

PRESIDENT LULE'S ADDRESS TO THE NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

ON THE 22ND MAY 1979

(As reproduced in *Weekly Topic* of 25th May, 1979)

Mr. Chairman of the Council, Your Excellencies, fellow members of the Uganda National Liberation Front, members of the National Consultative Council, and fellow citizens of Uganda. It gives me great satisfaction to be able to address you as you hold your first meeting on the soil of our motherland. You participated in the Moshi Conference and contributed to its success and I therefore heartily congratulate and commend you for the constructive work which you so ably did at Moshi.

It is fitting that at this first meeting of our council since Moshi we all review the task accomplished thus far and what remains to be done. The objectives of our Front were authoritatively set out by the full delegates conference in the communique we issued at Moshi on March 25, 1979. Significant progress has been achieved towards the fulfillment of these objectives.

I BRIEFLY REPORT THE FOLLOWING:

1. Our liberation forces have done and continue to do a magnificent job and deserve our highest praise and appreciation. Everything that could be done is being done to hasten the total liberation of our brothers and sisters in the few remaining areas.
2. Regarding law and order in most of the country which is now under our effective control, steps continue to be taken by our government to re-establish the rule of law, respect for and sanctity of human life and other basic human rights that our citizens have been denied for so long. To this end the machinery of justice according to law has been re-established with the appointment of a

distinguished Chief Justice and Senior Judges and the reactivation of a professional Police Force. We have emphasized before, and I repeat it now that our government does not and cannot support ordinary citizens or even members of any arm of government taking the law into their own hands to punish the suspected criminals or supposed supporters of the Amin regime. Whoever was guilty must be dealt with in accordance with the law. Even where there is a threat to peace to be dealt with by the Liberation Force, it must be dealt with in accordance with rules and procedures clearly established by the Ministry of Defence.

3. Furthermore, steps have been taken to stabilize and rehabilitate the Public Service and to improve its morale. As you know, an efficient and secure civil service is one of the basic foundations of sound government. Accordingly, we have appointed a Public Service Commission to ensure this objective. It will be endowed with a sufficient degree of independence to enable it to inspire confidence among public servants and the general public.

On another matter, you may have noticed on the streets of Kampala, how we are rapidly restoring fuel supplies so that people can travel and do their business. As a result, because food can now be transported, its price is getting more manageable and should continue to improve. Effort is under way to ensure that fuel and other supplies reach up country liberated areas which have been experiencing hardship.

4. In the field of foreign relations, our government has made promising progress because our cause was just in overthrowing tyranny and as our objectives commend us to other peace loving nations in the world, our government has already been recognized by the international community. We expect many more others to do the same. We shall fully and efficiently be participants in all international forums where the interests of Uganda or the well-being of all mankind are to be debated or decided. Just as we feel so keenly about our liberation,

we shall fully support oppressed peoples who seek deliverance: in particular, our brothers and sisters in Southern Africa.

On a regional basis, our government has already initiated meaningful dialogue with our neighbours for the purpose of establishing mutually beneficial relations. We live in a region of this continent which has the potential to enrich and benefit all its inhabitants. Uganda shall not be found wanting in any common effort to attain this end.

5. Let me at this juncture on behalf of myself, my government, our Front and its Liberation Army, and the people of Uganda record formally at this your first meeting at home, our deep gratitude for the sacrifice and steadfast friendship which President Nyerere, his government, the Peoples Defence Force and the people of the Republic of Tanzania have shown us. The saying that a friend in need is a friend indeed has never been truer than between Ugandans and Tanzanians at this moment in our history.

6. I will now turn to the economic and monetary situation we inherited. At the time the nation was liberated, Uganda had barely Two Million Shillings in foreign exchange, while at the same time, the money supply had soared to over 8 billion shillings thus outstripping the gross domestic product of the nation. At these levels of foreign reserves, which in a healthy and properly managed economy should be in the range of 40 to 60 percent of the money supply, in the case of Uganda, stood at a 1% of the money supply. A monstrously appalling state of affairs. Inflation had been escalating at an average annual rate of approximately 200% or well over 1000% over the eight year period.

The previous government had absolutely no idea about the management of our economy. Deliberate deficit financing of even the recurrent budget was the rule. During the current financial year, for example, with the expected revenues of 4 billion shillings, the government

was happy to incur expenditure of 6 billion shillings with the difference being met by the mere printing of money.

The financial institutions controlled by the government have been under tremendous pressure, being repeatedly coerced into granting loans to the supporters of the regime, loans which were never serviced and many of which have remained on the books of these institutions as the debtors have fled. Government has accepted its responsibility to correct these overwhelming ills. The first step has been to stop the drain of foreign exchange. As a result reserves which on take-over stood at a bare 2 million shillings level, have now steadily risen to 100 million and are still rising. The value of our currency is already starting to climb and should improve as additional measures are taken.

On the domestic liquidity front, measures have been taken by controlling bank advances and restricting bank withdrawals. Weekly withdrawals have been subjected to ceilings of shs. 5,000 for individuals, shs.10,000 for small companies, shs.50,000 for big corporations and shs. 100,000 for financial institutions. We have also frozen expenditures which in our circumstance appear unnecessary. We have at the same time re-instated the Central Tender Board for the proper control of government purchases of goods and services; and government purchases henceforth are to be handled by government agencies.

The road ahead of us is a hard one. We have to find 80 million shillings per month to finance the nation's fuel requirements alone. But we also have to provide for the basic essentials for economic growth ranging from salt, medicine and soap to computer services and weaving looms, while the greatest task of reconstruction has to be shouldered in earnest. Government servants do not have chairs to sit on or typewriters to use. The magnitude of these challenges must be fully appreciated in order for all of us to gear ourselves appropriately to them.

7. Let me now turn to matters relating to our Front in more detail. It cannot be doubted that the supreme body that gave birth to the Front was neither its Executive nor the Consultative Council; it was the real delegates conference which convened, deliberated and formed these two organs at Moshi. I understand you have discussed the minutes of these delegates' conference.

No doubt, they do form a useful guide about what we decided at Moshi and it is fitting to refer to them, whether you are in a consultative or executive organ of the Front. But we must surely recognize that neither of the two organs can authenticate the minutes of the delegates conference itself, since it is a fact that many of its members, though their organizations are represented on both organs are members of neither. It is like saying that the executive should authenticate and formally adopt the minutes of this consultative council or vice versa. Until the full delegates conference meets, adopts its minutes, it is obviously premature to start implementing them in detail. There is however, one document, the correctness of which cannot be disputed because it was approved unanimously by the delegates conference at Moshi. This is the famous Moshi Communique.

8. That communique was the concluding and definitive statement of the full delegates conference which it adopted before it adjourned on March 25, 1979. It set out in detail the goals of the Front and some specific ways of achieving them. I can do no better than quote most of the communique in full. After a wide ranging preamble which emphasized the need for unity, the diversity of our people, the trusteeship we held for those majorities who couldn't attend, the communique resolved as follows:-

"to establish and do hereby establish the Uganda National Liberation Front to take over the administration of our country, the Republic of Uganda, with the following objectives :

- (a) To coordinate the war efforts of Ugandans and direct its successful conclusion;**
- (b) To establish the rule of law in the country so that every national can once again be free to live and enjoy life without harassment and fear of molestation and death, and generally re-establish, maintain, and define human rights throughout the country;**
- (c) To restore the dignity of our people and their pride in our past and hope for the future;**
- (d) To restore the democratic way of life for all our people and as soon as conditions permit arrange free elections on the basis of universal adult franchise;**
- (e) To embark upon a programme of reconstruction and rehabilitation, and for this purpose to seek assistance from the international community;**
- (f) To establish friendly and meaningful relations with our immediate neighbours and the international community at large;**
- (g) To support and participate in the work of the OAU, Commonwealth of Nations and the United Nations;**
- (h) To elect and we do hereby authorize on behalf of our people an executive council to form an interim administration for the purposes of fulfilling the objectives of UNLF;**
- (i) To actively support other liberation movements fighting to assert their rights to self-determination and to the independence of their countries especially the liberation movements fighting against the minority regimes in Southern Africa.**

The communique goes on in the last paragraph to state and I quote:

"To leave the door open for fellow Ugandans who were unable to attend the conference because of circumstances beyond their control to join and contribute to the objectives of UNLF."

In the foregoing you can see clearly the duties and responsibilities which were definitely entrusted to the executive council and the government they were to form under paragraph (h) of the communique.

9. While still in Dar-es-Salaam, the executive committee acting under paragraph (h) of the communique decided on April 2, 1979 that the responsibility of forming the interim government be entrusted to me as its chairman. This task I accepted and the government was formed. This administration has taken effective control of the country since our return home, and is responsible for all the achievements I have already outlined. Our government was received enthusiastically by our people and was immediately hailed and formally recognized by the international community.

10. Another important point to remember too, is that this government of the Front is based on the constitution of the Republic of Uganda from which I myself and my cabinet derive the authority to administer the state. It is this constitution that we took oath to defend, uphold and implement as we assumed our responsibilities on arrival from Dar-es-Salaam. I urge the members of the council to study and understand its provisions. It is on the strength of this national constitution that I have made and will continue to make all the appointments to public office. There have lately been misreporting that these appointments, from ministers downward, were to be subject to the approval of this council. **Let it be clearly understood that that cannot be so. There is no authority for it. It is neither from the Moshi delegates conference communique nor from the national constitution under which we operate.**

The constitution of a state is different from that of a party which is in government, and clearly the Front is quite analogous to a party in this regard. The former establishes the state, defines the organs of its government and their respective powers; the latter on the other hand, deals with the organizational structure of the party (or Front in our case) and its goals which its government must accomplish under the state constitution. Failure to understand this basic distinction or to consider the two as interchangeable is faulty and could lead to confusion and unsatisfactory results.

11. Regarding the expansion of both organs of the front formed at Moshi, I have this to say. We have a compelling duty to open this Front **FULLY AND FAIRLY** to the vast majority

of our people now that we are at home. Besides enabling us to return home, one of the basic justifications for Moshi was the clear recognition on our part that having been so few the rightness of our decision had to be the condition that we were acting as trustees for our masses then trapped in the country by Amin's tyranny. Now that we are at home, we are duty-bound to carry out our trust and devise the necessary machinery for involving our people in the Front in a meaningful way. This is an irreversible commitment.

Yet we cannot at this moment consider implementing this commitment because of overriding current problems. There is a tendency to forget that although we have not formally declared a state of emergency there is in actual fact a war of liberation still going on. Even in liberated areas, despite the positive steps already enumerated, we are still in the process of establishing a rational administration to put society on a basis upon which we can realistically discuss holding a meaningful form of elections. I therefore feel that the time we should discuss this matter should be after the war is successfully concluded and security established.

It is only then that members of the executive council and government can find time to participate meaningfully in these discussions. In the present circumstances members of government are far too busy to spend a week or two with you in discussion. In other words, this is clearly the time for action. We can talk later.

In the meantime, I suggest we establish some mechanism by which consultations on a more regular basis can take place between this council and the government.

12. Let me talk about and emphasize the spirit of Moshi. This spirit which is indispensable to our success, must include forgiving one another many things that may have gone wrong in the past. It entails a recognition that our success is based on our mutual acceptance of one another. We must recognize that our country has been ruined because of negative divisions in the past. This has obviously caused fear. Fear that this or that particular group will dominate the rest unfairly as has happened in the past using brute military power. We must consciously safeguard against this costly practice. Accord-

ingly, it was in order to do so, that my government took a decision to make sure that the new Uganda Army would include all segments of our peoples on an equitable population basis. Similarly, it was for the same reason that when establishing the Public Service Commission, all regions had to be represented. Furthermore, my government is similarly representative and will continue to be so with any forthcoming changes that may arise.

I shall welcome and accept advice from members of our organs and the public generally. But it is absolutely important for all of us to remember that we SHOULD NOT, individually or collectively, by action or public statements, give the impression to the public at large that the Front is in some difficulty. The truth is that our basic goals are agreed, and there is overwhelming will to attain them in unity in accordance with the Moshi spirit. Let us keep it alive.

Fellow citizens, let me end by welcoming you home after a long and costly journey to peace in our land.

Let us all now strive to build a free, happy and prosperous Uganda.

LONG LIVE UGANDA