



Museveni (seated-centre) with NRM leaders from Masaka sub-region at Masaka State Lodge after a meeting yesterday. He urged them to tackle the issues raised by the public and uncover corruption within their areas and seek out solutions

MUSEVENI MEETS MASAKA NRM LEADERS

By Vision Reporter

President Yoweri Museveni yesterday met National Resistance Movement (NRM) leaders from Masaka at Masaka State Lodge.

He urged them to focus on addressing the real challenges affecting *wananchi* (local people), exposing corruption at local levels, and promoting government programmes aimed at improving livelihoods.

The meeting was organised by Masaka Woman MP-elect, Justin Namere.

Museveni criticised some leaders for spending too much time in political arguments instead of addressing the needs of ordinary citizens.

"It is unfortunate how some leaders waste time in Parliament talking instead of looking at the real issues and reaching the ordinary people. Leaders must expose wrongdoing and demand solutions to the problems

affecting the *wananchi*," the President said. He warned that silence in the face of corruption undermines public trust and weakens service delivery.

"Keeping quiet about thieves and corruption in your areas is unacceptable. If leaders at the district level are corrupt and Members of Parliament fear to expose them, then the whole system rots," he added.

The President also challenged NRM leaders to confidently speak about the achievements of the government instead of fearing criticism.

"Some NRM leaders fear talking about the achievements of the government because they worry about criticism from the population. This is wrong. Instead of keeping quiet, you should promote government programmes and explain what has been achieved," he said.

On national unity, Museveni cautioned against sectarianism, describing it as a dangerous force that divides communities along tribal and

BETWEEN THE LINES

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religious lines.

"This is dangerous and we must not allow it," he emphasised.

The President commended Namere for her courage and initiative in organising the meeting, recounting how he first encountered her when she was young and later brought her to work as an advisor.

He also recalled the circumstances surrounding her election victory.

"When she contested for the Masaka Woman MP seat, there were attempts to rig the votes. But she insisted on a recount, and when the votes were

counted again, she won. That shows courage," he said.

To illustrate the importance of unity across communities, President Museveni shared a personal story about how his education was supported through cattle sales to traders from different backgrounds.

"I went to school in the 1950s and 1960s because my father was able to pay the school fees by selling cattle in the monthly auction markets of Ntungamo. The buyers were businessmen from different backgrounds, including Walusimbi-Mpanga from Kampala, Bukyanya from Mbarara and Shear, a *muzungu* operating from Ishaka who supplied cattle to feed miners at Kilembe," he said.

"Who, then, supported my education apart from my father? Certainly not only the Banyankore or my church denomination," he added, stressing that development has always depended on cooperation

among diverse communities.

President Museveni further urged leaders to mobilise *wananchi* to embrace government wealth creation programmes, such as the Parish Development Model (PDM) and Operation Wealth Creation.

"NRM has always focused on the real issues affecting the people. In the past, we faced challenges like insecurity, lack of schools and health centres. Today, the main issue we are fighting is poverty," he said.

He explained that PDM was introduced to ensure that government support directly reaches households through parish-level structures.

Namere thanked Museveni for meeting the leaders and for his continued guidance to the people of Masaka. "His (President's) guidance will help us refocus on serving our people and promoting the government programmes meant to improve the livelihoods of *wananchi*," she said.