



**THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA  
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOLEMN DECLARATION  
ON GENDER EQUALITY IN AFRICA IN 2016  
(SDGEA)**

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
ART	Antiretroviral therapy
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CCTs	Coordinating Centre Tutors
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEWIGO	Centre for Women in Governance
CPTCs	Core Primary Teacher Colleges
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
e- MTCT	elimination of Mother to Child Transmission
EALA	East African Legislative Assembly
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EIC	Equity in the Classroom
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
FGM	Female Genital a Mutilation
FY	Financial Year
GBB	Gender Bench Book
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
HCT	HIV counseling and testing
ICWEA	International Community of women living with HIV in Eastern Africa
IRCU	Inter Religious Council of Uganda

JLOS	Justice Law and Order Sector
JSI.	Judicial Studies Institute
LC	Local Council
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MARPS	Most at Risk Populations
MDAs	Ministries Departments and Agencies
MFPEd	Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
mobile VRS	Mobile Vital Records Systems
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOJCA	Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
NAP	National Action Plan
NDP11	National Development Plan II
NGBVD	National GBV Database
NSP	National Strategic Plan
OPM	Office of Prime Minister
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PMTCT	Prevention of mother-to-child transmission
RTR	Tracking and Response
SBCC	Social Behavioral Change and Communication
SDGEA	Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

SDS	Social Development Sector
SESMAT	Secondary Science and Mathematics Teachers
SFGs	School Facilitation Grants
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UPDFs	Uganda People's Defense Forces
UPE	Universal Primary Education
UPF	Uganda Police Force
UPHIA	Uganda Population HIV Impact Assessment
USE	Universal Secondary Education

## A. INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Uganda signed the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA). Since then, Government of Uganda has submitted reports on the implementation of the Declaration. This report focuses on implementation of the SDGEA in 2016. The year 2016 witnessed opportunities that facilitated implementation of the commitments in the Declaration. These opportunities included:

- Implementation of the National Development Plan II (NDP11) 2015/2016- 2019/2020 which is the overriding national planning framework for the Country. The NDP 11 is implemented under Vision 2040 and its focus is on strengthening Uganda's sustainability for wealth creation, employment and inclusive growth. The NDP 11 prioritizes five investment areas namely: Agriculture; Tourism; Minerals Oil and Gas; Infrastructure Development and Human Capital Development. Gender equality and Women empowerment is core for attainment of the NDP11 goals. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is the national machinery for gender equality and women empowerment as well as the lead agency for the Social Development Sector (SDS). Social Development Sector Plan (2015/16- 2019/20) Operationalizes NDP11 and includes promotion of Rights, Gender equality and women's empowerment in the development process as one of its objectives.
- The NDP II is aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- To localize the SDG indicators Government formulated the National Priority gender equality indicators to assist in tracking the progress of the attainment of SDG 5 and other SDG targets. This framework guides the production of quality data needed for monitoring Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in the Country. The data from this instrument eases reporting to various international and regional commitments including the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.
- The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) which was enactment in 2015 was enforced for the first time in 2016. The Act mandates all sector and local Governments to obtain a certificate of gender and equity compliance before Parliament allocates finances for implementation of the budget framework papers for each sector and Local Government. The law mandates Minister of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MFPED) to

sign the Certificate of compliance on the advice of the Equal Opportunities Commission after thorough assessment by the later.

- In 2016 National General Elections for the President, Parliament and Local Council were held. The number of women members of parliament increased from 131 in 2011 elections to 157, although the percentage remained at 35%. The first female speaker of the National Assembly retained her position, while the Chairpersons of District Local Governments increased from 1(one) to 3 (three) women.

## **B. PROGRESS, ACHIEVEMENTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EACH ARTICLE OF THE SDGEA**

The following sections provide information on the progress and achievements on implementation of the Declaration. It also highlights the opportunities that existed during the period. The report is based on the guidelines provide by the Directorate of Women and Gender Development at the AU Commission which require that Government should provide an annual report.

### **ARTICLE 1: HIV/AIDS AND OTHER RELATED INFECTIOUS DISEASES**

#### **1.1 Progress, Achievements and Opportunities**

Uganda is a signatory to the Global reporting obligations and requirements on the progress of the National HIV and AIDS response. The National reporting is guided by the National Strategic Plan (NSP) (2015/16- 2019/20), The National Priority Action Plan (2015/16- 2017/18), The Monitoring and & Evaluation framework and other National key commitments.

The Country developed the National Action Plan on Women, Gender Equality and HIV/AIDS 2016/17-2020/21. It is aligned to the Global Strategy on fast track to end AIDS by 2030, NSP for HIV and AIDS activities in Uganda 2016-2020.

The overall goal of the Action Plan for women, girls and HIV is to promote gender responsiveness in the national HIV and AIDS response.

The year 2016 marked the end of the first year of the implementation of the National HIV & AIDS Strategic Plan (NSP 2015/16- 2019/20), the commencement of the implementation of the global targets of the SDGs and the UNAIDS treatment targets of 90, 90, 90 by 2020.

The results of 2016 Uganda Population HIV Impact Assessment (UPHIA) demonstrated that Uganda has made significant progress in the national HIV response. HIV prevalence declined across socio-demographic sub groups and across the country. The 2016 Uganda AIDS Indicators Survey estimated national HIV prevalence among adults at 6.3% compared to 7.3 % in 2011. Among women and men, HIV prevalence declined from 8.3% and 6.1% in 2011 to 7.5% and 4.3% in 2016 respectively. In urban areas, it declined from 8.7% to 7.1 % while in rural areas it fell from 7.0% to 5.5%. These declines in HIV prevalence were due to a decreasing number of new infections in recent years due to the impact of the intensified HIV prevention and treatment services in the country. Furthermore, almost 60% of people living with HIV (PLHIV) had



suppressed viral load which meant that treatment programs were successfully reaching the majority of the population with HIV.

Prevention interventions were guided by the National Strategic Plan (NSP). Efforts were made to ensure uninterrupted access to comprehensive packages of HIV prevention services tailored to unique needs of target populations with notable achievements. Various partners developed Social Behavioral Change and Communication (SBCC), strategic/ action plans and related tools based on the NSP. These included 12 cultural institutions who were supported by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) to develop messages on SRH/ HIV/ GBV and Maternal Health. The Ministry of Works and Transport developed SBCC strategy to the Most at Risk Populations (MARPS) and conducted sensitization and awareness creation on HIV and AIDS around construction projects. Ministry of Education and Sports has a well-established HIV unit with strategic guidelines that help to mainstream HIV/AIDS in its structure and activities. The good practices during the year included conducting outreach sessions for primary and secondary schools' teachers and learners, Music dance and drama competitions with themes on SRH and Teenage pregnancies and prevention of violence. SBCC messages for SRH/HIV targeting adolescents, young people and women were integrated in the communication programmes of Faith Based Organizations and Cultural institutions. Media and news print outs and TV messages were also scaled –up.

Regarding HIV counseling and testing (HCT) different approaches were used, including provider initiated HCT, routine counseling in health facilities and out reaches as well as home-based testing. There was a scale up on number of facilities providing HCT services.

Achievement in elimination of Mother to Child Transmission (e- MTCT) response were realized from concerted Government and Partner efforts. National e-MTCT programming under the championship of the Hon. First Lady continued with campaigns to promote PMTCT. Over 80% of the facilities conducted birth cohort monitoring and follow- up of infants. Mother- baby care points were rolled out country wide to optimize tracking, retention, follow-up and adherence. Safe male circumcision and male involvement remained a core prevention intervention.

HIV treatment, care and support services continue to take the highest investments in the HIV programmes. The Country adopted a test and treat approach for all HIV positive people including positive children. There was an increase in the number of sites proving ART for children. A

curriculum on pediatric HCT was developed with support from PEPFAR and training of trainers were conducted on Pediatric ART care.

Capacity was built for networks of women living with HIV and CSOs to demand for rights based HIV services. For example, the International Community of women living with HIV in Eastern Africa (ICWEA) worked with 42 organizations of women living with HIV from 14 districts of the country to ensure priorities of the vulnerable women living with HIV are prioritized at national and district levels. These women were trained in district and national level planning and budgeting processes, advocacy and accountability mechanisms.

Overall, the Uganda AIDS Commission continued to strengthen the leadership and governance for the coordination of the multi- sectoral HIV /AIDS response. The District AIDS committees and sub-county committees were active and functional and continue to guide coordination at the district and lower levels.

## **1.2 Challenges**

There are multiple factors fueling HIV epidemic among women and girls such as power imbalances between males and females. Other factors include gender based violence; stigma and discrimination; early sexual debut for both boys and girls; high risk sex; multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships, inadequate information, limited access and poor adherence to HIV services, norms of masculinity; and low status of women and girls. These factors raise concerns that require to be addressed jointly by all stakeholders. Other challenges include:

- Negative social norms and cultures.
- Economic dependence of women and girls on men.
- Weak enforcement of laws and policies.
- Disparities in access, utilization and adherence to HIV prevention and treatment services for adolescents and young people.
- Inadequate geographical spread and scope of HIV & AIDS services for adolescents and young people.

## **ARTICLE 2: PEACE AND SECURITY**

### **2.1 Progress Achievements and Opportunities**

The National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325 which was formulated in 2010 was revised in 2016. The review indicated gaps that shall be addressed in the Third National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325. The NAP focused on GBV and representation at different levels.

Uganda through CSOs like the Centre for Women in Governance (CEWIGO) localized the National Action Plan and came up with district based issues which are being addressed as per National Action Plan indicators. Each district formulated its own Action Plan. Districts have also come up with ordinances and bye-laws to regulate on alcohol and drug abuse, retention of children in school and elimination of early marriage. All these bye laws and ordinances are meant to keep peace in the house holds, families and communities.

Ugandan women particularly those in Military forces are also engaged in peacekeeping missions around the borders and in the neighboring countries of Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan and Somalia. There are two women military advisors serving at the UN level. One is a military observer while another one is a Legal Advisor. Attempts have also been made to engender the items on the peace agenda. Redress for victims of human rights violations is being addressed.

GBV was integrated in the National Development Plan (NDP II) and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development prioritized GBV in the Social Development Sector Plan for 2015/2016-2019/2020

GBV has been mainstreamed in the different sectors in Uganda for example Education, Health, Justice, Law and Order sector which include (Police, Army, and Ministry of Justice, Internal Affairs and Office of Prime Minister (OPM)). Under the National Focal Point on Small Arms and Light Weapons which is housed in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, issues of GBV including Sexual Violence are being addressed for women, youth and other vulnerable groups.

The amended Firearms law was tabled on the Floor of Parliament. Major issues for revision were that acquisition of fire arms by an individual should obtain approval and consent from the spouse, additionally the age for acquiring fire arms by individuals was raised from 18years to 25 years

OPM finalized the Peace Policy and the focus is on women's participation at all levels. Regulations to operationalize Trafficking in Persons Act 2009 were developed.

GBV programming particularly Sexual Violence in Refugees Settlements was scaled up.

Implementation took advantage of the prevailing opportunities including;

- **Existing structures** e.g. Peace and Security Committee at all levels that facilitates Peace building process
- **Political commitment**; there is Political will for women's participation at all level especially political representation from District to National level
- **Partnerships**; there are many Civil Society Organizations that work on peace related issues and these CSO's can mobilize more funds for implementation of UNSCR

## 2.2 Challenges

The perception that women are weak and therefore not able to participate in peace building and negotiation processes still persist.

With regards to international representation, the absence of properly established information sharing channels to ensure that as many capable women candidates are notified of the available opportunities is also a challenge.

Women are not sufficiently consulted nor involved in decision-making processes on the various resettlement programmes. This is aggravated by women's low literacy levels and the cultural norms on women's position and inadequate co-ordination of women initiatives at the grass root level.

## **ARTICLE 3: CHILD SOLDIERS**

### **3.1 Progress, achievements and opportunities.**

Uganda ratified the optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC) in 2002. Its principles were integrated in the amended Children's Act (2016). The Children Act was amended in 2016 and it provides for protection and promotion of the rights of the child including protection against violence, recruitment into armed forces and trafficking. The National Children Authority was established as an autonomous body in 2016. It has an expansive mandate in protection and promotion of children's rights in the Country. It advises on and monitors all activities, programmes, policies and measures relating to children's rights.

The UPDF has actively taken steps, in partnership with actors like the Ugandan Human Rights Commission, UNICEF and Save the Children, to integrate the Optional Protocol on Prohibition of Child Soldiers in training of UPDF staff and in operationalizing its principles in the way the military handles children. These are also operational in peacekeeping missions.

The Children (Amendment) Act (2016) sets minimum age of employment at 16, which is below the UPDF minimum age of 18 years. Nonetheless, it is currently impossible to gain employment in the UPDF and the Uganda Police without a national identity card.

In the past, underage recruitment into the armed forces in the absence of a system to verify age was a challenge to the Government. The Registration of Persons Act, 2015 addressed this loop hole as it dictates compulsory registration of births. The Act also provides for registration of refugees and other aliens in Uganda. National identification cards are compulsory for recruitment and this helps with age determination.

The UPDF has a Directorate of Human Rights which equips its officers with knowledge on child protection and rights for children in and affected by conflict. These cover among others Security Council Resolutions and legal instruments in armed conflict. Through the project, "Strengthening Child Protection in African Union Peace Support Operations in East and West Africa", Save the Children developed a training curriculum on child protection with the aim of operationalizing it within the African Standby Force. This process ensures their peace support operations personnel

undergo a standardized and mandatory pre-deployment training. The UPDF is participating in this training and it is hoped that the content will be incorporated into its military training curriculum.

Progress has been made in undertaking birth registration of children in 62 out of the 116 districts local governments and 135 hospitals are able to deliver improved on-line birth registration services using a system known as Mobile Vital Records Systems (mobile VRS). These efforts have led to improved national birth registration rates and sustainable scale up for national coverage is planned.

It is the insurgency groups such Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) that were responsible for recruiting child soldiers. Since the end of the Lord's Resistance Army LRA insurgency in Uganda in 2006, there has been no in-country recruitment or involvement of children in the armed conflicts.

### **3.2 Challenges in addressing the recruitment of children into armed forces**

Enforcing legal instruments, policies and programmes targeting children remains a challenge. There is still limited registration of births of children and national coverage of institutional arrangements. Registration is also still irregular, thus making it difficult to ascertain the age.

## **ARTICLE 4: GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

### **4.1 Progress, Achievements and Opportunities**

The State Party has progressively domesticated the declaration provisions into enabling laws that are applicable in national courts. This has been achieved through the concerted efforts of many stakeholders participating in advocacy consultations, debates and sensitization on gender equality.

In the year 2016, the Country made progress in the following key areas:

- The Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development developed, and Government approved the National Policy on the Elimination of Gender Based Violence in Uganda with its Action Plan.
- The National GBV Database (NGBVD) was upgraded to record case management (incidence, referrals, evidence, how many cases have been attended to). This is an online management information system which enables actors responding to GBV to safely collect, store and generate analyze reports in real time.
- Government put in place mechanisms for reporting violence against children such as the Uganda Child Help Line which is a 24hour services to receive cases of child abuse and offer referral services. There is Reporting, Tracking and Response (RTR) Guidelines in place to support this service.
- To repeal discriminatory provisions, Government focused on the Evidence Act to ease prosecution of sexual offences. A task force was put in place and compiled a report with clear gaps and recommendations faced by victims and actors along the referral pathway such as health, psychosocial, safety and security and legal median. The report indicated that much as there is no need for review of the Evidence Act, there was need to build capacity for both police and health workers in procuring evidence and keep it safe to support prosecution of sexual offences cases.
- Court watch sessions were carried out in Karamoja and Sabiny regions where FGM is practiced to ensure that FGM cases are handled and the victims access justice.
- Dissemination of the Domestic Violence Act (2010) which criminalizes the different forms of domestic violence and makes provisions for appropriate penalties and civil remedies was scaled up. The Act provides for the protection of victims of domestic violence, punishment of perpetrators of domestic violence, to provide for procedure and guidelines to be followed by the courts in relation to the protection and compensation of victims of domestic violence, to

provide for the jurisdiction of court, to empower the family and children court to handle cases of domestic violence and for related matters.

- Efforts to eliminate harmful practices e.g. Female Genital a Mutilation (FGM) focused on awareness campaigns aimed at changing attitudes and eroding its social acceptability in the communities where it is practiced.
- The Male Engagement Strategy on Gender Based Violence for reduction of GBV cases including FGM at grassroots level was developed. The Strategy aims at engaging men and boys as agents of change.
- To enhance effective collaboration with the media and private sector, a Multimedia Strategy against Gender- Based Violence was developed. This has helped the Media to report GBV cases with survivor centered Approach and Human Rights based principles. The primary audience of the Strategy are men and boys who hold power in the society, women and girls who are the primary victims. The secondary audience are duty bearers/service providers, private sector, community leaders, faith-based Organisations, cultural leaders, local celebrities and schools. The tertiary audiences include employers and employees.

The Government also took a number of additional measures designed to mainstream GBV in its policies and practices and registered the following achievements;

- Strengthened coordination mechanism through quarterly GBV Reference Group meetings and regular FGM Alliance meetings.
- Involvement of Uganda People’s Defense Forces (UPDFs) and Uganda Police (UPF) in handling GBV. These include capacity building to handle GBV within the institutions using existing structures like the Gender Desk, Spouses Desk, and Directorate of Women’s Affairs Desk.
- In Ministry of Defense, the Uganda People’s Defense Forces Gender Working Group was established with clear reporting channels. The institution put in place medical facilities for management of GBV cases and their own court system to ensure GBV cases are disposed off promptly to provide timely justice to survivors
- A mapping of GBV stakeholders at National and District levels for partnership, advocacy and resource mobilization for better Gender Based Violence programming was conducted.
- Social norm changing initiatives were rolled out throughout the communities, community leaders and members are signing personal pledge cards to end child marriages, community



action plans were implemented and comprehensive community mobilization took place. Advocacy and awareness creation against GBV was intensified during the 16 Days of Activism against GBV.

- Programmes on girl and boy empowerment were initiated in the Eastern and Karamoja regions which has the high prevalence of teenage pregnancies. Empowerment and livelihood clubs were established for girls in schools in this region. Dialogues and campaigns on ending child marriage and teenage pregnancy which started in 2015 is continued under the theme “let girls be girls, books before babies”.
- In the Justice Law and Order Sector, a Gender Bench Book was formulated to guide judicial officers to understand gender in administration of justice and barriers that women and girls face in access to justice. GBV special court sessions were piloted and a policy brief on institutionalizing GBV special courts in place and used for advocacy to establish special courts for GBV cases.

In addition, GBV survivors, most of whom were young women and girls continued to receive medical legal and psychosocial services in the seventeen (17) GBV shelters spread throughout the Country. Also at these centres, temporary accommodation, security and safety and basic necessities were provided.

Efforts continued to engage communities to adopt declarations on Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Religious leaders of various denominations exhibited high level commitment and cascaded interventions in communities on abandonment of FGM in the six (6) FGM practicing districts. For example, religious leaders under their umbrella Organization, the Inter Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) organized annual marathon as advocacy of abandoning the practice. In addition, Standard Operating Procedures on FGM were developed and are used by the practicing districts.

These efforts are complemented by CSO initiatives. Some of the CSOs undertook integrated projects which include legal literacy programmes, capacity building, legal aid services, counseling services and shelters for abused women. These initiatives increased the visibility of GBV; mobilized communities including men in the fight against GBV; and strengthened coordination between Government and CSOs in the handling of survivors of violence.

There were several opportunities in addressing GBV. These included:

- Political will; Uganda has good political will for Elimination of GBV and FGM from both National and District level for example the H.E the President of the Republic of Uganda and the Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament officiated FGM Zero Tolerance days and 16 days of Activism against GBV.
- Male involvement- a male engagement involvement strategy was developed for reduction of GBV cases which is a very good opportunity to ensure that men participate in GBV programming both at National and grassroots level.
- Good will: there is good will from both Donor and Government in terms of funding for GBV programming, this can be used to mobilize and lobby for more GBV funding.
- Existing coordination structures: Uganda has good existing coordination structure from both National and District level for GBV programming in changing GBV Reference groups and alliances at the national and local levels.

#### **4.2 Challenges in addressing GBV**

Some of the predisposing factors to GBV include: the low socio-economic status/ dependency of women; discriminatory laws and the cultural values, practices and attitudes regarding women in marriage (polygamy, payment of bride price and non-disclosure of marital woes). Strong attachment to cultural practices has been another challenge in addressing GBV.

There are resource constraints affecting proper GBV programming. This has led to lack of logistical operations and staffing of Law enforcement agencies.

The slow process of law reform and especially in relation to gender sensitive legislation is a challenge in accessing the legal system. For example, whereas discriminatory sections of the Divorce and Succession Act have been repealed, new laws are yet to be put in place.

## **ARTICLE 5: GENDER PARITY PRINCIPLE**

### **5.1 Progress, achievements and opportunities**

The key planning frameworks have been aligned to the global 2030 Development Agenda adopted in 2015. The National Development Plan 2015/16- 2019/20, the 2016 NRM Political Party Manifesto and the Social Development Sector Plan (SDSP) 2015/16 – 2019/20 are the key guiding frameworks for implementation of interventions.

In 2016, all Ministries, Departments and Agencies adopted a set of National Priority Gender Equality Indicators as a tool for monitoring gender equality in the Country's implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In addition, the Public Finance Management Act (2015) compelled all Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to have gender and equity compliant plans and budgets. The National machinery in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) monitors the compliance to this provision.

Government operationalized the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) to fulfill its mandate of eliminating all forms of discrimination including against women. The Commission reaches out the entire Country through the Local Government Structure and Circuit Tribunals. This is supported by a staffing level of 50 in FY 2016/2017, a rise from 26 in FY 2013/2014. The Commission is chaired by a female and out of the four members, one is a woman. The Commission conducts audit exercises on compliance with the principle of Equal Opportunities in the delivery of services and programmes within State and Non-state institutions. The EOC monitors the implementation of the gender and equity budgeting provision of the Public Finance Management Act 2015.

As one on the steps towards gender parity, the country continues to pursue women's full and equal participation in decision making as provided for by the Uganda Gender Policy (2007), the Equal Opportunities Policy (2006), the National Development Plan II and other sector specific gender policies. Temporary special measures continue to be upheld through the Affirmative Action Provision in the Constitution. Through the dissemination and implementation of national and sector specific policies, awareness was raised about the importance of women's participation in decision making among the public.

The Government also undertook production of gender statistics to avail information for gender responsive policy formulation, planning, and monitoring progress of national development towards gender equality and women’s empowerment.

The Government also pursued sustained policies promoting women’s full and equal participation in decision making in all areas of public, political and professional life. This was affirmed by the Assessment Report of Affirmative Action Initiatives and Strategies for Promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Uganda. The tenth Parliament has 157 women MPs, of whom 116 are on affirmative action basis as shown in the Table1 below:

**Table 1: Women MPs by the type of seat in 10th Parliament**

Type	Numbers
District women MPs (affirmative action )	116
Directly elected MPs at Constituency Level	22
Women representing Special interest groups	19

*Source: Parliament of Uganda 2017*

The tables below show the representation of Women in the 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament 2016- 2021, compared to other previous Parliaments.

**Table 2: Composition of Parliament by sex**

Period	Parliament	Total No. of MPs	No. of Men MPs	No. of Women MPs	Women MPs as a % of Total MPs
1989-1996	5 <sup>th</sup>	267	229	38	14
1996 -2001	6 <sup>th</sup>	276	225	51	18
2001-2006	7 <sup>th</sup>	305	231	74	24
2006-2011	8 <sup>th</sup>	306	204	102	33
2011-2016	9 <sup>th</sup>	375	244	131	35
2016 -2021	10 <sup>th</sup>	449	292	157	35

The 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament has a woman Speaker. In addition, the 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament has the first ever female Leader of the Opposition.

Women are increasingly leading Parliamentary Committees. Out the 28 committees in Parliament, 11 are chaired by women. Currently, there are 33 Senior Ministers, out of whom 12 are women. In addition, out of 46 Ministers of State, 14 are women. This reflects a 36 percent representation for women in Cabinet. Out of 39 Shadow Ministers of the opposition, 8 (20.5%) are women.

Table: Distribution of Total Women and Men in Local Government by LC level, 2016.						
Local Councils	Number			Percentage (%)		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<b>All Levels</b>	15,073	12,682	27,755	54.3	45.7	100.0
<b>District Council(LCV)</b>	1,916	1,364	3,280	58.4	41.6	100.0
<b>Municipality(LC-IV)</b>	745	537		1,282	41.9	100.0
<b>Sub-County (LC-III)</b>	12,412	10,781	23,193	53.5	46.5	100.0
<b>SOURCE : ELECTORAL COMMISSION, 2016</b>						

Regarding women representation in local governance, there were representatives at the district council (LC V), municipality (LC IV) and sub-county (LCIII) levels. The total representatives of the local government in LCIII-V was 27,755 who were elected or subsequently selected (special groups) in the 2016 elections. Among the total, 12,682 were women which is 45.7%. Similar patterns were found in all the local councils from III to V. Out of 3,280 representatives in district councils, 1,364 were women which was 41.6 % of the total. Likewise, the proportion of women councilors and chairpersons in municipality and sub-county were 41.9% respectively in 2016.

The Affirmative Action Policy review study also revealed that there was increased enrollment of females in public universities from 43% in 2008 to 44% in 2015. However, female representation is more prominent in Arts and Humanities across universities with persistent male dominance in sciences. The female representation in Local Government councils was 44% in 2013 and rose to 45 % in 2016. The increase in representation of female councils is attributed to affirmative action.

In addition to the affirmative action provision in political representation, there are measures taken to increase women's representation in leadership including; Sector Specific Affirmative Action Initiatives and Strategies.

The Uganda Police Force is implementing affirmative action in recruitment whereby 30% of newly recruited staff must be women. The Ministry of Health through the Health Sector Strategic Plan, established the Village Health Systems Strategy which reserves 1/3 of Village Health Team (VHT) membership for women.

The State Party has made progress in integrating women into the armed forces which was historically a male dominated institution. Special gender responsive measures being implemented by Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) include: deliberate promotion of women into higher decision-making positions; equal pay for work of equal value and access to the same benefits; representation of female combatants in the National Parliament and entitlement to maternity leave of 60 days. Gender concerns have been integrated in peace keeping processes, including training of officers going to peace keeping operations. UPDF has a fully-fledged Gender unit (Directorate of Women Affairs) headed by a female officer at the rank of a colonel which is the second highest rank among female officers. Three out of the nine Uganda's representatives to the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) are women.

## **5.2 Challenges**

There are persistent trends of patriarchal patterns of behavior and stereotypes in relation to the role of women in the private and public spheres. This affects the participation of girls in education, participation of women in employment and decision-making as well as the enjoyment of their human rights.

## **ARTICLE 6. WOMEN’S HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **6.1 Progress, achievements and opportunities**

The State party ratified the number of human rights instruments at sub-regional, regional and international levels. Some instruments have been ratified without any reservations while a few were ratified with some reservations. At national level, the rights of women are taken care of in the 1995 Constitution, laws and policies.

Uganda is signatory to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, and the African Charter on the rights and Welfare of the Child.

Uganda ratified CEDAW in 1985 without any reservations. Status reports have since then been submitted regularly to the UN CEDAW committee.

Uganda has initiated the process of ratification of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW. Consultations among various Government Departments like Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs (MOJCA), and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). The consultations will culminate into a recommendation to Cabinet for ratification of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW.

The African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa was ratified by Uganda with reservation on article 14:1(a) – the right to control women’s fertility and 2(c) – the right to choose any method of contraception.

The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda outlawed discrimination on the basis of sex among other things. Chapter four of the Constitution has specific articles on the rights of women such as Article 33 on the Rights of Women, Article 31 on the right to a family, and Article 32 which provides for affirmative action in favour of marginalized groups including women.

The Local Government Act (1997) which stipulates that election of special groups requires that at least one of the representatives is a woman for each of the key categories namely youth, older persons and persons with disabilities. This Act also helps to ensure the participation of women in decision making and politics.

There is a National Women’s Council Act, 2015 and National Women’s Council (Councils and Committees) Elections, Regulations, 2011. These instruments facilitate mobilization of women at all levels to participate in development initiatives at various levels.

Besides ensuring that Conventions, protocols and laws as above have been ratified and put in place, there are other efforts to ensure that women’s rights are protected, promoted and that they can access to Justice. These include the development of a training module for judicial officers on gender sensitive legislation by the Judicial Studies Institute (JSI). The module equips judicial officers with the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes to handle gender and human rights issues.

The “Gender Bench Book (GBB): Women’s Access to Justice in Uganda” was also developed by the Judicial Studies Institute (JSI) and launched in 2016 by the Chief Justice of Uganda. The GBB is a set of guidelines designed to help judicial officers in dispensing gender-responsive justice. The GBB is one of the key strategies identified to solve the gender capacity gap under the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) Strategic Development Plan for 2016-2020. Additionally, the JSI offers a curriculum on “Gender, the Law and Practice in Uganda”, whose goal is to stimulate the development of practical skills that the Judicial officers and support staff need for their work.

Human rights Institutions like the Uganda Human Rights Commission are in place and compile annual reports on human rights as well as summon different actors in public and private sectors to get reports on compliance with human rights principles. The Uganda Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) also monitors, evaluates and ensures that policies, laws, plans and practices of all public and private sectors are compliant with equal opportunities and affirmative action provisions of the Constitution. Government developed a checklist for compliance with human rights in policy, Bills, Budgets, Government programmes and all business handled by Parliament

## **6.2 Challenges**

Patriarchal patterns of behavior persist and discrimination against women and girls still exist as manifested in the areas of; preference for male to female employees, women’s limited access to information, and discrimination against women and girls with regard to inheriting property.



## **ARTICLE 7: LAND, PROPERTY AND INHERITANCE RIGHTS**

### **7.1 Progress, achievements and opportunities**

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda all land in the Country is vested in the citizens but the State has a mandate to protect natural resources including land, water, wetlands, minerals, oil, fauna and flora on behalf of the people. The Land Act (2010) provides a framework for land ownership distribution, utilization management and control in the country. The significant sections in the Act are: Section 28, which outlaws discrimination against women and children in respect of ownership, occupation and use of land, and Section 40, which requires mandatory spousal and children consent before disposal, mortgaging or transferring of land where the family derives sustenance. Land ownership in the Country is based on various land tenure systems which include customary, freehold, mailo and leasehold. Land is mainly obtained through purchase, inheritance or leasing. Approximately 23 % of land in the country is titled (Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development 2016). Approximately 5-26 % of the registered land is owned by women while the actual data on customary land ownership by women is not available.

To ensure protection and enhancement of land rights of women and children, the National Gender Strategy on Land (2016) was put in place to operationalize the Land Act, (2010) Cap 227 and the Land Policy (2013) which contain provisions for security of tenure and safeguard of the land rights of women and children.

The National Gender Strategy on Land is meant to ensure that what is provided in the Land Policy regarding protection and enhancement of land rights of vulnerable persons including women and children especially historical and cultural injustices and inequalities is implemented.

The National Housing Policy was also developed and approved in 2016 while the National Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy is being developed, and the National Urban policy was also approved in 2016.

To improve on land administration and management, Government established ministerial land zonal offices so that people can register land. By end of 2016 the land information system had been implemented in 9 centres in the country, of Jinja, Mukono, Masaka, Mbarara, Wakiso, Kampala, Kibale, Lira and Kabarole and seven (7) other zonal were being constructed,renoveted and repaired.

The Land Act provision of issuance of customary certificates of land ownership of formation of communal land associations was implemented Customary land certificates are registered in the names of spouses. Digitization of land records and land transfers was implemented. The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development continue to issue certificates of titles (Leasehold, Freehold, and Mailo) across all regions. From June 2013 to December 2016 about 503, 206 land titles were digitalized.

The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development has also undertaken sensitization and capacity building of all stakeholders on land matters including personnel in charge of capturing data on the importance of gender statistics in the land sector.

## **7.2 Challenges**

There is lack of clear and accurate statistics on land ownership and land management that are disaggregated by sex to guide policy design and for monitoring inequalities faced by women. Furthermore, in regard to fair ownership of land between men and women there is inadequate information in who makes decisions in regards to access and use of the land.

## **ARTICLE 8: GIRLS EDUCATION AND WOMEN'S LITERACY**

### **8.1 Progress, achievements and opportunities**

Education is essential for everyone and has a positive effect on human life. The Sustainable Development Goal Four (4) aims to ensure that all people have access to quality education and opportunity for lifelong learning which is vital for ensuring a full and productive life.

The Constitution of Uganda recognizes education as a fundamental human right and it is embedded in article 30 and 34 (2) which provides for the right to basic education for every Ugandan. According to the National Development Plan II (2015/16-2019/20), it is the responsibility of the Education and Sports Sector to deliver equitable, relevant and quality education, training and sports services for all. The Government through the Ministry of Education and Sports in 1997 and 2007 introduced the Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) respectively to improve the education and status of its population. Over the years Uganda has made tremendous progress in improving literacy levels.

In 2016, the Ministry of Education and Sports reviewed the Gender in Education Policy which was originally developed in (2009). Its vision is an inclusive and equitable quality education and sports and lifelong opportunities, for all girls and boys, women and men in Uganda. The policy is complemented by other policy initiatives and strategic plans that address barriers to girls and women's education in the country. These include the Gender in Education Strategic Plan 2015-2020 and the National Strategy for Girls' Education 2014-2020.

According to the Uganda National Household Survey (2016/17), the total enrollment for girls and boys at primary level increased over the years from about 7 million pupils in 1999/00 to about 11million in 2012/13 and dropped to9.4 million in 2016/17. There has been no big difference between the boys and girls primary school enrollment. While gender parity was achieved on enrolment and completion, there are wide gender gaps on other education outcomes such as retention, literacy and numeracy and performance among others.

The Universal Secondary Education (USE) has contributed to an increase in girls'

The Secondary School Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) was estimated at 38% in general, and that for male was slightly higher than that of females. (39% and 37% respectively). (UNHS 2016/17). There was a higher enrolment of boys than girls in the urban areas (61.3% and 52.5% respectively) while in the rural areas the rate is almost the same at 32.5% boys and 32.0% for girls. Whereas there are improvements in enrolment, completion of the Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) pass rate for girls in secondary schools over the years, there are still wide gender gaps in secondary education transition rate to Senior Five (S5) which is 30%; girls at 25.9% compared to boys at 33.6% while Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) performance index is 59%; girls at 62% compared to boys at 59%.

Government has undertaken deliberate interventions to promote equal opportunities for boys and girls in Business Technical and Vocational Education and Training (BTVE) through mainstreaming gender in Skilling-Uganda and scholarships in BTVE for best performing students.

At the University levels while there is almost equal numbers of males and females enrolled in computing, economics, arts, management and the social sciences, there continues to be a strong male bias in agriculture (81%), forestry (72%), science (69%), veterinary medicine (82%) and education (75%). Female Lecturers constituted only 30% of all Lecturers in Public Universities in Uganda (EMIS 2016).

Government has developed and disseminated guidelines on policy, planning, roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in the implementation of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) policy. The guidelines mandate parents to ensure protection for their children against harm and abuse while moving to and from school.

The Local Authorities (District and Sub County Local Governments) are responsible for ensuring that access roads to schools are passable and maintained. The districts are mandated under the Local Government Act Cap, 243, and the Presidential Directive of 2010 to provide adequate road infrastructure.

The Government adopted the education sector guidelines that provide that “No child should travel for more than 4 km to reach a school”. In the past years, the Government has progressively worked towards achieving the policy guideline on minimum distance to ECD centers and primary schools. Government continues to encourage the private investors to establish ECD centers within the proximity of primary schools and this has been adhered to in some parts of the country.

Through the School Facilitation Grants (SFGs), the Government continues to support construction of schools and renovation and expansion of school facilities (constructing girls boarding and separate sanitation facilities) with the aim of making schools more accessible to all school-age children. This has greatly contributed to retention of girls in schools.

Since 2012 an inter- sectoral committee has been in place to provide a multi-sectoral forum to tackle violence against children in schools. The Committee has developed the Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response Guidelines on Violence against Children in Schools for stakeholders and learners and the National Strategic Plan on the elimination of Violence against Children in Schools, 2015-2020.

Government through MoES introduced the Secondary Science and Mathematics Teachers (SESMAT) initiative to promote uptake of science and mathematics by girls.

The MoES is implementing several scholarships for students and over 75% of the scholarships have been awarded to girls in secondary schools.

The Government is implementing the Equity in the Classroom (EIC) programme to facilitate equal participation of girls and boys in the classroom. Under the programme, technical support and training is provided to teachers through the Core Primary Teacher Colleges (CPTCs). The training covers teacher sensitization for attitude change towards girls’ education. It also focuses on helping teachers to improve classroom teaching methods that support girls’ participation. All CPTCs have been covered and over 450 Coordinating Centre Tutors (CCTs) have been trained to reach out to other primary schools in the country.

Since 2012, a Gender Unit has been in place to coordinate and provide technical support for gender mainstreaming in the Education Sector. The Ministry has made budgetary provision to facilitate the work of the Gender Unit.

The Literacy level for both women and men in Uganda has had a positive change over the years. According to the latest survey by UBOS, the literacy rate of adults aged 18 and above has increased from 67% in 2012/13 to 74% in 2016/17. The male's literacy rate was 78% higher than the women at 70% (UNHS 2016/17).

The Government through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development implements the Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) programme in collaboration with NGOs and it was designed to link literacy to people's livelihood and needs. The programme incorporates skill-specific training in addition to literacy and numeracy. The target group is everyone that has missed the opportunity for formal education during childhood and includes men and women, Older Persons, youth and specific groups of marginalized people such as prison inmates, Persons with Disability (PWD) and ethnic minorities. FAL is being implemented in almost all districts.

## **8.2 Challenges**

There are higher levels of drop out especially for girls from Primary 5 to Primary 7 to an extent that the survival rate to Primary 7 of girls was 32.9% compared to 33.1% for boys in 2015. According to the UNHS 2016/17, the following are some of the reasons for the persistent school drop outs and absenteeism from school.

- a) Early marriages and early pregnancies
- b) Male child preference due to parents' attitudes
- c) Poor school facilities that are not responsive to girls' needs
- d) Orphanhood
- e) Long distances to school
- f) Expenses associated with tuition costs
- g) Workload at home
- h) Poor Academic progress

The main reason for leaving school is cost consideration for both boys and girls followed by lack of funding (boys 33% and girls 31%). Pregnancy contributes 4 percent of the girls dropping out of school (UNHS 2016/17).

## **ARTICLE 9: PROTOCOL TO THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS ON THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN AFRICA**

### **9.1 Progress, achievements and opportunities**

Uganda is one of the Countries that immediately signed in 2003 and on July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2010 ratified the Maputo Protocol, becoming the 28<sup>th</sup> Country to ratify the Protocol.

A multi sectoral framework for implementing and monitoring regional and international frameworks was developed in 2014;

Dissemination of international and regional, instruments is done as part of regular support supervision and monitoring of Local Governments.

Following parliamentary elections, the MGLSD conducts orientation of Women Legislators on regional and international instruments including the Maputo protocol;

Government has domesticated the MAPUTO protocol through various Policy and legal frameworks which include the Uganda Gender Policy Domestic Violence Act, \Equal Opportunities Commission Act, Prohibition of Female, Genital Mutilation Act, and The Universal Primary Education (UPE) Policy. Affirmative Action measures.

A National Task Force on the Maputo Protocol was established, made up of over 20 Women's Human Rights organizations and other CSOs.

A vibrant Civil Society that advocates for the rights of women and other vulnerable and marginalized groups.

A strong national coordination mechanism for gender equality and women's empowerment that brings state and non-state actors together to advance the women's agenda.



### **C. CONCLUSION**

The Government of Uganda is committed to implementation of the commitments contained in SDGEA. The principles in the declaration have been integrated in the interventions of different sectors at national and local levels. Non state actors such as CSOs and women Organisations do complement government efforts in implementation of the declaration.

The major challenge however is the requirement for annual reporting. Since change in gender equality and women empowerment interventions take some time, the only option is therefore to report on interventions put in place rather than the change in the lives of women.

Secondly, the protocol requires annual report based on the calendar year. However, implementation of intervention in the country is guided by the allocation of financial resources based on the financial years which start from July and end in June of every year. This poses a challenge of sorting out data from country reports.

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