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Uganda: DP responds to IPC Calls for Co- operation

Mercy Nalugo 9 May 2010

The Democratic Party has summoned an impromptu meeting next week to take a final decision on whether to join the Inter-Party Cooperation or not, Sunday Monitor can reveal.

The party spokesman, Mr Emmanuel Mwaka Lutukumoi confirmed the meeting scheduled for May 12 yesterday. He, however, insisted that no one will attempt to coerce Uganda's oldest party to join IPC with what he called "erratic statements." "The idea of IPC originated from the Democratic Party in 1996, but we don't think anyone can set a deadline for us to join.

In 2001, we believed in it and we know the importance of cooperating but we want a clearly defined democratic strategy of getting one leader

and not rushing the process," he said.

Mr Lutukumoi was responding to calls by the IPC members to join the cooperation in order to field one joint candidate. Uganda Peoples Congress, Forum for Democratic Change, Conservative Party and Jeema are already members of the IPC, which has released its road map and set June 29 as the date within which to elect a joint presidential candidate probably to tussle it out with President Museveni in 2011.

They have also set May 30 as the deadline for the Democratic Party to join IPC, failure of which they would lock it out completely. Ms Salaamu Musumba, while addressing journalists at Parliament on Friday, said the IPC will not offer any other opportunity to DP if they do not join by the set date.

"Instead of strengthening structures at the grassroots, the parties are wasting a lot of time talking about IPC. How will the IPC survive without proper structures at the grassroots level," Lutukumoi wondered.

He said the May 12 meeting to be attended by the executive and the national council members shall be held at the party headquarters. He accused the FDC Vice President, Ms Musumba saying she is being

erratic. "We are not going to be forced to take decisions by some people who are impatient. DP is bringing a stronger candidate with strong views and we want new faces on the ballot paper," he said.

Experts consulting

Mr Lutukumoi said they had sent a team of experts at the grassroots to consult the people and submit a report before the national council meeting. In the IPC roadmap, the presidential candidates shall interact with Kabaka and other religious leaders before the Nairobi presidential candidates consensus retreat to be attended by international dignitaries. The IPC national conference shall then elect the joint presidential candidate by June 29 at St Augustine Centre in Makerere University.

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