



GLORIA TURYAMUREEBA A VOICE OF UGANDA MANUFACTURING

by TR CUTLER



Industrial journalist, Thomas R. Cutler (TRC) met with Gloria Turyamureeba (GT) in Entebbe, Uganda (pictured above).

Gloria is an entrepreneur and enterprise development expert in Kampala, Uganda. Turyamureeba has over 20 years of experience in enterprise development including serving as board chair and managing director for C&S Upholstery Ltd. Turyamureeba also served as board chair and managing director for Footprints Travel Consultants Ltd., both in Kampala, Uganda. She is currently pursuing an MBA in leadership and management from York St. John University in conjunction with Robert Kennedy College in Zurich Switzerland. Turyamureeba can be reached at LinkedIn.

TRC: How has the Ugandan industrial sector changed over the past 5 years?

GT: The industrial sector has experienced steady progress for the last five years with an average yearly growth of 5 to 8%. This has been in a vast range of product production.

TRC: How has COVID changed the Uganda manufacturing sector?

GT: COVID has had both positive and negative impacts on the industrial sector of Uganda. It helped increase capacity and consumption for products like PPEs, medicines, medical equipment, agro-processing and its related sectors. On one hand these improved a lot since demand was so high. On a bad note, many factories

laid off workers especially with the factories that were dependent on imported raw materials. Due to this situation, government lost quite a lot of revenue and households suffered.

TRC: How is Uganda uniquely positioned to be the leader in manufacturing?

GT: Uganda is positioned to be one of the regional leaders in manufacturing because the government is developing the requisite infrastructure to support manufacturing in line with Ugandans' planned growth corridors. We are developing industrial parks around the country to have equal distribution so that costs of production and labor are minimized. Also, value addition is encouraged for import substitution by most industries; this enhances exports thus attracts greater incomes in forex. We are working on increased regional markets especially southern Sudan, Congo, and most of the East African community countries. We have strengthened the legal and institutional framework to support manufacturing. Abundance of food is a big bonus and inexpensive, so even citizens' minimal salaries can survive easily.

TRC: What industries is Uganda best able to capture over the next decade?

GT: In the next decade we hope to capture two sets of industry. First, the light manufacturing: textiles, apparels, shoes, assembly of electronic and medical items, paper and paper products, chemicals, petroleum chemicals, and pharmaceuticals, cereal products, tiles, sanitary ware, plumbing equipment to name a few. The heavy manufacturing will include iron and steel, cement production to a much higher capacity, tractor and automotive manufacturing and assembly.

TRC: What are the top myths or misconceptions North American and European companies have about Uganda?

GT: There are some of the myths and misconceptions that Europe and the US have about Uganda. The most widespread story is that of the late dictator Idi Amin (he left power in 1979). Some people still think there are roots about him and his bad behaviors which is a myth.

People also think there is also a few of a high prevalence

of disease like HIV and malaria, yet the former was contained years ago by the strong leadership of the current president who was open about it and that saved lives and continues to this day. Corruption exists but new strides are being made to correct these problems by adding much needed transparency.

TRC: What is the treatment of women in the industrial sector in Uganda?

GT: Women are treated the same way men in this country. One of the biggest achievements of this current regime has been to empower women at all levels. We had a vice president for 8 years who was female. But there are jobs for women in most of the industries.

TRC: What is the average hourly wage of laborers in Uganda?

GT: The average hourly rate varies from sector to sector but on average is 12,000 shillings which is about \$4.50 USD.

TRC: What safety protocols are in place to protect employees?

GT: There are set safety protocols which have been set by the ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development to protect all workers at all levels. Like OSHA in the US, some of the protocols include: minimizing occupational accidents, diseases, and injuries in the workplace promoting good health of the workers promoting construction of safe and healthy work environments promoting awareness of occupational safety and health among workers, employers, and consumers thorough training and sensitization.

TRC: What role do you see your company playing in the industrial arena moving forward?

GT: I know and believe that tourism in tandem with industry will grow Uganda by leaps and bounds over the next decade. I intend to use my platform to inform everyone that Uganda is open for business and the huge potential in both sectors, tourism, and industry. I am committed to the growth and empowerment of the girl child because once she is strong, the household is strong, and hence the nation. My experience on various boards has helped me see the capacity women have to change the nation. Fifty-six percent Ugandans are women and since we are still largely a peasant community, it is the women that produce the food, raise the families, and educate the children.

TRC: What would help Uganda's prospects most?

GT: Uganda would benefit most from sustainable industrialization and sustainable tourism for inclusive growth, creating employment and on-going wealth creation.

TRC: What is the friendliness of the political climate?

GT: Uganda's political climate is very good and

welcoming to all investors. We have peace and security; that is a big plus. We openly welcome anyone that wants to add value. There is a list of minimum requirements for anyone coming to invest in Uganda. for foreigners. The minimum is \$250,000 depending on the field they are entering. The rest is paperwork and licensing. Depending on the size of investment, government can offer land, especially in the industrial parks.

TRC: What are the best next steps for a company seeking to interface with you and operate cooperatively with Ugandan businesses?

GT: The best next step for a company wishing to invest in Uganda should contact me on LinkedIn. I can help an investor step by step through all the paperwork and people they want to meet. To lower the cost and time for an investor coming into the country we serve as a one stop center. Uganda Investment Authority



was created years ago to facilitate the whole process under one roof. On a personal level I can help with this too. The government offers tax exemptions/holidays to attract foreign direct investment.

TRC: What else should we know?

GT: Uganda is a beautiful country, people are very friendly, no one will bother you. We are 45 million people, 70 percent below the age of 28 years; a noticeably young population that needs to work. Uganda has plenty of food and the weather is amazing all year round. We are part of the East African community. Our leaders together are pushing for one big entity since the market then becomes almost 200m. We have one tax system, one national identity system, and we are working on many other parts of Africa to make it one. We just signed a big pipeline deal with Total petroleum to do the oil pipeline from Uganda through Tanzania. This should bring in a lot of related services hence employment and wealth. We do this keenly aware of the environment as we preserve the endangered chimpanzees and gorillas. ■

Author Profile:

Thomas R. Cutler is the President and CEO of Fort Lauderdale, Florida-based, TR Cutler, Inc., celebrating its 23rd year. Cutler is the founder of the Manufacturing Media Consortium including more than 8000 journalists, editors, and economists writing about trends in manufacturing, industry, material handling, and process improvement. TR Cutler, Inc. recently launched two new divisions focusing on Gen Z and the increasing role of Africa in the manufacturing sector. Cutler authors more than 1000 feature articles annually regarding the manufacturing sector. Nearly 5000 industry leaders follow Cutler on Twitter daily at @ThomasRCutler. Contact Cutler at trcutler@trcutlerinc.com.

