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PRESIDENT MUSEVENI APPLAUDS FIRST LADY FOR HER ENDURANCE DESPITE HIS ABSENTEEISM DURING THE STRUGGLE PERIOD

President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni has applauded the First Lady, Janet Kataaha Museveni for exhibiting resilience and courage in raising their children despite his permanent absenteeism during the liberation struggle period.

The President, also the groom of the day, made the remarks yesterday during a luncheon at Irenga farm in Ntungamo district in commemoration of their golden jubilee anniversary. The colorful occasion was attended by family members and friends.

“You heard what the children were saying that Maama was tough with them and was able to bring them up for a number of years without my presence and I really salute her for that. So, her contribution to bringing up those children has no comparison because she did it when I was not there and the children did not even know that I would come back to their lives,” he said.

The President added: “Maama Janet was not only a mother but a mother of children with a permanently absentee husband. Therefore, when Maama Janet helped me to create a family, I was very grateful for her contribution.”

He further explained that before coming to power in 1986, he was living on account of opposing the bad regimes which were here and one would not imagine that he would be able to have a family and children but in spite of the instability, by God's will, he was able to have both.

“One would imagine that we would not be able to have families and children. I separated from my people when Diana was eight months old. I never saw her again until six years later when I found her in Sweden. There was a lot of instability but within that, God was doing what we were not able to do by ourselves,” the President noted.

President Museveni also urged their guests at the luncheon to avoid shortcuts and need for a soft life by engaging in corruption assuring them that if they do God’s work, He will then do theirs.

He therefore cited that this is why he and other freedom fighters had no alternative but to oppose the bad regimes and yet they needed to have a normal life like other people.

“My daughter Natasha recently while doing her film, she asked me a question of why I would not give up the fight, I told her that if I had given up the fight, I would have died from giving up because I would have died internally. We call it ‘Okwegaya’ meaning to despise oneself, to see things going bad and you keep quiet because you want an easy life,” he said.

FAMILY IS LIFE

President Museveni also said there is a need for people to understand that family is life and all the other things including wealth and professionalism among others are facilitations of life.

“Now here in our groups, we refer to marriage as ‘Okwombeka amaka ‘meaning you are just marrying a man and woman, but you are also making a home. It also means wife, children but also wealth creation. I want to thank God for my family, Maama Janet, for the children now that they have grown up and for the grandchildren,” he said.

‘IT WAS ALL GOD’

The First Lady, Maama Janet said she was so grateful to God for enabling them to celebrate their 50th anniversary of marriage.

She disclosed that due to the instability in Uganda in the 1970s, they were forced to have a wedding from Turnham Green Church in England, a function that was attended by a few family members and close friends on the 24th of August, 1973.

“Our family was one of those families that were very vulnerable because of the political role that my husband played. You could say that his political role placed us as a family in the front row for any danger, hence our lives as a family were always at risk during those difficult and challenging times in our country’s history,” Maama Janet said.

She added: “God however in His Mercy and goodness protected us on both fronts and guided our footsteps until He brought us safely back to Uganda. That is not to say however that being in Uganda

means one cannot die because since 1986, many of our colleagues and loved ones have passed on because of different circumstances.”

Mrs. Museveni therefore reasoned that it is right and befitting that they thank God because He truly has been gracious to them as a family and has also increased them in numbers by giving them four children and 15 grandchildren.

“The Lord has given us a blessing to see them while we can see them and all those gifts are not to be taken for granted,” she noted.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

The First Lady expressed her gratitude towards her husband for agreeing to celebrate that important day in Ntungamo district (Kyamate and Irenga) and not either in Rwakitura or Kampala.

“This is because this was where my husband and myself originate from, my husband’s family originated from here and went to Kiruhura district when he was a young man but I think his love for Ntungamo has remained with him throughout his life,” she said.

“As for Kyamate, that is where we both first met on the road while going to school. It is not true that we went to the same school because my husband was in a boys’ school, and I was in a girls’ school, but both emerged into one school somewhere along the road. So when I finished from the girls school which had only three classrooms, I had to go to the boys school but fortunately, my

husband was no longer there so we cannot claim that we met at school,” she noted.

Mrs. Janet mentioned that the compound in Irenga where they held the celebrations, is her family’s home where she was raised from the age of 7.

“This is where my childhood dreams were formed and my love for my homeland was made in this very compound. Therefore at 75 years and to celebrate our marriage jubilee, I could not be more happier being in any other place in Uganda except right here at Irenga and I am so grateful to my husband and to my family for agreeing that we should celebrate this jubilee at Irenga,” she said.

“Celebrating the family in these end times is our human duty I believe; we thank God that there are still more people in the world who bless God for having created a human family to be the origin of people that He has blessed to multiply and populate the earth. We cannot ignore the fact that there are now people in the world today who have tried to redefine the family and who now fight to destroy the family as you know it. To justify their idea that men should marry men and women should marry women, there are those who are called transgender and those called queer,” she added.

The First Son, Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba thanked God for being so faithful to their parents and enabling them to celebrate their golden jubilee.

“He has not only protected them and used them to serve this great land of Uganda but also through them, they brought to the world a great number of people since the population of Uganda has

greatly increased when Mzee and Maama are in charge of this country,” Gen. Muhoozi said.

“Therefore, I join them in thanking you for honouring their invitation to come and join our family to give glory and honor to God during this thanksgiving today.”

The First Daughter, Pastor Patience Rwabwogo in the company of her husband Mr. Odrek Rwabwogo said when their parents got married 50 years ago, their lives were under threat because their father was involved in the struggle for the fight for freedom in Uganda.

“In fact when they got married in 1973, the only thing that was certain was the uncertainty of the new life they were embarking together but 50 years on, God has fought their battle, He has enlarged their territory,” Pastor Patience noted.

“God has blessed them with every natural and spiritual blessing and He has restored all things to them. They have built houses and lived in them, planted vineyards and eaten fruits from them. God of restoration has restored everything for them.”

Pastor Patience also said their parents are committed to family and they have been able to give them love and quality time in abundance.

“We had a lot of love, but we also had strong boundaries. We have grown and our relationship with our parents has grown into a stronger bond because Mzee and Maama are the first one we always call to share good news, prayers, and share counsel.”

Mr. Edwin Karugire, a husband to First Daughter Mrs. Natasha Museveni Karugire informed the guests that President Museveni and Maama Janet have been a source of safety and stability not only for their family but also for the millions of Ugandans of different generations; the senior citizens, the youth and the senior youth like him.

“On this 50th anniversary, I would like to celebrate Mzee and Maama. We thank God for their lives. We pray that God will keep you healthy and strong always. We pray that God gives you wisdom as you undertake tasks that He entrusted to you and always protect your union,” Mr. Karugire said.

On the other hand, the Yoruba Kingdom of Nigeria, King Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi also thanked God for the gift of life He has given to the couple that has enabled them to celebrate the milestone.

“We are very proud of you, it's not only Uganda that should celebrate but the entire Africa.”

On behalf of the Yoruba people, King Ogunwusi also gifted President Museveni and Maama Janet with a special collection of their ancient artistic works.

The event was also attended by the First Family members, government officials such as the Vice President, H.E Jessica Alupo, Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja, international guests, religious leaders, among others.

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