when I addressed the farmers and leaders on the 28th of December, I lambasted the blindness of fragmenting family wealth (*kuchwanyagura*) on inheritance. The locusts, in the form of children, descend on the family wealth and make it disappear. “I want my share, I want my share”, they clamor, only to get their small portions and sell them. Even if the inheritors did not sell their portions, a small property, e.g. land, cannot do what the big one can do. Over-fragmented land becomes LWD (Land With Disability). That is why, as back as the elections of 1996, in the NRM manifesto, we talked of the 4 acres

model as the medicine for those who had already fragmented the family lands. Hence, the recommendation for the seven activities:

Coffee (clonal), fruits, pasture for zero-grazing, poultry for eggs, food-crops, piggery and fish-farmers for those near the wetlands. All these are products that can give good money, even if they are done on a small scale. That is why we recommended them. There are, however, other products that the country needs but can only be done on a big scale. Which are these? They are:

Cotton, maize, tea, sugarcane, beef, tobacco, etc. In fact, you cannot do the 7 without being assisted by these – e.g. maize-for all the animal feeds for poultry, cattle, fish, in addition to humans and industry.

Other societies have handled the issue of inheritance in very radical ways, especially for land. The NRM has been recommending to you, inheritance by shares (*emigabo*). What is wrong with that? You do not divide the property itself, but you divide what comes from the property (income) and you can aggregate your annual share and acquire your own property; thereby, the family property is not only preserved but it can be expanded and, moreover, all the shareholders can get their own separate properties from the original family one.

The NRM Secretariat and the RDCs, must ensure that these survival issues for the African race, are clear to the people.

RDCs, should talk in the local radios and even visit homes and talk with the elders. If the religious leaders, the cultural leaders and all the political leaders could spread this message, it would be good.

During the last season (*eshumi*), we got a lot of rain. The rivers, swamps, plains (*empita, ensenyu*), are all full of water that is drying slowly. Hence, the season has been good. Apparently, the Meteorology Department informed the country that the rain has now stopped and we shall only see the rain again, after February. While in the farm at Kisozi, one of my social media people, talking in a worried way, told me that somebody had “predicted” drought in February. Bambi, our dot.com group!! Be informed that, that radio or TV or department of Govt “predicted” the normal. It is *akaanda* – the small drought in the months of *Biruuru* (*Kahiingo* – January) and *Kaata* –February) and a few days of March, around the Equator, is the season (*eshumi*) of *akaanda* and it is dry.

Then we enter *Katuumba* season comprised of the months of *Katuumba* (March), *Kyabahezi* (April), and *Nyaikoma* (May), which is the season of the small rains – whose crop is called *obwijegashe* (maybe small harvest) that is turned in, in June.

We, then, enter *Ekyaanda* (the big drought) comprised of the two months of *Kamena* (June) and *Nyirirwe* (July) plus 15 days of August. This is the driest part of the year when the grass would be burnt (*empiira*).

We, then, enter the *eshumi* (season) of *Ituumba* (heavy rain) comprised of the months of *kichuransi* (August), *Nyakaanga* (September), *Kashwa* (October), *Museeneene* (November) and *Muzimbeezi* (December).

We, on the equator, are blessed to have these cycles of rain and drought because each one contributes to us the wealth creators. Rain, makes crops and grass grow and the water bodies are filled. However, crops and pastures need the sun and some warmth to ripen. The sun is also a natural disinfectant and killer of parasites in the soil. Therefore, the wealth creators need both the rainy seasons (*Katuumba* and *ituumba*) and the dry ones (*akaanda* and *ekyanda*). We only need to know how to use them properly. To take one example, the flat areas of Kisozi are still flooded even now. It is the *akaanda* (drought), that will evaporate the water, at no cost to me, to allow those places to grow pasture.

Therefore, the *akaanda* is good and welcome. The danger point is, if the rain does not come by the middle of March, 2023. Additionally, for us, people from the drier areas of the world e.g. Egypt, brought information about irrigation. With irrigation, we can grow crops throughout the year.

Ugandans, know more about your heritage and add on additional knowledge – you will be super- affluent and invincible.

Signed

Ssabalwany, the Old man with a hat.

11th January, 2023