UGANDA PEOPLES CONGRESS

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

UGANDA HOUSE

KAMPALA

23 April 2005

**Opening Address By A. Milton Obote President Of The Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC) At The Consultative Group Conference Of The Uganda Peoples Congress On 23th April 2005.**

1. Fellow citizens, this is the first Conference in 20 years of the great Congress of the people to meet in Uganda. I planned for a long time to open this first Congress with a very hearty message but it is not to be so.
2. Fellow Congress, I have received a very disturbing message that the dictatorship is so afraid of this Congress that there is a plan to disrupt it. There is a plan to disrupt the Congress by eliminating some of the Delegates. I know the delegates that have been mentioned, I will not give the names to you. I have already arranged to warn the Delegates privately.
3. Fellow citizens we have a license issued by the Registrar General on behalf of the NRM dictatorship which at face value tells us that we are free as Congress of the People to organize Conferences, to address political rallies and to function as a political Party but as I said that is at face value, it carries no meaning.
4. A gang of outlaws have taken over our country and having been in Government since 1986 they want to use extraordinary powers to entrench themselves in Government. When they issued a Proclamation in 1986, many people never thought that time will come when the Great Congress will have such a Conference. We had however planned with our improvisation organs to have this Conference not today but during the duration of the dictatorship. Our improvisation organs were created with a definite message, the message was that they were to work with the dictatorship, circumvent the policies of the dictatorship and do everything possible for the introduction of multiparty system of governance. I would say that the policies of the improvisation organs were carried out with tremendous success and that is why we are meeting here today.
5. In 1990 and 1991 Dr. James Rwanyarare travelled to Lusaka and gave us good briefings on the operations of the dictatorship. It was a time for preparations for Constituent Assembly elections. We knew that the other Parties were also preparing for elections to the Constituent Assembly we had however a secret agenda. The Congress struggled hard to win the majority of seats in the Constituent Assembly but having been prohibited from fielding candidates it was impossible to win the majority of seats. When the Constituent Assembly Bill was published we started preparing our case for challenging the Law for debarring us from contesting the Constituent Assembly elections. We fought hard to win the majority of seats in the Constituent Assembly but having been debarred from fielding candidates we had no chance of winning the majority of seats. Additionally the Law provided about a third of the seats to the NRM and divided as follows; seats for the army, seats for historicals, and seats to be fought for by the Parties and the NRM. After the elections the UPC decided on a strategic approach, which was to substantially in time get rid of the dictatorship. The approach decided upon was to go to Court and it is the Court that has eventually brought the liberation which the people of Uganda are now enjoying and which has led to the Parliament sitting to amend the Constitution and finally led to the Registration of the UPC.
6. Fellow citizens, on Registration I should say one thing namely the registration of the Democratic Party (DP) their Registration is now in Court and there is evidence that the Government do not want the DP to be Registered. This is a very sad event and whatever is to happen about the democratisation, if the DP is not registered and Government is shown to have prevented that registration, we must all be wary of the tactics used.
7. Fellow citizens the dictatorship has destroyed our country. For 19 years young men and women have grown up knowing nothing of governance except dictatorship. We will be facing those people they believe that what they have learnt is the correct one and we disagree, we are back to the early days when this country was liberated from the colonial masters. We faced old men and women who believed that because the people of Uganda cannot produce needles, we were not capable of ruling ourselves. Now we are going to face young men and women who have been taught dictatorship and with the modern paraphernalia are going to use them effectively. Fellow citizens the one thing that dictatorship has introduced in our country, which is abhoric and fearful is the culture of killings, which began in Luwero District. They celebrate annually on the 6th of February the culture of killings. They began killings in Luwero, then Northern and Eastern Uganda, parts of Western Uganda with ADF, then Rwanda, then the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Sudan. All the killings in these places are the same, large numbers, cruel and inhuman killings and massive displacement. The leader of the NRA has recently claimed at a wedding that someone who had been attacked should explain how the people were killed. The pleasure of killings has entered into their heads that they think it is a normal exercise of good governance. We don't agree. We had hoped that with the decision to get Parliament to amend the Laws to get rid of dictatorial provisions from the Constitution, killings would also stop and reconciliation would replace the past.
8. In Uganda today men and women are being slaughtered like animals in the Northern Region and the UN has even decided to get involved by agreeing that the International Criminal Court (ICC) should get involved.
9. Fellow citizens, the alliance between Great Britain and the United States of America with the Uganda dictatorship is of no benefit to the people of Uganda because of the alliance, the dictatorship has borrowed colossal sums of money to be repaid by the suffering people of Uganda. The alliance has also made it possible to hide the atrocities that the dictatorship has been meting on the people. The people of Uganda are also human beings and the violence that the dictatorship commits on the people of Uganda is the violence that the Governments of Great Britain and United States of America commit on the people of Uganda. How can the UN get the ICC to get involved in killings in the North without the political Parties in Uganda being helped to get involved by being heard in the same situation. The UN and the others are trying to make that the country known as Uganda belong to the dictatorship and so are the people of Uganda. We do not agree.
10. Fellow citizens who are members of the UPC assembled in this Consultative Group Conference, we must note that our country is being destroyed by the culture of corruption which affects even the Presidency. The corrupt practices which have become known and where the Presidency was involved were so excruciating that the dictatorship governed the country with insult of disregarding the wishes of the people. In 1987 there was currency conversion and a 30% tax levied on all money in circulation. The tax went to the Presidency and has never appeared in any Budget.
11. Fellow Congress Delegates, the dictatorship has made the people of Uganda lose sight of quality education and the people now join the Prime Minister of Britain in praising make-shift schools under trees. The donors pay more than half of the Budget of Uganda of the dictatorship and if the donors wanted they could have used that fact to bring meaningful changes in Uganda but even there they pay what the dictatorship wants and the political Parties remain removed from Governance. Consequently, the economy of Uganda is without direction. In 1987 the dictatorship plagiarized the Recovery Programme of the UPC and despite the fact that the Programme had been submitted by the UPC to the donor countries they accepted it as a new Programme when presented by the NRM. Just as they say borrowed clothes never fit well, the Recovery Programme did not fit the implementation of the NRM and many Programmes have remained unimplemented. A good example is the Mityana-Fort Portal road that should have been completed in the late 1980s, but only recently was the cause for Museveni threatening people for supposedly undermining his 2001 Elections Manifesto and yet the funds for this particular road were secured by the time of the NRM plagiarisation. Ever since the plagiarisation of the UPC Recovery Programme the NRM have had no ideas on publishing another comprehensive programme.
12. Fellow citizens, the NRM has been credited for success in fighting HIV/AIDS. Many who credit the NRM with success do not know or want to hide the background. When the NRM was fighting the people in Northern and Eastern Uganda, they deployed HIV positive soldiers against the people. The idea was to post such soldiers among the local people with orders to rape women and sodomise men leading to the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in Northern and Eastern Uganda.
13. The great Congress Delegates, I return to the dictatorship's wish that some of you will not see the end of this Conference. I appeal to you in case some of you are picked up to be punished for the crime of attending a Conference to peacefully listen to ideas about Uganda, remain firm and ashame the dictatorship for practicing against innocent people the culture of violence. One day the people of Uganda may be able to repay in a more peaceful acceptable way. I say all this for God and my country.