

Then & Now: Museveni to hold demo over unemployment

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While he sometimes acts on his promises, President Museveni has also earned a reputation of reneging on others. Officiating at the 36th graduation ceremony at Makerere University in October 1999, Museveni told the fresh graduates that he would join them on the streets to demonstrate against managers and politicians who he said were the cause of unemployment.

“Very soon I will be joining the unemployed graduates to demonstrate against bureaucrats in the system who are responsible for the unemployment. I will join you because you know that I am always at the forefront of the struggle,” Museveni said, according to The Monitor [now Daily Monitor].

The President added that the bureaucrats should wake up from their slumber and address the people’s needs. He was irked that MPs in the 6th Parliament had blocked the passing of the Electricity Bill, saying that if the law had been passed, investors in the energy sector would have flocked to Uganda leading to the creation of many jobs.

He told the graduates that the only way through which employment opportunities could be secured for them was through the modernisation of agriculture. He urged them to go to the villages and help government in its agriculture modernisation strategy. However, the demonstration did not take place and today the unemployment rate remains high because government and the private sector cannot absorb the increasing number of graduates as well as unskilled job seekers.

Secondly, the various income generation projects initiated by government to solve unemployment have not yielded fruits. The latest scheme is the Youth Fund aimed at fighting unemployment among the youth by supporting small-scale businesses. However, there are disagreements over the minimum requirements to access the fund.

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