

GENERAL PROGRESS REPORT OF THE PARTY
April-July 2011 presented to the Cabinet Aug 21st 2011.
By John Odit, Secretary General.

Introduction:

It has become apparent that some of us seem not to be impressed that some progress has been made in the party since the new appointments were made in April 2011. The purpose of the report is to provide you the party leaders with a brief on what we have achieved in the short spell of time. None the less the report also highlights what has not been possible owing to challenges on our way as yet. I hope that you will find it useful.

April 2011:

On April 4th 2011, the President made some new appointments at the top leadership. This development came in immediately after the presidential and parliamentary elections of February 18th 2011. The Party President made some new appointments and limited reorganization at the party headquarters. Subsequently the following appointments were made:

Mr. Joseph Bossa, formerly Secretary General appointed Vice President,
Hon Odit John, Secretary General,
Hamza Sewankambo, formerly Chief of Staff, Administrative Secretary,
Hon Francis Kiyonga, Chief of Staff,
David Pulkol, Secretary, Policy and National Mobilization.

Later in the month Rev. Onesmus Mutahinduka and Caleb Kamure were appointed deputy secretary for mobilization Western and Northern regions respectively.

National Council Meeting:

It will be recalled that an earlier attempt to hold a National Council meeting flopped owing to lack of quorum and poor preparation. This is the second highest organ of the party whose decisions on policy matters are binding, hence need for a quorum as required by the constitution. The next meeting was fixed for April 30th 2011. This was set to be the first test for the new team to handle. At the same time it was a requirement that prior to the meeting of the National Council, a meeting of the Central Executive Committee takes place to initiate policy proposals and business for the Council. Having just emerged from the national elections, it was found important to organize a meeting of the UPC women leaders and receive their agenda for policy consideration too. The women indeed demanded for greater space in the party and together with the youth proposed the party grants them the league status. The CEC elected the appointment committee to recruit workers for the secretariat.

The immediate challenge was to raise adequate funding to finance the three major meetings to take place in three days consecutively. It has been the practice for the Milton Obote Foundation-MOF to finance only the National Council meeting. Even then (MOF) used to manage the funds itself due to lack of confidence in the capacity of the party's accounts section to handle the events.

Our immediate challenge was to look for sufficient funds to cater for all the three meetings, and prove that we could manage the meetings successfully. First was the budget, next was the mobilization of members to raise the required quorum, and three to accommodate them satisfactorily, four was account for the funds. We needed confidence ourselves and to convince the financiers that we could handle the funds and account for it.

We are grateful that Chris Opoka was generous to introduce us to the international partners here in Kampala upon which we impressed to give our party the funds for our program.

Deepening Democracy Program, DDP granted shs 36million and the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, NIMD also granted 5 thousand Euros, and MOF provided sh 31million. This money was sufficient to fund all the three meetings. Because of prudence there was a balance which we used to initiate the work on the new strategic plans.

We offered guarantee to account for the funds, and even MOF entrusted the party to manage the Council meeting as a test case.

All meetings took place quite successfully at the Ankrah Foundation, Mukono, and the funds were well accounted for. The Council elected party disciplinary committee, and tasked the President to look into the needs of possibility of creating the women and youth leagues and report to the next Council meeting.

I am satisfied with the performance of the team. Chris Opoka, David Pulkol and Francis Kiyonga for being trustworthy party leaders who accomplished their tasks very well. I thank Basil Lucima for managing the funds prudently out of which we had a balance to finance our first retreat in preparation for our strategic plan. It was clearly a test which we passed with success.

Restructuring the Secretariat:

When we came in there had been a protracted negotiation between the party and MOF, on the restructuring of the secretariat. What had remained was the availability of funds and the date for the action layoff to take effect. We came in and requested MOF to approve the budget and enable us send off existing staff by May 15th 2011. This request was granted and the money was released for paying all entitlement to the workers. This too was possible because MOF had confidence in the way we had handled funds for the Council meeting. Confidence building was gradually taking root, and this was another achievement. Every departing retiree was adequately compensated and to date nobody is complaining of nonpayment of his or her entitlement. We encouraged those who are still interested to serve the party to reapply for any of the available posts that would be advertised, as it would be consistent with the party policy. This was in itself an achievement at this time in point.

Western Uganda party branch elections:

When we came in DDP had extended a twelve months grant amounting to shs. 156 million to support the party carry out branch elections all over the country in 2010/2011.

This program was meant to be audited in June 2011. We were informed the elections had been completed in the eastern and northern regions already. There was a balance of shs 36 million to cover the remaining two regions of the West and Buganda. This means that elections in the other two regions had cost the party shs 120 million! I personally suspended the exercise in the West and Buganda and called for the department responsible to review the budget and accountability framework which would provide value for money. We noticed that the available balance could not cover the remaining two regions. With shs 21million we conducted elections in nearly fifty constituencies in western Uganda and presented results of the elections with full accountability in a record of one month. Records are being entered in the data base here at the headquarters. We are yet to receive the accountability and returns of the previously held elections in the east and north. I must thank the team which did an excellent job under my supervision namely Basil Lucima and Ojok Michael in Bunyoro, Francis Kiyonga and Benon Muhanguzi in the Ruwenzori sub region, and Moses Nuwagaba, Onesmus Mutainduka and I in south western region. This too in an excellent achievement and we have been given a nod by the donor representative for our part. We have

presented our new request to DDP to extend further grant to complete our grass root elections in central region and elsewhere that the election was not done. This is progress by itself.

The Strategic Plan:

Our next challenge was to answer the question of how to present a more orderly method of providing direction for the party and resource mobilization to implement the laid down plans. The idea of a new strategic plan to succeed the one in place was shared among the members of the party cabinet. It must be noted that the cabinet is an organ of the party which implements party policies and program on behalf of the Central Executive Committee. With the lay out of various strategic priorities and tasks sent to the secretary general by the party president, the cabinet under the chairmanship of the vice president embarked on designing a framework for a new plan. The secretary general directed every head of department and committee to develop cabinet concept papers for consideration. I am grateful that all members of the cabinet worked tirelessly to prepare necessary documents, which were assembled to constitute policy framework. David Pulkol was tasked to bring the various papers together. With our saving from the Council meeting it was possible for the cabinet to go for a retreat at Esella Hotel to design the first draft of the strategic plan. The retreat was facilitated by a consultant from Makerere University. This local initiative encouraged the International Republican Institute,(IRI) to offer sufficient funding to pay for a senior consultant, and a second retreat to design the log frame which could give a complete structure for the strategic plan. IRI has accepted to produce the final plan as well. We are now finishing the budgeting before forwarding it to IRI for production. This, we feel is another achievement, and when completed, should provide a mechanism for resource mobilization for the party to implement its plans.

Bilateral assistance from the International Partners based in Uganda:

We have contacted a number of partners based in Kampala here and most of them have either already started providing assistance, have renewed partnership with the party already.

DDP:

As reported earlier, DDP has been and will remain the leading partner. It will extend support for us to complete our grass root elections in Buganda and other parts of the country with gaps. It is looking into the possibility of furnishing and equipping the party headquarters. It is also considering the possibility of training our party leaders in the regions down to the constituency level. We have submitted our proposal to them, and they have demanded for a complete budget for the next six months immediately. This will be submitted within the week. We expect to submit a long another proposal for three years by the end of the year. This clearly is no mean achievement.

IRI:

This partner is supporting ten student interns attached to our party. The program has assisted the party in managing the accounts office, IT and web site; sms bulk messaging, parliamentary attachment and office of the president.

Fredric Ebert Stiftung - FES:

We have made contacts with this partner which advised that our proposals should be submitted in November earliest to be included in their long term program. None the less they included our youth in their July training with youth from other political parties. Invitations for members of the youth leagues from all political parties in East Africa including UPC have again been invited. Ms Anyakoet and Rukundo have applied to participate in the workshop here in Kampala next week.

National Democratic Institute, NDI:

We picked one youth from the Tororo and one from Kitgum to attend a tot workshop in Kampala to become resource persons for UPC youth training program at regional headquarters.

Challenges:

It was not possible to compile compelling evidence of electoral malpractice as this would require cooperation from a much wider population from the country side. Moreover there were individuals who were assigned the task as the presidential task force. The president should cause them to prepare this report.

Pending debts and unfulfilled promises remain serious headache, and we do not have any magic bullet for them.

Blue book disappearance still has no satisfactory answer, and we have no control over the document.

Conclusion:

It is my prayer that this brief might put to rest the perception that we are letting the party leadership down. I do not believe the assertion is right. Instead we have had too many challenges and failures from decades of non performance by the party machinery which cannot be fixed in less than one hundred days. We need to support one another and recognize each ones value. We have come a long way; from non attendance of cabinet meetings, lack of quorum prior to present day to regular attendance by colleagues. This also came out of good efforts. To date debates are sometimes vibrant, stormy and constructive but these are all for good cause as we chart the ways to repair and strengthen the party.

Solidarity

John Odit

SECRETARY GENERAL, UGANDA PEOPLES CONGRESS.