



**THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

**MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

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**NATIONAL CELEBRATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILY- 2018**

**A SYNOPSIS**

**THEME: "THE ROLE OF FAMILY IN THE GLOBALIZED WORLD"**

**NATIONAL VENUE: LUWERO DISTRICT**

**DATE: TUESDAY 15<sup>th</sup> MAY 2018**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

The United Nations, through its resolution 47/237 on September 20, 1993 proclaimed the year 1994 the International Year of Families. Ever since then, May 15<sup>th</sup> was dedicated as the annual observance day for families worldwide. Over the years, the day has been celebrated under different global themes, and this year them is “Families and inclusive societies, 2018.

The issue of social inclusion/exclusion is not only imperative in the attainment of MDG Goal 1 “Eradicating extreme poverty”, but also other Goals, such as achieving universal education, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality, and improving maternal health. Unless we pay closer attention to the issue of social inclusion/exclusion, some segments of the population will continue to be excluded from the progress made so far.

The International Day of Family (IDF) is intended to bring out the importance of family “as the smallest unit of society where all development starts. It provides a chance for governments, organizations and individuals to carefully consider their quality of life and relationships enjoyed in their home.

At Country level, the theme chosen for this year’s commemoration is “The role of the Family in a globalized world” The theme recognizes the fact that the industrialized world, the ‘traditional’ breadwinner/homemaker family no longer constitutes the main family form or the only normative environment in which children are born and raised. In the developing world, we do not find the same general acceptance of diverse family forms, but we are witnessing an increase in dual-earner households, single parenting and female or child headed households, an upsurge in the number of women in the labor force, and a significant aging of populations.

As individuals, families, communities, and societies increasingly become integrated into new complex globalized systems, their values, traditions, and relationships change (Parkin & Stone, 2004). Globalization transmits new concepts about gender, work citizenship, identity, familial relationships, and women’s and children’s rights, even to very distant places. However, various

groups respond very differently. In some cases, these concepts empower individuals and their families to change their lives, and in other cases, they are forced into situations that are disadvantageous and destructive. Besides this global view, the Second National Development Plan (NDPII) acknowledges that “strengthening the family as a springboard for development as well as Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals is dedicated to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels. This will enable communities to work towards creating an environment that promotes functional families, respond to effects of globalization and utilize opportunities and this marks the International Year of the Family and offers an opportunity to refocus on the role of families in development.

## **2.0 Theme:**

In 2018, the world is still celebrating 20+ years of the International Day of Families with the theme “Families and inclusive societies” this aims at exploring the role of families and family policies in advancing sustainable development goal 16 in terms of Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development”. The Ugandan theme for 2018 is “**The role of the Family in a globalized world**”

## **Goal of the International Family Day 2018.**

Highlighting the importance of family as basic units of society. However, Families play a central role in society, despite their centrality, it is also understood that the concepts, definitions and perceptions of family life as well as the policies that impact families are not static. While it is unclear if the changes in a family during the course of the 20th century have been greater than in previous eras, we do know that the early 21st century is characterized by greater family diversity, increasingly codified in laws.

## **Specific Objectives:**

- i. To highlight challenges family face in the globalized world in Uganda
- ii. To create awareness about the importance of parenting as a foundation for a stable society;
- iii. To empowering families to respond to the effects of globalization.

The Importance of the role of the family in the globalized world as first line of response. The Family plays a central role in society through reproduction, production and community organisation. It has to meet the challenges of globalization for this generation that needs socializing them to meet the needs of the next generation. Some of the challenges facing this generation is technology, exposure to uncensored information, lack of role models, inadequate information, teenage pregnancy and early marriages, unemployment to mention.

### **3.0 What is a Family in Uganda?**

There exists no formal consensus on how to define families from a global perspective but there is agreement that some form of family or kin relationships characterize all societies.

*“a family is defined as a primary social group of two or more people, related through blood ties (of birth, siblings, and extended family ties), marriage, adoption, and placement and whose fundamental purpose is reproduction, socialization, nurturing economic support, guardianship, emotional and psychological support, in order to create an environment that ensures safety and a sense of belonging for its members”.*

In Uganda, two types of families are recognized and these are, the nuclear and extended family. In the **Nuclear Family**, there is a father, mother and their children related by blood or through adoption. Some families are monogamous, where the man has only one wife while others are polygamous in nature and the man has several wives. Arising out of unavoidable circumstances, some nuclear families become child headed families and single parent families while others may consist of husband and wife only.

In an **extended Family**, there is a group that consists of a nuclear family (parents and/or, children) and other blood relatives often spanning three or more generations. The extended family members may not necessarily live in one home. Traditionally, all African families belonged to this category but the socio-economic challenges, globalization and western influence among others, have continued to transform the family structure.

The family stability does not have a specific definition but it implies the state of being steady, secure, strong and enduring in all the four areas of life, i.e. physical, emotional, cognitive and

social aspects. Family stability should be the goal of all types of families irrespective of the challenges each face. Some of the indicators of family stability include stable relations among the parents, parenting, good nurturing and stimulating home environment which includes warmth, family cohesion, emotional availability, and involvement in day to day activities. Family is extremely important. Discipline is very key. A kid's character is formed between 0 and 5 years. One Professor said that if by 10 years a kid does not understand then he will never understand.

### **What is globalization?**

**Globalization** is defined as the increasing process of interdependence and interconnected between different political, social and economic components of the world. It is the way in which the world is seen as the global village. In our contemporary environment, **globalization** directly and indirectly affects **family** life through the strategies and programs created by economic and social policies. Yet, in a globalized environment, many social policies that directly impact and assist **families** are being dismantled or substantially reduced.

A serious disadvantage of the mainstream focus on the purely economic effects and challenges of globalization is that it ignores the social consequences of the process on families and communities (Baars, Dannefer, Phillipson, & Walker, 2006). The effects of economic restructuring, which are in part the product of globalization, are felt in particular by vulnerable individuals such as children and elderly. While these and others are often discussed as distinct groups it is important to note that both are usually reliant on their families, and that it is the social capital provided by the family that ensures the quality of life for them. By reducing or eliminating programs that affect families, such as nutrition, health, early care, and educational opportunities, parenting, family empowerment, lifelong disadvantages that have long term social ramifications may be created.

Uganda's population is predominately rural though urbanization is on the rise. According to the National Population and Housing Census Report, 2014. The census enumerated a total of 7.3 million households countrywide with the majority of the households (75 percent) being resident in rural areas. Thirty percent of the households are female headed. The Mean Household Size is 4.7 persons and has remained fairly stable over the past four decades. In Uganda, one in every seven

of households obtains their livelihood from subsistence farming, with a majority (82%) being found in rural areas. (NPHC- main report). Households that depended on employment earnings from their livelihood constituted 16% while those depending on commercial farming were only 2%. Close to 80% of all households in Uganda are involved in agriculture. More rural households (90%) participate in agriculture compared to the urban households (46%).

### **Factors impacting on family stability due to globalization**

Even though the challenges created through globalization may appear to be similar on the surface, local circumstances dictate how these issues are perceived and the type of response that they elicit. For instance, in developing countries, governments often focus less on reducing internal class inequalities and serving their poorest and most vulnerable populations, and more on policies and programs that decrease the differences between themselves and wealthier nations. These states are frequently concerned with programs that increase wage labor and move them to the level of industrialized countries.

### **Family and Culture**

In the past, many African families lived in one homestead, and the women were responsible for homes on a full time basis while the men would go out to work and bring in resources. Families had opportunities to celebrate successes, birth of children, marriages, and other achievements and although there was a less intimate relationship between fathers and children, the father of the home was visibly in control. With the challenges of development and the need to make money to support the family this resulted into both father and mother working outside the home in search of better livelihood. This however, came with a number of challenges.

### **Family and Urbanization**

Globalization and Concurrent Social Transformations Affecting Families Dramatic recent changes in the economic and political arenas have been accompanied by significant social transformations. In particular, the global influx of women into the formal and informal labor force and their rising educational levels, have had profound implications for family life. The world over, we are

witnessing an increase in two income households and the ability of women to decrease their dependence on the men in their households and communities.

### **Work-Family Issues**

Owing to rapid socio-economic and demographic transformations and the effects of the fast moving world order, families find it more and more difficult to fulfill their numerous responsibilities and often times takes away both mother and father from the home. There is increased demand for full participation of every family member in taking care of the home, both in terms of physical contribution and moral support. The increasing number of women entering the formal workforce has been as a result of the need for dual earnings, increase in education attained, and women empowerment. Whereas this brings numerous benefits, it sometimes creates a conflict if not managed well. It is becoming more and more difficult for the parents/guardians to reconcile work and family responsibilities while maintaining the intergenerational bonds that upheld family stability and sustained relationships.

A critical aspect of the new wave of global migration pertains to the significance of female labor. As employment opportunities have opened up, an increasing number of women are migrating in order to take advantage of these prospects. According to United Nations statistics, approximately 49.6 percent of all migrants now are women (Morrison, Schiff, & Sjoblom, 2008). In the process of migration, many of these women leave their families, and specifically their children, behind in their home areas a phenomenon commonly referred to as 'transnational mothering'. Women who undertake labor migration usually do so in order to provide a better life for their children and loved ones. The long absences of a spouse from home have sometimes exposed their counterpart, in most cases women to extra marital affairs, leading to higher risks of couple separation, diseases like HIV and AIDS and slow family development.

### **Gender roles in the Family**

Particularly in the developing world, but also in parts of the industrialized world, we are increasingly seeing what is termed as the ‘feminization of the labor force’. This term refers to the growing number of women who are working outside of the home in paid employment. Lately the traditional role of a man as a provider is being challenged with the increasing social changes. This, therefore, puts men in a dilemma of what exactly their role is in a home.

As women are able to earn their own living, they are less likely to stay in destructive and abusive relationships, or they may choose not to marry at all, this in the end weakens the family institution. Women are increasingly becoming as much of providers as the men. So the only way out for men is to participate in the roles that were traditionally for women.

### **Marriage and Divorce:**

Earlier the point of marriage was largely procreation. Cross-cultural research reveals that the concept of marriage is shifting because the increased number of women working in the paid labor force affects economic bonds in families. For example, dual earner households are becoming the new norm in the industrialized world. The new daughter-in-law was expected to help out completely with the daily up-keep of the husband’s home, even at the expense of her wishes. The main aim of marriage was to keep this system going, firstly through the birth of the son and secondly by making sure everyone did their role to keep the system going. The complexity of modern living has changed people’s perception towards marriage and family, as more families are becoming “touch and go” due to workplace demands and lack of time spent together.

However, in the modern age, we are no longer under threat or attack from other clans, neither facing the crisis of evolution. The function of marriage is now to find a life partner to whom one can talk and share life with. This means that women can and are wanting to have more identity than just ‘wife’, ‘mother’ etc. They want to have a social and professional identity as well. This means that she can also be a more engaging life partner, with something of substance to contribute to conversation. This also means that systematic abuse like dowry or domestic violence will not be tolerated. Men have to change how they view themselves and women.

### **Parenting in the globalized world**

There is a deliberate political decision meant to encourage men and women to share responsibilities at home, but also enable both of them to engage in paid work in order to respond to the effects of globalization.

Parenting today is viewed as a nightmare by many parents and guardians. Some of them appear helpless in the face of the growing challenges posed by the media, changing global moral values, worsening influence on children from schools, the information overload, conflicting messages, declining cultural values, economic hardships.

Male participation in parenting has been found to not only enhance peace and harmony in the home but also facilitate economic growth and development as more women get to participate in the economic spaces.

### **Technology and family stability**

Technology has replaced parenting and guidance, most parents are not at home and have not time to regulate the information children receive from diffident unreliable source. Communication has broken down everyone is busy on the phone or has come with office work at home he or she is on the computer. The only time which was left for parents was to collect children from school, but now we have taxis that can collect children and drop them. Television occupies the children as parents are in different activities, this has come with a lot of effects such as sexual abuse, killings and abductions, delinquency, teenage pregnancy, indecent dressing, lack of respect for adults to mention

### **Progress and available opportunities**

Government of Uganda has put in place legal and policy frameworks as well as interventions which have created a favorable environment for women and girls to realize their rights. The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) which recognizes that family is the first line of response and responsible for it members and stipulates the age to which a person starts a family. Some of the

Laws include the Local Government Act, 1997 provides for planning and budgeting for service provision at local level.

But most other laws that aim at protecting individuals within the family such as property laws, inheritance laws, child care and protection laws to mention to mention others such as marriage laws, gender related laws focus on the individual in the family but do not bring out the efforts of strengthening the family to be able to respond to the challenges of globalization.

For example According to the Convention, children have certain basic rights that include the right to life, to his or her own name and identity, to be raised within their own families or cultural groupings to express their opinions, to be protected from abuse and to have their privacy protected. Despite variations within and between countries, social protection for children is far less developed than it is for other 7 vulnerable groups such as women or the elderly. In part, this stems from a tendency to focus on children outside of their particular family and community contexts.

These laws and policies available need to be interpreted and implemented in rural and remote areas that are often not complicit with these initiatives and to relate them to family stability. For example Initiatives like Youth Livelihood, Wealth creation, Uganda women Entrepreneurship have endeavored to improve the financial status of individuals in the family but not stressing the obligation of working as a family.

### **Challenges and gaps**

Family provides the basic needs of a person, including shelter, care, education, health, and other types of welfare. The family is the fundamental social unit and when the family is under stress and its members do not receive any support, the impact is felt across the community.

1. There is inadequate laws that protect the institution of marriage as a foundation for a family
2. There is curriculum emphasizing the importance of social justice in education institutions in transmitting “ancient systems, simple living, high thinking, and traditional values.” By implementing these concepts into the society he said, “A happy family, community, and

world can be established.” According to Ramesh Chandra Rai, the head of Political Science Department at Bhagalpur University in India

3. According to Kenneth Braswell, director of Fathers Incorporated, added that “if we don’t talk equally about the contribution of both men and women to the nurturing and upbringing of our children, the concept of family cannot work properly.”
4. Lack of family focused programming that tends to focus on community or individuals in the family.
5. Teenage pregnancy and child marriage
6. Child sexual gender based violence
7. Inadequate statistics to show the implications of globalization to a family.
8. Increased gender based/domestic violence and divorce in our communities
9. Disease especially HIV/AIDS that drain the families their property when the individual especially the head of the family falls sick
10. Participation, access and control of family property that is sometimes taken to be an extended family property
11. Lack of involvement of men in child care and nurturing

### **Recommendations:**

Governments need to develop a national policy that outlines specific interventions for strengthening the family institution.

Specific national legislation needs be introduced and enforced universally in order to prevent the early marriage of girls.

Local and transnational NGO’s need to collaborate to form more holistic partnerships that better meet the needs of families.

Collaborations between national governments agencies and NGO’s need to continually focus on family issues.

New studies need to be conducted highlighting best practices and effective collaborations between local, national, and transnational NGO’s and governments with respect to providing services to families.

In developing, instituting and monitoring social policies, we need to be aware that families act as a buffer between globalizing forces and the choices and challenges that women, men, and children face on a daily basis