



64th CPC Speech

President of Uganda's opening address

Address by HIS EXCELLENCY YOWERI KAGUTA MUSEVENI
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

At the 64TH COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE
Theme: *Adaption, Engagement and Evolution of Parliaments in a rapidly changing Commonwealth*

Commonwealth Resort Munyonyo
26th September 2019

- H.E. Vice President, Edward Ssekandi;
- Rt. Hon. Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda and President-designate of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference;
- Secretary General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA);
- Distinguished Rt. Hon. Speakers and Heads of delegations from all CPA regions;
- The Vice Chairman of the NRM Party;
- All Parliamentarians here;
- Invited guests;
- Ladies and gentlemen.

On the behalf of the people of Uganda, I welcome you, the members of the CPA, again, to Uganda. You are most welcome. I say that I welcome you to Uganda, again, because I was very much here when you were here last, 52 years ago. I was not in the meetings themselves. I was, however, 23 years old that time, a first-year student in the University of Dar-es-salaam and already a very active student leader, leading the University Students African Revolutionary Front (USARF). The meeting must have taken place during the short holiday because I remember I was in Uganda and not in Dar-es-Salaam.

I normally, tell my young Party/Movement comrades that what they call history, I call current Affairs. Hence, while for many of you the meeting that took place here 52 years ago is history, for me it is current affairs.

I would like to recognize the support of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second, the Queen of United Kingdom, who is the patron of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC).

Let me appreciate the CPA Chairperson, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka and the CPA Secretary-General Mr. Akbar Khan. I thank you all for the invitation to speak to you today.

The host Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, Rt. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, has been doing a lot in our country and through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association networks over the years. These efforts must be the



reason we are hosting the CPC in Kampala today. I congratulate her, the Members of Parliament and the Uganda Secretariat of the CPA for successfully organizing this conference and appreciate their hard work.

The newspapers in Uganda have been reminding us that the two controversial issues of that time were: the regime of Ian Smith in Rhodesia and the United Kingdom (UK) joining the European Union (EU) and abandoning the Commonwealth special economic arrangements.

Since that time, the issue of Rhodesia was unilaterally resolved by Africa through the war of liberation executed by Zanu and Zapu, supported by Africa and the socialist countries. It is good that the British government, under Margaret Thatcher, came in, last minute, to facilitate the transition with Lord Soames and those other arrangements.

The issue of the UK membership in the EU is, of course, back in the news, with Brexit. The people of the UK, through internal processes, have the capacity to direct the destiny of that country.

When I met Her Majesty, the Queen in 1987, I told her that the Commonwealth was an Association of great potential. With a population of 2.4 billion people, it is the only international organization that I attend, and I do not have to put up with the inconvenience of translation with ear appliances.

We can communicate directly through the use of the English language. This is a phenomenon of great potential if it is properly used. We could cooperate in security, investments, culture and governance. Can we revive the preferential trade arrangements? Here in Africa, we are now committed to the CFTA, to COMESA and EAC. What preferential commercial arrangement could Africa have with the UK, with France or with Portugal? Of course, we have some arrangements with the EU that includes France. Maybe we could have arrangements with the UK, even when they are out of the EU, as well as with the other Commonwealth countries such as India, Canada, Australia, Pakistan, etc.; but as the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) – the whole of Africa, not portions of it.

However, unfortunately, much of this potential is clouded by ideological disorientation, bigotry, egocentrism and myopia. A lot of time and energy is spent on the enterprise of some groups trying to control the destiny of other people. This is wrong and unnecessary. History is our good teacher on this.

Man has been here for the last 4 and a half million years, ever since we evolved as wise primates known as homo sapiens, from the earlier species. Right from the beginning, the problems facing man were two: oppression of man by nature and oppression of man by fellow men. Oppression of man by nature involved: floods, drought, disease, landslides, wild beasts, darkness, cold, etc., etc. Oppression of man by man involved: slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, fascism, etc. In a recent speech in Japan, I pointed out that for much of the human history, man could not ably tame nature on account of the limited knowledge by man as far as the scientific laws were concerned. Gradually, however, man invented fire around 1.5 million years ago; started domesticating crops around 10,000BC; started domesticating livestock around the same time; and invented iron tools, around 1200BC.

Nevertheless, even with those advances, man continued to rely on human muscle and the muscle of beasts. Human muscle involved the use of the hand-hoe, blacksmithing, carpentry, clay-work (okunogoora, kubuumba), etc.; and beast muscle involved the use of donkeys, camels, horses, etc.

This use of human and beast muscle meant low quantities of production and low speeds in terms of activity. However, in the year 1438, Johannes Gutenberg invented the Printing Press. In the year 1698, Thomas Savery invented the steam engine for pumping water and in the year 1823, George Stevenson converted the steam engine to the task of pulling railway engines. This constituted the First Industrial Revolution. Since that time, portions of humanity have been through the second and the third Industrial Revolutions. On account of some



historical events, mainly precipitated by the internal weaknesses of Africa and also on account of external greed during the period when some portions of humanity were being emancipated from the reliance on human and beast muscle power, Africa was in the throes of the slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Therefore, Africa, largely, missed out. Nevertheless, by a combination of factors, Africa, along with other colonized peoples in India, Indonesia, Indo-China, Pakistan, etc., shook off the shackles of colonialism and regained their freedom, the last being South Africa in 1994.

Now that colonialism has been defeated, our advice to friends is that egocentrism, greed and bigotry should be banished so that we use the enhanced scientific knowledge of man to cause the universal wellbeing of the whole of humanity without exception. Unfortunately, greed continues to obstruct the mutually beneficial interaction within the different portions of the human race and to block the optimum use of scientific knowledge for the universal benefit of man as a whole. Artificial conflicts, propelled by greed or ignorance, always cause avoidable losses and waste time. This greed and ignorance obscure the facts and impede human co-operation.

The other night, on the 24th of September, at the reception of the Chinese, I pointed out that Karl Marx, in 1848, pointed out that up to that time, in the 41/2 million years of human existence here on earth, man had gone through 4 social systems: the primitive communalism system (some of it still being practiced by some forest dwelling groups in Africa and the Amazon); the slave state (like ancient Rome); feudalism; and capitalism. Of the four social systems witnessed by man up to that time, the only rational ones were the primitive communal system and the capitalist system. The slave system and the feudal systems were restrictive, exploitative and irrational.

Capitalism, by emphasizing the minimization of costs in order to maximize profits, brought rationalization into the production process. Also, by rewarding initiatives, it unleashed the productivity of society. In recent times, you have seen how people like Bill gates of Microsoft and Zuckerberg of Facebook, through introducing new technologies, have both built up alot of wealth but also empowered society more. This has been the story of capitalism in the last 300 years in some parts of the Globe – innovation, specialization and exchange. By 1929, however, an irrationality had already been detected in capitalism. Maximization of profits meant minimization of costs, which, at that time, included minimization of wages. Low wages meant also low purchasing power. Low purchasing power meant low demand for the products of capitalism. The capitalist efficiency in the production of goods and services had to be balanced with the commensurate purchasing power; otherwise, the system would collapse.

That is how some economists like Maynard Keynes came up with the socialist idea of the Welfare State, where the State would give free money to the citizens to enable them to buy the products of the capitalist factories.

By that hybridization, the challenge to capitalism of the disequilibrium between the productive capacity of the capitalism and the aggregate demand of the market, was transcended. Countries like China have further pushed forward the strategy of market socialism. As a consequence of this hybridization, the world has seen greater prosperity than in 1929 when capitalism faced the challenge of the disequilibrium between production and consumption.

I am quoting this example so as to advise the members of the Commonwealth using one of our proverbs: It says *“Oyorora zoon, tomany erahiye.”* The translation is: *“When the dog puppies are young, you should feed all of them equally because you do not know which puppy will become a better hunter when the puppies are old.”*

It is wiser for the World leaders to respect the internal systems of each country and influence others by example. It says in the *Book of Mathew: Chapter 5 verses 15-16: “Let your light so shine before men, that they see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”* If our practices are correct, they will thrive and spread. If they



are wrong, they will collapse. It is not necessary to generate crisis on account of differences in ideology. Let there be peaceful competition among different ideas.

The right one will emerge. When Karl Marx wrote his communist manifesto in 1848, there was not a single socialist country in the world. However, he pointed out that “socialism” was in “womb of capitalism”. In 1917, a Socialist – Communist Revolution took place in the Soviet Union. In 1949, in China. In 1959, in Cuba. In the 1930s and, thereafter, the capitalist societies of Western Europe borrowed the socialist tools of the welfare State, where free money was given by the State to lubricate the wheels of capitalism by bolstering the purchasing power of society.

As members of the Commonwealth, we all share the principles of democracy according to the principles of the Harare Declaration on Democracy of October 1991. Nevertheless, the forms of democracy are also different although the substance must be the same: one person, one vote, by secret ballot at regular intervals. Those are the principles of the Commonwealth. How, then, should the Commonwealth members deal with the other countries that are not members of the Commonwealth and who may have different social and political systems – Communist, Islamicist, etc.? My advice is what I have already said above. *“Let our light so shine before men, that they see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven.”*

We should not create crises in attempts to coerce those people that have different ideas to be like us. The Berlin Wall Blockade of June, 1948 - May, 1949, the Korean war, the Vietnam war, the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the Hungarian uprising of 1956 and its crushing by the Soviet forces, the Czechoslovak uprising of 1968 and its crushing by the Soviet forces, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan of 1979 and the counter-intervention by the Western countries by supporting the Mujahideen, the proxy wars in Angola, etc., etc., led to a lot of wastage of resources and life. Many of them ended with unintended consequences. Yet, we have seen bad systems collapsing by their own dynamics, without external pressure. The collapse of the Shah of Iran, the collapse of the Emperor of Ethiopia, the collapse of the communist system of Eastern Europe, etc., were not caused by wars from outside, but by internal weaknesses. When capitalism was challenging feudalism, one of the European leaders, Metternich, tried to use war, if I remember right; but ended up bringing ruin to Austria – Hungary.

On the other hand, we can see today that China is still a communist country with a governance system different from the one we use in the Commonwealth countries. The countries of the world by working peacefully with China, our social and political system being different notwithstanding, have done a lot of good to China and to the World. I have quoted these historical examples because I have noticed absence of serious scrutiny of historical phenomena and learning for them. Recently, I met a British lady in South Africa, and she said that she was heading an OECD Think Tank. I joked with her by asking: *“How can we have no thinking with so many Think Tanks in the World?”* I invited her to come to Uganda and see whether we can jointly attempt to think. We had the Commonwealth Think Tank in London, the Smart Partnership hub, led by Dr. Michaela Smith. It did not get enough support from the Commonwealth. Uganda struggled to support the hub alone. I have not got the latest on that effort.

In conclusion, therefore, my view is that the Commonwealth countries, in substance, are democratic countries, albeit with variations in form; and this is a great achievement.

Secondly, the Commonwealth countries could use their numbers to mutually promote investments, work together on security, work on cultural exchanges and also examine the options on trade without disturbing the CFTA arrangements in Africa.

Thirdly, peacefully work with all countries of the World irrespective of their internal social systems for mutual advantage and on the basis of respecting the sovereignty of each country.



Fourthly, promote the spread of the benefits of scientific innovation because, like in all ages, the advances in science and technology, have always been the primers of change in society for good or for evil; but this time insisting that those advances are only for good and never for evil.

Fifthly, the protection of the environment must remain, not only a core point of our commitment but also a basis of our agreed point of action. The oppression of man by nature can be solved by the use of science throughout the whole round. The oppression of man by man is always better resolved by the affected communities, in some extreme situations supported by appropriate external solidarity. This is what we did with apartheid and colonialism.

I thank you. It is now my honour to open the Conference and to wish you fruitful deliberations.

26th September 2019
Commonwealth Resort, Munyonyo, Uganda

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Information about the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) can be found at the official conference website www.cpc2019.org and for further updates please visit the CPA website www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cpc2019.

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Notes to Editors:

64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, 22-29 September 2019, Kampala, Uganda #64CPC2019

The **Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference** is the annual conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). The **64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference** will take place in Kampala, Uganda hosted by the CPA Uganda Branch and the Parliament of Uganda. For further information visit www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cpc2019.

The **Commonwealth Parliamentary Association** (CPA) exists to develop, promote and support Parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and to implement the enduring values of the Commonwealth. The CPA is an international community of around 180 Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures working together to deepen the Commonwealth's commitment to the highest standards of democratic governance. Visit www.cpahq.org.

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