

# UGANDA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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**Our Ref: UMA/PRES/20221206**

**6<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

## **RE: MY SPEECH TO THE NGC TODAY**

Allow me greet all the members of the National Governing Council (NGC), with the love of Christ and thank you for the great work you have done in making the medical profession noble and admirable. I have seen that the attendance is very good today. How I wish we all attended the NGC in full capacity as today.

Anyway, allow me to also apologize to the NGC for the unnecessary pressure following the current events in Uganda starting Saturday at the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Youth Symposium;

Allow me say that my heart is still with the Uganda Medical Association (UMA). My faith is in working together to better the medical profession irrespective of the circumstances. Now:

1. I recognize the contribution of my team, the National Executive Committee (NEC), for our tremendous achievements as follows:
  - i. Salaries have gone up by far. The Director General Health Services is now earning 15 million per month. The SHOs and Interns are now at 2.5 million per month. The entry level Medical Doctor/Officer is at 5 million shillings, which is what was agreed between the UMA leadership and State House in 2016.
  - ii. Mobilizing all the Branches countrywide and conducting fresh elections.
  - iii. Acholi was the first Branch to host the Grande Doctors Conference outside Kampala.
  - iv. Contributed to the Public Health Act 2022, and Organ Transplant Act 2022.
2. Unlike other Past Presidents of the UMA, I have been in the general political space ranging from the district leadership, as the NRM Youth Chairperson of Moroto Constituency, Alebtong District. Also, I stood for the NRM Regional Vice Chairman, Northern Uganda with the late Right Hon. Speaker, (MHSRIEP); and recently for MP of the East African Legislative Assembly.
3. All this has made me a political animal over the years. My support to the NRM is not a secret. I studied Medicine and Surgery at Kampala International University on a Scholarship by State House.
4. By endorsing the Chairman of my political party, the NRM for the 2026 General Election, I was not in any way representing UMA. I would like to categorically state this.

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5. However, I am also the President of UMA and therefore the vision bearer, projecting where Uganda will be in the next 5, 10 or 15 years. In my assessment, the NRM Chairman will still be a dominant player in the leadership of Uganda for the near future.
6. By endorsing his candidature for the Presidency of my NRM Chairman, **I was not representing a decision of the National Executive Committee (NEC), the NGC or the General Assembly.**
7. I represented a view I am convinced will build a strong UMA and putting it out there to cause the national debate that it has. Colleagues, we are on the national 7 international agenda. You can decide to Strike or you can simply kneel down. Every doctor is talking about UMA including in Canada (Dr. Munini Mulera) and even Dr. Kizza Besigye, who has until now been generally focusing on political work.
8. Kneeling down is not new in contemporary culture. Young men today, in Uganda, kneel to ask for marriage. My neighbors in Acholi, the men kneel as part of the traditional marriage practices. Here in Buganda, the women kneel as a sign of respect and the men for their mothers & the Kabaka. As Christians, we knell down to pray. My kneeling was in respect to my Party Chairman who, among many achievements, has just put in place CT-Scans in 14 Regional Referral Hospital. How else would I thank him?
9. Certainly, this is what visionary leaders do, they test the waters, they stretch the boundaries and that is how society is moved forward, not by those that play it safe, but by those that invent aeroplanes, fly to the moon and send rovers to Mars.

Having said that, I am convinced that the UMA is better aligned with the vision 2040 under the leadership of the NRM Party Chairman His Excellency General Yoweri Kaguta Museveni.

The fact that we, the Medical Fraternity, have colleagues whose future is uncertain with over 2,000 unemployed youthful doctors, others performing low-income/under-employing jobs and the Super/Sub-Specialists trained in India over two years ago who up to now have no placement. Even new graduate Specialists (Master of Medicine, MMED) are yet to be deployed by the Public Service to Regional and General Referral Hospitals. **How can we take Specialized Care to the rural areas of Uganda? How can Ugandans benefit, if we do not support programs of the day?**

A case in point, a friend and a brother who is an Orthopedic Surgeon met me on his daily errands of moving from a private clinic to another, and yet where he comes from sub-region in Northern Uganda, there is no single Orthopedic Surgeon in a public hospital. This melted my heart & it's on that day that I decided that if it means sacrificing my life for the betterment

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of the Profession and Ugandans by getting doctors moved closer to the national cake so be it!

As a speak, I as the President of UMA have been invited with a team of the leadership of NEC and NGC to meet the fountain of honor sometime in December 2022 following the Kololo presentation. Indeed, this is one of the few times we are meeting the Fountain of Honor when we are not striking but instead having non-pressure-based discussion about the future of the Health Sector in Uganda and how the UMA can participate meaningfully.

For example, we would like to implement the resolution of deploying young Medical Doctors to Health Centre level III. This Presidential Directive has never been implemented.

Moving forward, I urge all Doctors of Uganda to read the political weather and interpret this accordingly. It goes without saying that Uganda is undergoing a slow but sure political transition, and we the Professionals ought to play an active part. Let us not be left behind only to complain later that the leadership of Uganda is not in the right hands. I have made my choice, have you?

Indeed, it is my vision to see a strong UMA, which is in developmental discussions now and then with the top leadership of our country, to secure the health sector and protect the Profession. In the end, even the common Ugandan will benefit from our quest for Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

Once again, I stand by my beliefs and I persuade you the NEC and the NGC, to see reason in my approach, which was not on behalf of NEC, the NGC, or the AGM.

I say this, FOR GOD & MY COUNTRY!

**SERVICE WITH HONOR,**



**DR. OLEDO SAMUEL ODONGO.**  
**PRESIDENT**

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