



Date: 24th November 2009
Press Release MUO9. No 5

Miss Uganda disputes false allegations in the Ugandan media – Carol Kasujja's articles in the Sunday Vision starting on the 24th October 2009 onwards.

The director of Miss Uganda for Miss World Joyce Church disputes and dismisses claims made by Carol Kasujja's articles in the Sunday Vision on the 24th October 2009 onwards. Below are facts of events and not as suggested by the articles in the Sunday Vision newspaper.

We would like the world to know that the New Vision Newspaper management contacted the organisers (Joyce Church), with a view to having an under cover journalist take part in the Miss Uganda 2009 competition to show to the Ugandan public transparency, consistence, a fair and just event and above all to show that bribery would not be involved in the Miss Uganda 2009 competition. The New Vision writer of the articles Carol Kasujja was taken into this competition on that basis and the management knew from the onset that she would be taking part as a planted mole with full management knowledge.

At the auditioning, she was initially declined by Joyce Church, not qualifying as a contestant until the intervention of a New Vision management for the reasons explained above. The New Vision management said that they had always wanted to do a story on the whole life of Miss Uganda at boot camp from the auditioning through to the grand finale and that Carol be treated as a Miss Uganda for Miss World contestant for the purposes of this exercise.

Any suggestion by Carol's article that anyone who knows the management can qualify to be a Miss Uganda 2009 contestant is a pack of lies. There is no basis for truth in this suggestion. In fact what is even more surprising is that the whole process of auditioning was recorded by WBS TV and some journalists from various media houses were present at the auditions in Kampala right through to elimination. Why a journalist would lie when there were a host of other fellow journalists, TV companies and other members of the public present is unbelievable. This is one of the many things that some people have said about the pageant seeing it as a soft target. The television recording does not lie.

We find it unprofessional for a journalist to write such articles that have little basis in truth. Even more unprofessional is that the New Vision newspaper management allowed such articles to be published without ensuring their accuracy in truth. It questions the editorial management of these articles and the whole management team that can allow such false articles to be written.

Miss Uganda 2008 Dorah Mwiima and the then Miss Uganda UK 2009 Maria Namiro were not judges as the article suggested, We always ensure that we have witnesses and we would never conduct any auditioning without the presence of either journalists or other members from the public present, for obvious reasons. This is above all else to show transparency and to avoid such uncalled for allegations such as Carol's. We are shocked that a journalist can actually find it in her heart to make false accounts of events and lie about it. Some journalists and other members were present in the auditioning rooms, but she still chose to lie. In fact it is sad as fellow journalists from the same newspapers were also present .I am sure the journalists present at the time can clarify this. This too was filmed.

These false allegations as written by Carol Kassujja are actually questioning our integrity and professionalism. Why would any current beauty queen be a judge? If we never operated like that in the Miss Uganda UK 2009 event, would we suddenly go to Uganda and become unprofessional? They were both at the auditioning rooms as beauty queen guests in their own right, neither of them made any comments or laugh at any contestants as the article suggested. They were both under our guidance and management. They are both respected beauty queens in Uganda. We are certainly not that unprofessional to even contemplate bringing on Dora or Maria as a judge on any Miss Uganda 2009 event, at auditioning or at any other time.

Carol commented that some of the girls that came to the contest for Miss Uganda 2009 were actually taller than Miss Uganda 2008 Dora Mwiima. We have no comment to make on that, as

Dorah is a beauty queen winner from the previous organisers of Miss Uganda 2008 with their own set of rules and we are extremely pleased with her as she has done us all proud. Our rules stipulate that our contestants for Miss Uganda 2009 need to be a minimum of 5'7. This is the Miss World requirement to which we have to comply, so taking on someone who is not 5'7 would be setting them to fail, as it would mean that they won't win. We never invest time or resources on contestants that we believe have no potential of winning the Miss Uganda contest. A strict criteria applied to all contestants, apart from Carol Kassujja who was below standard in most categories.

Miss Uganda 2009 for Miss World competition is a beauty contest and not a modelling competition and neither is it a competition for contestants whose dreams and aspirations are to be models, famous or celebrities as witnessed during our auditions and as such, we would never suggest to a contestant to walk like a model. It is essential to understand the fundamental difference between a beauty contest and a modelling competition. The only rumour of contest fixing that has come to our notice is of Carol Kassujja, as an undercover journalist. She is the only one who was fixed at the knowledge and agreement of the organisers to show transparency. As a journalist she has miss used her trust and position by printing false stories on the Miss Uganda 2009 contestants, some of who are upset over this.

Before the auditioning, all contestants were made aware that either they would have to come with a two-piece swimwear or on failing that, a bra and underwear would be sufficient. This is what they would have to do at the Miss World 2009 Final and if they are not comfortable doing this in front of the professional Miss Uganda 2009 management, then there is no chance that they can succeed at Miss Uganda 2009 beauty contest. Any suggestion of getting any contestants braless or topless is so untrue and a total fantasy by the writer. We have no desire to see any contestants naked, neither was this done at Miss Uganda UK 2009 that we successfully organised spectacularly or at any other beauty competition that we are involved in.

The New Vision article writer Carol Kasujja must have an active imagination (fantasizing) if she saw any of the contestants topless at the auditioning. There were WBS TV and photographers present. Has anyone seen the photographs? The presence of the media on the same day of the Kampala auditioning can certainly verify that we had and have no desire to see any Miss Uganda 2009 contestants topless or naked. The article has committed a gross professional misconduct by suggesting that. As none of the contestants are overweight, we had no reason to mention anything to do with stretch marks or any other weight issue.

No contestants were put on any diet at all at boot camp and neither do the directors or the management diet nor are they on any weight control programme. All the contestants ate the same food as the management and the organisers. All the contestants lived with us on a privately rented house a few minutes walk from Imperial Resort Beach Hotel, overlooking the magnificent Lake Victoria. Journalists, photographers and TV stations regularly frequented this boot camp training venue. It is hardly squalid. We wonder how many of the Ugandan's population actually live this way in their day-to-day normal lives.

The auditioning judges, Joyce Church, Sarah Nyamwenge the Contestants Manager and Flava had no idea of who was next to enter the auditioning room so any suggestion of bribery to get into the contest is utter nonsense and is a defamation of character and one that we refute. As we mentioned earlier most of the media houses and journalists were present and some of the TV crews from some stations. Most of our events were filmed.

All the questions addressed to the girls were transparent and recorded, video taped by WBS TV, and some partner sponsors management were actually present at the time. Performance Production Ltd the licence holder for Miss Uganda 2009 for Miss World is in communication with our lawyers and are taking these articles seriously with a view to taking a court action should the newspaper not take necessary steps to ensure that they print a full apology and rectify these false allegations by their writer. They are to take full responsibility for what their writer submitted for which they have full editorial rights to question and scrutinise prior to going to print.

The articles written in the Sunday Vision of 24th October 2009 onwards are a false representation of our Miss Uganda 2009 management, contestants and the running of the beauty contest. We believe that Carol's articles in the Sunday Vision are a gross professional misconduct and a defamation of character of the company, which we take very seriously. Our lawyer is monitoring the situation and we will take the necessary action to ensure this

inappropriate reporting of Miss Uganda 2009 stops immediately, when the management return from the Miss World 2009 Finals in South Africa.

The false articles written by Carol is perhaps a reflection on how she is managed by New Vision, especially as she had consistently at boot camp demanded money from the Miss Uganda management in return for what she claims would be for articles giving a true reflection of life in boot camp and from a beauty queen contestants point of view. This has been witnessed by all the management of Performance Production Ltd and was something the management were coming to terms with. I.e. the extent of bribery and corruption within some members of the media in Uganda. This poses a few questions. Did she not receive enough money that she was demanding from the management to write an honest series of articles? Do the Ugandan people expect and deserve honesty and accuracy from their media? Is she being paid by others to write detrimental information?

Chris Church the director was handed a note on the night of the grand finale in The Imperial Royale Hotel on the 26th Sept 2009 asking for money. This note has been kept. The truth is, we have been targeted by some journalists asking for astronomical amounts of money in return for articles in their newspapers, and Carol Kassuja has been the worse at exploiting this.

It is really sad that Uganda has now become such a country that some journalists were going to Maria, Uganda`s representative in South Africa at The Miss World 2009 Final, asking for money in return for good articles about her and our event. That should never happen to any beauty queen, or anyone else for that matter.

Does honesty sell newspapers and do the Ugandan people believe everything they read? If so then, it is vital that the media tell the truth. The power of the press is well known, but we do not believe they should abuse that power.

On our return from South Africa, we will be requesting a meeting with the appropriate government department, to see how corruption within members of the journalist could be addressed.

For now we take the first step by asking the New Vision Newspaper to rectify its story regarding the Miss Uganda 2009 For Miss World beauty contest immediately to avoid further actions. Failure to do that would lead to a court action brought by the management of Performance Production Ltd against the New Vision Newspaper Group.

Joyce & Chris Church
Directors

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