

[DP holds Benedicto Kiwanuka memorial mass today](#) [full story...](#)

[Ddungu-Kabenge case pushed to Thursday](#) [full story...](#)

[Speaker delay Bill again](#) [full story...](#)

LATEST NEWS

## National

**'We have a better road network today'** Publish Date: Oct 06, 2012



3 people like this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends like.



Print



Mail



Share

### PROF WILLIAM BANAGE

At the time Uganda got her independence, I was 29 years old and a lecturer at [Makerere University's](#) Faculty of Agriculture.

We looked forward to building a new country. It marked the beginning of a new journey, filled with expectations of a successful arrival.

The nation's founding fathers mainly focused on defeating poverty, ignorance and disease. 'Catch up' was a popular phrase those days, urging Ugandans to catch up with developed countries. At the time, we were at the same level of development with a number of countries, such as Korea, which, unfortunately, have left us behind.

There are areas where we have retrogressed, as well as others where we have succeeded. Today, there is more literacy than in 1962. Uganda has produced some of the best educated Africans. We have more people going through higher education institutions, although the quality has not matched the numbers.

There is also a better road system. Those days, it took us 12 hours to travel from Fort Portal to Kampala, using old UTC buses. That was only if the road was not blocked by, for example rains, in which case, we would spend up to five days on the road. In such circumstances, a telegram would be sent to Kampala, requesting for another bus. The telegram would take about three days to reach Kampala, but we still had to wait.

In health, there are diseases, such as leprosy and yaws, which were a problem in 1962, but not anymore. But, of course, we have AIDS, while malaria and jiggers are still terrorising people.

Poverty is still a challenge. At the time of independence, Uganda's population was seven million, but now it stands at 35 million. So, there is a bigger problem to handle. The economy is bigger now, which means more effort is needed for economic, social and intellectual development.

However, due to a number of reasons, we have not realised the dreams we had at independence. This is partly attributed to violent changes of government, hence a turbulent history.

We expected good governance that would bring about major development, but the political system has not, in many ways, paid the dividends we expected due to wars, making the idea of building a democratic system unattainable.

Democracy came along with changes, such as the removal of chiefs, who were responsible agents of governance. They knew each and every one in their areas.

During their time, wrong-doers would be arrested, judged and punished. Similar are the Members of Parliament. I do not know where they go after they have been elected.

There is also a lot of corruption, inefficiencies in the administration system, such as the Police, local council system and other government departments.

If we are to make improvements in the next 50 years, governance must be improved.

We need a social revolution to increase awareness about efficiency in the running of the country. Fortunately, there seems to be a realisation of the need to improve the way things are being run. I was impressed by KCCA cleaning up the city. Parliamentarians are also waking up, asking for accountability every now and then. You cannot treat a disease without doing a diagnosis. It is clear, for example, that the environment is being abused and the health sector is in disarray. We should not accept the status quo, but should move on.

Today, there is a lot of laxity. We have heard of the story that one Kenyan does the work of five Ugandans. Why is that so? A lot needs to change.

We also need to instil the spirit of idealism in the young people. They have become so dependent, expecting things to be done for them. There is little effort by them to change things using their intellectual capacity.

Ugandans should ask what they can do for their country and not what the country can do for them. Fifty years is a very short period in the life of a country.

So, we have not travelled for long, but as the Chinese say, even a journey of 1,000 miles begins with a step. Ugandans should not think this is a celebration of arrival. It is a celebration of the start. The Uganda I hoped for is still a long way.

*As told to Vicky Wandawa*



3 people like this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends like.



Print



Mail



Share

Sorry, the browser you are using is not currently supported. To use the comments, Disqus recommends the following browsers:

[Firefox](#)

[Chrome](#)

[Internet Explorer 9](#)

[Safari](#)

Benjamin

You are a big joke mzee, you even talk of good road net work? Good you mentioned Fort Portal, have you been to a place called APAC district?

Geoffrey Buga