

HE PLEDGED CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF INTEGRITY, ACCOUNTABILITY

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As soon as he was declared the elected Speaker of the 12th Parliament, Jacob Markonsi Oboto, popularly known as Oboto-Oboto, immediately declared war against corruption in Parliament, pledging to restore integrity, accountability and public trust.

"We are aware of the challenges that may be before us. I pledge a corruption-free Parliament. Under my leadership, we will cultivate a culture of integrity and accountability. Accountability begins with us," Oboto said in his maiden communication to the House as Speaker.

The West Budama County South legislator stressed that Parliament cannot effectively hold the Executive accountable unless legislators themselves uphold high standards of transparency and discipline.

"In the next five years, we shall hold the Executive and other government bodies accountable, but we must first begin with ourselves. Parliament must lead by example," he said.

Oboto also promised to focus Parliament on service delivery and the needs of ordinary Ugandans, saying legislative work must produce tangible results for citizens.

"Every Bill, motion, and decision must directly respond to the needs of the ordinary citizen. Results must guide our work. Budgeting and appropriation will no longer be an exercise in financial engineering and distortion, but a results-driven endeavour to deliver services to our people," he stated.

On oversight, Oboto warned against reactive accountability measures, urging parliamentary committees to act early to prevent misuse of public resources.

"Oversight should not be a post-mortem. We must not wait for public funds to be lost; our committees should be empowered to act in real time to protect public resources," he said.

OBOTH DEFEATS MAO, MWIRU

Oboto was nominated by the outgoing Vice-President, Jessica Alupo, who described him as a capable and experienced leader with the qualities needed to steer Parliament effectively.

She said Oboto was knowledgeable in law, parliamentary procedures and processes, impartial, fair and firm in decision-making. She also noted that Oboto was a strong

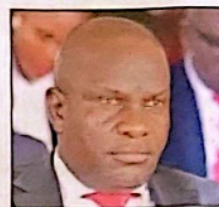
OBOTH DECLARES WAR ON CORRUPTION IN PARLIAMENT



Museveni handing over the speaker's mace and other instruments of power to new Speaker Oboto (left), after he was elected at Kololo Independence Grounds yesterday (Scan picture using the Vision Digital Experience to watch video)



Outgoing minister Mao



MP Mwiru

TAYEBWA VOTED BACK AS DEPUTY

Thomas Tayebwa (Ruhinda North, National Resistance Movement) won a landslide contest for Deputy Speaker, beating two female candidates. Tayebwa polled 457 votes to retain the position he held in the 11th Parliament.

Asinansi Nyakato (Woman MP for Hoima city, People's Front for Freedom) garnered 45 votes while Sarah Aguti (Woman MP for Dokolo District, Uganda People's Congress) got 14 votes. There were three spoilt votes. One candidate, Godfrey Aine Kaguta (Mawogola North MP, National Resistance Movement), got nominated but was not seconded.

Tayebwa said he was assuming office with gratitude, humility and a renewed commitment to serve Ugandans. "I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to President Museveni for your enduring leadership, guidance and trust. You have often reminded us that leadership is about service to the people, not service to oneself. That principle remains our enduring call as legislators to legislate, oversee and represent with the people of Uganda always at the centre of our work."

Tayebwa singled out the Patriotic League of Uganda and its chairman, Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, for their support during his political journey.

He paid tribute to the people of Ruhinda North, whom he represents in Parliament, saying their continued support had inspired his public service. He thanked his family, particularly his wife, Anita Tayebwa and their son Timothy, for standing by him throughout his political career.

"Public service demands much and your support has been my anchor. You inspire me to work hard every day so that you can live in a better Uganda."

He pledged to work closely with Speaker Jacob Oboto-Oboto and all MPs to strengthen the institution and advance the interests of citizens.

"As a deputy, it is my duty to support the vision of the Speaker. In me, I promise you a deputy who will not only support but also advise where necessary," he said.

He extended an olive branch to opposition legislators, saying he was ready to work with all MPs who share the goal of improving the welfare of Ugandans.

communicator who is bold, decisive and goal-oriented, even-tempered, resilient and emotionally intelligent, calm, measured and disciplined in parliamentary engagement, patient, neutral and respectful toward colleagues.

"The personal traits make him a breath of fresh air in the office of Speaker and will make him a successful Speaker,"

Alupo said.

The motion was seconded by MP Frank Tumwebaze who also described him as a humble and knowledgeable person who will unite all members in the House.

Oboto was officially declared the winner of the speakership race by Chief Justice Dr Flavian Zekia after defeating two other candidates, Norbert Mao of

the Democratic Party and Paul Mwiru of the National Unity Platform, at Kololo Ceremonial Grounds.

Oboto secured a landslide victory, polling 441 votes out of the 519 ballots cast. Mao received 15 votes, while Mwiru garnered 60. Three votes were invalid.

The House burst into ululations and applause

immediately after the results were announced. In excitement, Oboto jumped repeatedly, briefly stepping away from his seat before returning as MPs cheered his victory.

In keeping with parliamentary tradition, several MPs, including outgoing Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja, escorted and symbolically dragged him to President Yoweri Museveni to take the oath as Speaker.

Museveni later swore him into office and handed over the instruments of power associated with the office of the Speaker. These included the mace, which symbolises the authority of Parliament, the Constitution, the Uganda flag, the coat of arms, a copy of the Rules of Procedure, and the Speaker's regalia.

Oboto was officially declared Speaker at exactly 1:39pm, changing his status from an ordinary MP to the country's third most important person in order of precedence, after the President and the Vice-President.

Although Oboto was voted by Parliament through a secret ballot, he had already been endorsed by his party's top policy organ - National Resistance Movement's (NRM) Central Executive Committee and the NRM caucus, which sat at State House, Entebbe on Sunday.

BENEFITS, PRIVILEGES

The office of the Speaker comes with extensive benefits and privileges designed to support the demanding nature of the role and life of a public service.

While the exact monthly salary is not publicly disclosed, it is generally thought to be substantial. In addition to the salary, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker are entitled to a monthly pension amounting to 50% of the sitting Speaker's salary, as provided for under the Parliamentary Pensions (Amendment) (Number 2) Act of 2011.

The Speaker is provided with a chauffeur-driven four-wheel-drive vehicle, with engine specifications ranging between 3500cc and 4000cc, replaced every five years.

Personal security is guaranteed through the provision of two security guards, while two domestic staff members support household management.

Healthcare is another major benefit, with comprehensive medical coverage provided for the Speaker and his spouse(s).

Additionally, the office holder receives a monthly allowance of sh660,000 to cover utility expenses.

Upon retirement, the Speaker receives a lump sum payment equivalent to one year's salary for each term served.

In April 2024, Parliament endorsed an increase in its budget by sh125b to sh945.5b to cater for salaries, travel, per diem and operational costs in the offices of the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Leader of Opposition and Government Chief Whip.

His election brings to an end the speakership wrangles that have dominated the country's debate since corruption allegations against former Speaker Anita Annet Among first emerged. Among had vowed to carry on the position till 2031 when she would hand over to her former deputy, Thomas Tayebwa (Ruhinda North, NRM).

However, after corruption allegations and investigations, she pulled out of the race.