

ESTHER LEUFFEN RECOGNISED FOR NETHERLANDS' ASSISTANCE TO THE POLICE

In the evening of 6th August 2009, a cock-tail party was set on the lush green by the side of the swimming pool of Hotel Africana in Kampala, courtesy of the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Major General Kale Kayihura. Soft music played in the background as guests were served drinks of their choice and rubbed shoulders freely in a moment of joy. The Police fraternity was wishing farewell to Esther Leuffen of the Netherlands Embassy, a lady with a big heart whom they referred to as their own.

The occasion was graced by none other than the Right Honorable Third Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Internal Affairs, Kirunda Kivejinja. Among other dignitaries was the Commissioner General of Prisons, Dr. Johnson Byabashaija and the Permanent Secretary Ministry Of Internal Affairs, Dr. Kagoda.

The IGP welcomed guests to the party and said this was an opportunity to say farewell and thank you to Esther who has been a great friend to the Uganda Police Force (UPF). She has been of help at a time when there were many demands on the Police Force in terms of service delivery almost everywhere, but especially starting from 2006 when the Force was required to enhance their presence in Northern Uganda because the people were leaving the camps to go back to the villages.

He said had it not been for the contribution of the Government and people of Netherlands, it would have been difficult for the police to establish itself in a very short time both in the Central-North (Acholi, Teso, and Lango) and move recently in Karamonja. He took the opportunity to thank the government and people of Netherlands for the timely support.

Apart from the major support, Netherlands also helped UPF through the NUFIK project to build the Human Resource by developing the training curriculum and introduction of the dual learning concept of training which balances theory with practice and innovation. Together with Esther, the Force brainstormed on the Police Review and modernizing and professionalizing it. This is the challenge of the 21st century, according to the IGP.

He thanked Esther for her enthusiasm and also thanked the government of Netherlands for its generosity. He said Esther has been a friend to all who interacted with her and although she is relocating for another assignment, her heart and soul remains in Uganda.

He wished her well wherever she would be going but that she should know that Uganda is her home. "On behalf of the UPF, so as not to forget us, we have prepared for you a small token just to keep our link," he said, as he presented the gift to her.

On his part, the Minister had this to say: “My job is simple, only to say a word of thanks for the job well done. For the period I have been here as one of the top managers of this government I have observed with keen interest the spectacular collaborative arrangements you have been able to solicit and implement with the greatest effect especially in the UPF. You are an ambassador who will not only be remembered by name and face but by the physical programs you have implemented in the county.

“Your contribution is historical because you have enabled us to reclaim the total sovereignty of Uganda by being able to establish security in those areas. We are, therefore, recognizing and confirming you that you are a daughter of this country with a citizenship because he or she who contributes to the welfare of Uganda has every claim to enjoy staying here.

“Thank you very much. I wish you the best in your career wherever you are going.”

Esther was all smiles as the attributes were flowing. While giving her remarks, she said “I am really honored tonight as I can see those faces I have been working with for the last four years, not only in Kampala but also upcountry in places like Karamoja where we experienced the challenges of policing.

“This is the whole Police Force. It is extremely privileged to see you all here. I’m grateful to you for having organized this party for me.

“I would also like to say that I am very grateful for my colleagues from the Embassy for joining me here. I recognize you all and I am grateful for your contributions because I didn’t do it all alone. Although I am at the spotlight, you people contributed as much as I did.

“Although I am going, I must say that it has not been easy. There are a lot of projects that have to be accomplished and I am confident that these people will carry on with the same spirit. When I come back, I will be eager to see further progress. Keep up the spirit even if it is difficult.

“To the Police Officers, I can’t mention each of you by name but I see very many faces of those who have been great friends. With you I had the opportunity to understand the challenges facing the Police.

“Leaving is not nice at all but I am happy that things will go on. What makes me even happier is that one day I will be back here again, be it as a visitor.

Thank you very much and I look forward to meeting you again.”