

**SUBMISSION TO THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR) 40TH, SESSION OF THE UPR
WORKING GROUP-THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

“Shadow Report by the Women's Movement on the Situation of Women's Rights in Uganda”

Submitted on behalf of the Women’s Movement by:

**Uganda Women’s Network, The National Association of Women’s Organisation (NAWOU) and the Uganda
Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA Uganda)ⁱ**

14th July 2021

I. Introduction

1. Uganda has participated in two Universal Periodic Reviews; in 2011 and 2016 and received recommendations from UN Member states relating to a cross section of human rights issues, including women's rights. Uganda committed to undertake specific measures to respond to the recommendations to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights in Uganda.
2. This report is prepared by the Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) with consolidated contributions from members and partners. It presents critical perspectives of the progress made by Uganda and CSOs towards implementing the recommendations made by the UPR 2016-2021 period, existing gaps and recommendations for consideration by the Government of Uganda to address the gaps before the next review. The report focuses on different areas including health, education, government and leadership, discriminatory and violence against women.

II. Methodology

3. The report was compiled using the information generated from a desk review of government policies, strategies, plans, reports and studies conducted on the status of women's rights and gender equality in Uganda. This was complimented by the reports from the 3 women's rights organizations on their work towards the promotion of women's rights and gender equality in Uganda during the UPR review period.

III. Implementation of accepted UPR recommendations that relate to women's rights

1.Theme E41 Right to health (General)-Recommendations 115.114, 115.115, 115.119, 115.122

Progress

4. The health sector budget allocation increased from 5.3% during the FY 2016/17 to 8.9 during the FY 2019/2020, and then reduced to 6% for current FY 2021/22, a figure that is lower than the Abuja Declaration of 15%ⁱⁱ.
5. In May 2016, the President of the Republic of Uganda launched the "Every Woman Every Child" Global Health Strategy Commitment where by Uganda committed to ; ensure that comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and New born Care (EmONC) services in hospitals increase from 70% to 100% and in health centres from 17% to 50%; ensure that basic EmONC services are available in all health facilities; and that skilled providers are available in hard to reach areas, reduce the unmet need for family planning from 40% to 20%, increase focused Antenatal Care 4th visit from 42% to 75%, with special emphasis on Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) and treatment of HIV to ensure elimination.
6. The national Safe Motherhood Program (SMP) has guided the promotion of maternal health in Uganda. As part of this program, a number of initiatives were established in the last decade (2010-2020) including building a supportive community network of traditional birth attendants (TBAs) as a backup for a modern maternal health system, and interventions to forecast high-risk obstetric events and strengthen referral systems.
7. The formulation of the national population policy (2020) that seeks to reduce fertility and maternal morbidity and mortality by promoting informed choice, service accessibility and improved quality of care.
8. The health infrastructure network has improved in the country and by 2018, 72% of the populations lived within a five kilometre radius of a health facility of the population lived within a five-kilometer radius of a health facility. Significant progress has also been made in the provision of specialised medical care in gynaecology manifested by the construction of a modern state of the art women's hospital with a capacity of 320 beds at Mulago National Referral Hospital in 2018, to provide specialised maternal and reproductive health services in the country.
9. The provision of free mama kitsⁱⁱⁱ to mothers who deliver at healthy facilities, increasing of awareness on the importance of deliveries at health facilities, improving the prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV, the provision of free insecticide treated mosquito nets to pregnant mothers, increase in breastfeeding by mothers to children under 5 years, provision of nutritional supplements to expectant mothers and malnourished children, the promotion of exclusive breeding up to 6 months and with food supplements until 2 years and the provision of free contraceptives at all government health facilities.
10. Formulation and implementation of a Multi-Sectoral Plan (2015–2020) to increase contraceptive use and integrate interventions in all sectors and at all levels. The Plan prioritises the establishment of youth-friendly corners in health facilities to sensitise young persons, especially girls, on family planning, the National Sexuality Framework (2018), the National Strategy for the Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy and Child Marriage, the Health Sector Development Plan (2015/16—2019/20).

Gaps

11. The sector budget is below the Abuja Declaration recommendation of 15%. Furthermore, the budget allocation to health has often suffered sporadic budget cuts^{iv}, this has further been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic which requires procurement of emergency services to save lives. A low budget contributes to lack of appropriate diagnostic equipment, inadequate staff, lack of basic maternal health commodities and medicines to enable women to give birth safely.^v By Uganda's maternal mortality rate is still high standing at 375 deaths per 100,000 live births by 2019^{vi}. Infant Mortality Rates stands at 56/1000 and 27% of the mothers still deliver outside formal health facilities.^{vii}
12. While there have been efforts to improve the health infrastructure network across the country, over 50%^{viii} of Health Centre IVs are not fully functional. This is attributed to lack of the necessary equipment and a critical gap in human resource. The few available staff is de-motivated by the heavy work load, poor remuneration and work environment which results in negative attitude towards work and patients. Uganda's doctor-patient and nurse-patient ratio is approximately 1:25 000 and 1:11 000 respectively. A Medical Officer earns an equivalent of USD 238 per month in salary while a midwife earns less than USD 200.^{ix} This constrains the ability of women to access emergency services on time, which increases their vulnerability, morbidity and mortality especially in the rural areas^x.
13. Most of the beneficiaries of the available health services are middle class urban women who have access to well-equipped health infrastructure and can afford the services at private facilities. The poor women both in rural and urban areas who are the most vulnerable can hardly benefit from many of the key investments the government has made to improve health services. For instance , the services at the new Mulago women's hospital are provided at a cost including: caesarean section UGX 2,000,000; immunization UGX 890,000; and normal delivery UGX 800,000; on top of consultation fees of UGX 50,000)^{xi}.
14. Limited availability and access to youth friendly SRHR services especially in the rural areas and failure to roll-out of comprehensive sexuality education for adolescents. This exposes adolescent girls to high SRH risks. The available SRH programmes have not adequately addressed the key challenges faced by adolescents, including early sexual debut, child sexual abuse, child marriages and limited sexual and reproductive health information. Teenage pregnancy is still high standing at 25%.
15. Despite the fact that 14% of unintended pregnancies end in abortion and unsafe abortion accounted for more than 8% of maternal mortality^{xii}, government withdrew its Abortion Guidelines (2016) due to opposition from religious leaders.
16. Only 5 percent of the population age 15 years and above are covered under health insurance.

Recommendations:

17. Progressively increase the health sector budget to meet the Abuja declaration thresh hold of 15%. Prioritize an increase in funding services for basic maternal health care, primary health care, human resources, medicines and related commodities to enable women fully enjoy and fulfil their natural maternal functions, a fundamental human right provided for in the Constitution^{xiii}.
18. Lift the ban on recruitment of Health workers in order to reduce the current doctor to patient and nurse to patient ratio to manageable level and work towards achieving the WHO recommended standard. This should be coupled with provision of motivation packages to attract and retain medical personnel especially in rural areas.
19. Re-package and market sexuality education to increase uptake and minimize resistance from religious leaders.
20. Provide youth friendly Reproductive Health Services (ARHS) across the country which address the challenges faced by young women.
21. The 11th Parliament should enact the National Health Insurance Bill in order to provide access to health care for the majority of the population especially women and children.

2. Theme E51 Right to education (General) and Theme E52 Primary Education-Recommendations 115.123-126

Progress

22. The Government of Uganda developed and implemented various policies and plans that promote girls' right to education. These include: the Gender in Education Policy 2016, the Gender in Education Strategic Plan (2015-2020), and the National Strategic Plan on Violence against Children in Schools (2015-2020),

the Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan (2017/18-2019/2020), under which the sector set out to increase access and retention of children to school by undertaking the following: construct 1 primary school at parish level and a secondary school at sub-county level across the country, and a Technical Institute per district, to construct more classrooms in existing schools to meet the standard classroom: pupil ratio and teachers' houses in education institutions, implemented the 2016 Presidential campaign pledge of providing sanitary pads to girls in school and promote proper menstrual hygiene and management, recruitment of qualified teachers, provision of scholastic materials, carry out continuous professional development for teachers, and enforce the provision of midday meals in schools.

23. The design and implementation of National Strategy for Girls' Education (NSGE) in Uganda (2015–2019). The strategy was premised on the national desire to provide an implementation framework, laying out strategies to achieve the goal of narrowing the gender gap in education particularly through promoting girls' education, as a form of affirmative action and addressing the most pressing barriers to girls' full and equal participation in education in Uganda.
24. Government developed and passed of the National Guidelines for Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy and Re-entry of Child Mothers in School Settings (2020) as well as the Gender in Education Strategic Plan (2015-2020) to enable the increase in the enrolment rate of children in primary schools and achieve equal gender opportunities, particularly in setting up policies that strengthen the rights of girls in education and provide education to vulnerable groups and improve the quality of the public education system.
25. Government has undertaken deliberate interventions to promote equal opportunities for boys and girls in Business Technical Vocational Education and Training (BTNET) by mainstreaming gender in the BTNET Strategic Plan 2011-2020 (aka Skilling-Uganda) and providing scholarships for the best performing students.
26. Women rights organizations have worked with schools and communities to provide disposable and reusable sanitary towels, build the capacity of teachers on menstrual hygiene including the making of reusable pads and provision of water and sanitation services to girls in schools.
27. Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) has sustained advocacy for government to increase budgetary allocations to menstrual hygiene. As a result, the School Facilities Grant (SFG) guidelines on construction of school facilities provide for separate toilet facilities for boys and girls in schools, washrooms for girls in primary and secondary schools (need date and source). The MoES developed and popularized the Menstrual Hygiene Management Manual (date) and advocacy is done during the commemoration of the annual menstrual hygiene day.
28. Organizations of women educationists and scientists^{xiv} provided offered scholarships to girls undertaking science subjects at secondary and higher education levels and oriented teachers in STEM on how to support Girls' participation offering STEM disciplines.
29. The Albinism Umbrella carried out school outreaches to promote awareness, conduct eye check-ups and provision of visual aids and scholastic materials for children affected with albinism. There was increase in teachers' awareness about needs for pupils/students with albinism, improved eye care for pupils/students with albinism and an increase in enrolment and decrease in dropouts of children with albinism in/from school.
30. The above interventions led to expansion of educational infrastructure in Uganda. Ninety-two percent of all parishes and 71% of all sub-counties have a government-aided primary and secondary school respectively. This has enabled children including girls to access school within walkable distance. The National Enrollment Rate (NER) was higher for females (80%) compared to males 78%. The NER in urban areas was higher (85%) compared to rural areas (80%), with Kampala having the highest at 88%. The NER for secondary school (13-18 years) for girls was slightly higher (29%) compared to boys (27%). The inequality in primary schools among boys and girls reduced to near parity from 0.96 in 2012/13 to 0.99 in 2016/17. Gender parity for secondary schools increased from 0.89 to 0.95 during the same period. Enrolment for girls in BTNET institutions increased from 14,492 to 15,675 in the year 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 respectively.^{xv}

Gaps

31. Despite the progress made, the gains and efforts made in education have been challenged by the outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic which resulted into lockdown measures resulting into nationwide closer of schools and higher institutions of learning since March 2020. This has resulted into a spike in sexual exploitation, child marriage and teenage pregnancy among school going age.
32. Culture and traditions continue to discriminate between boys' and girls' with beliefs around sex preference, gender roles, which affects girls' performance at higher education levels compared to boys. The situation is further compounded by poor learning environment, with most school facilities unable to

cater for the special sanitary needs of the girls, heavy workload at home and poor academic progress leading to less than 30% completion rate for girls at Primary Level affecting their transition to secondary school level.^{xvi}

33. The high incidences of Violence Against Children (VAC) in schools and institutions of learning, and mainly targeting the girls' child, affecting their performance and stay in school. According to the National Strategic Plan On Violence Against Children in Schools (2015-2020), sexual violence especially against girls is widespread; 77.7% of the primary school children and 82% of the secondary school students experience sexual abuse while at school.
34. Underfunding of the sector limits effective implementation of policies and guidelines to recruit more female teachers and putting-up gender responsive school facilities. There is no documented effort to counter non-compliance by some schools that keep pregnant girls and child mothers from accessing education.
35. The declining quality of education in public schools remains a major concern. Studies reveal that less than 50% of Primary 6 and Primary 7 children can grasp concepts that are taught at Primary 3 levels (MoES 2017).
36. The children in public schools especially in rural areas still suffer hunger which negatively impacts on their performance.

Recommendations

37. Eliminate the prevalence of child marriage which largely impacts on girls, through a review, extension and resourcing of the National Strategy to End Child Marriage 2014/15 – 2019/2020.
38. Develop more effective mechanisms for addressing the risk of violence and sexual harassment of girls in schools.
39. Rollout of the President's Initiative on skilling the Girl Child to enable equal accessibility to vocational institutions and informal skills training by school dropouts and those that never had an opportunity to attend school especially girls from rural and in hard-to-reach areas.
40. Take deliberate actions to invest in adolescent girl-targeted services such as water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and provide sanitary pads for girls.
41. Implement the policy on re-admission to school of the teenage girls who get pregnant and provide incentives to make re-joining schools attractive.
42. Design and implement a School Feeding Programme.
43. Invest in orientation of teachers, students, and pupils to online learning. This will also require intentional investments in ICT services to ensure national coverage of internet at affordable rates by all Ugandans

3.Theme F11 Advancement of women &F14 Participation of women in political and public life – Recommendations 115.50 &115.56

Progress

44. Women's right to participate in politics is guaranteed by the Constitution .^{xvii}.This commitment has facilitated progress in women's representation in parliament, local government, and cabinet. Out of the total number of members of the10th Parliament (2016-2021) ^{xviii} ,35% were women, the same figure registered in the 9th parliament of 2011-2016 but reducing to 33% in the current (11th) Parliament (2021-2026). It should be noted that over 80% of the women that join parliament are on affirmative action seats with less than 5% coming as directly elected constituency MPs.
45. The 10th Parliament (2016-2021) was presided over by a female Speaker who was serving a second term and for the first time, had two successive female Leaders of Opposition (LoP). There was an increase in women's representation and leadership of the Parliamentary Committees. For instance, out of the 28 committees in Parliament, 11 were chaired by women.^{xix} Women also constituted more than 40% in the 3 out of the 4 leadership positions of both the sectoral and standing committees. Four committees had 50% and above women representation in the sectoral committee.
46. At local government level, women constituted 45.7% the councillors, higher than the affirmative action requirement of 30% provided for the Constitution. However, only 3 out of the 112 directly elected district Chairpersons were women.^{xx}
47. Women's representation in Cabinet has progressed from 28.7% in 2016-2020 to the 43% by June 2020.^{xxi} For the 1st time, under the current leadership, women occupy 4 out of the 6 top most executive positions including: Vice President, Prime Minister, 1st and 3rd Deputy Prime Minister and continue to

hold senior ministerial positions in different sectors.^{xxii}. This is attributed to the strong and active women's movement that has persistently lobbied for the increase of women in political leadership as well as the good performance of the women that have occupied similar positions before.

48. The Women's Democracy Group (WDG) comprising of five women organizations^{xxiii} played a major role in preparing women to participate and win elective positions at all levels during the 2016 and 2021 elections. Out of the 3,403 female aspirants 1,488 were elected as Member of Parliament and local government leaders. WDG also has trained, coached and mentored 2,110 women leaders to enhance their influence and effectiveness in Local Councils and supported them to form women caucuses to pursue the gender agenda.
49. WDG developed the women's manifesto (2021-2026), a document that was used to rally women across the country to demand political actors to attend to their issues.
50. In public service, women's representation is low at senior management level. Out of the entire public service of over 250,000 employees, females account for only 33%.^{xxiv} Only 34% of women are directors compared to their male counterparts, and this is compounded at assistant commissioner levels where only 48 out of 209 officers are female (23%). The only position where gender parity is attained is among deputy directors of government agencies. Among town clerks and Chief administrative officers, only 7.1% and 8.6% of officers are female, leaving a huge gender gap in local government administration in the upper echelon of district and town leadership.^{xxv}

Gaps

51. Patriarchal attitudes that view men as natural leaders and this constrains women from seeking positions of leadership or to be considered for elective and appointive positions by the voters and appointing authority.
52. Commercialization of politics yet most women are economically disadvantaged and lack the social networks and sound financial base to outcompete the men. Studies^{xxvi} estimate that aspirants for the position of Member of Parliament spent a minimum of Shs500m (US\$143,000) on campaign expenses in 2021.
53. Many women are hesitant to participate in elective politics because of the high level of electoral violence that targeted them.
54. Many of the women in leadership positions still grapple with balancing "public and gender roles" and being a leader and "a good wife".
55. Cultural biases in recruitment process, lack of qualifications and skills given the already marginalized position of women in education/ training, low self-confidence have stalled women's career progression in public service.

Recommendations

56. Take deliberate action to transform cultures that discriminate women, through for example, enlarging political space to allow in more women participants; and women leaders to mentor and support emerging leaders in both political and public service spaces.
57. The 11th Parliament should formulate progressive electoral reforms to enhance women's participation in political leadership by for example reducing the nomination fees.
58. Conduct public awareness on the benefits of having women as equal participants in political leadership.
59. The Electoral Commission is encouraged to adopt a multi-stakeholder, multi-disciplinary and electoral cycle approach to the prevention of election-related violence, and the creation of an environment conducive to allow women compete and win more open seats.
60. Increase the percentage of women in public service through strategic affirmative action at senior management level.
61. Provide opportunities and encourage women to undertake career development as a basis for promotion and appointment to top positions.

4.Theme F12 Discrimination against women - Recommendations 115.49, 115.51, 115.52, 115.53, 115.57, 115.59, 115.62, 115.69, 115.8 115.90, 116.1, 116.7, 117.37

Progress

62. In 2021, Parliament passed the Succession Act (Amendment) Bill, the Sexual Offences Bill, and the Employment Act (Amendment) Bill and the three legislation await assent by the President to become law. The Succession Act (Amendment) Bill seeks to remove sections in the Succession Act, that discriminate against women and girls and promote their rights to inheritance, the Sexual Offences Bill addresses long

standing issues with regard to sexual offences including marital rape, while the Employment Amendment Bill seeks to: protect the rights for special classes of employees not protected under the Act, including casual employees, volunteers, breast feeding working mothers, domestic and migrant workers; enhance the anti-sexual harassment provisions in the Act and expand the circumstances under which severance allowance is payable by an employer to an employee.

63. Women's rights organizations and activists have continued to advocate for the passing of the Marriage and Divorce bill. The bill that seeks to create a uniform law that protects women's rights during and after marriage has stalled on the floor of Parliament since 2013 and its debate has been frequently deferred to allow further national consultation by the Government.
64. In response to advocacy by women rights organizations, some cultural institutions like that of the Acholi people enacted a bye law to provide for the rights of women and girls to inherit land and other properties from their deceased parents.
65. The Domestic Violence Act (DVA) Coalition composed of several women rights organizations lobbied for the amendment and repeal of laws that discriminate against women, organized and trained community monitors to assess the implementation of laws relating to violence against women such as the Domestic Violence Act, the National Policy to eliminate Violence against Women and its action plan, and the National Land Policy. The findings from the activities of the community monitors have informed advocacy activities at district and national level.
66. Furthermore, the women's right organisations have continued to engage parents in selected districts and trained them on positive parenting, giving equal opportunity boys and girls to attain education, mentored teachers, pupils and students in selected districts on gender equality, GBV prevention and response and leadership skills. This has contributed to improved performance and retention of pupils and students in the selected districts.
67. Mobilised communities and local leaders to promote male involvement as agents of change in violence prevention combat violence against women through initiatives such as SASA methodology, &the model couple approach. This resulted into increased numbers of women participating decision making activities at various levels, access, own and taking control over productive resources such as land, increased incomes and freedom of expression in their households and communities.

Gaps

68. The Marriage and Divorce Bill has not been passed despite concern by the CEDAW Committee in 2010 over the delay.^{xxvii}
69. Although the 2004 and 2010 amendments to the Land Act provide legal protection to a spouse to occupy family land, and to give consent before any transaction on land is affected,^{xxviii} women continue to be dispossessed of land. They are either forced to give consent or are too poor to pursue legal remedies following the unlawful sale.
70. New forms of VAW in form of cyber harassment is on the increase but yet to be recognised as a Human Rights Violation in Uganda. Cyber harassment or Online violence against women (VAW) is a new form of VAW that is curtailing women's rights to information, participation, and expression. Online VAW particularly affects young women and WHRDs, with 45% of female Internet users in the capital city, Kampala, having experienced online threats.^{xxix} Online VAW ranges from stalking, threats, to release of nude photos or so-called revenge porn. Although the government has enacted laws such as the Anti-Pornography Act and the Computer Misuse Act, these laws have instead been used by the State to punish non-conforming women who are seen as 'transgressors' or 'trouble makers' rather than stem the exploitation and abuse of women. As coping measure, many women have chosen avoid the online spaces, thus widening the gender digital divide. Uganda's Data Protection and Privacy Act 2019 lacks gender specific provisions to protect the privacy of women and other vulnerable groups.
71. Government has not implemented Court verdicts and parliamentary reports that have called for a review of discriminatory laws and policies. This includes implementation of constitution court verdict on equality in divorce,^{xxx} court verdict on maternal health^{xxxi} and the recommendations of the parliamentary sexual harassment committee report^{xxxii}.

Recommendations

72. Expedite the President's assent to the Succession Amendment Bill, the Sexual Offences Bill and the Employment Amendment Bill.
73. Parliament should enact the witness protection law and establish a witness protection agency and a witness protection programme to guarantee safety of witnesses before, during and after court proceedings.

74. The Government of Uganda through the Attorney General, should prioritise the Marriage and Divorce bill for a conclusive debate on the floor of parliament and enactment.
75. Mainstream gender into ICT policy formulation and implementation to protect the rights of women and other vulnerable groups.
76. Implement court verdicts on equality in divorce and maternal health and the recommendations of the parliamentary sexual harassment committee report on Sexual Violence in Institutions of Learning in Uganda 2019.

5.Theme F13 Violence against women - Recommendations 115.10-13, 115.18, 115.37, 115.51, 115.53, 115.54, 115.61-67, 115.72, 115.73, 115.75, 115.76, 115.89, 115.91, 115.98, 116.8, 116.9

Progress

77. Uganda criminalized FGM in 2010 with a maximum penalty of 10 years' imprisonment.
78. In 2016 the East African Community (EAC) including Uganda enacted the EAC Prohibition of FGM Act to promote cooperation in the prosecution of perpetrators of FGM through harmonisation of laws, policies and strategies to end FGM in the region.
79. There have been efforts by government and civil society to raise awareness about the dangers of the practice and advocate for its elimination through national events such as the commemoration of the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation that took place on 04/02/2020 and during the 16 days of activism against GBV.
80. The Sexual Offences Bill that was passed in May 2021 broadens the definition of rape to include a range of sexual acts, including marital rape. However, in its current form, the bill raises concern about compliance to women and human rights standards as certain clauses appear to target certain populations such as Commercial Sex Workers (who are predominantly women), PLWHIV, and sexual minorities.
81. Uganda has made strides to facilitate capacity building of health, social, and community workers, CDOs, religious and cultural leaders, and police to ensure an integrated package for GBV prevention and response. In August 2020, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) hosted a training of service providers to handle, investigate, care for survivors, and to ensure justice in Sexual and Gender Based Violence (S/GBV) cases.
82. In 2018, as part of a strategy by the Justice, Law and Order sector (JLOS) to clear case backlog, the Chief Justice established special sessions to clear SGBV cases. The special sessions cleared 788 in 1 month exceeding the target of 650 cases. On average a traditional court session would clear 40 cases in 6 months or more. The sessions targeted improving the experience of survivors/victims of SGBV as they interface with the criminal justice system through emphasis on a victim-centred and gender-sensitive approach; promotion of a coordinated and integrated approach among the role-players in the chain of justice; and strengthening of the investigation, prosecution and adjudication functions in the management of sexual offences.
83. In 2017 a civil society-led initiative supported the judiciary to conduct special sessions covering cases from 11 districts in the northern and Karamoja region. The initiative was located in the JLOS stated strategy of creating specialised divisions and courts for the purpose of improving efficiency and effectiveness of delivery of judicial services. It is reported that 350 cases were cleared in 3 weeks as a result of the initiative.
84. Civil society organisations facilitated a cultural approach to address violence against women and girls through the promotion of positive cultural values and norms adopted by different cultural institutions from different parts of the country. This includes promoting instilling the cultural values of humanness, honesty, respect and strengthen the roles of paternal aunts and maternal uncles in grooming young people before marriage to shun and despise actions that lead to violence against women.
85. The Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda in collaboration with the MGLSD, UN Women and civil society organisations supported the establishment of a Council for Traditional Leaders in Africa (COTLA), Uganda chapter, an umbrella body for cultural leaders from Africa with a mission to end harmful practices against women and girls such as child marriages and female genital mutilation. CCFU's research explores the place of culture and cultural institutions in promoting women's and girls' rights and has organised cultural institutions through regional and grassroots leaders to discuss their role in protecting women and girls' rights^{xxxiii}.

Gaps

86. Enforcement of the law that prohibits FGM remains a challenge due to various reasons including: limited access by police to remote areas where the tradition is fiercely protected, limited awareness of the law among the practicing communities, difficulty in collecting evidence to support prosecution, traditional cutters have no alternative source of income, uncontrolled movement across the national border to Kenya to conduct the practice, as the Kenyan ban on FGM is allegedly not enforced in these areas.
87. Some arrests have been made and cases brought to court in Uganda but implementation and enforcement remains a challenge. Media reports over the last few years suggest there have been many arrests, but few actual prosecutions in Uganda.^{xxxiv}
88. A National S/GBV Action Plan for children 2019/30 was developed. However, as of 2019, the teenage pregnancy rate was 25%. Therefore, government involvement in empowering girls, their families & communities, and support collective action to reduce teenage pregnancies is important.
89. Uganda does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts like investigations, implementation of the Anti-Trafficking Act 2009 and increasing convictions. Notably, implementation levels of these efforts were lower in 2020 compared to the previous year^{xxxv}. i.e., decrease in the numbers of investigations & prosecutions. This was attributed to some reasons such as the Anti-Human Sacrifice and Trafficking Task Force lacking funds, resources and manpower.

Recommendations

90. As a member of the East African Community, Uganda should fully implement the EAC Act to tackle cross-border FGM and facilitate regional cooperation.
91. Put in place mechanism to enable effective reporting, recording and monitor FGM cases in Uganda in order to improve efficiency in enforcement of the law by various stakeholder (policy makers, the judiciary, the police, civil society).
92. Improve procedures for collecting evidence in FGM cases to aid successful prosecutions, dissemination of clear, easy-to-understand and accurate information about the FGM Act, increase, train and encourage judges and law enforcers to fully apply the sentences provided for by the legislation.
93. Conduct an awareness creation on the health impact of the practice among the communities where it is practiced.
94. Provide resources address GBV, especially VAW/G and implementation of the Domestic Violence Act, and facilitate the activities of the Anti-Human Sacrifice and Trafficking Task Force

Conclusion

95. Uganda has made a lot of progress towards the promotion of women's rights and gender equality. This is reflected in the progressive legal and policy framework and mechanisms in place to implement the gender agenda. The role of civil society to complement government's efforts and advocacy initiatives towards gender equality is plausible. However, there is need to consolidate the achieved gains by enacting the pending laws such as the Marriage and Divorce Bill, address the negative social cultural norms and attitudes that compromise women's rights and gender equality, provide adequate resources and training to support effective implementation of policies and programs that benefit women and girls in order to reduce the existing inequalities.

ⁱ The report represents the views of the wider Women's Movement in Uganda but acknowledged the specific contribution of the below listed organisations: Uganda Women's Network (UWONET Action for Development (ACFODE), Albinism Umbrella, Centre for Health, Human Rights and Development (CEHURD), Cross Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU), The Uganda Association of Women Lawyers Uganda (FIDA-Uganda), Femme Forte, Forum for African Women Educationists (FAWE), Kigezi Women in Development (KWID), LANDNet, Legal Aid Service Providers Network (LASPNET), National Association of Women Organizations in Uganda (NAWOU), National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Uganda (NCHRDU), National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda (NUWODU), Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI), Tunaweza Children's Centre, Women Human Rights Defenders Network, Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), Women with a Mission, Women's Democracy Network (WDN), Women's Probono Initiative, Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP), Refugee Law Project (RLP), Forum for Women in

Democracy (FOWODE)

ii Ministry of Health, Annual Health Performance reports

iii Mama Kit is a set of materials given to a mother to be utilized during the delivery process. The contents include sterile gloves, surgical blades, gauze, cotton, polyethylene papers, ligatures, and baby soap.

iv UWONET 2018, Gender Assessment Survey

v Ibid, page 42

vi UNDP, Uganda Human Development Report 2020

vii Uganda Demographic and Household Survey (2016)

viii Ibid page 47

ix The National Women's Manifesto 2021-2026

x Third National Development Plan (NDP III) 2020/21 – 2024/25, Page 8

xi UWONET 2018, Gender Assessment Survey

xii Fact Sheet: Abortion and Post Abortion Care in Uganda, Guttmacher Institute

xiii Article 33

xiv These included Forum for Women Educationists (FAWE), Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), Uganda Women Mathematics and Mathematics Society of Uganda

xv Ministry of Education and Sports (2017), Annual School Census

xvi Uganda Demographic and Household Survey (UDHS 2016).

xvii (Articles 32,78(1b) & 180 (2b).

xviii Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2018), Women and Men in Uganda: Facts and Figures at 74,

https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/06_2018women_and__men_in_uganda_FF2016.pdf

xix GoU-SDGEA (2018): "Annual Report of the Republic of Uganda on the Implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa in 2017". A Republic of Uganda (RoU) progress tracking annual report on the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA); Kampala.

xx Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), 2017

xxi (Parliament of Uganda, June 2021.

xxii The sectors include education, health, energy and minerals, science technology and innovation, Presidency

xxiii Action for Development (ACFODE), Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), Women's Democracy Network-Uganda Chapter (WDN-U), Center for Women in Governance (CEWIGO) and Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) as the coordinating agency

xxiv UWONET 2018, Gender Assessment Survey

xxv Women's Manifesto 2021-2026.

xxvi Alliance for Finance Monitoring (ACFIM), 2019, Unregulated Campaign Spending and its Impact on Electoral Participants in Uganda.

xxvii Paragraphs 11-12, Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of

Discrimination against Women, CEDAW/C/UGA/CO/7

xxviii Sections 38A and 39 Land Act (Amendment) Act 2004 Sections 38A and 39 Land Act (Amendment) Act 2004

xxix xxix Ibid, APC and WOUGNET

xxx Constitutional Petition No.2 of 2002 between Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA-U) and 4 others vs the Attorney General of Uganda, challenging Divorce Act (Cap 249). See

xxxi Constitutional Petition No. 16 of 2011 between Center for Health, Human Rights and Development (CEHURD) and 3 Others vs the Attorney General of Uganda. See <https://parliamentwatch.ug/maternal-health-judgement-implications-for-parliament-and-health-rights-in-uganda/>;

xxxii Parliament of Uganda, "Report of the Select Committee on Inquiry into Allegations of Sexual Violence in Institutions of Learning in Uganda", February 2019. See also <https://parliamentwatch.ug/the-ugly-face-of-sexual-harassment-in-the-work-place/>

xxxiii <https://crossculturalfoundation.or.ug/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Culture-and-the-2017-Marriage-Bill-report-summary-final.pdf>

xxxiv 28 too many. May 2018. Uganda: The Law and FGM. Pg. 7 - 9

xxxv Ibid