



MEDIA RELEASE

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PRESIDENT YOWERI KAGUTA MUSEVENI OFFICIALLY OPENS XIX NAM MIDTERM MINISTERIAL REVIEW MEETING AT MUNYONYO, REAFFIRMING GLOBAL SOUTH SOLIDARITY AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

The XIX Midterm Ministerial Review Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) officially opened today at Speke Resort Munyonyo in Kampala, Uganda, bringing together foreign ministers, heads of delegations, and representatives from across the Global South to deliberate on pressing global issues and reaffirm their shared commitment to peace, cooperation, and sustainable development. The session began with a solemn tribute to Rt. Hon. Raila Amolo Odinga, the former Prime Minister of Kenya, who passed away earlier in the day as the meeting was convening. Delegates observed a moment of silence in recognition of his life and legacy as a Pan-African leader and advocate of unity and justice.

In his opening remarks, Hon. Gen. Odongo Jeje Abubakhar, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda, welcomed delegates to Kampala, expressing Uganda's gratitude for the trust placed in its leadership as the current Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of NAM. "It is a great honour and privilege to welcome you to Kampala," he said. "Your presence today demonstrates your strong commitment to NAM's mission and the shared determination of the Global South to address today's major global challenges together."

Gen. Odongo commended the Senior Officials who had worked tirelessly over the previous two days to reach consensus on a forward-looking outcome document, adding that Uganda remained committed to defending NAM's principles and strengthening its unity in the face of emerging global complexities. Since assuming the Chairmanship during the 19th NAM Summit in January 2024, Uganda has actively advanced the Movement's mandate through a series of structured engagements at both ambassadorial and expert levels. These have included regular sessions in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Nairobi, and The Hague, ensuring NAM's coherent participation and visibility within key United Nations bodies.

Under Uganda's leadership, NAM has coordinated Member States' participation in critical discussions within the UN Human Rights Council, advocating on themes such as Unilateral

For more information, please contact:

Margaret Awino Kafeero

Head of Public Diplomacy

margaret.kafeero@mofa.go.ug, 0787639414

Coercive Measures, the Right to Development, and International Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights. Similar coordinated efforts have been seen in global platforms like the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and various disarmament fora, solidifying NAM's standing as the collective voice of the Global South.

Gen. Odongo reaffirmed that Uganda's stewardship is rooted in advancing equality, sovereignty, and solidarity principles that have guided NAM for over six decades. He further urged Member States to deepen South–South cooperation as a vital pillar for inclusive and resilient development, noting that intra-South trade had expanded from \$0.6 trillion in 1995 to over \$5.6 trillion in 2023. “Yet much of this trade still occurs within Asia,” he cautioned. “We must enhance cooperation between Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean to fully realize the benefits of South–South trade.” On the question of Palestine, he reiterated NAM's long-standing and principled position, emphasizing that the Movement must continue to advocate for a Two-State Solution and for renewed international efforts to end occupation and support the reconstruction of Palestinian institutions.

Delivering the keynote address, H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda and Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, opened with a philosophical reflection on the evolution of human society, emphasizing the central role of science and technology in shaping the destiny of nations. “We have two categories of problems in the world,” he said. “The first is the oppression of man by nature floods, droughts, and disease. The second, and perhaps more serious, is the oppression of man by man. Through knowledge and cooperation, we can overcome both.”

Drawing from historical and contemporary examples, President Museveni underscored the interdependence of global economies and the necessity for equitable distribution of wealth and technology. He observed that Africa's combined GDP currently around \$4 trillion is disproportionately low for a continent of 1.5 billion people, underscoring the urgent need for industrialization, technology transfer, and fairer global trade terms. “The prosperity of one region must contribute to the prosperity of all,” he stressed. “When others advance, we too should rise. The transformation of China, India, and other Asian nations lifted global demand and benefitted many regions. We must therefore not be selfish with progress but share it.”

The President reaffirmed the enduring relevance of NAM's founding principles sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and non-interference amid renewed global tensions. He commended the Movement's continued neutrality as a stabilizing force in an increasingly polarized international system. “The Non-Aligned Movement remains a voice of reason and balance,” President Museveni said, “providing a platform for developing nations to advocate for peace, equity, and the right to development.”

He called for deeper cooperation under Uganda's NAM Chairmanship theme, “Deepening Cooperation for Shared Global Affluence,” emphasizing that prosperity must be built through regional integration, industrial innovation, and collective action. President Museveni added that as the world approaches the 40th anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Right to Development in 2026, NAM must speak with one voice to ensure that development is pursued equitably and sustainably.

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margaret.kafeero@mofa.go.ug, 0787639414

The President underscored Uganda's intention to lead global advocacy for a legally binding international instrument on the Right to Development, calling on the United Nations General Assembly to expedite its negotiation and adoption. "Development must be recognized as a fundamental human right," Gen. Odongo reiterated. "Persistent inequality and poverty threaten global peace and must no longer be tolerated."

The Munityonyo meeting continues with a renewed call for unity among NAM Member States in defending the Movement's common positions on peace, development, human rights, and international cooperation. Gen. Odongo, in his closing statement, encouraged delegates to continue their work "in a spirit of cooperation and urgency," emphasizing that the challenges facing the world today demand "collective commitment and decisive action."

He also extended appreciation to Uganda's Permanent Representative to the UN in New York, Ambassador Adonia Ayebare, for his instrumental role in maintaining cohesion and guiding the daily operations of the NAM Coordinating Bureau in New York. As delegates enter their last day in Munityonyo, the overarching message remains clear: the Non-Aligned Movement stands firm as a united front for the Global South anchored in principles, driven by solidarity, and committed to building a fairer, more inclusive world for all. **END**

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