

BUSOGA REGIONAL FREE AND FAIR ELECTION FEEDBACK REPORT

MAY 2015



8TH/MAY/2015

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REPORT ON THE FEEDBACK MEETING ON THE UGANDA CITIZENS' COMPACT ON FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

1.0 PREAMBLE

Uganda has for so long been short of Free and Fair Elections stemming as far back as 1980, in which other sections of life have resorted to brutal means of gaining political power which has proved a more costly alternative particularly in terms of loss of lives and demolition of property. Nevertheless it's also apparent that since Independence, Uganda has never witnessed any peaceful /Diplomatic Transition of power from one president to another meaning that a lot has to be done to prepare the Country in that regard. Many of the Countries that have undergone Diplomatic Transition of power from one president to another have built very strong and Independent Electoral Commissions, and have also strengthened their Diplomatic institutions Autonomously like the Judiciary and Parliament and also defused the state from the ruling party.

In view of the fact that Governancy, Advocacy, Capacitybuilding & Democracy are one of the core Values and principles of FABIO, it consequently got aspirations of having Free & Fair, Credible elections at every political contest, supremacy & egalitarianism through its participation in a number of projects and activities which incorporate: the Citizen's Manifesto Amplified (CMA), Integrity Campaign and Free & Fair Elections (FFE) with support from the UNNGOF.

Therefore, having realized the need for the same, the coordinating Team for the Free and Fair Elections Campaign, The citizens Coalition on Electoral democracy, the inter Party Political Organizations for Dialogue, the Electoral Commission, The National Consultative Forum, the Cabinet, the Citizens Manifesto process, and more than 3000 leaders from Toro, Bukedi, Teso, Kigezi, Busoga, Sebei, Ankoles, Bugisu, Buganda, Karamoja, Bunyoro, Acholi, Langho and west Nile regions, all made proposals for reform in agitation for Free and Fair Elections in Uganda.

2.0 OVERVIEW

Having participated in a series of consultative meetings all over Uganda, Busoga was one of the regions that gave in views in regard to Free and Fair Elections in Uganda through FABIO a Civil Society Organization. The whole process resulted into a National Consultative Forum and selected individuals from each region gathered and agreed on a sequence of reforms that ought to be considered by parliament.

The National Consultative Forum finally agreed on the key reforms that the citizens across Uganda covet parliament to undertake and these were named the "*Uganda Citizens Compact on Free and Fair Elections*". Its a cardinal principle in research that after a survey has been carried

out , those carrying out the research have a moral obligation to give feedback to the people who were involved in the research process to further ascertain the credibility of the findings. It's on this basis that a feedback meeting was held at YMCA Jinja on the 8th of May 2015.

3.0 THE FEEDBACK MEETING

This was held on the 8th of May 2015 at YMCA Jinja and it attracted numerous people from the different walks of life specially,

- Academia/University Students
- Religious and Cultural leaders
- Representatives of different political parties
- Politicians & Technocrats
- Civil society organizations
- Project facilitators
- Media fraternity
- And to mention but a few

3.1 GOAL OF THE FEEDBACK MEETING

The main goal of the feedback meeting was to inform the people who participated in the “*Regional Consultative Meetings*” about the decisions of the “*National Consultative Forum*” , and also design out a way forward for the project ahead of demand for alteration/reforms especially before the 2016 general elections

The feedback meeting was therefore organized to:

- Provide updates from the national consultation and the regional forums
- Discuss the citizens’ compact on Free and Fair Elections
- Agree on regional actions to take forward the compact
- Mount pressure on parliament to adopt the compact
- Build momentum for a national dialogue on the roadmap to 2016

3.2 AGENDA

The following agenda was adopted by the participants:

- i. National Anthem
- ii. Busoga Anthem
- iii. Prayer
- iv. Opening remarks from the ED –FABIO
- v. Communication from the Speaker Jinja district



- vi. Communication from the NGO Forum
- vii. Discussion of the compact and regional actions to take forward the compact
- viii. Closure

Both National and Busoga Anthems were sung and a prayer was led by Rev. Fr. Wejuli Danton who asked God to grant the peoples' wishes for peaceful transfer of power and Free and Fair Elections, he in his remarks challenged every one to discover his or her position in pushing the struggle ahead and he noted that Uganda belongs to us as seen in article 1 of the constitution of the republic of Uganda

3.3 COMMUNICATION FROM THE ED-FABIO

The ED FABIO, Mr. Kayemba welcomed the participants to the meeting and thanked them for turning up for the enormous cause. He noted that this whole exercise is an effort of all the people of Uganda who sat in diverse forums and raised the issues that have turned out to be a subject of discussion in what has been named the *"Citizens' Compact on Free and Fair elections"*, therefore its not true that this is an effort by the opposition political parties but all Ugandans including the NRM political party, religious leaders, political leaders, IPOD, CCEDU, EC, NCF to mention but a few. He also argued every one to embrace and also demand for reforms from the different members of parliament because it's now in the hands of parliament which will either pass or denounce these reforms

Mr. Kayemba highlighted the need for this meeting in which he noted that after the consultative meetings in all the regions of Uganda, Busoga inclusive which led to the Nation Consultative Forum on Free and Fair Election in which the President had even been invited as Chief guest though state house denied receipt of the invitation letter, which designed the Uganda Citizens' Compact on Free and Fair Elections out of the different proposals gathered from the different regions, which Compact was adopted between the 24-26 November 2014 in Kampala

He further panacurated that this meeting would be important to give the people of Busoga a possibility to check whether the issues discussed last time were all considered at the national level conference, and also help design a way forward in pursuit of the same and Mr. Kayemba thinks we can have another national conference on the same. He welcomed and thanked all members for coming

3.4 COMMUNICATION FROM THE SPEAKER JINJA DISTRICT

In the Meeting was the Speaker Jinja District, who made a key note address, and thanked FABIO for being consistent with their issues of restoring Democracy and the Rule of Law in this Country Uganda, he noted that parties are good because they can give a good direction for the

Country and he hence called upon every one to be part and parcel of the reform process: “we all need to embrace and agitate for it”.

3.5 COMMUNICATION FROM UGANDA NATIONAL NGO FORUM

UNNGOF was represented by Chris who thanked FABIO for standing for the right cause and being on the rightful truck. He noted with concern that this compact arose out of a rigorous process that involved public rallies by CSOs and Regional consultative meetings organized at regional levels.

He opened up to the participants that the citizens of any Country participate in the governance of their state through paying taxes and electing leaders whom they believe can effectively utilize their resources for purposes of development and he noted with concern that UNNGOF has advocated for both reasons: paying taxes and citizens voting a person of their choice for proper state management and development

He further noted that this Country has never witnessed any peaceful transition from one president to another and Uganda has never witnessed a president handing over power from one person to another even during the NRM’s 30 years era.

In Presentation of the Compact, Chris noted that 21 issues were raised and discussed in the recent FFE meeting and the outcome was galvanized in one manuscript code named the “*Citizens compact on Free and Fair Elections*”. However for the sake of Busoga region 3 issues from Busoga region were not adopted by the National Consultative Forum and these included;

- The issue of public servants taking leave instead of resignation from office in which the opposite was taken as seen in the Compact document at page four
- The need for political parties to have term limits
- Parliamentary seating ought to be adjusted to accommodate the independent candidates

Chris noted that the UNNGOF made efforts and petitioned the speaker of Parliament of Uganda and presented the document on the Citizens’ Compact on Free and Fair Elections and he reported that Rt Hon Deputy Speaker of parliament promised to make sure that She lays the same on the floor of parliament and to him this was a huge statement in the democracy of this country

He also noted that the reforms in the document represent the needs and desires of the citizens of Uganda and he argued all those who agreed with these reform proposals to sign in the book that gathering signatures in support of Free and Fair Elections

He argued the participants to put pressure on their area Members of parliament by asking them to pass the reforms because this is what Uganda needs in order to move ahead. He cautioned the participants not to sell the right for a democratic Uganda by accepting small gifts in exchange for their vote and he encouraged all people including those that were not present in the meeting to build momentum for the same. He however challenged the youths to embrace the struggle since they are the biggest group comprising 78% of the total population of which 83% of them are unemployed and their ability to vote for a leader of their choice freely and fairly may solve the problem

3.6 DISCUSSION OF THE COMPACT AND REGIONAL ACTIONS TO TAKE FORWARD THE COMPACT

Throughout the discussions of the Citizens Compact, the forum clearly had consensus that the reforms are a necessity and that the compact was representative of their views. Therefore a number of actions were proposed to take the compact forward and these included:

- ❖ That the people of Busoga should shun away from any sort of corruption and instead push for these reforms at all cost and the same should be encouraged even among the MPS. They were encouraged to vote for people who have a clear vision for this country and have some fear for God.
- ❖ It was Proposed that The UNNGOF should expedite the process of translating the Compact in the different languages understood by the different regions
- ❖ That FFE campaign should be rolled down to sub county levels by establishing taskforces on FFE and the FFE team ought to go to the villages to inform and mobilize the local populace because they are the majority if we are to build momentum
- ❖ One other participant proposed that since we have only 4 months to the general campaigns, then the elections should be extended for one more year to allow government expedite these reforms
- ❖ The media fraternity was encouraged to be part and parcel of the taskforce to popularize the compact. They were encouraged to even try and host MPS and ask them to declare their position openly on air to enable the masses make appropriate decisions when it comes to 2016
- ❖ It was proposed that the campaign be taken to places of worship places like churches and mosques and this calls for massive involvement of religious leaders in the spread of the gospel for a noble cause.
- ❖ Displaying the translated compact at the sub counties notice boards as this was proposed to a very effective communication method that has worked at the lower levels in informing the local citizens on ongoing Government Programs. This therefore calls for a buy in by the necessary leadership at that level.

- ❖ The participants also proposed that the campaign should target special interest groups like the women, youths, Persons with Disabilities and school going children. In addition to this also pressure groups and other association like the boda boda association, market vendors association among others should not be left out so as to intensify the campaign.

3.8 Challenges

A number of challenges were realized during the implementation of the FFE feed back meeting which integrated:

- There was a challenge of poor time management by both the participants & some facilitators of the workshop which affected the Agenda of the day.
- We observed a challenge of poor attendance by participants as compared to the recent FFE meeting held and this was caused by the lack of facilitation for transport since many of our targeted participants come from as far as Iganga, Kamuli, Luuka, to mention but a few.
- Delays in communication particularly from the funding organization where the implementing/activity dates are not always communicated in time so as to give the implementing organization ample time to intensify mobilization of participants which in the end affects turn up output in terms of meeting the targeted number.
- The delays in delivering finances for mobilization & booking the hotel has oftenly caused mayhem in mobilization since it's stiff to determine the venue prior to making any installments of it.

3.9 Recommendations

- The issue of time management should always be the first precedence in these meetings so as to evade the implications of poor time management.
- There is need for massive sensitization of the public in order to change money minded mentality whilst calling them for meetings & dialogues.
- There should be some alteration in communication in case of implementing any activity so as simplify mobilization and also for proper planning by the implementing organization.
- It's imperative that the finances are released in time so as to permit appropriate planning, mobilizations and bookings.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In a nut shell, this meeting was very vital in that it provided some feedback to the people that made the reform proposals and it also gave an opportunity to the participants to know why some of their proposals were not included. It's important to note that by the end of the meeting, the participants received copies the Compact and some others to distribute to others that had not come and a clear way forward was designed to make sure that the project achieves its intended objectives among which include; immediate translation of the compact into local languages understood by the different regions, engage the media to have the compact debated on radios, calling of MPS on radio programs to establish their stand on the Compact to mention but a few.

5.0 PHOTO GALLERY

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A GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS DURING THE FFE FEED BACK MEETING



UGANDA NATIONAL NGO FORUM'S REPRESENTATIVE



FABIO'S ED DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE



ONE OF THE FFE FACILITATORS GIVING HIS REMARK



First African Bicycle
Information Organisation

FABIO

