

**JEEMA**

**THE JUSTICE FORUM**

REMARKS ON THE TOPIC: 'BUILDING A STRONG COOPERATION/ALLIANCE'  
PRESENTED TO THE IPC 2<sup>ND</sup> INTER-PARTY CONFERENCE  
13<sup>TH</sup> -15<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2009 AT POPE PAUL MEMORIAL COMMUNITY CENTRE,  
KAMPALA,

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**INTRODUCTION**

I want to congratulate the 4 cooperating parties namely, CP, FDC, JEEMA and UPC for establishing this cooperation through which parties agreed to work together to transform Uganda into a just and democratic nation. The fact that we have managed to work through the IPC over the last one and half since the first protocol was signed on 5<sup>th</sup> August, 2008 is a clear demonstration that we can indeed work together to change the political situation of our mother land, Uganda. My remarks to this historic IPC Inter- Party Conference will centre on the theme of "Building a strong Cooperation/Alliance".

**REVIEW OF THE INTER PARTY COOPERATION**

In reviewing the IPC project, it is important to distinguish between the Strategic and Organizational/Operational levels. Our view is that the strategic decision we took to form a cooperation was a move in the right direction. We are happy with the overall direction of cooperation as the strategy and we want to assure all our partners that we remain committed to the cooperation/alliance.

At the operational/organizational level, we are also happy with the work by the Secretariat and the Steering Committee and the Summit, to execute the IPC approved work plan, that has been accomplished and we want to commend all the key actors who have generated this solid achievement.

However our assessment is that IPC still has a long way to go in reaching out to the grassroots through tackling current political issues. Although the formulation of the electoral reforms and development of the private members bills will remain one of our solid achievements, IPC needs to do more to position itself at the centre of the political struggle in Uganda. The mother political parties are still ahead of IPC in this respect. IPC still has a long way to assert itself as the overall lead institution for the constituent parties. IPC has not yet effectively explored the potential for local funding.

We need to make an in-depth analysis, to identify the possible areas of weaknesses. My experience when I was chairing the Summit during my term in office, I had the feeling that there was a gap between the Steering Committee and the Chair of the Summit. The

Summit and Steering Committee which are the key organs in the cooperation are driven by different political parties at any one point in time. The summit chair is totally, detached from the Steering Committee which works as the executive arm of IPC. This means that the Chair of the summit is just a titular head who has even no leeway to take any initiative. It may work out better for the Summit and Steering Committee to be chaired by the same party, and for the Chair of the Summit to be an Ex-Official member of the Steering committee.

Secondly, the role of the Secretariat needs to be redefined. Is the Secretariat also supposed to act as the Think Tank for the Cooperation? During the first Inter Party Conference I suggested that IPC should have a separate think tank. The role of the think Tank is to look at IPC in terms of the broad picture. This includes putting the IPC at the Centre of the political issues in Uganda. The think tank ought to generate new ideas, evaluate various options and explore various alternative sources of funds to implement IPC program. IPC should move out of the BOX where it now operating. An IPC which is weaker than some of the individual political parties that formed it rises questions whether, that is the type of organization that can effectively take on the NRM. It is the think tank which should generate strategies to make IPC dynamic so that it is felt to be a stronger organization than the mother political parties.

## **DEALING WITH INEQUITIES AMONG AND BETWEEN PARTIES IN THE ALLIANCE**

By agreeing to form a cooperation/alliance we are forming an organization which is similar to a federal arrangement. We want to preserve the parties, which will be like the Federal states, while also working under the alliance which is comparable to the Central government. The constituent parties will raise their funds separately and fund their candidates. If we had formed a merger, we would have gone into a unitary relation, where the constituent units would be submerged. All our funds would have been put in one basket. But it also happens that the Partners in the alliance, cannot be at par in all respects. Each partner has its own strengths and weaknesses.

Two issues rise in this Alliance/Federal relations. First the public expects an overall alliance which is stronger than all the constituent units which make the alliance. Secondly, just like in any federal system, the issue of inequities amongst the federal states is going to create disharmony.

Those who are conversant with the East African Federation, will tell you that the issue of unequal benefits has always remained a thorny issue in EAC. The disadvantaged partner may not be fully committed to the federation if its benefits are monopolized by other partners.

We need to be fully conscious of this core weak sport which is likely to affect us just as it has bedeviled various efforts to form federations and alliances. It is said that the strength of

a chain is measured by the weakest sport in the chain. In our contribution to Joint Electoral Platform (JEP) which formed part of the basis for the Draft Protocol we tried to deal with this issue. We hope that it will get the seriousness it deserves. Equally, we could benefit from our partners in Sweden to learn whether this was one of the issues which confronted them and if so how they overcame it.

### **THE PRESS IN THE IN THE RUN UP TO THE GENERAL ELECTIONI IN 2011**

The attempt to intimidate the press in the last 3 months by the NRM government have revealed the Governments ill intentions to limit and control access to the media in the run up to the general elections in 2011. The Government of Uganda in September closed down 5 radio Stations within one day under the pretext that they were inciting people to violence during the September 10<sup>th</sup> demonstrations. Since then, all mass media houses were given new strict guide lines which gagged what the media had to broadcast and aloes limited access by the opposition. Three of the 5 radio stations have been opened, but the popular Central Broadcasting Corporation (CBS) and Radio Suubi still remain off the air. I have received invitations to participate in talk shows only to be canceled at the last hour. Dr Besigye, President of FDC, was denied access to FM radio while in Karamoja. Last Sunday, Radio Buddu FM was temporarily switched off when Mr. Muhammad Kateregga, Vice chairman of JEEMA was participating in the Radio Talk show. Clearly, the NRM government is determined to suppress the freedom of the press and deny opposition access to independent media.

A cross sections of Ugandans have called upon the NRM Government to reopen the two radio Stations without any precondition. Recently, we called upon the NRM Government to reopen CBS by the end of 2009, or else, we mobilize Ugandans to go on a sit down strike on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2010. Owing to intense pressure from all sections of Society, the NRM Government announced the setting up of a Cabinet sub- Committee to explore conditions for reopening the CBS. It looks like the Cabinet Sub-Committee idea is a PR gimmick intended to hoodwink the public that some is being done, to reduce the steam and pressures so that Government buys time, while it keeps the 2 Radio Stations closed for a long time.

After the IPC Masaka rally, in which we talked about the sit down strike, we were requested to put in place measures to effect the sit down. **A suggestion was put to us that we should form a Sit Down Strike Committee with various Political parties represented to organize the sit down strike. It was also proposed that we request opposition MPs in Kampala, to organize rallies before the end of the year in their constituencies to sensitize the people about the sit down strike.** I want to propose to IPC, that we consider, the suggestion of forming a nucleus sit down Strike committee which should work to involve other parties to mobilize Ugandan to effect the sit down strike in protest for the closure of CBS and Radio Suubi.

If we had some thing like a Think Tank I mentioned above, this is the sort idea that needs to be carefully studied and evaluated by such a body. However, in its absence, we can't just sit down and see the freedom of the press being suppressed and buried. We are of the opinion that sit down strikes can work in Uganda' present circumstances, but that no effort has been made to explore this strategy.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, our main concern in these brief remarks is how to build a strong inter-party Cooperation/Alliance that can deliver Ugandans from the current NRM oppression. Among the many suggestions we have raised is the issue of setting up a think tank for the alliance.

**We therefore, want to move a step ahead and propose that IPC should request the Free Movement (TFM) of Prof. Juuko and Dr. Barya to constitute the core team of the Think Tank. TFM is well known to us, and we all know the part they played in the G6 in the run to the 2006 election. We propose that three (3) Officials from the TFM be joined by one member from each cooperating parties plus the head of the CIL Secretariat to constitute the Think Tank for IPC. This is our suggestion, and we welcome other suggestions on how to go about building a strong Inter-party Cooperation/alliance.**

The Think Tank should be a sub-committee of the steering committee.

**FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY**

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14<sup>th</sup> December, 2009