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**QUESTIONS
AND
ANSWERS**

**ABOUT
THE REFERENDUM**



2000 JUNE / JULY

Q1. WHAT IS A REFERENDUM?

A. A Referendum is a VOTE taken on an important issue by all the people qualified to vote in a country.

Q2. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A REFERENDUM AND AN ELECTION?

A. In an election people vote for candidates while in a referendum people vote on issues.

Q3. WHAT IS THE JUSTIFICATION FOR HOLDING A REFERENDUM?

A. In any democratic country power belongs to the people. Therefore, should there be any issue on which people are divided, the most democratic way of resolving the disagreement is for all the people to vote on it. By so doing people will have taken over the decision-making role usually reserved for elected representatives in Parliaments and Local Councils since elected leaders may not always effectively reflect the views and interests of the people.

Q4. IS HOLDING OF REFERENDA PECULIAR TO UGANDA?

A. No. Many countries provide in their constitutions for referenda as one of the democratic means of resolving issues on which they disagree. Examples:

a) In 1955 a referendum was held in Sweden to determine on which side of the road (left or right) vehicles should be driven.

b) In Malawi the decision to introduce a multi-party political system and do

away with the one-party political system was taken through a referendum.

c) In Egypt on 27th September, President Hosni Mubarak was re-elected for another term through a referendum.

d) In Australia on 6th November 1999 the proposal to change it to a republic was rejected through a referendum.

Q5. IS THE REFERENDUM ON POLITICAL SYSTEMS REALLY NECESSARY?

A. Yes, because the Constitution provides for it on the basis that all power belongs to the people.

Q6. WHEN WILL THE REFERENDUM TAKE PLACE?

A. On a date between 3rd June and 2nd July, 2000. The Electoral Commission will appoint the date.

Q7. WHAT IF I DO NOT VOTE?

A. Remember that if for instance only three people turn up to vote at the referendum and two people vote for one system and one person votes for the other, the two will win the referendum. So the side you support could lose because you and others who think like you decide not to vote.

Q8. IF I VOTE IN THE REFERENDUM DO I HAVE TO VOTE AGAIN PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN THE YEAR 2001?

A. Yes, because the referendum is different. You should vote in both provided you are qualified.

Q9. IF I AM A MARRIED WOMAN AND MY HUSBAND SUPPORTS A SIDE THAT I DO NOT SUPPORT, WILL I BE IN TROUBLE IF I VOTE DIFFERENTLY FROM MY HUSBAND?

A. Voting is by secret ballot. Your husband or any other person should not know the side you have voted for unless you disclose it. So keep it a secret.

Q10. AM I ALLOWED TO CAMPAIGN ANYWHERE IN THE COUNTRY FOR THE SIDE I SUPPORT?

A. Yes, but you must inform the Police Officer in charge and the Sub-County Chief in the area you want to campaign publicly.

Q11. WILL GOVERNMENT GIVE ASSISTANCE TO THE SIDES?

A. Each side is required by law to form a National Referendum Committee consisting of not more than twenty members. Government will give equal facilitation to each side through these committees.

Q12. WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE MAJORITY OF THE VOTERS REJECT THE MOVEMENT SYSTEM?

A. The term of the current Movement Government will expire in 2001 and elections will be held after which the newly elected Government will take over under the System determined through the referendum.

Q13. WHAT IF THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE VOTE FOR THE MOVEMENT SYSTEM?

A. Presidential and Parliamentary elections will be held in the year 2001 and the Government elected will operate the Movement System.

Q14. WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME AS A UGANDAN AS WE PREPARE FOR THE REFERENDUM?

- A.**
- a) register to vote;
 - b) during the display of the registers check if your name appears on the register and assist in identifying names of those not qualified to be on the register i.e. those below the age of 18, non Ugandans, and the dead;
 - c) during the campaigns ensure that there is peace even if you do not agree with the person's viewpoint.
 - d) since voting process will be transparent you are free to witness process including counting of ballot papers;
 - e) should your side loose accept the results and continue with your life as usual. Remember in a Referendum like in any contest there are losers and winners. However, should you feel aggrieved with the referendum results, remember that the law provides that any registered voter supported by 2% of all registered voters in the country, can challenge in court the referendum results.

Q15. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE:-

MOVEMENT POLITICAL SYSTEM?

- A.**
- a) membership is all inclusive and there is no registration of members and issuing of membership cards.

- b) Accessibility to all positions of leadership by all citizens.
- c) Individual merit as a basis for election to political offices.
- d) No official opposition in Parliament.
- e) Political offices are open.

MULTI - PARTY POLITICAL SYSTEM?

- a) Membership is open to only those who subscribe to the ideals and policies of the party; and are in possession of membership cards or known to be followers of the party;
- b) Leadership within the party is restricted to party members only;
- c) Political parties determine the candidates for elective offices by using a sieving process after which the one leading becomes a party candidate;
- d) There is an official opposition in Parliament; and
- e) Political offices are normally reserved for members of the winning party or winning parties in the case of a coalition government.

Q16. WHAT ABOUT ANY OTHER SYSTEM?

- A. In order for any other system to be accepted for the purpose of being proposed for voting in the referendum, it must be different from the movement political system and the multi-party political system and must be approved by Parliament as such.