Greetings My Fellow UNAA Members,

Our Canadian brethren, hope you had a pleasant and enjoyable Canada Day, and to my fellow Americans, hope your Independence Day celebrations were as memorable as mine.

For two years, it has been a privilege serving as your President. This has been a very consequential time in the history of our organization.

Two months from today, we shall all witness the enduring spirit of our democracy at the Hyatt Regency New Orleans Hotel as our organization; the Ugandan North American Association (UNAA) holds elections during the 27th Annual UNAA Convention and Trade Expo to fill all elective positions on the UNAA Executive Committee and the UNAA Council for the 2015 to 2017 term.

These elections will also bring to an end the 2013 to 2015 term of office and today is an opportunity to share some thoughts on the journey we have traveled together since September 2013 and to set expectations for an even brighter future of our organization.

I am filled with gratitude to the members of the UNAA Executive Committee, UNAA Council and the UNAA Board of Trustees for their leadership.

And above all, I thank you the members of UNAA for the trust that you bestowed upon me.

As I reflect on my Presidency, my thoughts inevitably return to why we chose to embark on this journey in the first place. At the time we hungered to reform this organization by introducing effective leadership guided by policies and practices founded on the highest ethical standards and executed after thorough analysis and with good judgment. Our goal was always to leave UNAA in better shape for the generations that will come after us.

And this goal was not merely lofty or aspirational but rather one tempered by the reality of where UNAA found herself at the close of the 2011 to 2013 term.

1. In August 2012 UNAA incurred a debt of $22,745.09 owed to the Pennsylvania Convention Center following a decision to host meetings and seminars of the UNAA 2012 Convention at a
convention center instead of a hotel. The convention center came with a $40,000 price tag where a convention hotel would have hosted UNAA’s meetings and seminars at no cost - $0.00.

2. In addition to the loss incurred above, in early 2013 the UNAA Treasurer without appropriate authorization withdrew a whopping $23,423 from UNAA’s Bank accounts. The Board of Trustees responded by requesting him to resign and refund the moneys. Needless to say these funds remain missing and unaccounted for.

3. For almost a decade leading to 2014 and despite constant appeals from her membership, UNAA’s leadership was unable to consistently produce and publicize financial and operational reports in a timely manner if ever at all.

4. In August 2010 UNAA promulgated a new constitution which expanded UNAA’s leadership base while introducing new checks and balances through formal institutions. On paper, this effectively transformed UNAA by shifting leadership away from the historical power bases to more modern and rule based institutions. This was all good only that someone forgot to inform UNAA’s historical power bases.

Coming into office in September 2013 we recognized the ship needed to be righted immediately. It was going to take sustained focus and grit to break from a culture which had let UNAA down so badly for several years. Members of the 2013 - 2015 team were going to make the hard but correct choices even if they were unpopular with UNAA’s historical power bases. It was a moment for true leadership and not the traditional appeasement. Under our leadership UNAA was going to be put on a path to sustainable fiscal discipline band stability and a democratic culture of accountability and transparency was going to be nurtured. And we delivered;

1. After a careful and long process, we appointed a new board of trustees devoid of the financial conflicts of interests which guided the decisions and choices of the historical power bases.

2. We have created a culture of accountability and transparency by releasing UNAA’s Annual financial reports and statements in a timely manner and putting them on UNAA’s website accessible to the members of the public.

3. We tirelessly worked at increased funding and sponsorship to the organization increasing it by more than fivefold.

4. We launched a ground breaking Community Outreach Initiative that increased membership more than three fold.

5. We launched the transformative Chapter Development Program (CDP)

6. We created new Partnerships, Programs and Initiatives like the Emerging Scholarship Program Fund.

7. We have reduced convention attendance costs across the board without any degradation of services.

8. We have established fiscal discipline and modern financial management systems.
9. We have secured UNAA’s legal property.

10. We have groomed a new generation of diverse leaders, and increased membership by attracting a new and empowered generation of UNAA Members.

While we celebrate these accomplishments it is not lost on us that there remains room for improvement. There is also room to legitimately challenge and debate the decisions we took. Whether one agreed with us or not, at least we made the hard decisions driven by honest convictions and in an open and transparent manner. We surmounted the obstacles and challenges thrown our way in a spirited and determined manner and when in doubt we sought approval from UNAA’s supreme organ, the members.

With the next free and fair election, a new dawn is upon us and UNAA’s members get to once again weigh in and decide. We will hand over an organization forever transformed; on a much firmer financial and legal footing. As we reflect on the accomplishments over the last two years, it is clear that the State of the Association is stronger now than it has ever been in more than a generation because of resolute leadership, and your unwavering loyalty and support.

**Repurposing, Restructuring and Positioning UNAA for its next 25 Years of Achievement**

1) **New Board of Trustees appointed to lead UNAA:**

In composing a new board of trustees, your elected leadership on the executive committee and council took great care to appoint people with impeccable integrity and no possible financial conflicts of interest.

It is my opinion that people who have possible conflicts of interest (e.g. they claim that the organization owes them money, they provide paid services to the organization, etc.) should not serve in leadership positions; elected or appointed. This eliminates potential conflicts of interest or at the very least, the appearance thereof. They are of course welcome to continue competing for UNAA’s business as vendors where their services will be accessed at fair market prices.

It is also my opinion that the schisms UNAA has experienced recently and historically have a tinge of financial conflicts of interest, making the disagreements that much more vicious; where competing financial interests masquerade as contests of principles.

By making UNAA’s finances an open book to the public, working towards auditing UNAA’s finances over the past couple of years and appointing a new BOT without any known financial conflicts of interest; we are aiming to prevent future leaders from having to experience future schisms.

2) **Creating a culture of accountability and transparency:**

An organization without transparency and accountability ultimately lacks legitimacy. Over the last two years, we have taken the following steps to create a culture of accountability and transparency.

a) *Releasing to the public UNAA’s State and Federal Tax Returns.* When I became President, we immediately released all of UNAA State and Federal Tax Returns covering over ten (10) years, the largest such release in the organization’s history and for the very first time ever, we released these to the public
and not to just paid up UNAA Members. You can access them here; [http://www.unaa.org/annual-tax-returns](http://www.unaa.org/annual-tax-returns)

b) **Quarterly Financial Report.** We also started the tradition of releasing quarterly financial reports, the first time ever that a quarterly financial report had been produced to the public. You can access them here; [http://www.unaa.org/quaterly-financial-reports](http://www.unaa.org/quaterly-financial-reports)


d) **Audited Financial Reports.** The next step for the organization as we continue developing this culture of accountability and transparency is to develop the habit and include in the annual budget an allocation for the auditing of these reports by an external and neutral auditor before their presentation to members at the Annual General Meeting the following year. Like it was often been stated, the credibility that comes from an audited report would be worth the cost. An audit would cost about 5% of the annual UNAA budget and we have secured sponsorship where this will no longer be an issue.

3) **Increased Funding and Sponsorship:**

Increased accountability, transparency and credibility will inevitably attract sponsors. Since San Francisco 2007, the Ugandan Government has become UNAA’s most consistent and reliable sponsor, contributing $20,000 annually. Effective with New Orleans 2015, this sponsorship will increase to $100,000 per year, with $50,000 going to the UNAA National Budget and another $50,000 going to the various UNAA Chapters. This is the largest such commitment by any sponsor in UNAA’s 27 year history.

In the coming months and weeks as we get closer to New Orleans, new sponsors and partners will be announced as New Orleans is on track to be one of the most well attended and sponsored UNAA convention.

As a result of increased sponsorship, a new UNAA Strategic Plan, 2015-2020 will be presented at the UNAA Annual General Meeting that will lay out goals for the organization including the possibility of acquiring a permanent home for the organization and a full time staff.

4) **Community Outreach Initiative (COI):**

In UNAA, our diversity is our strength, welcoming everybody irrespective of political affiliation, tribe origin or ethnicity and religious preference. As President, I have presided over an administration that has done more community outreach trips and events than any other UNAA administration in the organization’s history. Below are the highlights.

a) Held town hall forum with the Ugandan community in the New York Area in June 2015.

b) Sponsored and sent representatives to several community events like the Breast Cancer Awareness Summer Bash in the Boston Area and have sponsored and will send representatives to coming events this July.
c) Attended the 11th Annual North American Masaba Cultural Organization (NAMCA) together with 
the Speaker of the UNAA Council in May 2015 and the 10th Annual North American Masaba Cultural 
Organization (NAMCA) with the Speaker of the UNAA Council and Youth Representative in May 2014.

d) Attended the launch of the Tooro American Association (TAA) in April 5th 2015 in Maryland

e) Presented a topic “Youth Entrepreneurship and Leadership in Kigezi” at the 10th Annual 
International Community of Banyakigezi (ICOB) Convention in Washington DC in August 2014 and 
attended 9th Annual International Community of Banyakigezi (ICOB) Convention in Toronto, Canada in 
August 2013 as Chairperson of the Dallas Convention Organizing Committee.

f) The 2014 San Diego Organizing Committee attended a community picnic in San Francisco, 
California in August 2014 and attended and UNAA co-sponsored a community picnic in Los Angeles.

g) Attended the annual community picnic event in Atlanta, Georgia in June 2014.

h) Attended the annual boat cruise gala with the Seattle community in May 2014.

i) We held a Town Hall Forum with the Boston community in April 2014.

j) Attended the Gwanga Mujje Boston Mobile Van Clinic Initiate Fundraiser in April 2014 where UNAA donated towards the Mobile Van Clinic.

k) Held town hall forums with the Ugandan communities in San Diego and Los Angeles in Dec 2013 and in Mar 2014.

l) As Chairman of the Dallas Convention we visited and held town hall forum events with the 
Ugandan communities in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Houston, Texas and Austin, Texas.

5) UNAA Chapter Development Program (CDP) Launched:

The Ugandan diaspora sends over $1 billion to the Ugandan economy in remittances per year, of which about $500 million is from North America alone, constituting the single largest contributor. Yet, Bank of Uganda states that about 80% of the $1 billion remittances go towards consumption instead of remittances.

With the Chapter Development Program, we are fundamentally changing the role of the diaspora and giving them the necessary tools and resources to better organize Uganda’s social-economic development.

In response to the needs of the various local Ugandan communities across North America and in an effort to create a more formal relationship between UNAA and the local communities while strengthening UNAA; we are now proud to introduce the Chapter Development Program (CDP); a grassroots fund where UNAA will be distributing $50,000 per year to Ugandan communities and organizations that choose to participate as UNAA Chapters & Affiliates.

This effort has the strategic objective of expanding UNAA’s grassroots network and also expanding UNAA’s community engagement activities beyond hosting that annual convention. We would like to position UNAA to have real and positive impact in people’s lives.
We believe this initiative will radically transform the organization into a much stronger and efficient advocate for the Ugandan diaspora. The local communities could use these funds to set up local scholarships, health and life insurance schemes, help with the transportation of our loved ones who die without insurance. This initiative does not replace the need for local associations to collect membership dues but rather only supplements it.

More information is available here: http://conta.cc/1FcuCzg

6) New Partnerships, Programs and Initiatives:

a) Government Engagement:

As the world’s attention turns to Africa as a business and investment destination, UNAA must be at the forefront representing the interest of the Ugandan diaspora. In May 2014, I attended an African Diaspora leadership summit at the White House in preparations for the US-Africa Summit hosted by President Obama in August 2014.

I have met with H.E. Scott H. DeLisi, the USA Ambassador to Uganda who was gracious enough to host me at the U.S. Embassy in Kampala. I have also met officials from the U.S. State Department, and other U.S. government agencies to continue to stress the role of the Ugandan diaspora in the U.S. – Uganda Bilateral Relationship.

When we came into office there was a Diaspora Desk at the Ugandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2013 shortly after we took office, a Diaspora Desk was established at the Parliament of Uganda and in 2015 a Diaspora Desk will be established in State House Entebbe reporting directly to the Ugandan Presidency.

We have lobbied and advocated to the relevant stakeholders the issues that affect the Ugandan diaspora; like the need for an amendment of the Uganda Citizenship Act of 2009, Diaspora to access National ID Registration, Diaspora Voting Rights, Visa, Money Exchange and Phone call taxes and fees, the draft diaspora policy, etc.

Regarding these issues, I have met and presented to various Ugandan officials including the H.E. the President of the Republic of Uganda, H.E. the Vice President of the Republic of Uganda, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda, various Ugandan cabinet ministers, Ambassadors, parliamentary committees, government agencies, etc.

In an April 2015 visit to Uganda, Ambassador Emmanuel L. Ssendaula; the first Deputy Katikkiro and Minister for Buganda Affairs Abroad graciously enough hosted me and the UNAA delegation at Bulange Mmengo when we paid a courtesy visit. Issues of mutual interest were discussed.

Join us in New Orleans on Sunday, September 6th 2015 for an extensive discussion of these and other issues.

b) Private Sector engagement:

We have signed memorandum of understandings and created collaborations with various members of the private sector; among others the Africa Travel Association (ATA), Imaging the World (ITW), Uganda CrowdFunding Network (UCN) Radio, Tribute Home Care, etc.
c) **Innovative use of Technology:**

Since my ascendancy to the UNAA Presidency in September 2013, in collaboration with the Secretariat and the UNAA Director of Communications, we have initiated the aggressive and innovative use of new technologies in UNAA’s outreach programs targeted to potential members and media, resulting in increased attention and an enhanced reputation for UNAA. UNAA Sponsors and New Members continue to increase dramatically.

**d) Emerging Leaders Scholarship Program.**

We established the Emerging leaders Scholarship Program that seeks to develop and mentor a new generation of leaders in our communities. The winners not only will win scholarships, but will be given leadership training and mentorship that aligns students with mentors in their chosen fields of study as well as provides a professional network – Professional Interest Networks (UNAA PINs) through which UNAA members can tap into.

The inaugural winner of the scholarship was Thelma Ihunde, a petroleum engineering student at Louisiana State University. More information about the program, how to apply and how you can contribute to the fund is available here: [http://www.unaa.org/emerging-leaders-scholarship](http://www.unaa.org/emerging-leaders-scholarship)

**7) Reduced Convention Costs:**

Over the years, attendance costs have been soaring upwards, UNAA debts mounting and people were feeling increasingly disenfranchised from the organization. Through prudent management of UNAA’s resources; adjusted for inflation, the convention delegates in New Orleans will pay the lowest costs in UNAA’s history, across the board.

*Here is a historical perspective:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Host City</th>
<th>Hotel Cost</th>
<th>Boat Cruise</th>
<th>At least broke even?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia 2012</td>
<td>$139</td>
<td>$99</td>
<td>No ($22,745.09 Debt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas 2013</td>
<td>$139</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego 2014</td>
<td>$169</td>
<td>$99</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Orleans 2015</strong></td>
<td><strong>$129</strong></td>
<td><strong>$89</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yes (Projected)</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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**8) Fiscal Discipline and Modern Financial Management Systems:**

We came into office with the background of a Philadelphia convention of 2012 that had seen record low registrations, low sponsorships, very high expenses, and a disastrous decision making process that left the organization with $22,745.09 in debt.

a) Through a very careful and deliberate planning process, the convention in Dallas broken even with about $5,000 left over, this regardless of the fact that the Treasurer at the time had walked away with over $23,423 unaccounted for in UNAA funds. Financially, this was a turning point in the organization’s planning process after Philadelphia. The Dallas convention was the very first convention in UNAA history where credit/debit cards were accepted onsite.
b) We embarked on San Diego with resolute determination to not only provide a great experience for the delegates, but do it without breaking the bank. To say San Diego was a resounding success would be an understatement. A group that had lost the Dallas elections and refusing to concede went ahead to hold a rival convention across the street. UNAA members have never been kind to people who subvert our democracy, San Diego 2014 was no different. UNAA members once again voted with their feet and money and participated in the convention organized by the elected leadership decisively reaffirming their democratic decision in Dallas.

c) In June 2015 we launched another first in UNAA history, where in a partnership with PostBank Uganda, our delegates will now be able to pay for their registration dues at any bank branch hence paying less in Money transfer fees for services like MoneyGram/WesternUnion. This also has the added benefit of creating a paper trail for easy accountability and transparency.

9) Secured UNAA’s legal property:

With increased sources of funding, UNAA is now very well positioned to secure its intellectual copyrights, defend itself in the courts of law and go after those who infringe on its intellectual property as well as officials and leaders who may attempt to run away with the organization’s property.

A full comprehensive update on this issue and the steps that the UNAA leadership has undertaken and intends to undertake will be availed to UNAA Members on Saturday, September 5th 2015 at 2:30pm during the Annual General Meeting at the Hyatt Regency New Orleans.

10) Recruited a new generation of diverse leaders:

With a new generation of leaders recruited into the UNAA ranks, the organization is now very well positioned to seize the possibilities and opportunities of the present and future as the oldest, largest, and preeminent organization of the Ugandan Diaspora.

The Annual UNAA Convention and Trade Expo, is the premier networking event of the Ugandan diaspora bringing together renowned persons of Ugandan origin in academia, business, technology, health, education and politics.

Founded almost 27 years ago in the Suburbs of Atlanta, Georgia by two sisters, UNAA has undergone tremendous demographic changes over the years and will continue to do so for change is always about survival, the only constant in life. UNAA has stayed relevant and will continue to do so as long as it continues to change and adapt with the changing times and needs of its members.

With an unprecedented mobilization outreach effort like none the organization has ever seen, the UNAA chapters and communities as well as the various cultural groupings revitalized, transparency and fiscal discipline restored to the organization, new sponsorships secured, new partnerships and alliances built, and a new Board of Trustees in place as the constitutional custodians of the organization, and a new culture of mutual respect and adherence to constitutionalism nurtured; now is a good time for me to step aside and hand over the reins of this organization to a successor of your choice.
Please know that this isn’t a goodbye, as mandated by Article 6.10 of the UNAA Constitution, I will stay on as an ex-officio of the new UNAA Executive Committee for the first three months after the election to ensure a seamless transition of power.

I look forward to seeing you all in New Orleans for the 27th Annual UNAA Convention and Trade Expo and hope you have paid your membership to exercise your democratic right in choosing your leadership for the next two years.

I am proud to be a UNAA Member, humbled to have stood in her service for the last several years, and ever-optimistic of what she will become in the years ahead. I leave you with the words of Dr. Kenneth P. Ruscio:

I wish for you the quality of discernment — the ability to distinguish between what is important and what is not; to distinguish between what is real and what is artifice. Judging wisely and carefully has always been in short supply.

Celebrity is not leadership. The volume of an argument is not a measure of its quality. Repeating a false statement over and over again does not eventually make it true. Sticking with an opinion in the face of contradictory evidence is not principled conviction but intellectual laziness.

Cultivate that quality of discernment in every corner of your lives. What truly matters are the intangible attributes — the virtues of honor and integrity, of respect for each other despite our differences, of civility. Pay attention to the character, not the artifice.

Change is inevitable. Light bulbs burn out. To move forward, to improve, to change, is not a rejection of the past. It is the way to honor the past, and while the past shapes an organization, the past does not, and should not, dictate the future.

Thank you for your time and see you soon.

God bless you, and through you, may God continue to bless UNAA.

Sincerely,

Brian M. Kwesiga
+1 (972) 415 – 6372 | brian.kwesiqa@yahoo.com
President and CEO, UNAA (2013 - 2015)