

PRESS RELEASE

For Launching NRM Chapter in Denver, Colorado-USA, Saturday, 2 April 2005

NRM-USA Unveils the Strategic Mobilization Plan for the Uganda Diaspora Community

The Chairman of National Resistance Movement Organization of USA, Mr. Godfrey Sseruwagi has unveiled an NRM advocacy and Information program for **promoting the welfare, protecting the interests and provision of practicable social services** to Uganda Diaspora workers in recognition of their economic contributions for the Development of the country. In a statement read on his behalf by his Vice Chairman, Edward Wanda during the launching of NRM chapter in Colorado on Saturday, 2 April 2005.

Mr. Sseruwagi said that NRM in the Diaspora would focus on an **Outreach Campaign** and initiate a process of engagement and direct involvement of the Diaspora community in the affairs of their country through participatory approach by collecting useful information regarding their needs and the role Government of Uganda can play to make more use of the Ugandan Diaspora Community as a resource for rapid development of the country.

Through its Advocacy Plan Initiatives (**API**), NRM USA proposes to the Movement Government to Institute a **CENTRAL MANPOWER EXPORT & WELFARE ORGAN**, which can take up such a promotional role and manage the proposed programs and benefits for overseas workers such as; **Govt. to Officially Seek Legal Status for Ugandan Diaspora Workers** in countries that offer temporary work visas such as the recent proposed new temporary worker program by U.S. President Bush. This program will match willing foreign workers with willing American employers, when no Americans can be found to fill the jobs. The legal status granted by this program will last three years and will be renewable. Mr. Sseruwagi said that such program will ease free movement of more Ugandan overseas workers streaming into the country with constant new ideas of development.

Mr. Sseruwagi said that the proposed Manpower export and welfare programs would also open more opportunities for more Ugandans intending to look for work outside the country to ease on unemployment in the country by officially exporting labour as a deliberate

policy for the country. We will continue to register more remittance flow to the country if Government plays a crucial role to study the needs and demands of the overseas labour market and take advantage of such shortages. Ugandans on the streets without jobs have the ability to offer skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manpower which can be enabled to officially emigrate to other countries for a specified period, for work if they are given proper counseling and re-orientation in appropriate needed skills, keeping in view the needs of the International labour market and if our unemployed labour functional capability is enhanced to compete with the workers from other labour exporting countries.

Some countries have set up fully-fledged ministries or Independent Department dedicated to marketing and exporting human labor to foreign countries and also protects their well-being. By Uganda not doing anything towards achieving this objective, the country is sitting on a goldmine that should be exploited for the benefit of this country. The proposal is calling for overseas job-related skills training, conducting of Pre-employment and Pre-departure seminars to prepare a potential overseas worker in a new foreign land as a strategy for soft landing of a potential Ugandan overseas worker.

Mr. Sseruwagi went on that the proposed **Uganda Diaspora Welfare Fund (UDWEFU)** will assist a Diaspora worker in distress. Others benefits will include; repatriating of a fallen worker's body and ambulance service to home village, interest free loan for emergency travel home, Family assistance loan, pre-departure loan for a traveling and others to be proposed and discussed by the Diaspora community.

In order to encourage Ugandans abroad away from home, Mr. Sseruwagi proposes to **Institute a Rewards and Recognition System** at the end of the year for the significant contributions of Uganda Diaspora Workers who have excelled in their work for the development of their country or contributing to the socio-economic development of their communities abroad or inside Uganda. Such rewards could be termed as Presidential Awards and awarded at Ugandans annual gatherings abroad such as UNAA. NRM USA also proposes; a **Pension Scheme for returning overseas workers** who currently might not be absorbed in the mainstream employment due to their illegal status. Mr. Sseruwagi also proposes that some financially capable Ugandans abroad can participate in investment

in Government approved projects that is lacking capital by buying shares in such projects. Also the **Home Town Association (HTA program in** partnership with Government matching Fund can be an encouragement for the Diaspora members to develop their villages and towns of origin in terms of infrastructure and job creating projects.

Mr. Sseruwagi is calling for the **Re-Naming of Uganda Overseas Worker from Kyeyo to Ugandan Diaspora Investors UDIs or Country Overseas Investor COIs or any other** to be suggested through a petition by Ugandans working abroad. He says; Uganda government **MUST** officially recognize remittances flow to the country as Private Capital and Uganda's workers sending such capital should **NOT be regarded as members of a KYEYO group as currently portrayed in the media and public officials, BUT should be regarded as Uganda Diaspora Investors** who stands out as vital pillars and strong building blocks to Uganda's development through their remittances to the country. The terminology "Kyeyo" is derogative and demeaning to majority of Ugandans working overseas, a sentiment widespread, implying doing low profile jobs or literary meaning; sweeping the streets of Europe, America, Canada, Japan which is not the case. H.E. President Museveni referred to Ugandan workers overseas as "*Uganda's most precious investors*" in his speech read to Ugandans' UNAA gathering in Boston 2003. Such an encouraging phrase by the President referring to Uganda nationals working abroad is a great incentive to such workers enduring the European and North American cold and racism, working hard to send money to their relatives and developing the country. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of Phillipines calls Phillipino workers overseas "**Countrys' modern day heroes**" or "**Economic heroes**" to respect and honor their contributions in terms of remittances sent back to the country.

Mr. Sseruwagi, Called upon for support from all the Uganda Diaspora community in order to draw-in social-political support from the government and the Uganda public in order to influence and sensitize the need for guarding the interest and welfare of all Ugandan workers overseas and also bring services near to wherever they work and reside.

He cautioned the elected NRM USA committee members not to sit back but to be active by contributing development ideas that will economically empower the Diaspora community and Ugandans at home. I believe that if we are economically empowered we will also be politically stable and set a precedent of politics of development in our country other than the current political trend with most politicians gifted in empty talk, criticism and offer no solutions.

It is disturbing that many of our political leaders seem to think that politics is their means of livelihood other than serving the people and looking for solutions of job creation or markets for their products. We must introduce a culture of leaders to be emulated and be role models for their personal achievements in alleviating poverty from themselves first as individuals before they involve themselves in politics. And then they will have the moral authority to lead by example and lead our people out of poverty. How can a poor man lead the poor peasants out of poverty? A blind man leading others who are blind! I believe that this is one of the fundamental reasons why poverty levels are rising because local leaders themselves are blind with no vision to offer for wealth creation for the people they lead, even with an enabling structure and environment put in place by the President and the Movement Government. Mr. Sseruwagi emphasized that after 19 years of the movement, Ugandans have gained a reasonable level of political maturity and it is high time Ugandan voters are led and represented by only developmental politicians laying down their concrete plans of poverty alleviation and development to the electorate before they elect them or those appointed in positions of responsibility be constantly evaluated for their new ideas and initiatives brought in a ministry, organization or must step aside for visionary leaders. Our chairman, the President is much burdened and must be assisted by all his lieutenants to carry forward and share his vision for developing this country. Voters must be sensitized that unless already proven hard working men and women with poverty alleviating vision leads them, and not those still looking for mere jobs and survival in politic, they will also remain in perpetual poverty. At Uganda's low level of development, we need dynamic, hard-thinkers, go-getters leaders not laybacks only waiting for their monthly paychecks and stand in the way for development if not given small kickbacks to alleviate their own poverty. Such impoverished leaders from whichever political party, will always be busy

caring for themselves and their families and not the people they lead and this is natural law of survival, therefore the voters and appointing authorities must avoid such individuals.

NRM USA will concentrate on the politics of job creation in the country and assist to address the issues of appropriate skills in education to access jobs wherever they are in the world for our country to build a strong middle class that will sustain our economy and progress of our country.

Mr. Sseruwagi concluded by cautioning the Diaspora community on contributing financially to the opposition that will offer nothing in return due to lack of a political program that will benefit them. He reminded participants that; at the moment NRM as a political organization is the only one that have proven and tested leadership with the longest track record visible on the ground. The organization is poised and capable of taking us through the murky political waters of the transition and therefore the right forum for Uganda and the Diaspora community. The track record is undisputable even by our opposition. I urge you to be keen and identify a winning team and be part of that team. The function was presided over by the National Secretary for mobilization, Maasogalaba Ddamba Kanyike. The Vice Chairman, Mr. Edward Wanda challenged members to be engaged and brainstorm on the proposed programs with the view of improving on such programs and adopting new ones they think are important for the welfare of the Diaspora community. This will be the homework of the Colorado chapter and other chapters. Others who addressed the gathering were the Secretary for Finance, Amooti Joseph Kazinduka. Mr. Kazinduka said that NRM USA was formed to bridge the existing gap between the Movement government and Uganda Diaspora community, and warned Ugandans to be on the watch of those promising doom and gloom when they seem to be failing to convince Ugandans of their political agenda. Such days are long gone. National Committee member Deborah Mawanda represented the Texas Chapter. NRM State committee was elected and Mr. Edriss Kironde was elected unopposed as the Chairman of Denver-Colorado State Chapter. Eddie Sserunkuuma Vice Chairman, Vincent Nsubuga SEC for Research Barbara Sserumaga SEC General, John Kalema SEC for Finance, Charles Kirya SEC for Mobilization Nelson Kawuki Muzei SEC for Information, James Ddembe SEC for Youth & Gender

-----END-----