

Michael Atingi-Ego: Judicial Officers Colloquium

Keynote address by Mr Michael Atingi-Ego, Governor of the Bank of Uganda, at aBi Finance Limited Partners' Breakfast Meeting, Kampala, 29 April 2026.

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Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury;
Chairperson, aBi Finance Limited;
Leaders of our banking and microfinance associations;
CEOs and representatives of financial institutions;
Distinguished guests;
Ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning to you all.

It is an honour and a pleasure to join you this morning at this Partners' Breakfast Meeting—a gathering that speaks to the power of collaboration in shaping our financial future. Let me begin by expressing my deep appreciation to aBi Finance Limited for convening us here today to launch two transformative initiatives that will fundamentally reshape how Uganda's financial sector measures, manages, and reports on sustainability. Exactly twelve months ago, I stood before stakeholders outlining a vision for the Bank of Uganda (BoU) rooted in three pillars—Innovation, Integrity, and Inclusion.

Innovation, I said then, would not be innovation for its own sake. It would be purposeful: adaptive policies and cutting-edge solutions designed to address the emerging challenges of our time. And it would be relational, drawing on the social capital that binds institutions, communities, and people together. Today's launch exemplifies precisely this kind of innovation-grounded in partnership, responsive to global standards, and attuned to local realities.

aBi Finance Limited has been an indispensable partner on this journey. Their work embedding environmental, social, and governance practices within our supervised financial institutions has been nothing short of catalytic. The rollout of the ESG Framework for the Banking Sector in 2024, followed by the Sustainable Finance Curriculum in 2025, elevated not just standards but consciousness—shifting sustainable finance from aspiration to operational reality. These efforts have laid the foundation upon which today's initiatives will build.

The First Initiative: IFRS S1 & S2 Capacity Building

Let me turn to the substance of what we launch today, beginning with the IFRS S1 and S2 Capacity Building project, implemented in partnership with the Uganda Bankers' Association.

In September 2024, the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Uganda adopted a roadmap for implementing International Financial Reporting Standards S1 and S2. These standards represent a watershed in global financial transparency. They require institutions to disclose not just what they own, but how sustainability and climate-related

risks shape their business models, inform their enterprise-wide risk management, and influence their strategic commitments.

Think of IFRS S1 and S2 not as compliance burdens, but as translators-converting the language of environmental and social impact into the language of financial decision making. They enable investors, regulators, and the public to see, with clarity and comparability, how institutions are navigating the transition to a low-carbon, climate resilient economy.

The context for this work could not be more timely. Uganda's National Climate Finance Strategy and National Green Taxonomy, both launched in 2025, have created the strategic architecture for channelling capital toward sustainable development. The coming into force of IFRS S1 and S2 presents a timely convergence-aligning disclosure standards with national priorities and positioning our financial sector to attract international and regional climate finance flows. This alignment is essential if we are to meet the ambitions articulated in Uganda's Nationally Determined Contributions, currently under revision.

To be clear: the BoU is resolute in its commitment to IFRS S1 and S2 implementation. In November 2025, we issued supervisory guidance obligating supervised financial institutions to adhere to the mandatory adoption timeline-accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2028. We followed this in October 2025 with guidelines for managing climate-related financial risks, effective 31 December 2025. These guidelines align with the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision's principles and provide the foundation for credible, robust IFRS S2 disclosures.

But guidelines alone do not create capability. This is where today's capacity-building project becomes indispensable. Many of our institutions are at nascent stages of IFRS literacy. This initiative will close those technical gaps, ensuring that when 2028 arrives, Uganda's financial sector is not merely compliant, but competent-able to leverage these standards as strategic tools, not just regulatory checkboxes.

The Second Initiative: The Tier IV ESG Framework

The second project we launch today-the development of the Tier IV ESG Framework in collaboration with the Association of Microfinance Institutions of Uganda-addresses a different, but equally consequential, frontier.

In June 2023, the Microfinance Deposit-Taking Institutions (Registered Societies) Regulations were gazetted, bringing large Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies-SACCOs-under the BoU's supervisory purview. These institutions, many of which had operated under self-regulation, now face a structured licensing regime. SACCOs with voluntary savings exceeding Shs. 1.5 billion and institutional capital above Shs. 500 million are eligible for licensing, with a deadline of 30 September 2026.

Our approach to this transition has been deliberate and developmental. We recognise that these institutions have deep roots in their communities but may lack the formalised systems expected under central bank supervision. Accordingly, we have adopted what

we would call a nurturing regulatory posture-customising licensing requirements, providing training, and offering handholding support to help SACCOs build robust risk management, financial controls, and governance processes.

The benefits of this formalisation are substantial. Licensed SACCOs gain access to regulatory guidance, enhanced financial reporting systems, deposit protection of up to Shs. 10 million through the Deposit Protection Fund of Uganda, formal entry into the Credit Reference Bureau ecosystem for information sharing, and subsidised funding from the Agricultural Credit Facility and Small Business Fund. These are not marginal improvements-they are structural enhancements that can catalyse growth and deepen financial inclusion.

But inclusion without sustainability is incomplete. As global investors, regulators, and the public demand transparency beyond financial statements, SACCOs must embrace ESG and climate-related risk management as core operational practices. This aligns organically with the cooperative movement's foundational principle of 'concern for community'-working for the sustainable development of the communities they serve.

The Tier IV ESG Framework will move sustainability reporting from niche to norm across all tiers of our financial sector. It will enhance data quality, comparability, granularity, and assurance. For SACCO members, this investment translates into tangible benefits: unlocking new funding avenues, lowering the cost of capital, and delivering greater transparency and accountability. In short, it strengthens the social contract between SACCOs and the communities they exist to serve.

The Broader Vision: From Standards to Systems

Ladies and gentlemen, what we witness today is more than the launch of two projects. It is the articulation of a systemic shift-a recognition that the financial sector does not exist apart from the social and environmental systems within which it operates. Financial institutions are not mere intermediaries; they are stewards of capital, and with stewardship comes responsibility.

The Financial Times columnist and anthropologist Gillian Tett reminds us that finance is fundamentally a set of cultural practices-shaped by norms, rituals, and shared beliefs. If we wish to build a financial system that genuinely serves sustainable development, we must change not just the rules, but the culture. Today's initiatives represent cultural transformation: from opacity to transparency, from short-termism to long-term stewardship, from narrow profit maximisation to broader stakeholder value.

This is the path that leading central banks and regulators worldwide are charting, not least because of the recognition that climate and sustainability risks are financial risks. They cannot be cordoned off as externalities or relegated to corporate social responsibility departments. They must be integrated into governance structures, risk management frameworks, and capital allocation decisions.

Uganda's financial sector now stands at this threshold. The frameworks we adopt, the standards we enforce, and the capacity we build will determine whether we lead or lag in the global transition to sustainable finance. Our conviction is that we will lead-not because the path is easy, but because the alternative is untenable.

A Call to Partnership

None of this work is possible without partnership. I want to commend aBi Finance Limited, the Uganda Bankers' Association, and the Association of Microfinance Institutions of Uganda for their commitment to advancing sustainable finance. I also recognise the financial institutions represented here today-institutions that are not merely adapting to new standards, but actively shaping a more resilient, inclusive, and responsible financial ecosystem.

To the SACCOs preparing for licensing: embrace this moment. See regulation not as a constraint, but as a catalyst. The systems you build, the standards you adopt, and the transparency you offer will strengthen your institutions and deepen trust with your members.

To the banks and financial institutions implementing IFRS S1 and S2: approach these standards with rigour and seriousness. They are not cosmetic exercises. They are strategic imperatives that will shape your access to capital, your risk profiles, and your reputations in the years ahead.

And to all stakeholders: let us move forward together with clarity of purpose, discipline of execution, and confidence in the future we are building.

The Launch

It is now my singular honour to formally launch these two transformative projects:

First, the IFRS S1 & S2 Capacity Building initiative, implemented in partnership with the Uganda Bankers' Association.

Second, the development of the Tier IV ESG Framework, implemented in collaboration with the Association of Microfinance Institutions of Uganda.

May these initiatives bear fruit that endures-strengthening our institutions, serving our communities, and safeguarding the future we will leave to the next generation.

I wish to bless this endeavour with words from Genesis 2:15: "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."

Stewardship is our calling. Let us fulfil it with wisdom, with courage, and with care.

Thank you for listening to me. God bless!