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BROADCASTING IN UGANDA 1/

by

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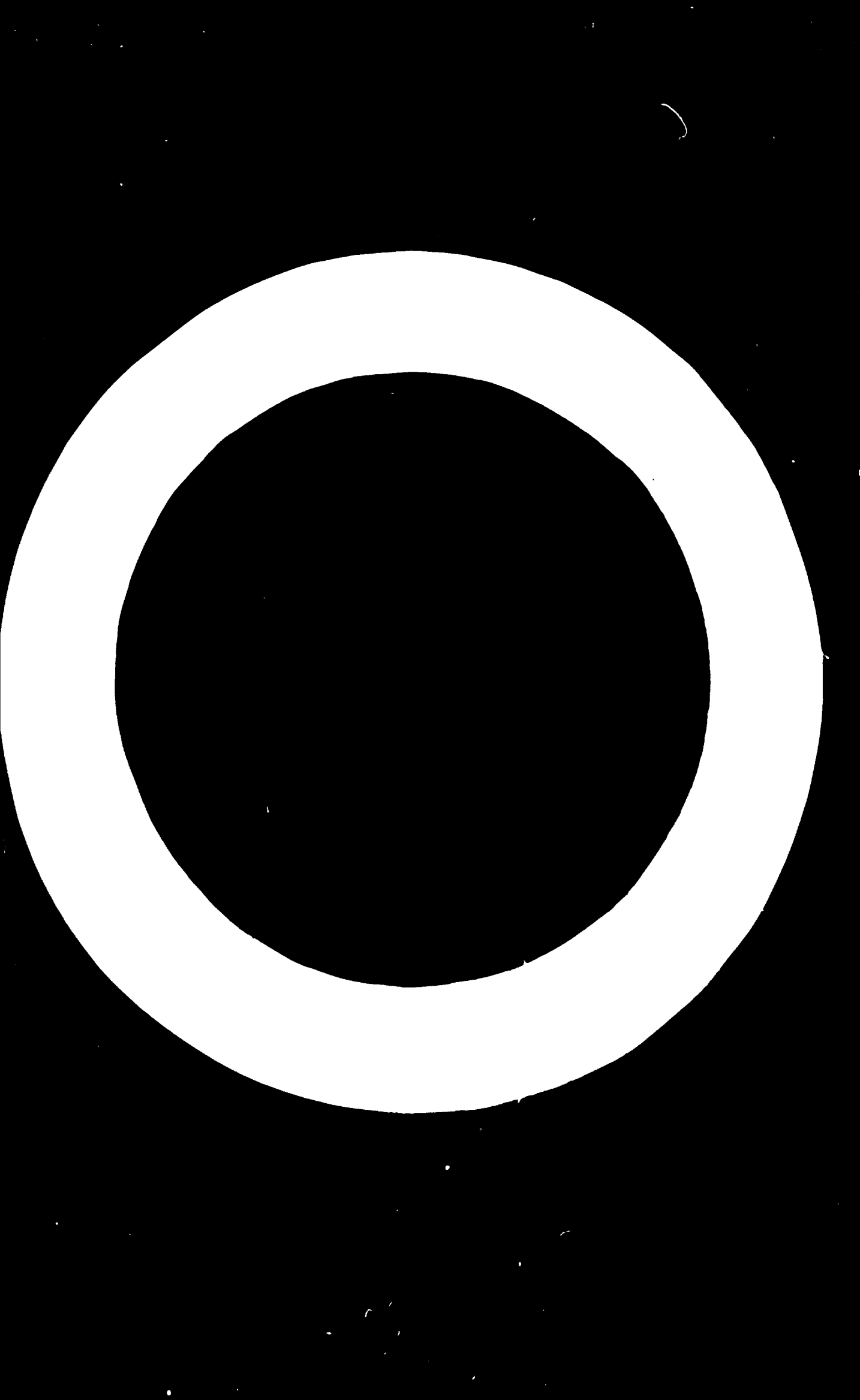

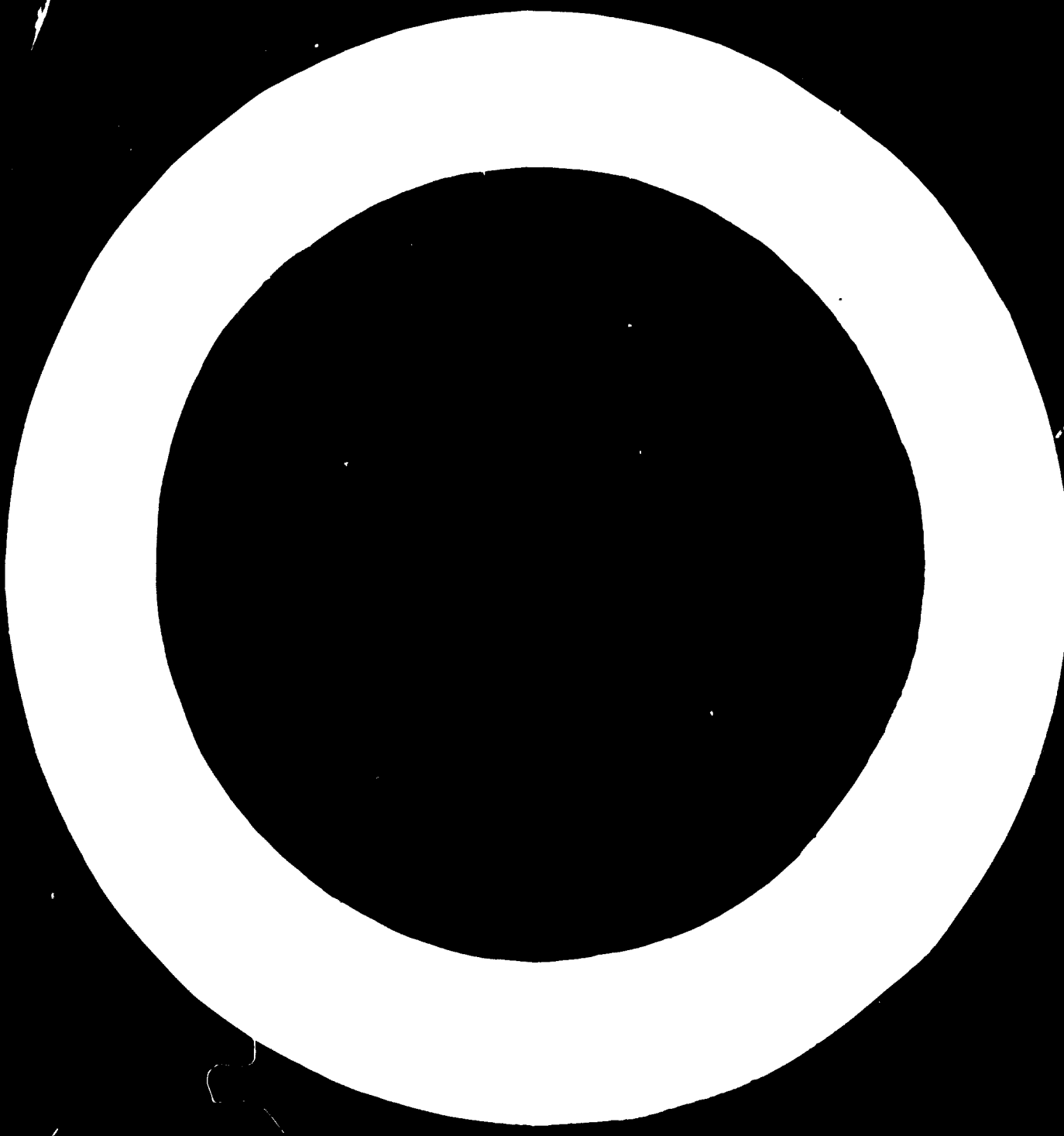

BROADCASTING IN UGANDA

The scope and purpose of a broadcasting service and its operation vary according to the needs of each community. In the design and creation of each plan, however, there arise many similar basic problems and considerations.

Broadcasting in Uganda is to serve a population of [illegible] million, covering [illegible] major languages and a total of [illegible] hours of sound broadcasting every day.

The problems can broadly be classified under two headings i.e., restricted finance and lack of adequate and technical know-how. Taken singly, each problem within these groups may not be peculiar to Uganda alone. When they exist together, however, they can prove very formidable especially so in a developing country like Uganda where there is a greater need to provide an adequate service to improve literacy, to educate and to inform its people and more important still, to promote a national consciousness amongst the masses of its population in respect of race, culture and religion.

For a developing and not so rich a country such as Uganda, this means that domestic receivers must be of low cost, cheap to maintain, robust and easy to repair, if they are to be bought by the great bulk of the rural population with their very low incomes.

The receivers for these requirements must also be reasonable in quality, reliability and operation. Most of the receivers in the market today are not only expensive in initial cost but also they need frequent charging of batteries. Often, good batteries are not easily available in the remote areas of the country. This means that the owner of the set has to travel a long distance by bus or train simply to get a replacement of the batteries for his set.

The number of receivers in the country today is estimated to be in the region of about [illegible],000 radio sets in operation.

The government is spending over £[illegible] million in the development of broadcasting service. Four [illegible]00 kW medium transmitters are in the process of being installed. It is hoped that these will provide a total coverage of the country.

The television service is equally well developed. There are at present six transmitting stations in the country. It will be seen from the above points that the Government is doing its best to provide an adequate medium through which it can wipe out ignorance, poverty and disease, but all this effort seems to be frustrated by lack of availability of low cost receivers which the low income earners can afford. The majority of the public are unable to enjoy the undoubted pleasure and manifold advantages of a broadcasting service.

Uganda is fortunate in that it has most of the requirements that would be needed in the setting up of electronic industry :-

1. It has one of the biggest power stations on the continent of Africa; the Owen Falls Power Station. This is situated at the source of the River Nile. It has ten turbo alternator sets of 15,000 KW each. Plans are in mind to construct another big power station on the River Nile. Uganda does, in fact, export electricity to Kenya.

2. Uganda's road system ranks among the best in Africa. The domestic market for the consumer goods has been enlarged lately due to the improvement in the road facilities.

3. Uganda's geographical position makes it easy for her to be a major supplier of industrial products to her neighbours, e.g. Rwanda, Burundi, Congo and Sudan in addition to her partners in the East African Community (Kenya and Tanzania).

4. At the moment copper is being intensively mined and mineral ores known to exist include sulphur, cobalt and ceramic materials. Most of these could be utilized at a later date in the manufacture of telecommunications and electronic equipment.

5. There is, in Uganda, at least for the moment, an unlimited supply of cheap labour. In addition to unemployment in the towns, there is much underemployment among the rural population. It is, of course, true that much of the present Uganda labour force has no experience in modern industry. Primarily, the labour force lacks the requisite skills, but gradually a permanent labour force is developing.

6. The government encourages foreign investment to play an important role in the industrial development. The basic stand is that every potential source of technical knowledge, managerial skills and investment funds for industry must be exploited to the utmost.

There are a number of private companies in the country today which are engaged in the assembly of radio receivers, radiograms and television sets on a small scale.

Most of the radios imported in the country are from Japan.

7. A modern Technical College is available. This trains senior secondary school-leavers up to the technician level in telecommunications engineering. At present the highest technical qualification obtainable, apart from degrees, is the Full Technological Certificate in Telecommunication Engineering. The examination is set externally by the City and Guilds of London Institute.

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