

government regarding the Bill in Parliament. This was during a meeting at the Office of the President in Kampala.

President Museveni

sectors.

Financial institutions, academic and research bodies, health

requiring proof of income while reducing penalties from 20 years' imprisonment to a maximum of 10

poses risks to the economy and Uganda's global standing.

No invitation cards needed for citizens to attend Presidential swearing-in

By Eddie Ssejjoba

Thousands of Ugandans are expected to converge at the Kololo Ceremonial Grounds on May 12, for the swearing-in of President-elect Yoweri Museveni, with organisers announcing that no invitation cards will be required to access the venue.

Haji Yunus Kakande, the Secretary in the Office of the President and chairperson of the National Organising Committee (NOC), said all Ugandans are free to attend the ceremony and those who wish to wear National Resistance Movement (NRM) party colours will also be allowed.

FREE ENTRY FOR ALL

"We invite all Ugandans to turn up in big numbers and fill Kololo Ceremonial Grounds on May 12. Those who wish to wear party colours are free, but no one will be required to present an invitation card to access the venue," Kakande told journalists on Tuesday.

The swearing-in ceremony will usher Museveni into his seventh elective term in office after he won

the January 15, presidential election with 7,946,772 votes, representing 71.65% of the total votes cast.

His closest challenger, Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, garnered 2,741,238 votes, equivalent to 24.72%.

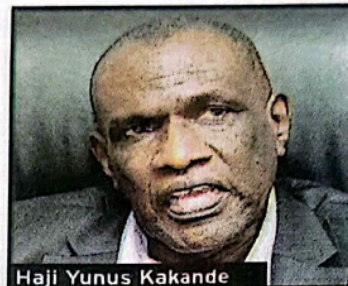
Kakande said preparations for the event were in advanced stages, with the organising committee having attained at least 90% readiness.

The National Organising Committee operates under the Strategic Leadership Committee chaired by Head of Public Service and Secretary to Cabinet Lucy Nakyobe, which reports to the Vice-President.

NATIONWIDE SPECIAL PRAYERS

As part of the preparations, government has organised nationwide special prayers for the President-elect ahead of his inauguration.

The prayers will begin today in mosques across the country, followed by Seventh-day Adventist churches on Saturday and other Christian denominations, including the Orthodox Church, on Sunday. Kakande said ministers have been



Haji Yunus Kakande

30 international delegations have confirmed attendance.

assigned to represent government in various churches and mosques during the prayers.

"We want to ask God to bless our President-elect and grant him good health as he takes oath for yet another five years in power," he said.

He described the occasion as historic, noting that Museveni will be marking 40 years in leadership.

"Ugandans will agree with us that this is going to be a special occasion for our President. He is clocking 40 years in power and this is not a simple thing by all means. Not many leaders have remained in power for this long," Kakande added.

MAY 12, DECLARED A PUBLIC HOLIDAY

Government has already declared May 12, a public holiday to enable Ugandans travel to Kampala and witness the ceremony.

This year's inauguration will be held under the theme: "Protecting the gains, making a qualitative leap to higher middle-income status." The function is expected to run from 8:00am to 2:00pm, with food and drinks to be served to attendees.

INTERNATIONAL DELEGATIONS

Kakande said by Wednesday evening, at least seven Heads of State and more than 30 international delegations had confirmed attendance.

The confirmed leaders include Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia,

Samia Suluhu Hassan of Tanzania, Daniel Chapo of Mozambique, Jean-Lucien Savi de Tové of Togo, Brice Clotaire Oligui Nguema of Gabon, Salva Kiir Mayardit of South Sudan and Ibrahim Ghali, President of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

Other guests expected at the ceremony include 15 secretaries general of ruling parties, three vice-presidents, two prime ministers, former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and several ministers.

Political parties that have confirmed sending delegations include the Communist Party of China, Kenya's United Democratic Alliance, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, South Africa's African National Congress, Tanzania's Chama Cha Mapinduzi, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, Burundi's CNDD-FDD and Mozambique's FRELIMO.

Kakande said more confirmations from foreign dignitaries were still being received.

The committee has also invited at least 40 delegates from each of Uganda's 146 districts and 30 delegates from every city and municipality.