



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFERS UNWAVERING SUPPORT TO UGANDA COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS**

Hon. Gen. Odongo Jeje Abubakhar has affirmed the continuous support and participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the activities of the Uganda Council on Foreign Relations (UCFR).

This revelation was made during his remarks at the annual Minister's address that took place on October 15, 2024 at Fairway Hotel in Kampala, attended by members of the diplomatic corps, foreign policy practitioners, media and academia.

"I am glad that the engagement has continued from my predecessors... I pledge that as a Ministry we shall maintain the spirit of engagement..." said Hon Odongo

Additionally, he gave a detailed presentation borrowing from both personal and institutional insights about Uganda's foreign policy. One of the insights explained included the legal Framework and Foundational Principles of Uganda's Foreign Policy where Minister Odongo emphasized them being laid on many legal frameworks notably Objective No XXVIII (28) of the "National Objectives and Directive Principles of State". He informed the audience that in its relations with others, Uganda is guided by international interventions, norms and principles such as Peaceful settlement of disputes, Respect of international law and treaty obligations, strong belief in multilateralism among others to guide foreign policy.

Hon Odongo added that relations with neighbouring countries with Uganda have been good, reflecting on the establishment of Joint Permanent and Ministerial Commissions where Uganda exchanges high level visits with these countries.

"Besides political cooperation, Uganda and some of these countries have initiated a wide range of joint projects to promote integration and connectivity..." said Hon Odongo.

Another fact that he explained was the open door refugee policy highlighting that Uganda accommodates a numerous amount of refugees where he expressed challenges such as insufficient funds but applauded supporting partners for their contributions that have enabled Uganda to host more refugees.

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“...Uganda hosts more than 1.7 million refugees... the cost of hosting refugees is enormous... however, with the help of international partners, this burden has been reduced, and refugees have been able to live a safer and better life..., said Minister Odongo.

Other insights that he attributed towards Uganda’s Foreign Policy included regional integration, promotion of regional peace and stability, promotion of African Economic Integration, the Pan-Africanism Agenda, the fight against international terrorism, International Platform Engagements ie NAM and G77+China, Relations with Countries Outside Africa.

With regard to UN Reforms he explained Uganda’s role as part of the African Union Committee of 10 (C-10) in championing reforms at the UN, and also working within the UN to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

During his presentation, he reflected on the achievements on the foreign policy platform which include the maintenance of excellent relations with all neighbouring countries and the international community, the open-door refugee policy has been recognized and appreciated globally, assumption of the Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, assumption of the Chair of the G-77, contribution to peacekeeping and building, re-election to the African Union Peace and Security Council among others.

However he also cited a number of challenges when it comes to foreign policy execution which include; perennial underfunding to finance all the running costs, regional and international political dynamics, the growing threats of international terrorism and growing conflicts in the region.

CEO of the Uganda Council on Foreign Relations (UCFR), Ambassador Francis Katana expressed gratitude to the audience explaining that the body, set up in 2016 was established to grow the bonds between foreign policy stakeholders. “...quite a number of Ugandans thought that there was something lacking in the country’s foreign policy...the idea to create this forum was to bridge a gap between other arms of government and stakeholders...,”said Amb Katana. He also explained that the vision of UCFR is to have the centre of excellence of the promotion of foreign policy through providing a platform for foreign policy debate, information sharing, to be an academic and intellectual resource for stakeholders and mentor young people.

General Ivan Koreta, Chairman of UCFR appreciated Hon Odongo for accepting the invitation and taking time to share his views on foreign policy. He explained that the annual foreign Minister’s address is an interesting forum for interaction and unites key players to act on these policies.

He also informed that the council continues to provide a platform for research, foreign policy, debate. He urged the audience to consider registration and become members of the body. **END**

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