

**A REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A YOUTH  
DIALOGUE HELD**

**ON 16<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2015 AT SEASCALLOP RESTAURANT**

**ORGANIZED BY PAN AFRICAN CLUB**

***TOPIC: "DOES THE POLITICS IN AFRICA SHOW A  
PROGRESSING CONTINENT"***

**CONTENT OUTLINE:**

- Presentation by **Prof Mambutsya Ndebese** a political historian and senior lecturer of Makerere University
- Presentation by **Hon David Pulkol**, Former Chief of External Security Organization (ESO).
- **Participants' Views**
- **Responses** by the Presenters and closing remarks from the moderator.

**PRESENTATION BY PROF MWAMBUTSYA NDEBESA**

Prof Ndebese began by telling the youths the difference between a good person and a good citizen; he said that a good person is not necessarily a good citizen adding that the latter is interested in public affairs and is committed to improving the society in which he lives whereas a good person does not mind about the statusquo but obeys laws. He emphasized that a good citizen must insist on his right to engage in public affairs and is never a conformist to unfair play.

Turning to Democracy, the Professor said that a democrat suspects that he may be wrong and that this is very important because it leaves room for correction and thus such a person / leader will be willing to listen to others and try to make sense of their views to improve on what he is thinking. That on the other hand, a dictator thinks that he is right all the time and hence what he thinks is final whatsoever. He does not believe that others have anything useful to add!

Professor Ndebesa told his audience that Democracy in Africa is on recess. He gave reference to a recent study report on governance by Mo Ibrahim which shows that overall governance in Africa is stalling and in more than one third actually regressing. He explained that Democracy is rule by the people not by one individual or a small clique born by blue blood. He disclosed that people can rule themselves directly or indirectly through representatives that but there must be clear rules and procedures of accountability.

He also said that in democratic practices, people must participate in their governance; they must be free to make choices and also participate in making policies. He cautioned however that one needs to always understand the mode of participation otherwise you may end up being participated (being used) to legitimize other peoples' agendas in which you have no stake or which could even be against you / national good.

Professor Ndebesa reasoned that most youths in Uganda today are being participated rather than participating and thus they are cheering, running around and singing for politicians without fully understanding the direction they are taking but are rather kind of bandwagoning. He gave example of the 'Mpenkoni' song by President Yoweri Museveni which he protested to the Registrar but lost unfairly that because this song belongs to the Banyankore who have sung it since time immemorial and is thus a public property. This means that legally and morally, no one has an individual claim to this song.

He also told us that Democracy is about contestation of policies and powers thus people should be free to critique what they have reservations about regarding governance of their society. He made a distinction between rule of law and rule by the law stating that in the former, you find good practices like equality before the law, equal opportunities and

enjoyment of freedoms of speech while in the latter you have bad laws restricting freedoms like freedom of movement and the like. He cited the recent arrest of Kiza Besigye and team when they were going to Rukungiri for an FDC rally adding that the Public Order Management Act is now being used to restrict freedoms.

The Professor wondered about the Electoral Commission's actions of selective application of rules whereby it is telling some politicians that don't access the people to talk to them yet one other aspirant is talking to them! He said that recently, President Yoweri Museveni for example de-campaigned Hon Ssemuju Nganda in a political rally in Kololo but Hon Nganda is not allowed to defend himself by explaining to the people why they should vote for him. He said that the Electoral Commission is not serious because its selective application of rules might radicalize people. He added that it is also expression of lack of political morality and poor ethics on the part of the Electoral Commission.

He explained that substantive Democracy is vital in enhancing the delivery of services and public goods yet in Africa our performance in Democracy is very poor. He added that even in indices pertaining freedom, human development at world stage, Africa is performing poorly with only a few African countries being below 100.

The Learned Fellow said that Southern African countries such as Zambia, Malawi, Namibia and South Africa are doing well in Africa but globally, they are doing badly. He however noted that these countries are improving and therefore there is hope.

Prof Ndebesa further said that next to Southern Africa in Democracy Index is West Africa followed by North Africa in the third place on the continent. He disclosed that Tunisia and Algeria are trying while Morocco is just somehow that but Egypt is regressing. Analyzing his presentation, you discover that in East and Central Africa, the Democracy story is generally not a good one. He says that the Democratic Republic of Congo should have been called the Undemocratic Republic of Congo because there is hardly anything there to show Democracy. He said that in Central African Republic, there is almost no government there while in Cameroon, the current President who came to power after overthrowing his uncle has overstayed in power with a consequence of undermining institutions as he

struggles to entrench himself which is not good for sustainable development of Cameroon. He added that the story is much the same in Chad while in Congo Brazzaville, the one family rule which has persisted for over 40 years now has also undermined Democracy in that country.

## **EXPLANATIONS FOR THE DEMOCRACY INDICES IN AFRICA**

### **(a) Southern Africa**

- There has been no successful coup in Southern Africa since independence apart from once in Madagascar.
- Southern Africa has not had a military General as head of state. He revealed that even liberators we hear or read about like Sam Nujoma and Nelson Mandela never picked military ranks.
- There are Presidential Term limits in Southern Africa enabling peaceful handover of power and thus no property destruction and loss of lives during change of governments. This has ensured continuity, stability and Democracy. He gave example of South Africa where just since 1994, they have had four Presidents including the one who was interim President for one year called Kgalema Montlanthe, he said it is unheard-of in some countries that a leader can be in power for only one year and then leave willingly but in South Africa it happened. Even H.E Nelson Mandela left power when he was still popular and could have moved on if he wished just like Sam Nujoma did in Mamibia. He said that conversely, Uncle Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe has not left power and is performing poorly. South Africa has also had Mbeki Thabo and now Zuma Jacob making it to four Presidents in around 20 years.
- Southern Africa has avoided military rule and militarism. This means they have not used force in political contests. He gave example of militarism in Uganda when Obote in 1966 used force to overthrow the Constitution to entrench his rule.
- That Southern Africans have institutionalized rule of law and politics rather than individual rule.

## **(b) West Africa**

- West Africans still have some problems but some countries such as Benin formerly known as Dahomey had military coups but have since transformed. Prof Ndebese challenged a recent claim by Hon Mike Mukula that no independent presidential candidate has ever won elections saying that in Benin it happened when Mr. Mathieu Ahmed Ke're'kou defeated Mr. Nicephore' Dieudonne Soglo who was the incumbent in 1996. He further revealed that in 2005, both of these leaders accepted a constitutional provision that no one would be allowed in Benin to contest for president when he is aged over 70 years aware that this would bar them running for president again since they were all above 70 years but they did it in national interest. As a result, Benin has transited into a prospering Nation.
- In Senegal, there has never been a coup. President Abdlouye Wade wanted power extension but the Senegalese successfully refused.
- In Ghana even with Jerry Rawlings, they have been changing while in Nigeria, the wish by President Olusegun Obasanjo to uplift Presidential term limits was failed and this saved the country from going back.
- Of great importance, Prof Ndebese said that ECOWAS has ensured a regional approach towards power in West Africa and that this has come with some tremendous successes for example in Liberia where former leader Charles Taylor is now before the ICC and Burkina Faso where the recent coup plotter is now under custody.

## **© Eastern Africa**

- That East Africa and the Horn such as Eritrea, Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya etc are improving and that would even do better if they can run away from violence. He was quick to add however that in Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, Presidential term extensions are a threat to Democracy. He also said that having one party state as is the case in Ethiopia also limits Democracy.
- That East Africa has been having regular elections but they have generally been largely protested.

- That in East Africa, there is a big problem of strong individuals at the expense of strong institutions. Prof Ndebesa gave example of President Pierre Nkuruziza of Burundi that one time the professor wife in Burundi's capital Bujumbura, city roads were closed and brought business to a standstill simply because President Nkuruziza was playing football with his operatives! He said the name Nkuruziza means good news that but it is now Nkurumbaya meaning bad news because his actions are killing people.

### (c) North Africa

- In Algeria and Tunisia, the military is retreating back and that this has created hope.

### CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA

Prof Ndebesa mwambutsya cited the following:

- **Political Corruption.** He explained that contrary to what some people say that financial corruption is our biggest problem in Africa that actually Political Corruption is the major problem and that it is the one causing financial corruption. He said that political corruption is hidden and hence sophisticated but financial corruption can be more easily dealt with.
- **Cronism.** This entails appointing friends to positions of responsibility irrespective of their ability.
- **Nepotism.** This has involved favoring relatives, tribe-mates, religious sectarianism and the like while placing people in positions of politics. He gave example that in Uganda, if you go to a state parastatal and you want to know the person on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor, listen to the language of the receptionist on the ground floor, the sweeper and the guard! He wondered that with such state of affairs, Pan Africanists still appear undisturbed.

Prof Ndebesa showed displeasure at the Regional imbalance in Uganda. He said that the Executive, Legislature, Judiciary, Police, the army and Prisons are all led by Southerners / Bantu speaking region. Someone from the audience added that even corporations are led by Southerners. The Professor questioned whether anyone in his right sense would say that the Lugbara and the Luo who are Sudan speakers and are part of Uganda are

not interested in those positions and wonders how come none of them is! He said Pan Africanists should not be just looking on lest us be like a monkey laughing at a burning forest forgetting that it is its only home.

- **Patronage.** This involves buying political support using public funds / resources. This weakens our states and hinders development. That comparatively, South East Asian countries might have got draconian dictatorial regimes but they use meritocracy / effective bureaucracies that but ours is 'Mwanawaguundi' literally meaning know who not know how. He said that the South Koreans, Taiwan's and Singaporeans send their 1<sup>st</sup> Class students for further studies but ours we send sycophants and relatives; he wondered how we can expect to get hi-tech from sycophants! He added that commonly, those with pass degrees are employed while those with 1<sup>st</sup> Class are unemployed and that the youths are just launching songs instead of tackling these deep-seated challenges in our society. He advised the youths to stop joining political parties without an agenda and wondered about the youths who have made it a habit to vend themselves to politicians.

- **Vote purchasing, election rigging, unfair competition, primitive accumulation of power;** are some of the other challenges obscuring Democracy in Africa.

Prof Ndebasa explained that Democracy is necessary adding that unless there is inclusive Democracy, we are losing it. He was uncomfortable that some people are supporting the suppression of inclusive Democracy including the IGP Gen Kale Kayihura whom he is not surprised about because the first time he got to know Kayihura was when he was still a UPDF officer, he had come to Ntungamo during elections contested by Mr. Buliko and Mr. Karazarwe, that Kale Kayihura arrested all youth agents of Mr. Buliko to ensure that Karazarwe unfairly wins the elections, That after the elections, these youths were released without charges! It is therefore difficult that such a person would support inclusive Democracy even when as an IGP, the Constitution requires him to do so in execution of his duties.

According to Prof Ndebesa, Democracy leads to legitimacy, accountability and development, reasons for which we badly need it. He argued that people must be treated in a fair manner and that without necessarily going into legalities, the issue at stake is immorality and lack of ethics and that this is the real problem of our leaders which has affected their democratic credentials. He wondered that you find even Bishops engaging in political immorality such as Bishop Katoneene who recently supported one candidate against the others. He said that political immorality is also immorality and that recalling the teachings of the prophets in the Bible against injustices, political immorality is part of it and that everyone including religious leaders should avoid it as much as possible. In conclusion, Prof Mwambutsya Ndebesa called upon everyone to be democratic so that our society can develop.

### **PRESENTATION BY HON DAVID PULKOL, FORMER CHIEF OF EXTERNAL SECURITY ORGANIZATION (ESO)**

**Hon David Pulkol** Began with a question that does the current form of multiparty Democracy suit Africa yet you have a single party system run in a multiparty mode! He argued that leaders doing this are Clever Fools because they assume that as they pretentiously claim to be democratic, they have failed to know that we see these things and we can tell that we are being duped. He gave reference to Mr. Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso and wondered whether he was being clever when he was plunging his country into chaos because of being full of himself at the expense of the country and no wonder today he is in exile.

Hon David Pulkol said that Elections are the key to politics. He said that unfortunately for Uganda, we have had a history of forceful takeovers of political leadership or rigged elections. He added that we also have histories of broken promises including peaceful power handovers. To him, President Yoweri Museveni has squandered a peaceful handover opportunity.

He said that the 2007 elections violence in Kenya was partly caused by the change of rules at will arrogantly by those in power. He said that in Uganda, we have Constituencies being created targeting individuals to come to Parliament to which he says that some of these uncalled for machinations might one time catch up with them. He said that this is done to create over representation of certain areas to manufacture artificial majorities. He gave example of Burkina Faso where Blaise Compaore scored 48% of the votes but his party had 73% of the seats in parliament. He also questioned the lack of patriotism on part of some of our leaders and gave example that in our Parliament, when it comes to emoluments, all MPs are always united whether NRM or Opposition that because it is about them.

Hon Pulkol said that in 1990s, there was a lot of euphoria in Africa that the wave of transitions from single party to multiparty system would bring to the fore durable and sustainable peace and accountability but this hope has vanished in many African countries now.

Hon Pulkol wondered that President Museveni called ballot votes a mere paper and that he has quite a number of times emphasized that the NRM got power through blood. He reasoned that this mindset has ensured the failure of electoral institutions in Uganda. He further said that for the same reason, elections in many African countries are incapable of changing decision making machine. He argued that we have elections without Democracy. He said that in an ideal democratic dispensation, there must be equal chance of today's minority to turn into tomorrow's majority and that the reverse should be true. He said that many incumbent leaders on our continent have ensured that our multiparty system is pseudo and thus our Democracy is sick. He revealed that the quality of our elections in Africa is generally backsliding.

Hon Pulkol said that the prerogative of the president in Uganda is so big and that he has expanded it beyond what is allowed in the Constitution. He gave example that the president has no powers to grant a district but rather it is parliament to do so but even the MPs ask the president to grant districts. He said that such has hindered the emergence of institutions in the country.

## **PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS**

**Charles Rwomushana** began with quoting Kwameh Toure that our problem is lack of consciousness of our unconsciousness. He said that Prof Ndebesa is knowledgeable but wondered whether he is aware that he does not know! He said that Hon David Pulkol has sentiments and is hurt but asked him whether he is conscious of his unconsciousness or is just talking on instinctiveness!

He criticized people who are clamoring on Museveni that he should practice democracy and asked that are they sure that the desire to ensure democracy was the mission which took him to the bush! He said that the real mission of President Museveni and his colleagues to go the bush was to size the Uganda state in order to go back to Rwanda because attacking Rwanda out-rightly then was considered suicidal. He wondered that we had educated people here in Uganda but they were asleep and unconscious! That after Rwanda, the next target was DRC and that no wonder, Afande James Kabarebe became the head of the army in DRC and that President Laurent Kabila was just a stooge.

Then he asked those saying that they want Democracy in Uganda that what for wondering how they think it will help them and to achieve what. He said that one must determine the mission that because those they are opposed to, theirs was to go to Rwanda, so these ones; what is theirs?

He praised President Idi Amin for chasing the Asians otherwise known as the Coolies who were dominating us. He said that they are however now back because they are President Museveni's allies but then wondered that they are supplying us with fake goods. In his view, Uganda is a new colonial state of the Coolies and that Ugandans' problem is lack of awareness and consciousness.

He also praised Nsibirwa, a former Prime Minister of Buganda who was killed for giving out land to establish an institution of learning which is now Makerere University.

**Musana Jafali** said that he had just contested in NRM primaries for Makerere L.C 3 but was cheated and that he would now join the struggle to fight injustices in Uganda. He added that Uganda is facing a problem of bad laws and that the President has too much power far away from what he deserves. He likened him to King Louis xvi who said that he is the state and the state is him. He also said that the president appoints nearly everybody who matters in this country and that this is unjustified.

**Agaba Kakuranga** said that the Constitution means nothing but rather people should resort to farming that because only farming is a solution to our problems. He promised that for every ten people who farm a SACCO provided it is about farming, they should contact him for assistance. He gave out his phone number which is 0752 652 615.

**Mutambi Samuel** said that all liberations have been done by classes; he gave example of Russian revolution where the struggle was between the Chief Executive Officers and the workers and that elsewhere like say America, the struggles were between Blacks and Whites, then he asked Prof Ndebesa that how about us who are a mixture of liberators and the exploited, how can we succeed?

**Carlos Kaniga** disagreed with Kakuranga that all our solutions are in farming, he said that farming is a business and that when you get the money; what next because if the politics is not sorted out, it can all be taxed away! He said that the leadership must be right for other ventures like farming to successfully take place. He likened Kakuranga to a person who tells you that you must continue to play football even when the Coach has a problem which to him implies that such a football team is bound to fail matches.

**Councilor Mayombwe Daniel** from Kanyanya in Kawempe Division said that improvements of the City which are chasing away the people are questionable. He said that the evicted are always told to go back where they came from that however most of these were born here and therefore they are being chased from where they were born from. He suggested that all Ugandans should be treated as indigenous people wherever they go in any part of Uganda because they are citizens and thus should not be just chased like that without offering to them an alternative to earn a living.

**Guma Bongo** said that for Africa to make it, it must prioritize education and agriculture first. He went on to say that Kakuranga who advocated for agriculture ahead of anything else has a good point. He also decried Africa's balkanization, religious names and resource outflow from Africa by Multinational companies. He said that in South Africa, Nelson Mandel connived with imperialists against national interest in matters of the economy and said that this is the reason Mrs. Winnie Mandela is not happy with the kind of liberation by the ANC in South Africa.

**Another participant** whose name our rapporteur failed to pick said that Democracy is now prevalent in Uganda. That consensus on national issues, participation, transparency and accountability are all present in Uganda and that in fact we are currently governed in the best way. He added however that we need proper separation of powers that because this is the only remaining challenge otherwise we are doing well.

**Kasirye Samuel** said that the challenge of Uganda is that we are behaving normally in an abnormal situation. He gave example of the group calling themselves the poor youths wondering how they could parade themselves to be bought as if they don't care about their country for as long as they get money.

He added that in 1977 the Muslims gathered in Rukungiri and resolved that Idi Amin becomes life president and that the same was replicated in the recent Hon. Evelyn Anite's appeal to Museveni to become sole candidate as if in the whole country of 35 million people, we have only one person who can lead.

**Nuwagaba Vincent** said that there are two types of democracy; liberal and social and that the former emphasizes civil and political rights while the latter emphasizes socio-economic rights. He reasoned that many people tend to clamor for liberal democracy yet to the contrary, social democracy is even more achieving because to him socio-economic rights should be put a head of civil and political rights. He reasoned that no matter how best our elections can be, we still cannot get the best leaders in Uganda adding that the prevailing dictatorship must be dismantled first.

**Murungi Robert** said that Democracy is created and to him, we have it in Uganda. He explained that we have elections and participation and that this is Democracy. He stated that Ugandans are enjoying economic and social rights and thus everything is excellent.

**Patrick Mulindwa** said that today's advanced access to information gives us a number of options which we should take advantage of in order to ride on the road to success and that this we should embrace as Pan Africanists.

### **RESPONSES BY PROF MWAMBUTSYA NDEBESA**

He called for respect of each other's views and respectful disagreement where need be.

The Professor disagreed with Hon Charles Rwomushana that Professors like him are not conscious. He explained that it begins with awareness and then to consciousness which basically entails doing something about what you are ware-of and that aware as they are, professors like him are conscious. He also advised Rwomushana against false consciousness that because experience has shown that some consciousness can be false. In essence probably, he was telling Rwomushana to check himself!

About going farming, Prof Ndebese said that farmers are not doing the best even at global scale. He said that there is no Developed Country which is more in agriculture than other sectors such as services and industry. He then advised that do not take people to farming to leave them there.

He also said that farming without settling the politics can be counterproductive because as we have seen in some cases, land will be grabbed politically because of the primitive / bad politics. He said that we need to contest land grabbing and that therefore, politics is primary and then land / agriculture is secondary.

About liberation and classes, Prof Ndebese said that no liberation has been by one class that all liberations have been interclass liberations usually planned and managed by the middle class and then executed by peasants and workers. He said for example that Fidel Castro of Cuba was a lawyer and therefore not a peasant because by definition, a peasant is a small scale land producer.

The Professor disclosed that Nsibirwa, a former Prime Minister of Buganda was killed for allying with the colonialists against the cause and culture of Buganda. For example he supported the Namasole / wife of the deceased Kabaka Chwa to remarry which was against the culture of Buganda. He explained that the land giveaway to establish Makerere University College was secondary.

He disagreed with the opinion that Ugandans are freely participating, he asked whether the likes of Dr. Kiza Besigye, Fatuma and Amama Mbabazi are participating freely given the recent encounters they have been experiencing with the Uganda Police Force. He also said that many NRM members have been un-participating because of the recent hike of money for one to become for example an aspiring Member of Parliament whereby you must pay 3,000,000/= to Kigundu's Electoral Commission, after 2,000,000/= to the NRM Electoral Commission and 500,000/= to UNEB totaling to 5,5000,000/=. In addition, you must submit your nomination papers in Kampala which is costly for those living in faraway districts. This means that the poor have been de-participated because they cannot afford all these costs. He asserted that we want participation and inclusive development.

The Professor analyzed that those in authority in Uganda are using hard and crude power and not soft power thus they are working hard but not smart. He asserted that soft power is superior to hard power and his call to leaders was to use more of soft power and less of hard power because in this digital generation, that is the way to go.

**HON DAVID PULKOL** concluded by saying that those feeling comfortable in Uganda because of having contracts and other jobs with the decision making machine should rather wake up to the reality and stand for the common cause of Uganda as a whole. He said that those feeling uncomfortable who are suffering the wrath of injustices and thus the ordinary masses should stand for their rights and all of us together can make Uganda a country we desire that is peaceful, prosperous and accommodative of all of us and thus for sure attain a happy living.

**PROF EDWARD KAKONGE** called upon the youths to always spare time to think critically about what they do. He warned the youths against accepting to be recruited in agendas of other people in which they have no stake but only to serve the interests of those seeking to use them as if they are thoughtless people. He said that if they do that then they will have no regrets for the decisions they make because basically it is a personal choice.

### **CLOSING REMARKS FROM THE MODERATOR**

In his closing remarks, Ngabirano John, the moderator of the discussion said that as human beings, we have an obligation to be informed. He said that the more you know, the more you realize that you actually don't know and thus the struggle to search for knowledge at every available opportunity must be everyone's life time commitment. He warned members against political partisan prejudices asserting that this can only hinder their learning potential yet learning is all that we come for at the Pan African Club not politicking against or in favor of anyone or any institution.

He further said that no one has a right to be ignorant and that in fact, it is criminal since even in Court they say that ignorance in law is no defense. He also emphasized the role of critical thinking which comes as a result of putting ideas together by people who have committed to looking at the bigger picture of the big things as a sure way of moving ahead.

**Compiled by:**  
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