MMK'S REMARKS ON THE OCCASION OF HAJJ SEND OFF AND WELI EASY PAY LAUNCH AT SHERATON HOTEL – 08.05.2025

Our hosts; The Pilgrims…… *(stand on the protocol that has been laid out).*

Asalaam Aleikum

I am extremely pleased to be here in person to witness two important milestones:

1. Sending off Allah's visitors of the 2026 Weli Cohort.

2. Launch of the Weli Easy Pay

So, I won't digress. I will restrict my remarks to the two reasons that bring us here. (Kusigala kumulamwa)

<u>ON HAJJ</u>

I trust that each one of you knows the importance of Hajji. That is why you saved for it and chose Weli Travel to lead you.

I also trust that Weli Travel has fully prepared you for the Hajj.

All I can state at this stage is that Hajj is made by persons who are able-financially, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Said differently, whoever has the means (obusobozi) can make a Hajj. However, not everyone who makes a Hajj gets the same experience and excellent memories as those people who go through Weli Travel.

Why?

Because Weli has a name (brand). It has experience of about ten years. Weli is professional. Weli is a pace setter. With each season it has been improving. Even the Weli Easy Pay partnership with Salaam Bank is part of its continuous improvement plan. Weli knows its business. Above all, Weli cares for its people.

So, clap for yourselves for choosing Weli Travel to lead you onto the Hajj.

EXPERIENCE SHARING

I made my Hijja in 2024. Before that the stories that we used to hear about the journey were scarily - That you had to make a Will before setting off.

Why?

Because your return was not guaranteed. They used to highlight two deadly spots.

1. The Qabbah - During TAWAF, the people struggle to touch the Qabbah.
2. Okukuba ebiwagi - stoning the devil (RAMI AL JAMARAT)

When we got in Mecca in 2024, the first thing we did was to perform TAWAF (that is, going around the Qabbah seven rounds). What had been put in my mind became a problem. I knew that at any time I fall down, I would be finished. So, I started feeling as if a muscle-pull was developing in my legs when infact there was none. So, watch out what you put in your mind.

We completed the seven (7) rounds well. All we had to do was to follow the instructions of the Weli Team. I was able to touch the Quabbah with my own hands on each occasion without any fight. Our group had a gentleman who was crippled (lame legs). He was also able to touch the Quabbah by himself.

When it came to the Okukuba ebiwagi, we performed the rituals seamlessly. All that was because Weli Team understands very well its business. Weli understands the dynamics on the ground.

So be assured you are in very safe hands. Just follow the instructions of the Weli Team and you will have a memorable experience.

That brings me to the 2nd part of today's function-launch of the **"WELI EASY PAY".**

WELI EASY PAY

I join the rest of you in congratulating Weli Travel and Salaam Bank for this important milestone. The partnership seeks to ease payment for Umrah and Hajj through making instalment payments managed by Salaam Bank.

A lot has been said about what Weli Easy Pay is about, and its benefits. As for me, I prefer to share two lessons out of this innovation.

Lesson 1 – Easing the fulfilment of our religious practices

Fulfilling the demands of our faith should not always be structured as cumbersome, or extremely difficult to achieve or as achievable only by special people. No. Weli Travel and Salaam Bank have shown the way that it possible to make it easy for our people to fulfil their dream to perform Hajj.

The challenge created is: how do we extend this mind-set and approach to the other aspects of our faith without compromising the fundamentals?

I challenge our leaders and all of us to seriously think through the following:

- How do we make it easy for our people to acquire knowledge of the demands of our faith?
- How do we make it easy and enjoyable for our people to live as prescribed by our faith?

By making it easy and enjoyable, we shall increase the number of people fulfilling the demands of our faith. By making it easy and enjoyable, we shall be increasing loyalty and commitment to our faith.

Once again thanks to Weli Travel and Salaam Bank for showing us the way.

Share lessons on the childhood memories about learning Islam; the intimidation that characterised the teaching etc

Lesson 2 - Brothers working together

The second lesson out of the Weli Easy Pay launch arises from the fact that the project is a partnership between members of the Umah: Weli Travel and Salaam Bank. As members of the Umah, they are brothers. But how many of us are able to work together with our brothers and sisters?

For our Umah to grow we must learn to work with one another. The reverse is true: Why? Because businesses grow starting with family and friends.

However, for brothers to come together on a particular project is simply a starting point. Sustaining the relationship is a different ball game. Mutual benefit is extremely important in maintaining the relationship. Where the gain of one brother is in the same vein the loss of another brother, disaster is always the outcome. And as is often said, whereas *"blood is thicker than water",* if blood is allowed to spill onto a cloth, it is much harder to clean than water. Fortunately, mutual benefit exists in the Weli/Salaam relationship: Weli will refer its clients to Salaam. They will also become Salaam Bank's clients. Salaam Bank pays Weli in full and Weli takes the clients for the Hajj.

Salaam Bank will then manage the instalment payment details, while Weli focuses on what it understands Best-Taking the Umah for Hajji.

The lesson from here is that we should not simply seek to partner with fellow brothers and sisters. Let's always first think of the value we take to the relationship with our brothers with whom we seek to work.

A word of caution

Don't abuse the relationship. Many of our people fear to work with brothers and close people because of the fear of the relationship being abused.

The Baganda say: **"*Twalabaganadda akulekera mpale yabituli*"** That summarises the inherent risk of abuse found in working with brothers and family members.

To make matters worse, when you complain about errand behaviour being exhibited by your brother and want to discipline him, it is usually escalated and becomes a clan matter. To guard against losing family relations and business, many people have opted to keep their distance away from working with or employing family members. Everyone ends up being a loser.

As such, my appeal to our brothers, Weli and Salaam is - remain professional, be clear on your expectations about the other, and maintain an open and honest communication channel. Further, have each other's interest in mind as, in the process, you will also be protecting your own individual interests.

We have trust what when we come back to reflect on your relationship after five years, you will be nothing less than a role model and case study for other members of the Umah on working together. If you fail the project, you will not have failed only yourselves but also the bigger community of the Umah which is looking forward to taking benefit of the simplified model for payment for umrah and Hajji

To our pilgrims, I wish each one of you a memorable Hajj. And to Weli and Salaam Bank, I wish you a mutually beneficial and prosperous relationship.

I say all this, for God and My Country.

MUZAMIRU MUTANGULA KIBEEDI
JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT