

Condolence messages from ActionAid and across the world

I am in mourning with my brother James Otto's family, friends, AAU and International family. Shocking news for me and all of us. I had the joy of meeting and working with Bwana James previously, as we advanced the governance work of our federation. He had such clarity of thought, deep politics for the poor and justice, and an unwavering and daring stance on doing what needs to be done in our organisation. When we threw tantrums on injustice, he would say, okay now what should we do about this. He brought us back to reality that its not enough to continue analysing without acting.

How words and his works will inspire our walk and water our efforts of courage.

May His Soul Rest in Perpetual Peace. – **Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda; Chief Executive, Rozaria Memorial Trust.**

I join you in mourning the passing of our dear colleague James AA. Otto. He leaves us with a strong legacy that we should celebrate and sustain– **Stella Mukasa–International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and member of the ActionAid Uganda General Assembly**

I am sad to hear that James has passed away. He was a courageous and generous man with very good and strong values. I worked with him from 2003 to 2016 – during my time as advisor to the UHRC and head of HUGGO. I met him many times in Gulu at HURIFO and in Kampala, I also met him later, when he became a Chair in AAU. I am happy to have known James – **Frans Mikael Jansen– ActionAid Sweden**

This is very sad and tragic . The late James Otto contributed tremendously to ActionAid and was very instrumental at the national and international level. He was highly valued at both levels. We are going to miss him a lot. May the Almighty God give courage to the family. May the lord rest his soul in eternal peace – **Dr Consolata Kabonesa– Chairperson of AAU Governing Board).**

With great sadness I convey our condolences to all of you and to James' family. James has been such a great leader, comrade and friend. He has guided and supported me on several occasions and shaped my views about human rights and resistance. My thoughts are with James' family and with AA Uganda team and board. In solidarity – **Adriano Campolina–ActionAid International CEO**

I worked under James as board member and chair of AAIU and I remember his calm demeanour in his approach to issues and commitment to social justice issues. He had become a friend. While we knew the complexity of the sickness he was battling, he always kept the smile when people visited him. He has done his part on earth and we all need to celebrate his achievements. May his soul rest in eternal peace – **Charles Businge–Regional Director: Southern and Eastern Africa–ActionAid.**

James' life in ActionAid Uganda is a chronicle of the history of AAU as a full fledged member of ActionAid International federation. I met James when I joined AAU Advisory Board around 2003, he was one of the founding advisory board members with two others recruited by Meenu Vadera the–then CD. James and I served together on the board when AAU became a national NGO with a proper board, he as treasurer and I as chair. He played an instrumental part in setting up AAU as a national NGO and closely supported me in managing AAU transition from a country program of AA UK into a member of ActionAid federation, navigating the registration process through the NGO Board, and successfully merging with MS Uganda. There are people for whom we struggle to find something to say in eulogies about their legacy, but not for him. James really played a key role in establishing a strong, functional board for AAU that recognized itself as a team with management, though with clear separation of roles. He was unequivocal about the importance of financial integrity, preventing conflict of interest of board members, and was invaluable in our building respect for board/ management boundaries and the board members' individual and collective fiduciary duties to the organization – **Irene Ovonji–Odida, CEO FIDA Uganda and Chair, ActionAid Uganda & ActionAid International**

I'm so sad to hear about James Otto. We only have had a chance to meet occasionally in the past years, but I always considered him a mentor, to whom I could go whenever I needed support in deepening the understanding of my role as a national chair, then as an international board member of ActionAid. I'm very much grateful for the privilege I've had to know him, as well as for his help and wisdom – **Chiara from ActionAid Italy.**

It is such a sad day for AA Uganda and the Federation with the news of the passing on of James Otto, a dear and respected colleague, a visionary leader and a brave campaigner for social justice in Uganda and beyond. I had the opportunity to visit James in hospital in July while visiting AA Uganda and even in his situation of illness, he was in high spirit and still thinking so much about all of us and ActionAid. I will never forget the tears he shed when he saw me and his immediate reaction and proclamation of how he felt appreciated and supported by the AA family. He was asking about all of our International Board members and the secretariat leadership. On behalf of the GBDC (the Board committee that James was a member of), the CEO and International Leadership Team I would like to convey our heartfelt condolences to James' wife and children and his extended family and to the AA Uganda Board and Management on this sad loss of a dear comrade and friend. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and yourselves as AA Uganda Board and Management who have done as much as you could have done to support James and family in the period he was unwell. May his soul rest in eternal perfect peace – **Chris Kinyanjui, Deputy Chief Executive & International Director**

I first interacted with James many years back while I was still the Executive Director at DENIVA. He had come to introduce a very successful, dynamic and visionary CSO that he founded and headed. During the discussions, he helped us to appreciate the challenges and risks that CSOs meet as they help the citizens to understand and fight for their rights. I remained in touch with him as he fought many human rights related "battles", some of them ending up in courts. Despite the "battles", he did not give up. In fact the battles made him more determined to fight on. Rest in peace James – **Professor Jassy B Kwesiga.**