

REPORT ON THE HOME IS BEST DIASPORA SUMMIT 2017 ACTIVITIES

Background

The Home is Best Diaspora Summit 2017 was scheduled to be a one day event on Wednesday 20th December 2017 in Jinja, in keeping with UIA's strategic plan 2016-2021 which details Jinja in Eastern Uganda as a focus for strategic investment promotion. In this year's Summit UIA sought to strengthen the linkages between SMEs in the priority sectors of agro processing, Tourism, ICT and Mineral beneficiation, as well as services, and organized Diaspora funds and investment clubs/groups. The one day event would provide a platform for the enhancement of SMEs and a viable 'soft landing' for Diaspora remittances.

As always the Home is Best Summit is organized to coincide with the annual Diaspora Social Networking Gala and Business Breakfast organized by The Uganda Diaspora Network, a forum aimed at bringing together Ugandans who live and work abroad by celebrating their contributions overseas and also encouraging them to give of their time, talents, ideas and expertise whilst inspiring the next generation of Ugandan leaders.

Due to circumstances beyond UIA's control, Summit did not take place in Jinja; a strategic decision was taken to strengthen the partnership with Uganda Diaspora Network, to not only provide support and participate in the Diaspora Business Breakfast and Gala, but to partner as core partners for the Diaspora events in order to take advantage of the already big number of diaspora Ugandans mobilized for the two events and the live talk show streamed live to the Diaspora host countries.

The Home is Best Summit 2017 at the Diaspora Business Breakfast

UIA in partnership with Ugandan Diaspora Network hosted the annual Home is Best Summit 2017 at the Diaspora Business breakfast meeting held at Kampala Serena Hotel on 29th December 2017. The business breakfast

attracted about 120 participants. Ugandans in the diaspora and the Ugandan business community who were interested in exploring joint ventures, had an opportunity to dialogue with various Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government during panel discussions and dialogues that were broadcast live via NBS TV from 9 am to 12.30 pm. The live broadcast was accessed by Ugandans living in the Diaspora in real time.

During the breakfast, UIA was able to inform stakeholders about the status of the One Stop Centre (physical and online eBiz), industrial park development and investment opportunities, through the live broadcast. UIA also disseminated information through an information table

Diaspora Networking Gala

On the 30th of December, UIA participated in a networking gala dinner which was presided over H.E the Vice President Edward Sekandi and attended by the Ambassador of France H.E. Stephanie Rivoal.

At the gala UIA was commended for its investment facilitation services and calls were made for more assistance in speedy approvals for investments, especially in regulated sectors. High taxation was also a point of concern.

Uganda Diaspora Network awarded Ugandans who had achieved in the fields of fashion, the creative arts, charity and aviation / security in their host countries hence raising Uganda's profile in the host countries.

Conclusion

The events were successful in that they enabled UIA to reach even more members of the Diaspora than has been possible through the regional activities. This has laid ground for keeping in constant communication with a larger target group to attract to the Home is Best Diaspora Summit Jinja 2018.

Most Ugandans living in the Diaspora find it difficult to attend the regional summits. The *Olwekobano* meeting in Iganga from 22nd to 23rd December 2017,

at which UIA was invited to show case investment opportunities was testimony to this. Not many Ugandans in the diaspora attended the event. It was mainly attended by a few Ugandan businesses and Local Government officials.

UIA has begun mobilization efforts earlier in the year to deliver a successful UIA initiated Diaspora Regional Summit in December 2018.