

**SPEECH BY GEN. EDWARD KATUMBA WAMALA, MINISTER OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT, THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA, AT THE 7<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE ISCOS ASSEMBLY OF MINISTERS, 10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2022, ENTEBBE, REPUBLIC OF UGANDA.**

- **Mr. James Wainaina Macharia, EGH**, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure, Housing, Urban Development and Public Works of the Republic of Kenya, and Chair of the ISCOS Assembly of Ministers,
- **Hon. Fredy Atupele Mwakibete**, representing the Minister of Transport and Communication of the United Republic of Tanzania,
- **Hon. Frank Museba Tayali, MP**, Minister of Transport and Logistics, Republic of Zambia
- **Honourable Marie Chantal Nijimbere** Minister of Transport, Public Works, Equipment and Regional Planning of the Republic of Burundi,
- **Honourable Yehualaeshet Jamere Sharew**, Director general Ethiopian Maritime Authority, Proxy for the Minister of Transport of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia
- **Honourable Joaquim Rebelo Manuela, Deputy** Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Mozambique,

- **Honourable Madut Biar Yel**, Minister of Transport of the Republic of South Sudan
- **H.E. Minister Antony Derjacques**, Minister of Transport of the Republic of Seychelles,
- **Honourable** Jacob Hlangabeza Hara, Minister of Transportation and Meteorology of the Republic of Malawi,
- **Mr Kris Lalising,MD Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd**, Proxy for the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping of the Republic of Mauritius,
- **Honourable** Minister of Transport and ways of Communications of the Democratic Republic of Congo
- Members of the ISCOS Coordination Committee- Principal and Permanent Secretaries of the ISCOS Member States
- CEOs of the Various Stakeholders Institutions of the Region,
- Representatives of Regional Economic Commissions, Stakeholders of the Shipping and Maritime Industry, Development Partners and representatives of the Maritime, Shipping and Logistics Institutions Present.
- The Secretary General and Members of Staff of ISCOS,

- Distinguished delegates,
- Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure and honour, to welcome you all to the Republic of Uganda, the Pearl of Africa and particularly to this beautiful lake city of Entebbe.

From the onset, I wish to thank my colleagues, the Members of the ISCOS Assembly of Ministers for honouring the Republic of Uganda as host to this momentous gathering and for the trust put in us to host this regional Meeting. I particularly welcome and pay profound tribute to the Honourable Ministers and Country representatives from all over the region for honouring our invitations and accepting to be with us here today. The government and the people of the Republic of Uganda welcome you wholeheartedly, and as the name of the hosting city “Entebbe”/Chair suggests, feel free, feel at home, pull a chair (Entebbe) seat back and relax as you enjoy the hospitality of the Ugandan people.

Chair and Honourable Ministers, we all know that almost 90% of our International Trade is moved by sea, handled by various multinational service providers, and subjected to policies, conditions and practices which each of us as individual countries cannot effectively handle. I wish us to honour the wisdom and foresightedness of the founding fathers of ISCOS, Mzee Milton Obote of Uganda, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia. As early as 1967, these gallant sons of Africa knew that Shipping and Maritime matters are cross border, international, complex, and capital intensive, and therefore, found it

inevitable to form ISCOS to Protect, Promote and Coordinate their Shipping and Maritime Interests and to carry out various functions on their behalf.

**Honourable Ministers Ladies and Gentlemen**, we all agree that the best way to benefit from Global networks and partnerships is not by receiving hand-outs and donations from our overseas colleagues, but rather through international trade and commerce. As developing nations, Shipping and Maritime transport can no longer be peripheral to our economies.

**Distinguished Guests**, Uganda being a land linked state largely relies on the Ports of Mombasa in Kenya and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania as main gateways for her exports and imports with no direct interface with the multinational service providers like shipping lines. Like many states in the Region and indeed in Africa, Uganda does not own ships operating on the high seas neither does it have direct access to the operations there, yet our international trade largely moves by sea. In that case, ISCOS has represented our shipping interests like negotiating favourable shipping terms, mitigating adverse shipping policies, averting hefty and unjustifiable surcharges and advising us on the best means by which to manage and contain shipping costs. ISCOS also helps us to have a technical interface with our costal neighbours and to help us understand their Shipping policies which are enacted from time to time. As a young Maritime nation, Uganda continues to build her capacity for the Maritime sector and we do appreciate the regional and international collaborations which ISCOS provides especially in the development of Maritime Policies, promotion of Maritime training and the enhancement of capacity for the shipping and Maritime sector. In terms of capacity building, ISCOS has helped us to form a

Shippers' Council and continue to run sensitization programmes which help our private sector to be up to date with best international shipping practices. We also acknowledge the collaborative efforts ISCOS carried out with the various stakeholders in repressing the piracy menace which was disrupting international trade and tourism to the region. In the line of implementing ISCOS' Advisories, I am happy to report that Uganda launched its Marine Cargo Insurance(MCI) Portal in October 2021 with the enforcement of Local Marine Cargo Insurance, starting in January 2022. Uganda is seeking to retain not less than US \$ 100 Million per Annum in her Economy otherwise spent on overseas firms. I wish to express my gratitude to ISCOS for this important research and advisory and for the technical support it has provided to Uganda in this journey.

**Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,** the roll out of African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in January 2021 presents yet another golden opportunity for our African states to build further commercial and trade synergies that deepen our economic integration in the Blue Economy space. This opportunity further positions ISCOS rightly as a platform to help us harmonise our shipping and maritime differences especially with our coastal member states in order to register seamless shipping and trade.

From the reports availed to me, I have noted that the Secretariat has done a commendable job in keeping focus to the objectives of ISCOS, protecting and promoting our interests in the Sector and assisting us to coordinate our common interest. I wish to salute the Secretary General and his team for this.

**Honourable Colleagues,** Uganda as a developing maritime nation continues to build her capacity in the Maritime sector. The government through the Ministry of Works and Transport embarked on reviewing all maritime legislation which gave birth to a new law, the Inland Water Transport Act, 2021. We are also currently developing a tri-modal port (the new Kampala Port at Bukasa) on Lake Victoria intended to be the main gateway for all regional imports and exports through Lake Victoria. In addition, the existing ports of Jinja and Port Bell will be remodeled to be fishing and passenger ports respectively. Further, designs have been concluded for the development of selected landing sites on Lake Victoria which is envisioned to improve cabotage on the Lake.

With the increasing need for collaboration as enshrined in the SDG 17 and the African Agenda 2063; as Nile Basin Countries, we are closely studying the possibility of establishing a Navigational Line between Lake Victoria and the Mediterranean Sea through a project Victoria and Mediterranean (VICMED) which is under Feasibility Study Phase 2. This will bring numerous possibilities for the communities in the Nile Basin to exploit the Blue economy.

In the same spirit, we are developing the Ntoroko One Stop Border Post which will include a modern jetty that will open up the Uganda – DRC maritime route drastically cutting travel times and further facilitating more trade between the two nations.

For existing trade on Lake Victoria between the Riparian States, Uganda has rehabilitated and deployed MV Pamba back to service bringing in an

additional capacity of 880 metric tonnes to the existing vessels connecting the Riparian states. In addition, we are developing a fuel depot on the Lake at Kawuku (off Entebbe road) with a holding capacity of 70million litres and building four oil tankers to transport fuel from Kisumu Port to the depot at Kawuku in Entebbe. It is hoped that this will greatly relieve pressure off the Northern Corridor and shall improve petroleum distribution within Uganda and also to hinterland countries like Rwanda, Burundi, DRC and South Sudan.

**Distinguished Honorable Ministers,** Maritime Safety has always been a global challenge and in particular to an emerging maritime state like Uganda. As a region, through the Multinational Lake Victoria Maritime Communication and Transport project, we are improving our Search and Rescue capabilities and are in the process of establishing a Maritime Search and Rescue Coordination Centre at Entebbe, and Nine Search and Rescue Centres in Uganda. This is intended to cut back Marine incidents and save the more than 5,000 lives that are lost on the lake annually.

We hope and believe that when all these projects are completed, there will be enormous modal shift from the traditional road transport to maritime transport which being the cheapest mode of transport, will save Uganda and the region a lot of resources.

I challenge ISCOS which is working closely with the shippers and the private sector to continue popularising Maritime Transport and assist us to change the mindset of the shipper which seems to be stuck with road transport even when water transport is realistically much cheaper.

On the International Maritime Regulatory perspective, Uganda has so far acceded to eight International Maritime Organization (IMO) Conventions, for purposes of achieving regulatory parity with the regional and international shipping. The Convention on the Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL) is a key element for realization of African Continental on Free Trade Area(AfCFTA).

I appeal to ISCOS to continue assisting our shippers on the implications of many of these conventions and to partner with the coastal neighbours in sensitizing the private sector on these developing international conventions.

**Honourable Ministers, Ladies & Gentlemen**, once again, we are delighted to have you with us today, colleagues from the regional States in the Eastern, Central and Southern Africa. As ISCOS Member States, we have noted that the benefits we accrue from working together in the Maritime sector would even be better if as a region, we develop an all-inclusive mechanism of collaboration and acted as a team. As a region, we are served by the same Maritime bodies, facilities and service providers, our challenges are the same and our strength should be in our numbers, the volumes of international trade we have and our ability to get right our priorities. I have seen reports that ISCOS is running a number of programmes for the benefit of the region as a whole. I wish to appeal to our neighbours to formally join us in developing the region's Shipping and Maritime sector which will help us to ride on the advantage of numbers and collective synergies. I know that many states may be averse to joining institutions because of the element of monetary subscriptions. But as a region, we ought to appreciate that shipping and Maritime Transport issues cannot be managed in a piece meal and



disjointed manner. We lose more than what we would save if we don't subscribe to an institution like ISCOS. I am optimistic that at the end of this Meeting, we shall be able to agree on some mechanism of collaboration going forward. As ISCOS' incoming Chair, I will be talking to my colleagues to ensure that we simplify all protocols for being part of the Region's Maritime body.

**Honourable colleagues**, the last man standing in the formation of ISCOS, Mzee Kenneth Kaunda passed away on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021. I wish to condole with the Republic of Zambia on the tragic loss of this hero and to the ISCOS fraternity and the region at large. Honourable Ministers, it is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us both economically and socially, and almost each one of us has lost a relative or friend. I wish to condole with all of us who have lost our dear ones to this pandemic and pray for God's Strength upon our families.

As I conclude Honourable Colleagues, I wish to thank ISCOS Secretariat and my technical team from my Ministry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Uganda government departments for the excellent arrangements for this meeting, adequate documentation and for the hospitality accorded to all delegations. I once again wish to thank the outgoing Chair of the Assembly of Ministers for steering us well throughout these turbulent days of COVID-19 pandemic.

I hope you will find some time within your busy schedules, to visit Kampala and other parts of Uganda, to experience the flora and fauna, the local dishes of Uganda and the warm hospitality of our people.

Last but not least, my sincere thanks go to the Coordination Committee for the wonderful preparatory works done for this meeting. It is therefore my

singular honour to wish this session of the ISCOS assembly, very fruitful deliberations

**Thank you very much for your attention**

***For God and My Country***