**UGANDA PEOPLES CONGRESS (Office of the President)**

**23 September 2004.**

**STATEMENT BY A. MILTON OBOTE**

1. It has always been since 1996 and continues to be the interpretation of Newspapers in Uganda that the events of 1996 in which Maama Cecilia Atim Ogwal resigned or was dismissed from being Chairman of the PPC was originated by an order sent by the Party President (PP) to Maama Cecilia that UPC members were not to participate in the personal merit elections of 1996 and which Maama Cecilia defied and was consequently dismissed.
2. The Newspaper interpretation is not correct. The matter arose out of a letter which Maama Cecilia dutifully wrote to the PP informing him that the PPC had begun to discuss the UPC participation in the 1996 elections but was detracted by a request from Party officials at the Headquarters such as Kagenda Atwooki who had the qualifications which Maama Cecilia described as brains but their contracts could not allow their Party to permit them to stand as candidates. Maama Cecilia sought the opinion of the PP on the contracts. The contracts forbade unelected officials from standing in Parliamentary elections because their work would provide them with advantages not available to other Party members not working at Headquarters and work which is unfair for the other members of the Party to compete with the officials for sponsorship by the Party in Parliamentary elections.
3. In response the PP said that the contracts referred to a different type of elections at which the Party was free to field candidates without prohibitions and or restrictions and that the PPC should discuss the NRM mode of elections which does not permit the Party which the PPC controls and directs to field candidates under prohibitions and restrictions during campaigns for their election.
4. The PPC discussed the personal merit mode of elections and decided that no member of the PPC should participate and sent their resolutions to the PP. On receipt of the resolution the PPC, the PP wrote back and said Hallelujah! God be with you.
5. The PP also considered and gave interpretation to the resolution of the PPC. His interpretations rested on the reason for the establishment of the PPC under Article 4(10) of the Party Constitution which was to circumvent the NRM policies and in particular the policies in Article 269 of the 1995 Constitution. To the PP, the PPC resolution read together with the circumvention policy removed members of the PPC from participation in personal merit elections. The resolution also removed members of the internal Parliament of the UPC, the Party's Representative Council (PRC) from participation in NRM elections when PRC was formed in 1997 because any such leader in the circumvention organs of the UPC who was elected would automatically be conscripted by law to be a member of the NRM Executive.
6. Neither the PP nor the PPC or PRC has ever made any Statement instructing UPC members not to stand as candidates in personal merit elections. The resolution of the PPC only affected members of the PPC who by definition were leading the struggle for the citizens' birthrights to assemble, associate and participate freely in the governance of their country according to their own consciences and therefore could not have as leaders people who were compelled or conscripted to become members of the Executive of a rival and dictatorial organisation determined to remove those very same birthrights. In July 1997 Parliament made amendments to the electoral law and the prohibitions and restrictions against opposition Parties have been relaxed. It is that relaxation which made the UPC to field a candidate in the recent Mbale bye-election.
7. There is no truth in Newspaper claims that the 32 UPC MPs in the UPC Parliamentary Group were all members of the Interim Executive Committee (IEC) which was led by Maama Cecilia and were all expelled from the Party in 1996. Nobody was expelled from the Party and only one member of the PPC elected in 1996 was affected by the PPC resolution of 1996.