

**SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> INTER – PARTY CONFERENCE  
(IPC) AT POPE PAUL VI MEMORIAL COMMUNITY CENTRE, NDEEBA –  
KAMPALA**

**(MONDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2009)**

**BY**

**MAMA MIRIA KALULE OBOTE**

**CHAIRPERSON OF THE IPC SUMMIT AND PRESIDENT OF UGANDA PEOPLES  
CONGRESS (UPC)**

- ✓ My fellow Presidents; Hon. John Ken-Lukyamuzi of the Conservative Party; Col. (Rtd) Dr. Kizza Besigye of the Forum for Democratic Change; Mr. Muhammad Kibirige Mayanja of Justice Forum
- ✓ Other Party Leaders who are present at this meeting;
- ✓ Honourable Members of Parliament in Uganda;
- ✓ Our distinguished development partners from KIC in Sweden;
- ✓ Our Kampala – based International Development Partners – USAID, DDP, IRI, NDI, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES).
- ✓ Members of the IPC Steering Committee.
- ✓ The Secretariat (Change Initiative Limited), the Media and other guests.

I bring to you all, the warm greetings of the members of my own party (Uganda Peoples Congress) and heartily welcome you to this second historic Conference of IPC.

As you will recall, the IPC held its first Conference from 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> August 2008 at Ridar Hotel and the 143 participants made 15 recommendations for strengthening the IPC. One of the recommendations urged us (the IPC Leaders) to promote internal democracy in our respective parties through organizing National Delegates Conferences at the earliest opportunity.

The second recommendation entreated us to develop a clear roadmap and feasible strategies which will lead us to victory in the general elections scheduled for February 2011.

My fellow Presidents and I are glad to report to you that (with financial support from KIC – Sweden) our parties organized successful NDCs from November 2008 to February 2009, which in turn overwhelmingly endorsed the IPC. Since then, we have sent our proposed electoral reforms and electoral amendment bills to Parliament, and agreed on a joint electoral platform. In addition, we have started moving together to regions to demonstrate to our grassroots supporters, our commitment to working together, to get rid of President Museveni and his NRM party from power in the next 14 months. We held meetings in Masaka (on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2009), Jinja (on 5<sup>th</sup> December) and would have visited Hoima (on 6<sup>th</sup> December) if President Museveni had not blocked it.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, this meeting is, in another sense, historic. We are now geared up to transform ourselves from IPC to Inter – Party Alliance (IPA), which proves that IPC is feasible.

As you may be aware, President Museveni, like every dictator, is a coward. He continues to rule this country by “**gun-bullying**”, and not through “**free and fair elections**”. Among the regimes we have had in Uganda, in the last 47 years of our independence, his is the most corrupt, sectarian, extravagant, ego-centric, callous and “visionless” regime. It is a regime which feeds (both foreign governments and our people) on falsehood, trickery, and cheating. Vague promises, constitution juggling, capricious arrests and detentions, side by side with arrogance aimed at weakening and forestalling **the forces of change**, these are the fixed paths along which the current Government is treading. The Government is neither capable nor willing to heed the verdict of the masses of our people – which is that “**they need change now and not tomorrow**”.

President Museveni’s greatest enemy is anything which promotes the unity of Ugandans. It is now clear that when he introduced guerilla activities in the country in the late 1970s, his main interest was not to liberate Ugandans (as he has been claiming in the last 40 years) but to acquire power for his personal and family aggrandizement. In 1979 – 80, he actively participated in wrecking the Uganda National Liberation Front Governments of Yusuf Lule and Godfrey Binaisa. After signing the Peace Accord in Nairobi on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1985 with the Tito Lutwa Military Government, he decided to overthrow it on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1986. Between 1986 and 2005, he imposed a non-party government system which allowed him to introduce one-man rule in the country. He cannot therefore be happy about IPC’s growing strength.

As a woman and mother, I am very aware that despite its rhetoric, Museveni’s Government has done little to promote women and youth empowerment. The majority of Ugandan women, especially those living in rural areas, continue to suffer silently from dehumanizing problems like dire poverty, illiteracy, poor nutrition, poor reproductive health services, domestic violence and other socio-economic troubles placed on them by their families. Similarly, the Ugandan youth (who constitute the majority of our population of 33 million people) are finding it very difficult to live near to decent lives. Youth unemployment, especially among young graduates from universities and other institutions of higher learning has reached very alarming levels.

We, in IPC, should therefore triple our efforts to bring down Museveni's Government by February 2011 and stop complete wreckage of our country. The coming 14 months are going to be critical. We should not only intensify mobilization of women and youth to join our ranks, but also provide adequate voter education in all villages in the country. We should never allow Museveni's Government to hold fraudulent elections again, in which millions of "ghost voters" are allowed to cast votes (both in gazetted and non-gazetted polling stations), and under a biased electoral commission.

We therefore appeal to the international community (including all non-African countries with embassies in Uganda, the Presidents of the countries in the E. African Community, the leaders of the African Union and other development partners) to refrain from supporting activities which encourage corruption, weakening political institutions, one man rule, abuse of basic human rights and fraudulent elections in our motherland. We cordially invite you to join us in restoring sanity in this country.

Finally, we are greatly indebted to our development partners from Sweden for the technical and financial assistance rendered to us.

It is now my pleasant duty to invite my colleagues, the presidents of CP, FDC and JEEMA to make additional remarks