



Waiving interest on outstanding taxes to boost compliance

URA surpasses July and August 2024 revenue target

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World Bank, URA Discuss Revenue Administration Reforms

The Commissioner General of the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), John Rujoki Musinguzi, engaged with a high-level delegation from the World Bank, led by Dr. Verena Maria Fritz, the Lead Governance Specialist, to discuss ongoing reform efforts and key challenges in Uganda's revenue administration. **Continue to page 12**

FOREWORD FROM THE COMMISSIONER GENERAL

Dear valued Taxpayer,

I want to thank you for the time you have journeyed with us in the revenue collection and tax administration efforts. Your support has tremendously improved our performance as an institution.

For the months of July and August, our revenue performance surpassed the target by UGX 115.912 billion. With the July target set at UGX 2.09 trillion, we collected UGX 2.1 trillion, scoring 104.4% in revenue collection performance while August had a target of UGX 2.323 trillion and URA collected UGX 2.345 trillion representing a 101.22% performance. Your commitment to meeting tax obligations has been instrumental to this success. As we strive to collect UGX 31.98 trillion this financial year, I encourage you to take advantage of the waiver on interest and penalties for outstanding tax liabilities as of June 30, 2023. Simply pay your principal tax by December 31, 2024, and start on a clean slate.

In order to enhance our service as an institution, we have made some fundamental structural changes including the establishment of a Tax Academy, which will provide training and skilling in taxation to foster a culture of continuous improvement and learning. We have also segmented our service management with dedicated divisions to manage upcountry taxpayers, Kampala

metropolitan, public sector and medium taxpayers.

Additionally, Tax Education is now a stand-alone division solely dedicated to empowering taxpayers with tax information to meet their obligations and build voluntary compliance.

There will be some process changes along the way that are geared towards easing your navigation of our systems and processes.

Do not hesitate to reach out through our contact points if you need assistance. My staff and I are committed to delivering exceptional client experiences, driving Uganda's economic independence.

Thank you for fulfilling your civic duty and kicking off the financial year with momentum. Let's maintain this pace until June 2025! I look forward to cementing our working partnerships and building new stakeholder collaborations that will enable URA to meet its mandate and foster economic development for our country.

For God and my Country

John Rujoki Musinguzi,
Commissioner General





Editor's Note

ROBERT KALUMBA

**AG. ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER,
PUBLIC & CORPORATE AFFAIRS, URA**

Dear Taxpayers,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to our first edition of the newsletter for this new financial year! I am excited to report that we have kicked off the year with surplus revenue collections in the months of July and August. We could not have done this without your diligent efforts in filing and paying taxes. Your contributions are invaluable and we are committed to transparency and accountability.

At URA, we are always looking for ways to stay connected with our clients - the taxpayers. That's why we have launched several initiatives, including the *Buuza Kamisona* initiative. This initiative is a joint partnership with Vision Group that runs every Wednesday in the Bukedde newspaper.

It is a platform that provides opportunity to URA to listen and respond to concerns from taxpayers. The feedback has so far been good. For those interested in participating,

please send your queries to 0701625460 and the Commissioner General will provide clarity. We are also pioneering tax education on radio with CBS 's exclusive tax show aimed at promoting informed discussions and community participation.

On the corruption front, we have adopted a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of corruption by ensuring all our services are free of charge. In case you encounter any misconduct, report it through our established communication channels and we will take action.

I would also want to urge the Public to be vigilant and watch out for scammers claiming to work for URA. Our staff always carry identity cards with their names and staff numbers. If you suspect fraudulent activity, report it to us immediately.

Lastly, I would like to thank you for all you do in fulfilling your civic duty and ensuring the betterment of our country.

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URA surpasses July and August 2024 revenue target

By Kamugisha Kabahweza Allan and Immaculate Wanyenze

The Uganda Revenue Authority has surpassed the July and August revenue targets by UGX 115.912 billion.

The URA set the July target at UGX 2.09 trillion and collected UGX 2.1 trillion, scoring a revenue collection performance of 104.4%, while the set target for August was UGX 2.323 trillion and URA collected UGX 2.345 trillion representing a 101.22% performance. The surplus resulted from Domestic and Customs revenue collections, where URA collected UGX 2.867 trillion and UGX 1.791 trillion respectively.

The performance of July 2024 revenue collection saw an increment of 18.75% compared for the same period in 2023, while the August revenue collection saw an increment of 15.2% compared to the same period in 2023.

The best performing taxes are Direct Taxes (PAYE, Corporation Tax, Individual income tax, withholding tax and Rental income tax), and International trade taxes.

This financial year 2024/25, Uganda has a budget of UGX 72.136 trillion, of which URA is mandated to contribute UGX 31.98 trillion through domestic revenue mobilization and collection.

URA still has to collect UGX 27.613 trillion in the remaining 10 months of this financial year.

In order to mobilize and collect the remaining revenues, the Uganda Revenue Authority is deploying several strategies that include;

Automation of Tax Waivers within the e-Tax System to operationalize extension of waiver of interest and penalties accrued as of 30th June 2023, which offer ends on 31st December 2024.

URA will improve retooling, IT infrastructure & management through implementing the URA Digital Strategy by providing prefilled web return for Local Excise Duty (LED) tax returns and fiscalization of exports and EAC transfers in ASYCUDA.

An e-commerce platform is being developed to monitor gambling and online

business in order to improve compliance in those sectors.

URA is also improving the management of EFRIS and expanding the adoption of DTS through utilization of UNBS data to grow the register and increase automation of lines at manufacturing sites.

Expansion and re-tooling of the tax education function to effectively train and equip taxpayers with relevant knowledge of their responsibilities, rights and obligations.

Tax-payer ledgers improvement/transformation so as to provide a clear view of tax-payer obligation and reduce cases of contestation of assessments from clients. In addition, there is optimization of the Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) initiative and improved management of the bonded warehousing function.

All the new tax and administration measures and strategies will lead to improved URA performance and thus more revenues collected.



Waiver of Penalty & Interest

Pay outstanding principal tax as at 30th June 2023 and have your penalties and interest waived.

Deadline: 31st December 2024



URA waives interest on outstanding taxes to boost compliance

By Immaculate Wanyenze

In a bid to cushion businesses still grappling with the economic fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic and to boost tax compliance, Uganda Revenue Authority has announced a tax amnesty or waiver of interest and penalty outstanding up to December 31, 2024, for taxpayers who will pay their principal tax that was outstanding as at June 30, 2023.

The latest move is part of the commitment the Government of Uganda made to combat the effects of COVID-19 by introducing provisions in the tax laws to specifically provide relief to businesses that had been negatively impacted by the Pandemic.

The initial amnesty, granted in 2020, waived interest and penalties on outstanding principal tax (income tax, value added tax, and excise duty) as of June 30, 2020. This was in response to the nationwide lockdown imposed to curb the spread of the virus.

The second amnesty, granted in 2023, waived interest and penalty outstanding as at June 30, 2023, for taxpayers who paid principal tax that was outstanding, as at June 30, 2023, by December 31, 2023. However, due to implementation challenges and the fact that businesses were still recovering from the effects of COVID-19, a

number of businesses were not able to fully benefit from this waiver.

Recognizing the continued challenges faced by businesses and following requests from the business community for the payment period for the 2023 waiver to be extended, the government has responded by extending the payment period to December 31, 2024.

The current amnesty applies to only domestic taxes, that is income tax, value added tax, excise duty, lotteries and gaming taxes and stamp duty. This waiver does not cover customs taxes.

According to Sarah Chelangat, the Commissioner Domestic Taxes Uganda Revenue Authority, all taxpayers with outstanding principal taxes as of June 30, 2023, are eligible for the waiver.

Therefore, if a taxpayer pays their outstanding principal tax as at June 30, 2023 in full by December 31, 2024, URA will waive the interest and penalty that had accrued on that tax as of June 30, 2023. For taxpayers who will pay only a portion of the outstanding principal tax by December 31, 2024, the interest and penalty will be waived proportionately.

"Once payments for the outstanding prin-

cipal tax as at June 30, 2023 are made, the penalty and interest that had accrued as at June 30, 2023 will be waived automatically. However, interest that accrues after June 30, 2023 is not covered. Therefore, Taxpayers are advised to pay such outstanding tax as soon as possible to avoid further accumulation of interest." Chelangat said.

Taxpayers who will pay the outstanding principal tax as at June 30, 2023 after December 31, 2024 deadline, for example in January 2025, will not benefit from the waiver.

In order to avoid this, taxpayers are advised to check their outstanding principal tax balance by logging unto their Tax Identification Number (TIN) account on the URA web portal. Once logged in, they need to review their tax ledger and confirm the outstanding amounts. If, for any reason, they disagree with the principal tax shown on their ledger, they can quickly get in touch with their tax office so that a reconciliation is made in time for them to take advantage of the waiver.

URA therefore, urges taxpayers to take advantage of this waiver and clear their outstanding principal taxes as soon as possible before the deadline of December 31, 2024.



All URA offices do not accept cash payments of any kind.

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URA Unveils new campaign to boost revenue mobilisation

By Our Reporter

The Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) launched a new campaign aimed at empowering taxpayers. Under this arrangement, the taxpayer gets to ask the Commissioner General on all tax queries which are answered every Wednesday publication of the Bukedde newspaper.

The taxman is expected to collect UGX 31.98 trillion in the 2024/25 financial year. In a bid to bolster its tax administration efforts, the URA Commissioner General, John Rujoki Musunguzi, launched a new campaign dubbed "Buuzza Kamisona", a joint tax education partnership with the Vision Group.

As part of the launch, the CG paid a courtesy visit to Vision Group Chief Executive Officer, Don Wanyama, and later appeared on the Bukedde TV hitshow Ekyenkya.

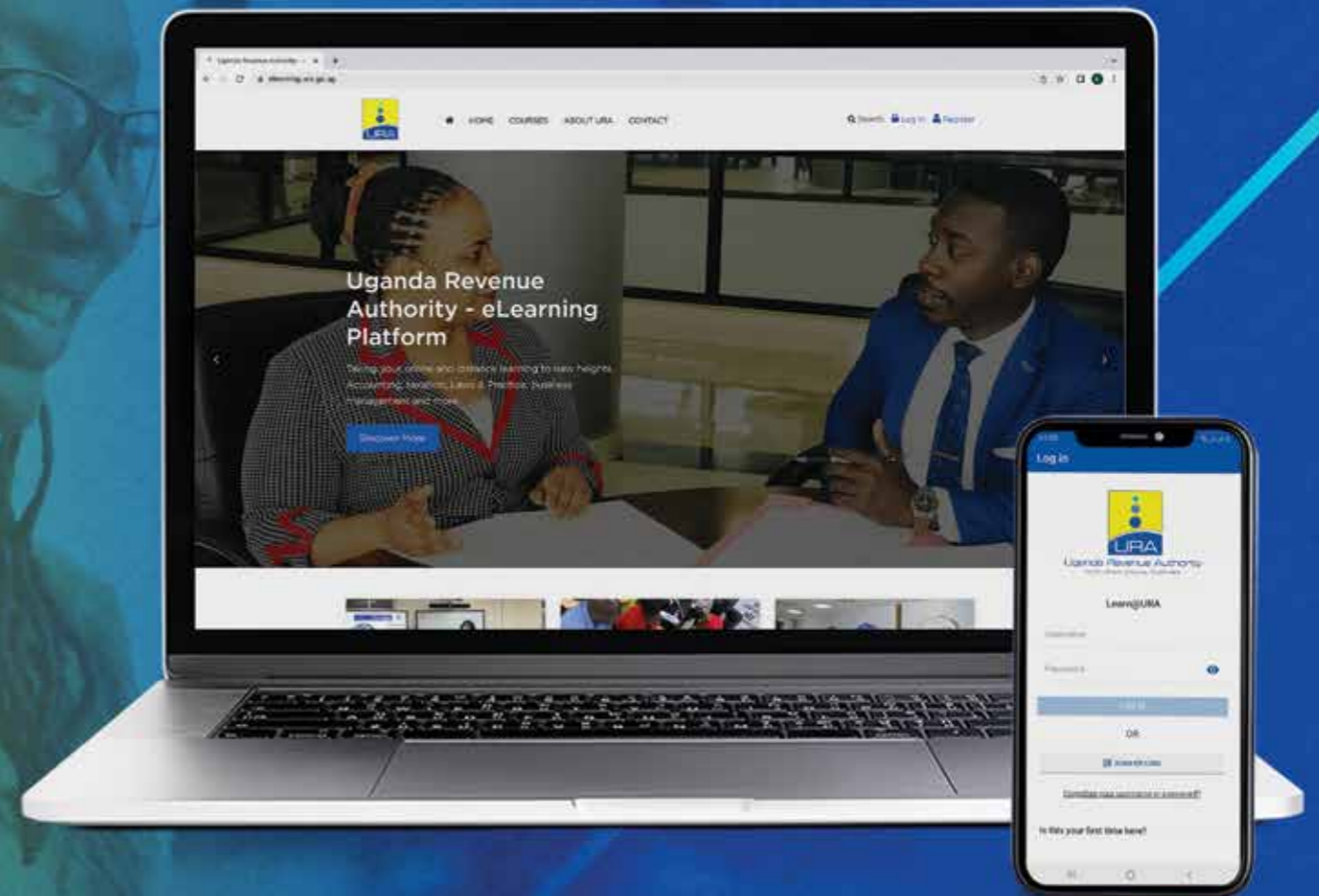
This media visit marked the beginning of URA's renewed commitment to supporting traders and taking tax education to the grassroots taxpayer.

With 4 editions down and more to come, URA is hopeful that this platform is one of the many avenues traders needed to express their concerns about taxation and tax administration.

URA encourages the public to embrace this initiative and send all their queries to the mobile number 0701625460 so that the Commissioner General addresses all your doubts and demystifies all the misconceptions surround revenues administration in Uganda.



Mr John Musunguzi (R), URA Commissioner General and Mr Don Wanyama (L), the Vision Group CEO, at the launch of the Buuzza Kamisona campaign.



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World Bank, URA Discuss Revenue Administration Reforms

By Rytter Muzira

The Commissioner General of the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), John Rujoki Musinguzi, engaged with a high-level delegation from the World Bank, led by Dr. Verena Maria Fritz, the Lead Governance Specialist, to discuss ongoing reform efforts and key challenges in Uganda's revenue administration. The discussions centered around Public Investment Management (PIMS), domestic revenue mobilization, climate change resilience, and IT system integration.

The World Bank delegation expressed a keen interest in the status of Uganda's PIMS reform efforts, particularly regarding revenue cash flow predictability. Musinguzi highlighted a significant challenge for the URA, which is the accumulation of government arrears that is putting a severe strain on revenue collection. He implored the World Bank to offer guidance on how the government can address this issue to enhance cash flow predictability.

The discussion then shifted to URA's efforts to meet the Domestic Revenue Mobilization Strategy (DRMS), with a focus on internal reforms to increase taxpayer compliance.

Musinguzi emphasized URA's commitment to digitalization and human capital development. He highlighted various digital solutions implemented to enhance efficiency and boost tax collections, such as the Bonded Warehousing Information Management System (BWIMS), automated audits, and the Digital Tracking Solution. However, he acknowledged challenges during the rollout of the Electronic Fiscal Receipting and Invoicing Solution (EFRIS), particularly among small taxpayers, which led to a temporary suspension of enforcement and hindered full implementation.

On human capital development, Musinguzi discussed the establishment of a Tax Academy designed to equip staff with expertise in modern tax administration. He also mentioned the creation of a strategy and risk management department to address enterprise risk and guide future organizational direction. To combat corruption, URA has formed an Integrity, Compliance, and Ethics Division to enhance transparency and accountability within the tax system.

"We are committed to building a robust tax administration that is not only efficient but also transparent and accountable.

Strengthening our human capital and enhancing our digital capabilities are key pillars in this journey," Musinguzi said.

The meeting also covered IT system integration, a crucial area for improving efficiency and collaboration within the revenue administration framework.

The URA Commissioner Information Technology and Innovation, Robert Mutebi, shared URA Digitalization and ICT strategy with reforms focused on creating a more efficient and taxpayer-friendly environment.

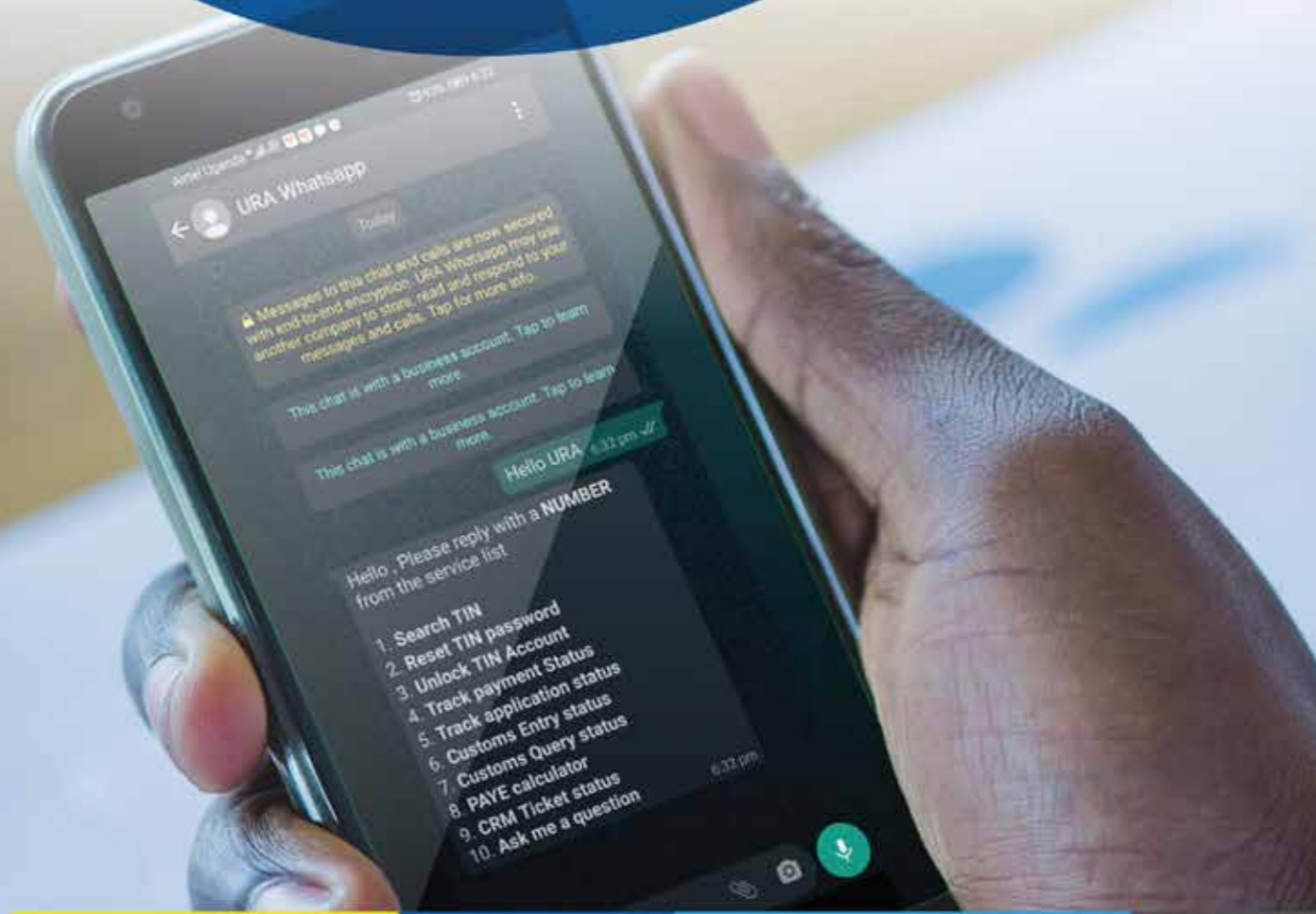
"Strategically, we have recognized that technology is a vital enabler for enhancing the customer experience. We have made a deliberate decision to ensure that all revenue we collect is traceable through advanced automation," Mutebi noted.

The meeting concluded with discussions on incorporating climate change resilience into revenue administration. While specific strategies were not detailed, both sides acknowledged the need to build resilience against climate-related risks that could impact revenue collection.



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Finance, URA Convene Landmark Conference on Tax Incentives

By Dismas Nuwaine

Key policymakers, economic leaders and other several stakeholders in manufacturing (Value addition), ICT and Tourism, convened at Hotel Africana early September for the 4th Conference on Tax Incentives, Policy and Administration.

Hosted by the Uganda Revenue Authority and the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development, the annual event fosters inclusive and focused in-depth discussions that shape the country's fiscal landscape.

Speaking at the conference, Prime Minister, Robinah Nabbanja, lauded Uganda's tax incentive structure which she said is well designed to stimulate economic activity in several sectors.

"The manufacturing and agricultural sectors are some of the biggest beneficiaries of Uganda's incentive base," said the Prime Minister, adding, "This has led to the creation of thousands of jobs for ordinary Ugandans thus contributing to the country's GDP."

The Permanent secretary and Secretary to the Treasury (PSST) Ramathan Ggoobi underscored the tangible impacts of these incentives.

"Last year, Uganda's economy grew by 6%, a notable recovery from the 3% growth during the COVID-19 pandemic," he revealed.

This growth, he argued, is a testament to the effectiveness of tax incentives in foster-

ing a resilient and transformative economy. Ggoobi noted that Uganda's tax-to-GDP ratio has risen from 8.9% in the fiscal year 2000/01 to 14.3% in the fiscal year 2024/25.

This increase, he said, is attributed to the strategic tax incentives in manufacturing and agriculture, which have driven the average industrial growth rate of 5.5% over the past decade.

"Before the COVID pandemic, we experienced a big growth of 9% in the industrial sector in the F/Y 2018 -2019," said Ggoobi, adding, "the share of industry to GDP has risen to an impressive average of 26.3% over the last decade. This is mainly driven by manufacturing."

Ggoobi also highlighted the government's drive to modernize tax processes through technology, focusing on innovations such as the Electronic Fiscal Receipting and Invoicing Solution (EFRIS) and digital tax stamps. He noted that these technologies are key to streamlining operations, enhancing transparency, and reducing enforcement costs.

Abel Kagumire, the Commissioner Executive Operations (CEO), representing the CG, pledged URA's commitment to enhancing taxpayer education on the incentives.

"Tax education is now a fully-fledged division at URA. Our Commissioner General launched the "Buuza Kamisona" campaign on 03rd September 2024, where we ask for feedback and we are ready to educate the public, sector by sector."

He also announced a major overhaul in audit processes, with a unified audit plan set to streamline operations and reduce taxpayer burden.

"Previously, our departments, customs, domestic tax and tax investigations have been auditing in individual capacities and at different times," said Kagumire, who continued, "this will be no more. We've agreed that in this financial year, we are going to have a joint audit plan. All the departments will work on one client at a time."

The conference set a forward-looking tone for Uganda's fiscal strategy, promising continued growth and innovation in the country's tax policy and administration.



Mr Abel Kagumire, Commissioner Executive Operations (URA) speaking at the conference.



For all your URA issues and inquires visit the **URA TouchPoint**

<https://touchpoint.ura.go.ug/>

BETTER CLIENT EXPERIENCE

NON-INTRUSIVE INSPECTION (NII)

Key Benefits of NII

1. Eases and fastens examination of goods and cargo clearance process.
2. Easily detects contrabands and combats trade fraud such as concealments, mis-declarations and under declarations.
3. Maintains the international security chain thereby enhancing national security.
4. CBRN detectors are embedded to protect the environment from radiation.



Non-Intrusive scanners bolster Uganda's security

By Kamugisha Kabahweza Allan and Acam Casper Peace

In a world of evolving trade dynamics and security challenges, the Customs department plays a pivotal role in safeguarding national interests while facilitating legitimate international trade.

The adoption of Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) technologies has revolutionized the URA Customs operations, allowing for efficient cargo screening without disrupting the flow of goods.

At the beginning of the 2024/25 financial year, NII identified two pistols coming into Uganda through the Elegu One Stop Border Post.

On 8th July, 2024, an event at the Elegu Border between Uganda and South

Sudan captivated authorities as Ms. Heba Youssef Taleldin Mamoud, aged 46, was intercepted while trying to enter Uganda with a concealed pistol.

Following instructions from URA officials, Heba was requested to place her baggage into the CT X-ray scanner. As the machine hummed to life, a detailed 3D X-ray image unfolded, exposing the hidden weapon nestled within her handbag.

Again on 21st July, 2024, Customs officers at Elegu border intercepted a concealed pistol with five rounds of ammunition in bags belonging to a male South Sudanese national Machol Majur Madol attempting to cross into Uganda from South Sudan.

Machol was requested to place his baggage into the CT X-ray scanner and the scanner image revealed a pistol, easily distinguishable from other personal baggage.

The technology at Elegu has also exposed hidden ammunition for another individual attempting to cross into Uganda from South Sudan, further demonstrating the effectiveness of NII equipment in securing revenues, ensuring safety, and bolstering national security.

Equipped with Radiation Portal Monitors, the NII equipment plays a crucial role in fortifying Uganda's defences against illicit radiation sources attempting to infiltrate national borders.

Customs officers stand at the vanguard of border protection, not only as sentinels of economic policy but also as the first line of defence against illicit trade and fraudulent activities.

Non-intrusive inspection technology continues to play a critical role in unearthing concealed, underdeclared, and mis-declared items.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) stands at the forefront of this transformation, enabling the successful implementation of NII measures within the Customs Department of Uganda.



Integrity at the Core: URA's Commitment to Client-Centric Service

By Annet Nantongo

Integrity is at the heart of Uganda Revenue Authority's (URA) mission to offer transparent, efficient, and client-centric service delivery. URA's deep-rooted commitment to integrity aligns with the government's steadfast resolve to combat corruption, reinforcing its role in transforming public service and championing values that resonate with Uganda's ongoing fight against graft.

In response to increasing public demand for transparency and accountability, URA has adopted a multifaceted strategy that addresses both internal and external challenges. This is captured in the Domestic Revenue Mobilisation Strategy (DRMS) of Uganda (2019/2020 – 2024/2025), where URA was tasked with establishing a dedicated function, led by an Assistant Commissioner, to oversee integrity, compliance, and ethics within the institution.

Integrity is more than just a principle – it is a way of life at URA, guiding every decision and action, whether visible or behind the scenes. URA defines integrity through its people, systems, and processes, ensuring that all deliver as promised in both client and employee engagements. This is not just about addressing issues as they arise but building a culture where integrity is embedded into every aspect of URA's operations.

In line with this strategic objective, URA under the leadership of John Rujoki Musinguzi, established the Staff Compliance Division in September 2020 to spearhead efforts in entrenching integrity across all levels. The division's mandate includes conducting baseline assessments of integrity, designing comprehensive strategies, and continuously reinforcing ethical behaviour among staff. This culminated in the development of the URA Comprehensive Integrity Strategy (2021-2025), aimed at guiding the institution towards a culture defined by professionalism, patriotism, and zero tolerance for corruption.

A pivotal moment in this journey was the Comprehensive Integrity Survey 2021, which measured URA's performance based on global integrity dimensions by the World Customs Organisation, including leadership, transparency, automation, and rela-



"At Uganda Revenue Authority, integrity is not just a value we uphold, but the foundation upon which we build trust with the public. In our relentless pursuit of mobilizing revenue for national development, we are dedicated to fostering a culture where honesty and transparency guide every decision and action. By upholding these principles, we strengthen our bond with the public and ensure that every step we take contributes to a more accountable and prosperous nation," John Rujoki Musinguzi, Commissioner General, URA.

tionships with the private sector. Though URA's baseline integrity score was 4.96 out of 10, this transparency paved the way for a targeted approach to improve the institution's culture and service delivery.

To ensure continuous progress, URA has made several strategic interventions. Among these are leadership development programs, a revised performance management system that integrates integrity assessments for staff, and automated processes to reduce human intervention, enhancing both transparency and efficiency. URA's institutional credibility is also reinforced through ongoing tax education initiatives, aimed at fostering public trust and voluntary compliance.

In a bold move towards accountability, URA implemented Lifestyle Audits in 2019, becoming the first government institution in Uganda to embrace this measure. This, alongside updated codes of conduct and new policies such as the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, ensures that staff adhere to the highest ethical standards. Employees are also required to sign integrity pledges, committing themselves to professional and ethical conduct.

Moreover, integrity is now embedded in staff promotion and performance evaluations, ensuring that it is not just a value but a measurable outcome in every employee's career progression. Leadership training and filling vacant positions are also key components of URA's approach to fostering a culture of ethical leadership and service excellence.

The Integrity, Compliance, and Ethics Division plays a vital role in sensitizing staff on these policies and ensuring adherence to the institution's ethical standards. Regular engagements with taxpayers and service providers also help URA uphold its zero-tolerance stance on corruption, making it clear that unethical behaviour, whether by staff or clients, will not be tolerated.

To empower the public, URA has strengthened its whistle-blower policy, providing multiple channels for reporting unethical conduct. Through toll-free numbers and dedicated email addresses, the public is encouraged to report corruption, ensuring that URA remains accountable to the people it serves.

Since 2021, URA has dismissed over 80 staff members for misconduct, and 14 more are currently facing charges in the Anti-Corruption Court. These actions demonstrate that URA is serious about rooting out corruption and maintaining the highest standards of integrity.

Integrity is not just a policy at URA. It is a commitment to Uganda. URA calls on all stakeholders, from clients to staff, to uphold this value in every interaction and decision, ensuring that together, we can build a tax system that is not only efficient but also just and fair. URA is proud to champion integrity, ensuring that it remains central to our identity, our systems, and our service to the nation.



Leveraging social media for revenue mobilisation

By Elizabeth Nakiru

Tax bodies and revenue authorities are increasingly leveraging social media as a tool for revenue mobilization. Some notable bodies include Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), South Africa Revenue Service (SARS), and the Internal Revenue Service (United States of America), which are quite active bodies that have popular social media presence.

Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) does not fall short of using the digital space to equally enhance its revenue mobilization efforts. URA is driving these messages through it through public awareness campaigns such as the Mpa E-receipt Yange, FfeBanno, URA Enforcement Alert, Tick Tock and the customs 101 campaigns. These are campaigns that are noticeable online and famously relatable to URA.

URA leverages social media platforms to educate the public about tax obligations, deadlines, and the importance of paying taxes. This includes explaining tax processes, changes in tax laws, and the benefits of compliance. This is coupled with simplified information in form of short videos, infographics, and FAQs which are shared to break down complex tax information into easily digestible content, making it

accessible to a wider audience.

With taxpayers being the key contributors to the revenue basket, URA employs the digital space to facilitate real time communication and customer service with our online clientele which includes a range of all age groups such as the youth (Gen Zs) who mainly use social media for entertainment, information, and lately activism. URA ably interacts with taxpayers, answering questions, and providing support as and when needed. This has enhanced taxpayer satisfaction and encouraged compliance.

In addition, the contact centre actively engages taxpayers through the inboxes of X, Facebook, Web-chat, and URA touchpoint where taxpayers are served individually by an officer. Social media has also been leveraged on by URA to promote online tax services including the EFRIS, ASYCUDA, return filing, tax waiver applications, to mention but a few. Through the URA Ticktock campaign, promotions are made using to encourage use of online tax filing systems, making it easier and more convenient for taxpayers to file their returns and make payments, thereby reducing the likelihood of late payments and penalties. The space is also used to inform the public about

the consequences of non-compliance, including potential fines, audits, and legal action.

The Digital Media Management Unit has endeavoured to hold monthly spaces on X that are dubbed "DRIFT X spaces" where they tackle tax related topics by demystifying them, providing clarification and new information while debunking myths and misinformation about tax administration.

The Taxman's social media is also a positive reinforcement that focuses on the moral and civic duties of paying taxes, encouraging voluntary compliance by appealing to the sense of contributing to society. For instance, the Mpa E-receipt Yange campaign that took place for the better part of last financial year promoted tax compliance and voluntary compliance with a foresight of building a tax paying culture and trust among the Ugandan citizens.

By leveraging social media in these ways, URA has ably enhanced their revenue mobilization efforts through improving compliance, increasing public awareness, and fostering a more transparent and communicative relationship with taxpayers.

URA, NCDC roll out tax curriculum to Vocational Education Training Schools

By Robert Wamala Lumanyika

Sometime last year, my family and I were returning from the village, when we met a terrible traffic jam at Kalerwe roundabout, a Kampala suburb. It was approaching 8:00 pm and the clouds had opened with a heavy downpour. The traffic lights went off creating a chaotic scene as motorists struggled to change lanes. Some pedestrians and motorcyclists commonly known as 'bodaboda' riders had taken shelter within the roundabout leaving a very narrow path for motorists.

No sooner had I negotiated the roundabout than I heard a bump on the hind part of my car. I stopped in the middle of the road to find out what had happened. A hug truck had failed to break and smashed my car hind lights. In the heat of the moment, a traffic officer ordered us aside, took charge of the situation, instructing us to drive to the nearest police station in Wandegeya.

By that time, fear had engulfed everyone in the car as my children frantically asked if we were going to be arrested, all this while with tears were rolling down their face. At midnight, an officer told us to park and return the next day and sort out our mess. We hailed motorcycles and left to return the next day. The truck driver arrived very early insisting that he should be allowed to go because his bosses were asking about his whereabouts and he had deceived them all night.

Lucky enough, the traffic officer rejected his plea, and insisted that on him repairing my car to my satisfaction if he was to be let off the hook. After several phone calls, a fairly old man, with a shiny watch, and white turned brown overcoat arrived, asking for my car while demanding for the keys to go and repair it *chap chap*.

I quickly asked if he had a garage, such

that I could drive there, but he said he was this 'muy-iribi mechanic', who had no permanent garage, but rather practiced his skill anywhere he found an opportunity to work. I rejected his offer and asked the truck driver to take me to a garage with proper details.

Among the many calls placed, there was no success. By then, the truck driver was receiving endless calls from the company but he did not want to tell them what had transpired. I later discovered that he was afraid of engaging his company bosses for fear of losing his job.

Finally, with limited choices, the driver let the cat out of the bag. His bosses asked him to obtain a proper invoice from a nearby garage such that the company would sort the payment. This was because their registered garage is located in the country side. By this time, we were at a garage located in Makerere behind LDC. In the moment, I had a dialogue with the operator of this garage why many garages are neither registered with the Uganda Registration Services Bureau nor Uganda Revenue Authority, and had opted to work informally.

He said, many people are ignorant about the requirements for registration, and they only focus on making money. Neither do they know that expenses are deducted from total gross income before arriving at chargeable income, which is taxed. That when they buy spare parts, they have paid enough tax and there is no need of making additional payments.

Some did not know the importance of getting a tax identification number, what correct taxes and rates are applicable, let alone their rights or obligations to tax. Similar to these mechanics, many people study from primary, secondary and even tertiary levels without appreciating the concept of tax.

It is against this background that URA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Curriculum Development Centre, in which among others, the tax curriculum has been rolled out in the secondary schools, and is examinable by the Uganda National Examinations Board.

In this MOU, URA is obliged to support the curriculum development exercise across institutions of learning, with the ultimate goal of reducing informality.

This Financial year, tertiary institutions were identified as training centres for the majority of the business operators. These impart job creation skills that aid graduates to start-up enterprises namely mechanical repairs, construction, transport, restaurants, and salons among others. However most of these graduates get to the job market without taxation skills, which increases informality and erodes the tax base.

In a bid to have the curriculum exercise actualised, tax content was developed jointly by a team of experts from URA and NCDC and will be rolled out later this year. The exercise has so far resulted into development of curriculum documents namely, Learner's book, training manual and teacher's guide, all of which were dully approved by the NCDC organs.

These have been quality assured, designed and taken to print, ahead of tutor trainings that will be conducted later this year. The materials are also available on the URA website, www.ura.go.ug under tax curriculum.

The writer is the Supervisor Tax Content, URA

How certain are you of your vehicle's registration?

URA and the Police grapple with motorists who continuously attempt to flout the motor vehicle registration process in so many ways. There have been several reports about cars on Uganda roads with number plates that are registered to other vehicles. Other times, two motor vehicles have been captured through enforcement operations with the same registration number plate. In this Taxman issue, our reporter, **Irene Kabakama**, explores some of the challenges and measures to counter the practice of affixing unauthentic number plates on motor vehicles.

How do unauthentic number plates affect revenue collection for the government?

Unauthentic number plates indicate that out of the genuinely registered vehicles some are attached with fake plates denying government of tax revenue such as customs taxes on imported vehicles not registered in the normal procedures where duplicate number plates of existing vehicles are illegally placed on newly imported vehicles.

Government also losses out on advance income tax on commercial vehicles where various commercial vehicles are operating with similar number plates. In addition, revenue from temporary license (TRL) fees on foreign registered vehicles is lost if the foreign registered vehicles are fraudulently affixed with duplicate number plates of existing vehicles and become untraceable by customs to enforce TRL.

What are the common crimes associated with unauthentic number plates?

The most common crimes associated with fraudsters in unauthentic number plates are murder, robbery, smuggling, concealment and other crime that render the actual owner of the vehicle untraceable.

What measures can be taken to prevent the practice of flouting number plate issuance

- Steps to prevent duplicated number plates; Digitalize number plates with logbooks just as National ID.
- Heavy penalties to offenders including prosecution.
- Staff should endeavour to follow all



the laid down procedures in motor vehicle registration and issuance of number plates.

How can car owners verify the authenticity of their number plates?

Car owners can confirm their number plates with the Ministry of Works and Transport in the Licensing office and the URA offices. Here the different offices will cross check the vehicle details e.g. chassis number to see whether it matches with the registration details but also probe the client on whether they have ever obtained any duplicate number plates.

What are the consequences for car owners found with unauthentic car number plates?

Car owners found with unauthentic number plates will have the plates confiscated from the owners for ministry of works destruction. Any attempt to alter, remove, or tamper with the vehicle registration number is a criminal offense and offenders can face fines, imprisonment, or both, depending on the severity of the violation.

How does the use of unauthentic number plates impact road safety?

This illegal practice makes it difficult for Police and law enforcement offices to track and follow up cases say of lost or stolen motor vehicles. In case of an accident, identifying the persons involved and ownership becomes complex too.

How does technology assist with tracking and identifying unauthentic number plates?

Today, one of the technology measure URA uses to verify number plate authenticity is the e-Tax system which houses all motor vehicle registration data. Once a car registration plate is punched in, the system generate the type of car attached to the registration details, Chassis number and all other corresponding details. Additionally, CCTV cameras can easily be employed to track the unauthentic number plates.

How can URA and the Police ensure a seamless collaboration in addressing this issue?

Efforts are in place to harmonize processes for URA and Police to interconnect their systems especially CCTV for easy tracking of unauthentic number plates. Some of the platforms this is being implemented is through the Express Penalty which the police can use to verify car registration details. This continuous cooperation helps URA to access the CCTV cameras for easy detection and follow up on fake number plates.

What is the role of the public in suspected cases of unauthentic number plates?

The public is encouraged to always carry-out background checks, inspect and ascertain the authenticity of the cars that they buy from some dealers. It is always important to ascertain the registration number, chassis and engine number, and initial owner registration details. This information can be sourced from URA's Customs department and the Ministry of Works and Transport registration and licensing department. Also, the public should report any cases of duplication of unauthentic number plates to the nearest police station.



URA Leveraging cultural institutions to boost tax compliance

By Akinyi Winiefred

For several years, Uganda has lost significant revenue due to citizens' poor compliance with tax laws.

This non-compliance stems from a lack of public confidence, corruption by public officials, poor service delivery by the government, ignorance of tax laws, etcetera. Additionally, many citizens are still oblivious that paying taxes is a key contribution they make towards national development.

According to the URA Commissioner General John Musinguzi, less than 5 million Ugandans are currently captured in the tax net and paying taxes.

To address this, URA has partnered with various stakeholders, including government, private sector, and religious and cultural institutions, to spread tax education, change mindsets, and build a culture of compliance.

Early this year, the Commissioner General paid a courtesy visit to Katikkiro Charles Peter Mayiga, where the two leaders discussed ways of advancing tax education and achieving voluntary compliance.

Mayiga pledged the support of Buganda Kingdom in tax education and challenged

URA to engage policymakers on proper service delivery for accountability purposes to taxpayers.

Since then, URA has partnered with the Kingdom by supporting initiatives like Kabaka's birthday run and the PEWOSA program championed by CBS FM with the support of the Buganda Kingdom.

Through these events, the taxman has managed to reach grassroots taxpayers and extend services like TIN registration and amendment, tax advisory services, etc.

One of the major contributors to revenue loss in Uganda is smuggling, mostly occurring in border districts. Statistics indicate that Uganda loses an estimated UGX 1 billion to smuggling every month. The West Nile sub-region has particularly been affected, with common products being cigarettes, petrol, cooking oil, and other household items.

Despite engaging both education and legal efforts, the practice has continued to rise. Commissioner General Musinguzi visited the sub-region early this year, where he commissioned the "West Nile stakeholder relations project." The project's goal is to get residents to engage in legal trade by educating them on the dangers of smuggling and its impact on the economy.

Through this project, URA has established partnerships with cultural leaders in West Nile, such as the Alur Kingdom and the Kebu Rigangi Institution in Zombo district.

In collaboration with the Alur chieftom cabinet, URA is educating subjects on its initiatives and the mandate of various agencies like the police and the army.

This information has served as an eye-opener for residents who have fallen victim to impostors who pose as security/URA officials and impound their goods.

The URA collaboration with the Kebu Rigangi Institution, has opened access to a kingdom that oversees about 300,000 people.

During a meeting with the late King, His Highness Ephraim Waringu Kebbi, in July, the two entities discussed strategies for combating smuggling.

Hon. Oleku John Smith, the kingdom's Deputy Prime Minister, advised URA to open a station in Alangi village, one of the developing trading centres in the Kingdom. He observed that the village has numerous porous borders and is far from URA's nearest service centre in Padeca.

Establishing synergies with cultural leaders has enabled URA to build a tax administration that enjoys the trust and confidence of all stakeholders. These efforts are indicative of URA's readiness to achieve citizen participation, drive voluntary compliance, and cultivate a healthy tax culture.



Ms Clare Sanyu (centre), the Supervisor Stakeholder Mobilisation Project Northern Region, in a recent visit to the Kebu Chief

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A delegation of URA and Zimbabwe Revenue Authority officials at the recent benchmark visit where ZIMRA visited URA to learn about Automatic Exchange of Information.

Benchmarking is still key formulae that drives growth

By Irene Kabakama

The Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) is increasingly becoming a leading benchmark destination for tax administrations worldwide, drawing the attention of high-ranking revenue officials from across the globe.

From the Federal Inland Revenue Service of Nigeria to the South African Revenue Authority, the South Sudan Revenue Authority, Zimbabwe Revenue Authority and Kenya Revenue Authority, URA's innovative tax practices are a beacon for those eager to enhance their own systems.

Each institution visits with specific needs for improving and harmonizing best practices. Some focus on different departments, while others enjoy a cocktail of everything URA has to offer.

Central to URA's appeal is its focused approach to tax policy and technology. The introduction of the Electronic Fiscal Receipting and Invoicing Solution (EFRIS), Digital Tax Stamps, Bonded Warehouse and Information Management System, and Authorized Economic Operators have both been daring and far sighted.

This has shown how technology can be used to transform tax processes—streamlining operations, boosting transparency, and reducing enforcement costs. These advancements not only align URA with global tax standards but also enhance compliance with international tax laws.

It's important to note that these en-

gagements are mutually beneficial; they combine engaging conversations with practical sessions and both sides continually learn from each other. In this exchange, URA has gained immensely from the rich insights provided by these international experts.

Benchmarking offers insights into the latest trends, technologies, and innovations in tax administration and has since become an essential tool for URA's steadfast growth and development.

By learning from global peers, URA pinpoints areas for improvement, particularly in customer service and taxpayer experience. This dialogue leads to significant enhancements, such as refining the Contact Centre, expanding taxpayer education, and rolling out new outreach programs.

Currently URA is running a campaign known as the "Buuza Kamisona" in Uganda's leading Luganda newspaper – Bukedde to consistently educate and empower the taxpaying community as a master seed to enhance future compliance initiatives.

Tax Education is no longer a unit attached to the Public and Corporate Affairs (PCA) division— the Public relations arm of the taxman, it has evolved to a department with an Assistant Commissioner, charged with the sole purpose of advancing tax literacy.

Also, these benchmarking exercises enable URA to stay competitive and innovative. By examining successes and failures from oth-

er tax authorities, URA adapts best practices, improves its digital platforms, and ensures that taxpayers can manage their taxes efficiently and independently. This continuous learning process enables URA's offerings to remain aligned with the highest standards of tax administration.

The selection of benchmarking partners is a meticulous process overseen by the Commissioner General and the Learning and Development team. They ensure that each partner's practices align with URA's goals and objectives, adding value to the benchmarking process.

One notable example is URA's adoption of the performance management system, inspired by the Kenya Revenue Authority. This initiative has significantly boosted efficiency and accountability within URA, leading to clearer performance indicators and enhanced transparency in tax collection. Through benchmarking, URA not only improves its services but also anticipates industry shifts, making proactive adjustments to stay ahead.

After each benchmarking engagement, URA thoroughly analyzes the data and feedback to implement actionable improvements, ensuring that each exercise leads to meaningful progress.

In essence, benchmarking is more than a learning tool for URA—it is a strategic advantage that drives excellence, fosters innovation, and ensures that URA remains a leader in global tax administration.



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URA supports Zimbabwe counterpart to establish Exchange of Information

By Akinyi Winiefred

A 5-member delegation from the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) recently visited URA to benchmark on the Exchange of Information (EOI).

It was comprised of Inzwirashwe Muwonwa the Manager International Affairs & Donor Coordination, Knowledge S Renzva, Head Fiscal Litigation-ZIMRA, Tawanda Nedanhe and Jerryphanos Mushai both EOI Officers at ZIMRA and Tatu Illunga, the Technical Advisor, Tax Policy and Administration – Good Financial Governance in Africa Programme – GIZ.

URA's Akinyi Winiefred sat down with Mrs. Muwonwa who led the team to untangle the gist of the visit and insights on EOI.

1. Who is Inzwirashwe Muwonwa?

I am the Manager of international affairs and donor coordination for ZIMRA. I joined ZIMRA in 2009 as a communications officer and became the manager for corporate communications two years later.

I was responsible for events management, stakeholder relations, and taxpayer education.

In 2021, I moved to the international affairs section that I am currently heading. My responsibilities include connecting the revenue administration with international partners and coordinating technical assistance programs with development partners such as the IMF, the World Bank, UNDP, and ATAF among others. I also do donor coordination where I engage partners, and coordinate alternative funding.

I am also leading the exchange of information unit alongside what I do. That responsibility has landed me here because EOI is my responsibility as the contact point for all information in ZIMRA.

2. What are the intentions of the visit and what changes do you anticipate it will bring to your institution?

The purpose of this visit is to improve our understanding of EOI, especially with regard to EOI on request both inbound and outbound. Our EOI unit is relatively new, established in January 2024. We came to build capacity for the unit.

This is also a partnership between our administration and the African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF). We held a technical assistance program with ATAF and they recommended we do a peer-to-peer learning with URA. We expect to implement what we have learned from here especially the issue of establishing a working group. All stakeholders form an important component in the EOI supply chain. This is one major takeaway we intend to implement.

3. When did ZIMRA start implementing EOI and how has the journey been thus far?

ZIMRA recently joined the global forum on transparency and exchange of information for tax purposes. We have been facing challenges where you send out questions and the other jurisdiction does not even respond because nothing is binding you. We have been relying on Double Tax Agreements (DTAs) but these do not give standardization.

We decided to join the global forum, which gives standardization of processes and demands certain professional workflows



Ms Winiefred Akinyi (R), URA's media officer in an interview with Ms Inzwirashwe Muwonwa (R) the ZIMRA

and processes within EOI.

Following advice from ATAF, we also established the EOI unit this year. We have achieved quite a lot in a short time for example; we have managed to develop our EOI manual, and work procedures and do a maturity assessment with the global forum. This capacity building is also a major achievement.

4. What is the importance of EOI in relation to the mandate of ZIMRA?

In relation to the collection of revenue, EOI plays a critical role because ultimately the purpose of exchanging information is to follow the money. EOI will help us collect more money and reduce base erosion and profit shifting because we will have access to information from other foreign jurisdictions.

5. What are the benefits of EOI to the taxpayers in Zimbabwe?

There is a burden on the complying taxpayers. With EOI, we shall be able to broaden our tax base and ultimately limit the tax increments.

6. What measures has Zimbabwe put in place to ensure EOI is implemented effectively?

tively?

We held a maturity assessment with the global forum and conscientized our stakeholders on the existence of EOI and advised them that ZIMRA joined the forum and what it meant for the country.

We shared existing DTAs with internal stakeholders like auditors and advised them to bring information requests to our EOI unit. We have also engaged divisions internally and we already have two requests so far.

We have also established open lines of communication in different forums like ATAF. We will engage with our treaty partners and inform them about our operational EOI unit.

7. What potential does EOI have in unlocking revenue for tax administrations across the continent?

EOI has huge potential that needs to be tapped by African tax administrations. When you do exchanges, you become aware of businesses that your citizens have in other countries.

Additionally, as Africa, we have lagged in regards to EOI. For instance, the AMTAM

(ATAF Mutual Assistance in Tax Matters) that has been developed by ATAF is not known. This needs to be publicized so that African countries can exchange information among themselves.

8. What lessons have you learned from Uganda about EOI?

Besides the creation of the working group that I spoke about, we have learned about EOI on request, the workflows, processes, forms required etcetera. From this visit, we noted that there were some gaps in our information request processes so back home, we will improve on the incoming and outgoing requests.

The issue of security is also critical. Aside from offices that are accessible through biometrics, we need to have cabinets that are lockable and have a backup of information for both soft and hard copies.

9. In the spirit of learning from each other, what new ideas do you feel URA should implement regarding EOI?

With the knowledge and practical experience URA has in the EOI, I think it's important to engage other African countries and capacitate them to be able to conduct EOI.



Additionally, Uganda is one of the countries that ratified the AMTAM, I think it is important to publicize this platform to African forums because it is advantageous for us as African countries.

10. Apart from EOI, what other measures can tax administrations implement to counter tax evasion schemes like money laundering?

Tax administrations need to invest in ICT systems because these have access to taxpayer information in various jurisdictions. They enable us to track the money so we can follow up.

11. What have you liked most about Uganda?

We have had a chance to taste the local food and I loved the *matooke* and goat *mchoma*. I also tasted the *Ugali*; we have this back home but call it *sadzza*.

We also visited downtown and got to see what Uganda really is. I am curious about how you are taxing the informal sector because there is a lot of business going on downtown. I also noticed you have many *bodabodas*; we do not have those in Zimbabwe.

Protecting Ugandans through destruction of over 180 tons of contraband goods worth billions

By Joshua Niyonshima

In July 2024, the Uganda Revenue Authority destroyed 180 tons of contraband goods valued at more than a billion shillings at Luweero Industries, Nakasongola. The goods which included cosmetics with hydroquinone substances, used undergarments, expired beers, sex toys, and food-stuffs were impounded by enforcement teams across the country from different operations. Importation of contraband is prohibited under S200 of the EAC CMA, 2004.

According to the Manager of Customs Warehousing, Canon Rahuka Milton, the

exercise is meant to deter the re-occurrence of such illegal activities and prevent the return of products to the market. It is also aimed at protecting Ugandans from the consumption of harmful products.

"Our major job as URA is not to impound goods, it is to collect revenue for national development. However, we are committed to protecting the health and safety of Ugandans by removing harmful and prohibited goods from the market. For instance, cosmetics that have the hydroquinone or mercury substance that causes cancer," Manager of Customs Warehousing Milton Rahuka.

The destruction of goods is by sections 18 and 248 of the East African Community Customs Management Act (EAC-CMA). The goods destroyed were valued at UGX 1,097,896,196,01 and the would-be taxes on these goods amounted to UGX 1,044,732,093.53.

Milton Urged Ugandans to stop investing in contraband as URA has upped its game in deterring the entry of prohibited goods into the country through modern technologies like Non-Intrusive Inspection, increased surveillance, and intelligence-led enforcement operations.



A cross-section of some of the destruction activities in Nakasongola recently.



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Agricultural machinery and feeds are VAT-exempt

By Kamugisha Kabahweza Allan

Uganda Revenue Authority participated in the CBS PEWOSA Agri-business Expo at Pookino Grounds in Masaka City early September 2024. This expo brings together dealers in Agricultural machinery, inputs, pesticides, and farmers involved in value addition.

PEWOSA – Project to Empower Women Through Savings and Loan Associations, has since expanded beyond women.

While live on CBS 89.2FM's Gakyali Mabaga program, broadcasting from Masaka, the supervisor Tax Education Wamala Robert Lumanyika explained that URA's mandate is to mobilize and collect revenue for government to provide services such as roads, health facilities and education.

Wamala appreciated the partnership that allowed URA to meet face to face with the persons in the agribusiness sector. "Participating in this expo provides us with an opportunity to interact with the taxpayers, understand their challenges in taxation, and how URA can help them navigate those hurdles."

In line with the tax awareness agenda, the importance of a TIN for any person involved in income generating activities such as businesses, employment, rentals and pro-

duction was highlighted. The expo attendees were urged to get a TIN since it is free of charge and acquired instantly.

"Even those who wish to supply government projects, transferring a motor vehicle and motorcycle, you need a TIN. When you make transactions exceeding UGX 10million such as transfer of land, you require a TIN to pay stamp duty," explained Wamala.

On taxes relating to agricultural equipment, animal and chicken feeds, it was revealed that they are VAT exempt adding that SACCOs do not pay taxes on their income. A question on the tax threshold was raised and it was clarified by the URA team that everyone earning income above UGX 2.82 million annually pays taxes.

There was a contention on counterfeit drugs and fertilizers and how they enter the country. It was noted that those are illegal and should be intercepted at the several One Stop Border Posts (OSBPs). This is because OSBPs harbour all government agencies involved in clearing goods entering the country to ease checks. Therefore, agencies like UNBS, NDA, Security Agencies, Immigration are stationed in one building and URA is the last in line.

Minister for Lukiiko, Cabinet Affairs, Protocol and General Duties in Katikkiro's Office, Owekitiilwa Noah Kiyimba appreciated

exhibitors especially government agencies for participating in the 3rd Edition of the PEWOSA Agribusiness Expo in Masaka saying that they shared knowledge with taxpayers.

"I call upon the agencies to sensitize the masses about what they do and enlighten them on the benefits. Most Ugandans are unaware about their rights and obligations in the development of the country, so do more sensitization programs," said Owek. Kiyimba.

In addition, he urged farmers to engage in value addition so as to gain from the tax-free exports.

Speaking at the URA tent, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives Buganda Kingdom, Owekitiilwa Hajji Hamis Kakomo, reiterated Hajji Kiyimba's call for more sensitization in order to ensure tax compliance amongst taxpayers.

He explained that thousands of people have gained knowledge and skills through the PEWOSA expos since the inception in 1998 saying that PEWOSA services are widely spread out across Buganda and reach about 5 million people altogether.

The 3rd Edition of CBS PEWOSA Agri-business Expo in Masaka attracted over 250 exhibitors.



Owek. Hajji Hamis Kakomo flanked by other delegates as they visited the URA tent during the PEWOSA Agri-Business expo



Owek. Noah Kiyimba, the Minister for Lukiiko, Cabinet Affairs, Protocol and General Duties in Katikkiro's Office



Intelligence-Based Operations: A Game-Changer in the Battle Against Smuggling in Uganda

By Joshua Niyonshima

In a demonstration of the effectiveness of intelligence-led operations, the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) has delivered a significant blow to smuggling networks. On September 10, 2024, the Mbale Enforcement Station executed a successful operation that resulted in the seizure of 3.6 tons of illicit wheat flour from Kenya.

The operation, which began early morning, was driven by precise intelligence. Winnifred Kusiima, in charge of customs enforcement in Mbale, detailed that at around 3:00 AM, the enforcement team received crucial information about a major smuggling plot involving large quantities of wheat flour being transported from Kenya into Uganda via River Manafwa. Swift and decisive action was taken: an ambush was set up near Greens in Bubuto Subcounty, Manafwa

District. By 6:30 AM, the smugglers began moving the contraband across the river and into Uganda. The enforcement team intercepted and impounded the goods before they could be transported further into Mbale City.

They included; 150 cartons of Dunia wheat flour and 5 cartons of kibuyu bar soap, all of which were loaded onto three large pick-up trucks and transported to the Mbale Checkpoint for processing.

In Busia, Enforcement Officer Onesmus Amwiine reported a successful crackdown on smugglers in Sofia and Daban towns. At approximately 4:00 AM, officers intercepted a vehicle with registration number UAH 073N suspected of carrying illicit goods. The search uncovered: 37 cartons of Dunia Wheat Flour, 24 bales of worn clothes, 5 bags of Bamburi Cement, 4 Ling Long

tyres, 17 bags of Muhammad Rice, 30 bags of Baraf Rice, 15 rolls of viscose material, a motorcycle, and a Toyota RAV 4.

Amwiine highlighted the effectiveness of the intelligence-led approach in disrupting smuggling networks, underscoring URA's commitment to thwarting smuggling activities.

Counterfeit Currency Discovery in Jinja.

On September 12, a routine inspection at a checkpoint along the Jinja-Kampala highway led to the discovery of UGX 65 million of counterfeit currency. Desmond Lumago, the Enforcement In-Charge in Jinja, reported that the money, packed in thirty bundles of UGX 5,000 notes, was found in a passenger's sack. The individual, who appeared tense, fled the scene. This saved innocent Ugandans from being cheated their hard-earned money.

Further Seizures Across the Country.

The crackdown on smuggling continued with several notable interceptions: September 13: Truck KCQ 112T was stopped at Nakalama Trading Centre with 35 cartons of Obama ballpoint pens and 43 bags of Pakistani Baraf rice concealed in the vehicle's cabin. The following day, Truck UBJ 246N was similarly intercepted at the Busitema checkpoint with smuggled goods.

September 14: Malaba enforcement officers intercepted Truck KDM 576E/ZD9014, which was transporting 25 bales of assorted Kitege material concealed within gypsum. The driver fled, but the truck and cargo were intercepted.

In a high-profile operation, Malaba enforcement officers thwarted a cigarette smuggling attempt. Acting on a tip-off, they intercepted a vehicle, UBN 672Y, and arrested the driver after a brief chase. The search revealed 1,721 bombas, 10 packets, and 20 sticks of super match cigarettes. The driver and cargo were taken into custody for further investigation.

Expanding Enforcement Across Borders.

URA's efforts extend beyond major towns. In Elegu, officers recovered over 3,000 liters of smuggled fuel, 1,120 liters of cooking oil, and 17 motorcycles. In Busia, intelligence led to the recovery of various smuggled goods, including soap, lubricants, and rice.

In the rolling hills of Rwanda and Kabale, URA's covert operations resulted in the seizure of a Corolla loaded with textiles. Additionally, the Busitema team intercepted significant quantities of smuggled goods, including used clothes and fishing gear.

Future Outlook

Simon Tumwesigye, the manager of enforcement in the Northern region, noted that smugglers have advanced their tactics, moving smaller quantities over distances to avoid detection. URA's continued vigilance and intelligence gathering are crucial in maintaining market fairness and protecting society from the adverse effects of contraband goods.

"As URA tightens its grip on smuggling syndicates, the public is encouraged to stay vigilant and report any suspicious activities to authorities. The battle against smuggling is far from over, but with these intelligence-based operations, Uganda is making significant strides toward a fairer and more regulated market," noted Simon.





NMS BENCHMARKS ON URA'S COMMUNICATION PROCESSES
 The Public and Corporate Affairs division of URA hosted the National Medical Stores team to share insights on communication and IT processes such as crisis communication, leveraging digital media, branding, stakeholder management, developing newsletters, and IT systems.



URA partners with Catholic Church Charity drive and Tax Compliance
 Uganda Revenue Authority has officially joined forces with the Kampala Catholic Church to raise funds for the Nsambya Babies Home, emphasizing its commitment to support vulnerable children in Uganda.

While at Rubaga Cathedral, URA Commissioner General John Musinguzi appreciated the partnership as a statement of trust. He added that other than wearing a tough face while collecting taxes, URA remains human and moved by the plight of the least privileged, the weak and the vulnerable in our society. URA welcomed the collaboration and pledged to include annual activities to support vulnerable children, particularly through the Nsambya Babies Home.



Mr. Robert Kalumba, the Ag. Assistant Commissioner



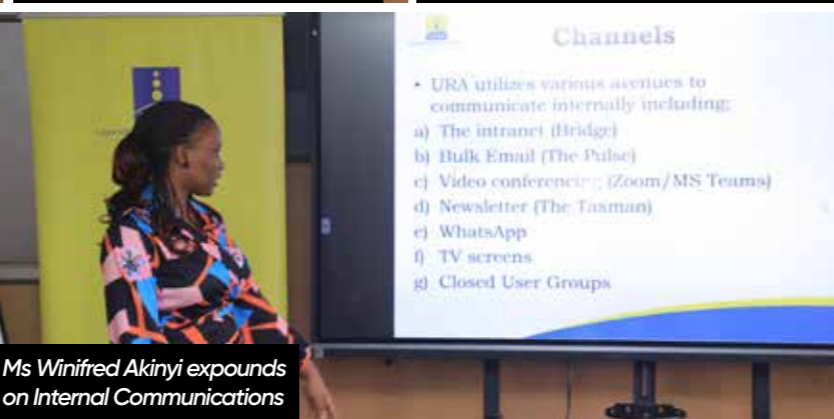
Josephine Kabyesiza representing the Stakeholder Relations team



Immaculate Wanyenze, the Ag. Supervisor PR & Communications Unit



Ms Elizabeth Nakiru, representing the Digital Communications Unit



Ms Winifred Akinyi expounds on Internal Communications

- Channels**
- URA utilizes various avenues to communicate internally including:
 - The intranet (Bridge)
 - Bulk Email (The Pulse)
 - Video conferencing (Zoom/MS Teams)
 - Newsletter (The Taxman)
 - WhatsApp
 - TV screens
 - Closed User Groups



URA commends Kibuli Muslim Hospital
 A URA delegation engaged the Kibuli Muslim Hospital Management team recently in a bid to strengthen relations.

the initiative to visit and look into their issues. These engagements are in tune with the URA strategy of engaging different stakeholders to make them aware of their rights and obligations but also to receive feedback on URA operations for better compliance.

The Titular Head of Muslims in Uganda, Prince Kassim Nakibinge, thanked URA for reaching out to them and taking



UPDF BENCHMARKS ON URA'S PROCESSES
 URA recently hosted a team of junior officers from the UPDF who visited to learn from the taxman's processes. The soldiers were tipped on, among other things, URA's mandate, structure, and trade facilitation initiatives.



The URA delegation in the meeting with the Kibuli Hospital management



Ms Rachel Austin (L) the Head of the International Capacity Building at HMRC and the URA Commissioner General, Mr John Musinguzi (R) share a light moment.



Mr John Musinguzi (8th Right) and the Archbishop Dr Stephen Kazimba Mugalu (7th R) flanked by other delegates in a recent visit to the URA tower in Nakawa.



Ms Rachel Austin of HRMC (L) and Mr John Musinguzi (R) URA CG after signing the MoU



URA signs MoU with HRMC
 Uganda Revenue Authority has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with His Majesty Revenue and Customs (HRMC) to partner in the areas of capacity building and exchange of information, among others. Currently, the two bodies are collaborating in the areas of human resources skilling and tax investigation, and the MoU will allow room for more cooperation.



CHURCH OF UGANDA ARCHBISHOP PAYS COURTESY VISIT TO URA
 The Archbishop of the Church of Uganda, Dr. Stephen Kazimba Mugalu, recently met with URA Commissioner General John Musinguzi to discuss matters of common interest and possible partnerships.
 Dr. Kazimba recognized URA's integral role in Uganda's development and expressed willingness to work with the tax body to enhance compliance. He also underscored the importance of compliance, urging Christians to always pay taxes and set a compliant and righteous example for others.



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