

Uganda Mission

Last Updated Wednesday, 21 November 2007

1. **Background** The Permanent Mission of Uganda to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva was opened on March 12, 1996. The Mission was at the time also accredited to the United Nations Organizations in Vienna and later to Switzerland as a country. The Chancery, which was conveniently located at 6 bis Rue Antoine Carteret in Servette, is easily accessible from Geneva International Airport and Central Railway Station, the United Nations Palais de Nations Offices, the Offices of the UN specialized agencies in Geneva, as well as the Offices of other International Organizations based in Geneva. The intention to open a Uganda resident mission in Geneva started in 1968 when Uganda was elected to represent Eastern Africa on the Trade and Development Board of the second United Nations conference on Trade and Development. However, this idea was not immediately implemented. Uganda's interests in Geneva were therefore sequentially represented by Uganda's Embassies in Paris and Brussels. These were supplemented occasionally by delegations from Kampala, to participate in specific Conferences. This arrangement proved inadequate and the immediate need for a Permanent Resident Mission in Geneva was acutely realized at the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of Trade Negotiations in December 1994. The Agreements of this Round had far reaching consequences for the rights and obligations which Member Countries were to undertake within the Multilateral Trading System. It was therefore with a view of representing Uganda more effectively in the Multilateral Trading System, that in 1991, His Excellency President Y.K. Museveni instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade and Industry to open a Uganda Resident Mission in Geneva. After overcoming administrative and budgetary constraints modest funds were provided for opening a Uganda Mission in Geneva in 1996. In that year, Ambassador Nathan Irumba arrived in Geneva on March 10, 1996, as Charge de Affaires. He arrived with Mr. Odeke the Finance and Administrative Attaché, and Mrs. Betty Wanzala, the Personal Secretary. Miss Joyce Banya, the First Secretary joined the Mission in May 1996 as Head of Chancery, while Mr. Vincent Mayiga from the Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry arrived shortly after to cover WTO issues. The Swiss Authorities, especially the Welcome Center, and the members of Uganda Geneva Association greatly assisted Ambassador Irumba and his team to settle into the new Mission. Special recognition goes to the following members of the Uganda Geneva Association for the great material and moral support extended to Ambassador Irumba and his team in establishing the Mission: Dr. Stephen Lwanga then with WHO; Mr. Elotu then with ITU; and Ms Beatrice Tusiime the then Chairperson of the Uganda Geneva Association.

2. **Vision** The Vision of the Uganda Geneva Mission is to effectively represent and promote Uganda's interests of peace and prosperity in Switzerland and the International Community in Geneva, and also contribute to the transformation of Uganda into a developed country through the fulfillment of its Mission Charter.

3. **Mission** The Mission of the Uganda Geneva Mission is to represent Uganda and effectively participate in the work of Geneva based International Organizations such as the UN, WTO, UNCTAD, ITC, ILO, WIPO, WMO, OHCHR and UNCHR; to promote Uganda as a major tourist destination for the Swiss and as a profitable destination for Swiss Foreign Direct Investment; to enhance the value, volume and diversity of Uganda's exports to Switzerland; and to mobilize financial and other resources from Switzerland to Uganda.

4. **Function** Geneva is a major hub for Multilateral Institutions that deal with a vast array of activities and issues, including multilateral trade negotiations and treaties; trade and development issues; political and security issues such as disarmament; human rights and social and humanitarian issues such as migration, labor and health; telecommunications issues; intellectual property issues; meteorological and environmental issues. The function of the Uganda Geneva Mission therefore is to act as Uganda's sentinel, or the eyes and ears of Uganda vis a vis the International Community that shapes and participates in the activities and issues of the Multilateral Institutions based in Geneva. The Mission also represents Uganda's interests within these Multilateral Institutions. Working closely with Ugandans living in Switzerland, the Mission will also be playing an increasing role of attracting foreign direct investment from Switzerland into Uganda; promoting trade between Uganda and Switzerland; promoting Swiss tourism into Uganda; and mobilizing financial and other resources from Switzerland into Uganda. The Mission also gives advice and issues Visas to those who wish to travel to Uganda from Switzerland.

5. **Institutional Structure** The Mission is headed by the Permanent Representative who is also an Ambassador representing Uganda to the Swiss Confederation, the World Trade Organization, the United Nations and other International Organizations based in Geneva. The Deputy Permanent Representative who has also usually been an Ambassador assists the Permanent Representative and takes charge of the Mission during the absence of the Permanent Representative. The Consular and administrative activities of the Mission are handled by the Head of Chancery who is also the Accounting Officer of the Mission.