

Corporate governance is rising in East Africa, and the opportunities have never been greater

Barbara Daisy Nabuweke, Company Secretary - East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) Limited

Across Uganda and East Africa, a noticeable change is happening. Corporate governance is rapidly emerging as both a leading organisational ambition and a strategic elevator.

Throughout my career in legal and governance work, I've seen how organisations across Uganda and the wider region are rethinking responsibility, risk and decision-making, as the financial and strategic benefits of strong corporate governance become increasingly clear.

The KPMG Uganda ESG (environmental, social, governance) Outlook shows that 52% of companies want to use ESG not just as a compliance requirement, but as a competitive differentiator, signalling a clear shift in how organisations view corporate governance. As ESG adoption spreads, so too does the opportunity for individuals who operate with clarity, accountability and integrity.

You may already be doing corporate governance work

As we approach the CGIUKI 15th Annual Directors and Company Secretaries Conference on 4 March (in partnership with KPMG), I've been reflecting on how many professionals in law, finance, accounting, audit and organisational leadership are already doing work

that aligns closely with corporate governance, often without realising it.

Experience built in these fields is highly valuable, and many don't realise that it can be a natural pivot into a rewarding corporate governance career. I know this because I practised as a lawyer for many years. It wasn't until I became deeply involved in board processes that I truly began to understand how central governance is to organisational success.

My career pivot began unintentionally, after taking on governance responsibilities as the assistant company secretary alongside my legal role at Standard Chartered Bank. At law school, I had encountered governance principles, but mostly from a theoretical perspective. I assumed the role would mostly entail administrative support, but it was so much more. Corporate governance is its own discipline, and after a while, I started to realise

// The growing demand for corporate governance presents both a challenge for organisations and a major opportunity for ambitious professionals. Chartered Governance Professionals stand out precisely because governance skills are in short supply yet highly valued. //

the limitations of relying solely on my legal background.

Why qualification changes your influence

Becoming a qualified governance professional, with the support of EACOP, has elevated my voice, my influence and my confidence. With years of legal practice and company secretarial experience, the journey was even more accessible.

When it came to navigating board processes, regulatory expectations, and corporate governance standards, I was aware I needed to upskill, but it's my colleagues I thank for encouraging me to pursue governance as a profession. They were the ones who, knowing my existing legal and boardroom experience, guided me to pursue the Chartered Governance Institute United Kingdom & Ireland Fast Track Qualifying Programme.

Completing the qualification set me on my long-term career path. I am now a company secretary for an organisation incorporated in the UK, with subsidiaries in Uganda and Tanzania, and I hold the position of director for a Ugandan NGO.



Date: 3 March 2026

Time: 5:30 pm

Venue: Uganda Office, BMK House within Hotel Africana, Plot 4-5 Nyabong Road, Wampewo Avenue

Join our corporate governance event.

Find out more above or at:

www.cgi.org.uk/s/east-africa

