



**Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Discrimination  
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**

**Combined eighth and ninth periodic reports submitted by  
Uganda under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2018\*\*\***

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

\*\* The annexes to the present report may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



## Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Foreword .....	3
Acknowledgement .....	4
Acronyms and abbreviations .....	5
I. Introduction .....	8
Legislative developments .....	8
Institutional developments .....	9
Judicial developments .....	9
II. Response to concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women .....	9
Bride price .....	14
Trafficking in persons .....	18
Prostitution .....	19
Child sacrifice .....	19
Maternal healthcare .....	26
Teenage pregnancy .....	26
Cancer .....	27
Mental health .....	27
HIV/AIDS .....	27
Vulnerable and marginalised women, including the Batwa .....	29
Rural women .....	30
Women heads of household .....	30
Land and agriculture .....	31
Access to healthcare .....	31
Rural electrification .....	31
Water and sanitation .....	32
Women with disabilities .....	34
Access to justice .....	34
Child marriage .....	36
References .....	38

## Foreword

The Government of Uganda, under the leadership of the National Resistance Movement (NRM), has been consistent in its pursuit for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Our obligations to the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UN CEDAW) are well embedded in the legal, policy and planning framework of the Country. The provisions of the Convention have been embedded in Uganda Vision 2040, the Second National Development Plan II (2015/16–2019/20), and Sector specific policies and strategies including the Social Development Sector Plan (2015/16–2019/20).

Since the ratification of CEDAW in 1985, Government has demonstrated its commitment to the provisions of the Convention, and continues to honour that commitment by fulfilling the requirement to periodically report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Combined Eighth and Ninth Periodic Report presents the progress made by Uganda in implementing the CEDAW Convention since the last report was presented in 2010.

Progress is reported in line with and in response to the concerns and recommendations contained in the CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations on Uganda's Combined Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Periodic Report as presented to our Government in 2010. The Report was drafted after numerous consultations with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Community Development Officers, technical officers and actors from the grassroots to the national level, and includes in its Annex all supporting tables, diagrams and statistical data.

The Combined 8th and 9th Periodic Report provides a comprehensive assessment of the progress that Uganda has made in implementing the commitments of CEDAW which reflect the collective action and collaboration of all stakeholders in Government, Development Partners, Civil Society, the Private Sector and communities to uphold and protect the rights of women and girls.

On behalf of the Government of Uganda, I wish to pledge our continued collaboration with the CEDAW Committee to ensure the realization of the provisions of the Convention.

Frank. K Tumwebaze (MP)  
Minister

## Acknowledgement

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development has coordinated the process of Government's reporting under the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and is grateful for the collaboration of various stakeholders in the process of consultations, including data and information gathering.

I wish to acknowledge and appreciate the contribution of the Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies that were involved in the process of compiling the Report and, in particular, members of the Task Team and the team that edited the final draft of the document.

I also wish to extend on behalf of Government, our sincere appreciation to the UN Partner Agencies for the technical and financial support extended during the preparation of this Periodic Report. Our gratitude goes to the UN Agencies, namely the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNDP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). We also wish to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, the Inter-Ministerial Committee and the European Union for their technical and financial support towards the completion of this report.

I thank the resource persons and Task Team members for their technical input and expertise.

James Ebitu  
Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

## Acronyms and abbreviations

AMISOM	African Mission in Somalia
BFPs	Budget Framework Papers
BTVET	Business Technical Vocational Education and Training
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CBR	Community-Based Rehabilitation
CCTs	Coordinating Centre Tutors
CDD	Community Driven Development
CEDAW	Convention on all forms of Discrimination against Women
CEHURD	Centre for Health, Human Rights and Development
COBE	Census of Business Establishments
COCTIP	Coordination Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons
CPTCs	Core Primary Teacher Colleges
CSE	Commercial Sexual Exploitation
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CTIP	Combating Trafficking in Persons
DPC	Divisional Police Commander
DVA	Domestic Violence Act
EALA	East African Legislative Assembly
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EIC	Equity in the Classroom Program
EMOC	Emergency Obstetric Care
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
ERP	Economy Recovery Programme
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FOWODE	Forum for Women in Democracy
FY	Financial Year
GBB	Gender Bench Book
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GCIC	Government Citizen Interaction Centre
GEB	Gender and Equity Budgeting
GoU	Government of Uganda
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HRC	Human Rights Council
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

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ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
IOM	International Office of Migration
IPPF	Indigenous Peoples' Planning Framework
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
JLOS	Justice Law and Order Sector
JSI	Judicial Studies Institute
MAGs	Male Action Groups
MARPS	Most-At-Risk Populations
MATIP	Markets and Agriculture Trade Improvement Programme
MDAs	Ministries Departments and Agencies
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MMR	Maternal Morality Ratio
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOJCA	Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
MPs	Members of Parliament
MPS	Ministerial Policy Statements
NAPW	National Action Plan on Women
NCDs	Non-Communicable Diseases
NDP	National Development Plan
NGBS	National Governance Baseline Survey
NGBVD	National Gender Based Violence Database
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
NPGEI	National Priority Gender Equality Indicators
NPHC	National Population and Housing Census
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NSI	National Standard Indicators Framework
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Actions Fund
ODPP	Office of the Directorate of Public Prosecutions
OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OWC	Operation Wealth Creation
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PNSD	Plan for National Statistical Development
PRDP	Peace Recovery and Development Plan

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PRELNOR	Project for the Restoration of Livelihoods in the Northern Region
PTIP	Prevention of Trafficking in Persons
SACCOs	Savings and Credit Societies
SAGE	Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SNE	Special Needs Education
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UDHS	Uganda Demographic and Health Survey
UHRC	Uganda Human Rights Commission
UJCC	Uganda Joint Christian Council
ULRC	Uganda Law Reform Commission
UMWA	Uganda Women Media Association
UN	United Nations
UNCESCR	United Nations Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights
UNGBS	Uganda National Governance Baseline Survey
UNHS	Uganda National Health Survey
UPE	Universal Primary Education
UPPFSPD	Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Food Security Population and Development
UPHIA	Uganda Population Based HIV Impact Assessment
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
UPS	Uganda Prisons Service
USE	Universal Secondary Education
USSD	Unstructured Supplementary Service Data
UWEP	Uganda Women's Entrepreneurship Programme
UWONET	Uganda Women's Network
UWOPA	Uganda Women Parliamentary Association
VAW	Violence against Women
VHT	Village Health Team
WSGS	Water and Sanitation Gender Strategy
YCVF	Youth Capital Venture Fund
YLP	Youth Livelihood Programme

## I. Introduction

1. The Government of Uganda ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1985, without reservations. On 22 July 2010, the Ugandan Government further demonstrated its commitment to achieving gender equality by ratifying the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. (Maputo Protocol).

2. The State recognises the importance of treaty reporting as an important process in the realisation of gender equality in the Country. After the 2010 reporting process, Government disseminated the Combined Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Periodic Report and the CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations to Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), political, religious and cultural leaders, law enforcement agencies, women leaders and youth representatives, among others.

3. In 2011, Uganda underwent its Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the Human Rights Council (HRC). At the UPR, the Council made various recommendations in connection with women's rights, citing as priorities the need for more engagement on SDG 5 (gender equality); SDG 1 (no poverty); SDG 3 (good health and well-being); SDG 4 (quality education); and SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth). The HRC named the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), the Parliament of Uganda and the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) as the principal duty-bearers in the implementation of its recommendations on women's rights, equality and non-discrimination.

4. Government has made efforts to develop its national policy framework in line with the CEDAW SDGs, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the recommendations accepted under the Human Rights Council in the State's last UPR.

5. The above interventions have contributed to significant progress towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. For instance, the Global Gender Gap Index (2018) ranks Uganda as the 43rd out of 149 countries in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment. The improvement was a result of significant progress in promoting girls' education, women's health, and women's participation in decision-making and politics. It is within this context that the Government hereby submits its Combined Eighth and Ninth Report for the period of 2011–2014 and 2015–2018, respectively.

### *Legislative developments*

6. Uganda has enacted gender-responsive laws and regulations, including the 2010 Domestic Violence Act to protect and provide legal solutions for survivors of violence in the home; and the 2011 Domestic Violence Regulations ; the 2010 Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act that criminalises the harmful practice of FGM; the 2012 Employment (Sexual Harassment) Regulations that give effect to the provisions on sexual harassment in the Employment Act; the Public Finance Management Act 2015 which provides for gender and equity responsive planning and budgeting and the 2015 HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Act that protects women and men living with HIV from discrimination on the basis of their HIV status. Parliament of Uganda is considering the Data Protection and Privacy Bill<sup>1</sup> to address the growing privacy concerns of women in cases of revenge pornography. The Bill would provide for the establishment of a Personal Data Protection Office to implement its provisions and promote the protection and observance of women's right to privacy, including online.

<sup>1</sup> Passed in 2019 as the Data Protection and Privacy Act (2019).



*Institutional developments*

7. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) is the Government Agency mandated to design and implement national gender programmes and interventions. Government has continued to strengthen the capacity of MGLSD to realise women's rights under CEDAW. In FY 2018/19, MGLSD was capacitated with Shs161.57Billion or 91.06 per cent of the Social Development Sector Budget, highlighting Government's continued commitment to putting women at the forefront of social development planning and budgeting.

*Judicial developments*

8. The Judiciary has been instrumental in handing down judgements that protect the rights of married and cohabiting women. In *Mifumi & Others v Attorney General and Anor*, the Judiciary outlawed wife inheritance and the practice of demanding a refund of bride price. In *Uganda v Yiga Hamidu & 2 others Criminal Session Case number 005 of 202*, the Judiciary outlawed marital rape and denied the argument that bride price payment had the effect of allowing the husband full rights to his wife's body. In *Hajj Musa Kigongo v Olive Kigongo High Court Civil Suit No 295 of 2015*, the court found that contested property between parties who had cohabited for 27 years should be owned in equal shares under the "doctrine of proprietary estoppel."

## II. Response to concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

**Paragraph 9: The Committee recalls the State party's obligation to systematically and continuously implement all the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and views the concerns and recommendations identified in the present Concluding Observations as requiring the State party's priority attention between now and the submission of the next periodic report.**

9. Government has disseminated these recommendations widely to all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in the official language. The Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) and CSOs have disseminated the recommendations to communities around the country. The recommendations have also been incorporated in the UHRC database which monitors MDA's implementation of human rights recommendations from regional and international mechanisms.

**Paragraph 10: The Committee invites the State party to encourage its National Assembly, in line with its procedures and where appropriate, to take the necessary steps with regard to the implementation of these concluding observations and the Government's next reporting process under the Convention.**

10. The State notes that MGLSD facilitates the training of newly elected Members of Parliament and Local Councillors on gender-responsive legislation. MGLSD has been orienting the Legislature on the importance of gender-sensitive legal reforms. The orientations involve training sessions, dialogue meetings and discussions on the mandate of MPs in the enactment of gender-responsive legislation.

**Paragraph 12: The Committee calls upon the State party to accelerate its law review process to harmonize its domestic legislation with its constitutional principles relating to non-discrimination and equality between women and men and with its obligations under the Convention without delay and within a clear time frame. To this end, the Committee urges the State party to:**

**(a) Expediently enact the Marriage and Divorce Bill, the Sexual Offences Bill and the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Bill;**

11. Government enacted the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Act in 2015. The Marriage and Divorce Bill (2009), now named the Marriage Bill 2017, has been presented before the 10th Parliament and is awaiting debate. The Sexual Offences Bill, 2016 is currently before Parliament. Government is reviewing the five Sexual Offences related laws, namely; the Venereal Diseases (Amendment) Bill, 2012; the Evidence (Amendment) Bill, 2012; the Trial on Indictments (Amendment) Bill, 2012; the Magistrates Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2012; and the Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 2012 in line with developments in the prosecution of sexual and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) offences. The Bills seek, among other things, to remove the requirement for corroboration of evidence by victims of sexual offences. The Bills also legislate for aggravated rape, sexual offences with persons incapable of giving consent, and victim compensation.

**(b) Raise the awareness of legislators about the need to give priority attention to legal reforms in order to achieve de jure equality for women and compliance with the State party's international treaty obligations;**

12. Government of Uganda, in partnership with CSOs, raises awareness by orienting the Legislature on the importance of gender-responsive legal reforms. The orientations involve training sessions, dialogue meetings and discussions on the mandates of MPs in the enactment of gender-responsive legislation. In 2014 and 2016, Government trained and retrained female members of the 10th Parliament on CEDAW and other international, regional and national standards on women's rights. As a result of the awareness raising efforts in the Legislature, Parliament passed gender-responsive laws and regulations as stated in paragraph 6.

**(c) Continue to increase support for law reform through partnerships and collaboration with religious and community leaders, lawyers, judges, unions, civil society organizations and women's non-governmental organizations.**

13. Article 33(6) of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda prohibits 'laws, cultures, customs or traditions which are against the dignity, welfare or interest of women or which undermine their status.' Government has utilised various measures to respect, protect and fulfil its obligation to eliminate discrimination, including through legislative and fiscal reforms, gender mainstreaming strategies, capacity building for women decision-makers and educational and programmatic interventions in MDAs.

14. The law reform process in Uganda is highly participatory and consultative, involving different stakeholders such as Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), Civil Society, the Private Sector, academia, members of the media and Cultural Institutions and ensures that the voices of male and female stakeholders from diverse backgrounds make contributions during the legislative reform process. The Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA) continuously advocates for the passing of gender-responsive legislation. In addition, UWOPA conducts training, dialogues and consultative meetings for the purpose of building the capacity of MPs on gender-responsive law reforms. UWOPA lobbies MPs to support gender legislative

initiatives. These measures have built the capacity of women MPs to push for more gender-responsive legislation, which has in turn led to the increased enactment of gender-responsive laws. As a result of the legal reform process, Uganda has enacted gender-responsive laws and regulations, as stated in paragraphs 6 and 12 above.

15. Parliament of Uganda is considering the Data Protection and Privacy Bill<sup>2</sup> to address the growing privacy concerns of women in cases of revenge pornography. The Bill would provide for the establishment of a Personal Data Protection Office to implement its provisions and promote the protection and observance of women's right to privacy, including online.

16. Other laws on women's rights are awaiting enactment by the 10th Parliament, some of which have delayed due to public sensitivities around culture and religion. These include the Marriage and Divorce Bill (2009) now named the Marriage Bill 2018, The Succession (Amendment) Bill 2018, and the Sexual Offences Bill 2016.

17. Government promotes gender awareness in the Justice, Law and Order Sector (JLOS) in order to foster a legal culture that is responsive and progressively aware of women's issues. The Law Reform Commission has been working with CSOs on the review, reform and passing of key gender equality laws and policies, including the Marriage Bill 2017; Legal Aid Bill 2016; and the Sexual Offences Bill. JLOS also supported MGLD to formulate the National Policy on the Elimination of GBV, thus strengthening Uganda's policy framework on ending Violence against Women (VAW). JLOS has developed gender monitoring indicators in its successive Sector Development Plans and is addressing gender justice through its various plans, targets and programmatic responses.

18. The Judiciary developed the Judiciary Gender Policy and Strategy; – Attaining Gender Equality in Access and Treatment by the Judiciary (2012) to enhance its response to the intersecting forms of discrimination that women face in the criminal justice system. The Judicial Training Institute (JTI) developed a training module for Judicial Officers on gender responsive legislation. The module equips officers in the field of gender justice and human rights. The Judiciary also has at least one female Magistrate Grade 1 in all districts, which enhances access to justice for women who would otherwise be uncomfortable appearing before male magistrates for SGBV and other sensitive cases.

19. The Judicial Studies Institute (JSI) developed the 'Gender Bench Book (GBB) to empower judicial officers with gender-sensitive approaches in the administration of justice. The JSI also offers a curriculum on 'Gender, the Law and Practice in Uganda' that builds judicial officers' capacity to deliver judgments that reflect an awareness of women's contemporary issues and women's right to non-discrimination.

**Paragraph 14: The Committee urges the State party to take all appropriate measures to ensure that the Convention is sufficiently known and applied by all branches of Government and the judiciary as a framework for all laws, court decisions and policies on gender equality and the advancement of women.**

20. Public awareness on the importance of human rights standards and principles is increasing. This is largely due to efforts by Government, CSOs and NGOs in the dissemination and implementation of various laws and policies concerning the rights of women. Some of the dissemination activities include national, district and community dialogues and diverse media engagements.

21. Government developed a five-year Multimedia Strategy in 2016 to address the gaps in knowledge about women's rights in various communities. The Uganda Media

<sup>2</sup> Passed in 2019 as the Data Protection and Privacy Act (2019).

Women Association (UMWA) continually sensitises media personnel and the public about women's rights. UMWA operates a radio station that provides an open platform for women to voice their concerns and discuss issues pertaining to women's advancement and gender equality. Government continues to train media personnel on the importance of gender-responsive reporting.

22. Government has developed Manuals for all Local Councils that contain information on women's rights and legal instruments in order to promote awareness at the grassroots level. 'Popular versions' of gender-responsive legislation have been translated into local languages and disseminated to increase knowledge on the legal framework protecting women.

**Paragraph 16: The Committee recommends that the State party expeditiously strengthen its national gender machinery, in particular the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, in order to ensure a strong institutional mechanism for the promotion of gender equality.**

23. In FY 2018/19, MGLSD was capacitated with Shs161.57 Billion or 91.06 per cent of the Social Development Sector Budget, highlighting the Government's continued commitment to putting women at the forefront of social development planning and budgeting. Government adopted the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy to give effect to Article 33(2) of the 1995 Constitution. The Strategy requires all actors to ensure that gender is integrated into their policies, plans, budgets, programmes and activities. Government enacted the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), 2015 to compel all MDAs to develop gender and equity compliant plans and budgets that specify measures taken to equalize opportunities for women, men, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups. PFMA, 2015 requires all MDAs and LGs to obtain a Certificate of Compliance on Gender and Equity every year, to be issued by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MOFPED) after approval by the EOC.

24. The Annual Report on the State of Equal Opportunities in Uganda FY 2017/2018 illustrates improved attitude towards gender and equity within the various sectors and MDAs, in part due to the PFMA 2015. Development and distribution of gender and equity guidelines by MFPEP to the respective Accounting Officers also enhances responsiveness towards gender and equity planning and budgeting.

25. To strengthen gender mainstreaming mechanisms in MDAs, MGLSD has supported the appointment of Gender Focal Points that analyse gender issues across various sectors, design appropriate interventions and report on the progress of implementation efforts within their respective MDAs. For instance, the Ministry of Education and Sports established a Gender Unit and Gender Technical Working Groups to review commitments, identify priority actions, and provide feedback on developments in the Education Sector. In 2015, the Government developed a multi-sectoral framework for monitoring and reporting on progress in the implementation of regional and international commitments on gender equality, women's empowerment and rights in the different Sectors.

26. The functions of MGLSD are decentralised to the Department of Community Based Services which ensures gender and equity in planning and budgeting at the Local Government level. MGLSD also reaches out to communities through the structures of the National Women's Council, which mobilises women from the grassroots to national level to participate in development processes.

27. The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) has strengthened the production of sex and gender disaggregated statistics to avail information for gender-responsive policy formulation, planning, and monitoring of national progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment. Furthermore, UBOS developed the National Priority

Gender Equality Indicators in 2016, aligning them with the Second National Development Plan, Sector Development Plans and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These indicators guide MDAs in target-setting from a gender perspective and MDAs are held accountable to their delivery.

28. Government aims to mainstream gender analytical skills through the adoption of gender-specific courses in various academic institutions. The courses include Gender and Local Economic Development at Makerere University and Gender and Equity Budgeting at the Uganda Management Institute. To raise awareness of the direct and indirect costs of gender inequality in Africa, UNDP partnered with Makerere University to launch the ‘Master of Arts in Gender-Aware Economics’, the first of its kind on the continent.

29. The School of Women and Gender Studies in Makerere University is partnering with international universities and Government institutions to address gender issues across various spectrums. These initiatives include the ‘Shame-Proofing’ Anti-Poverty Project on pro-poor loan schemes in Hoima and Kagadi Districts; the Gender Statistics Programme (2015–2018) and the Project on a Violence-free Makerere University implemented with CEDOVIP in 2017.

**Paragraph 18: The Committee urges the State party to strengthen its complaints system to ensure that women have effective access to justice, including through the adoption of an accessible complaints procedure to enforce constitutional guarantees and the provisions contained in the Equal Opportunities Act.**

30. In 2010, Government took a major step in enforcing Article 33(6) by passing the Equal Opportunities Commission Act and establishing the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC). The EOC was established to address marginalisation and discrimination based on gender and other grounds such as age, race, colour, ethnic origin, tribe, birth, creed or religion, health status, social or economic standing, political opinion or disability, among others. The EOC monitors, evaluates and ensures that legal entities’ policies, laws, plans, programs, activities, practices, traditions, cultures and customs are compliant with equal opportunities and affirmative action in favour of marginalized groups.

31. The EOC works through Local Government structures to ensure that services are rendered Country-wide. In FY 2018/19, Government allocated the Commission Shs 6.3677Bn for the establishment and operationalisation of four additional EOC offices to decentralise the Commission’s work and increase women’s awareness of its services. By expanding the mandate of the EOC, Government has signalled strongly that discrimination against women and other marginalised groups is neither acceptable nor to be tolerated at the familial, communal or state level.

32. The EOC also established a Tribunal to adjudicate on disputes relating to marginalisation, discrimination and other acts which undermine the principle of equal opportunity. The EOC Regulations (2014) provide guidance on how to lodge a complaint, how the investigations and referral procedures work as well as the nature of awards and decisions of the Commission. Witnesses before the Tribunal are given the same privileges as those appearing before a Court of Law.

33. By the end of June 2017, the Tribunal had held a total of 16 countrywide hearings to address complaints received from the districts of Sheema, Bushenyi, Mbarara, Ibanda, Busia, Wakiso, Mubende and Mukono. Out of 221 complaints registered in this period, 189 were resolved (85 per cent), demonstrating the Commission’s commitment to fast tracking the complaints management mechanisms.

34. The Tribunal received 390 complaints in FY 2017/2018 and responded to 279 (Table 2, Annex 2). Of these, 46 per cent were lodged by females and 54 per cent by males. Women complained the most about access to a clean and healthy environment (76 per cent) and the right to own property (69 per cent). The bulk of the complaints concerned land (147 complaints) while other complaints concerned religious, health, political and ethnic discrimination in relation to land/property employment, access to pension and education. The Tribunal has received over 500 complaints since its establishment (EOC, 2017/2018).

35. To further capacitate the Tribunal in its work, Government granted the Commission its own vote under the Uganda Budget (124) and increased its staffing level from 26 personnel in FY 2013/2014 to 50 in FY 2016/2017. Government's budgetary allocations to the Commission have also increased from \$171,000 in FY 2010/2011 to \$1,714,000 in FY2017/2018.

**Paragraph 20: The Committee urges the State party to put in place without delay a comprehensive strategy, including review and formulation of legislation and establishment of goals and timetables, to modify or eliminate traditional practices and stereotypes that discriminate against women, in conformity with articles 2 (f) and 5 (a) of the Convention. Such measures should include efforts to raise awareness of this subject, targeting women and men at all levels of society, including traditional leaders, in collaboration with civil society.**

36. Cultural norms and stereotypes are responsible for discrimination and gender-based violence and reinforce negative attitudes about women's status and abilities. According to the UBOS Time Use Survey (2017/18), significant segments of the Ugandan population still hold gender stereotypes for example, 81 per cent of female respondents to the survey believed that it was the woman's duty to take care of the household. Most respondents believed that women should take charge of running the household and caring for the sick and elderly (refer to Table 6, Annex 4). More positively, respondents felt that boys and girls under 18 years of age should not be married. However, a higher proportion of respondents felt that marrying off girl children was more acceptable than marrying off a boy child.

37. Article 33(4) of the Constitution provides that women shall have the right to equal treatment with men and that right shall include equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities. To realise this provision, Government has taken steps to progressively effect behavioural change in society to increase appreciation for women's rights.

38. Public awareness of the importance of human rights standards and principles is increasing. This is largely due to efforts by MGLSD, MDAs and NGOs in the dissemination and implementation of various laws and policies concerning the rights of women. Some of the dissemination activities include national, district and community dialogues and diverse media engagements.

#### *Bride price*

39. In 2015, the Constitutional Court of Uganda declared the custom and practice of refunding bride price contrary to Article 31 (3) of the Constitution, which provides that marriage shall be entered into with the free consent of the man and a woman intending to marry.<sup>3</sup> The Court stated that the refund of bride price was a sine qua non for the valid dissolution of customary marriage, as practiced by several tribes in Uganda. Furthermore, the demand for bride price undermines the dignity of a woman

<sup>3</sup> Mifumi (U) Ltd and 12 others v Attorney General, Kenneth Kakuru. (Constitutional Appeal No 2 of 2014.)

and violates Article 33(6) of the Constitution, and in addition, a woman's entitlement to equal rights with men at marriage, during marriage, and at its dissolution (Article 31(1)).

40. Other regions adopted by-laws to reinforce the issue of bride gifts as opposed to bride price, such as the Tororo Bridal Gifts Ordinance which states that a person shall not demand for the refund of bridal gifts as a condition precedent to the dissolution of marriage, and whoever seeks to do so commits an offence.<sup>4</sup>

41. The MGLSD engaged cultural institutions in the drafting of Declarations and Council Resolutions on child marriages, FGM and HIV/AIDs. The Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) developed tools for informal justice systems to assist cultural institutions in their response to VAW. These tools include the Karamojong Cultural Principles and the Case Management Handbook for the KerKwaro Acholi.

**Paragraph 21: The Committee expresses its concern at the continued prevalence of the harmful practice of female genital mutilation in the State party, which is a grave violation of girls' and women's human rights and of the State party's obligations under the Convention.**

42. The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Uganda declared FGM an unconstitutional practice in 2010 after finding that it contravened Articles 21(1), 22(1), 24, 32(2), 33(1) and 44(a) of the Constitution.<sup>5</sup> Government enacted the Prohibition of FGM Act (2010) and later, the Female Genital Mutilation Regulations (2013) that operationalize the 2010 Act.

43. MGLSD developed the National Policy and Action Plan on the Elimination of Gender Based Violence in Uganda (2016), the Referral Pathway for Response to Gender Based Violence cases in Uganda (2013), Guidelines for establishment and Management of GBV Shelters in Uganda (2013) as well as Guidelines for Prevention and Response to FGM (2012). This regulatory framework is an effective tool for State, Non-State and individual actors to combat the practice, leading to a holistic and integrated response to FGM.

44. Government in partnership with NGOs, Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), cultural institutions and UN Agencies has rolled out FGM abandonment campaigns and educational programmes. MGLSD, with support from UNFPA, developed a Training of Trainers Manual that aims to enhance the quality of FGM prevention dialogue at the grassroots level. To promote inclusivity, Government is working in concert with civil society and cultural leaders to conceptualise alternative rites of passage that do not involve FGM.

45. The National FGM Alliance was established to address the structural limitations in the implementation of the Prohibition of FGM Act, which include the limited access of police and poor understanding of the Act in remote and other practicing communities, difficulties in collecting evidence and an increase in cross-border FGM and 'vacation cutting' as a means of avoiding prosecution.

46. Government is ensuring that perpetrators of FGM are called to account in the courts and has established, together with development partners, 13 GBV shelters around the Country including in the Sebei and Karamoja sub-regions (Figure 5, Annex 3). The shelters provide clinical services, legal protection, counselling, psychosocial support and reintegration services. FGM/C prevention and management

<sup>4</sup> Local Governments (Tororo district) (Regulation of the Exchange of Bridal Gifts) Ordinance, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Law & Advocacy for women in Uganda v Attorney General (Constitutional Petition No. 8 of 2007) [2010] UGCC 4 (28 July 2010).

has also been integrated into reproductive health programmes that treat STI infections, fistula and other negative consequences of FGM.

47. The reporting of FGM cases, arrests and prosecutions has increased. Since 2013, at least 62 arrests have been made, with 33 prosecuted and sentenced across the six districts where FGM is practiced the most.

48. Due to government's sustained efforts, in 2011 attitudes about the continuance of FGM were reportedly on the decline, with 91 per cent of women supporting its eradication compared to 9 per cent that believed it should continue (UDHS 2011). Of all survey respondents, the youth denounced the practice the most, signalling that the harmful culture of FGM will come to a halt in the future (UBOS, 2017).

**Paragraph 24: The Committee urges the State party to give attention, as a priority, to combating violence against women and girls and adopting comprehensive measures to address such violence, in accordance with its general recommendation No. 19.**

49. Government has adopted a multi-sectoral approach to respond to violence against women as a social, economic and human rights concern, in the recognition that VAW, addressed under the broader term 'Gender-Based Violence' (GBV), has contributed to gender inequality in Uganda. In August 2016, Government approved the National Policy and Action Plan on Elimination of GBV. The Policy is a framework towards the attainment of a zero-tolerance environment of GBV and a comprehensive response to the needs of survivors.

50. MGLSD has established a National GBV Database (NGBVD) within the framework of the GBV Policy and Action Plan. This data is vital for the uniformity of policy formulation and paramount in the mainstreaming of gender issues. This has enhanced MGLSD's capacity to provide leadership and coordination in the country's GBV response.

51. In 2011, Government developed the Domestic Violence Regulations to enforce the Domestic Violence Act (2010). The Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs is revising the Sexual Offences Bills.

52. Despite this framework, the prevalence of SGBV in Uganda remains high with defilement constituting 50 per cent of all serious crimes reported to the Uganda Police Force (UPF) in 2017. The UPF Annual Crime Report 2017 shows that defilement cases increased by 34 per cent from 2015 to 2016 (13,118 to 17,567 cases respectively) while rape cases increased from 1,419 to 1,572 in the same timeframe. More positively, domestic violence cases reduced by 54 per cent from 2011 to 2016, from 358 to 163 respectively (UDHS 2011/16).

53. To facilitate the timely disposal of SGBV cases, JLOS piloted the Special Court Sessions. The Special court Sessions commenced on 12th November 2018 and entailed handling of GBV cases at specific locations at High Court and Chief Magistrate level at 14 courts. In preparation, JLOS trained stakeholders such as the Police, Prisons, Office of the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (ODPP), Uganda Law Society (ULS), the Government Analytical Laboratories and judicial officers on how to handle SGBV cases. JLOS conducted media campaigns on the Special Court sessions to raise awareness of the court sessions in 13 districts by November 2018. The court disposed of 788 cases on SGBV within a period of one month thus reducing the backlog of pending cases. Processes are underway to institutionalise this court as a permanent feature of gender justice.

54. ODPP established the Children, Gender and Sexual Offences Department in 2015. The ODPP developed a handbook to improve Prosecutor's treatment of children who come into contact with the criminal justice system, including SGBV survivors.



The handbook includes guidelines on the handling of children, social reintegration and follow-up mechanisms upon reintegration. Additionally, it guides ODPP on how to handle cases involving children in conflict with the law, children in conflict zones, child trafficking for sexual exploitation, children with disabilities and other situations in which the girl child is more vulnerable.

55. ODPP also commissioned a review of its victim assistance, witness protection and complaints handling mechanisms. The review led to the development of the Prosecutors Guidelines to guarantee Witness protection. The guidelines will benefit GBV survivors in the criminal justice system and enhance their protection before, during and after criminal justice processes. Additionally, Government established 13 Shelters to provide temporary accommodation, legal support, counselling and referral services to SGBV survivors.

56. Uganda Police Force (UPF) introduced a module on GBV in the Training Curriculum for new entrants into the force. Police Form 3A was amended to include clinical officers, nurses and midwives under the category of health workers authorized to appear as expert witnesses in GBV cases. Within UPF, the Criminal Investigations Directorate now includes an SGBV Department.

57. In order to address provision of psychosocial support to GBV survivors, MGLSD introduced the National Guidelines for the Provision of Psychosocial Support for GBV Victims/Survivors. The Guidelines provide minimum standards for duty bearers and service providers in their treatment of GBV survivors.

58. MGLSD developed the Introduction to Psychosocial Care and Support Training Manual (2015) to standardise service providers' response to the psychosocial needs of GBV survivors. These Guidelines are being implemented in conjunction with the Ministry of Health's Psychosocial Counselling and Mental Health Support for GBV Survivors/Victims (2010). MGLSD has been capacitated with Shs. 3,000Bn to continue the implementation of VAW programmes in FY 2018/19 – 2022/23.

59. Within the High courts, an audio-visual link system has been introduced to allow GBV survivors to sit in a different location from the accused, reducing the psychological burden on women appearing in SGBV cases and the number of cases dropped when women fearing reprisal refuse to attend court to give evidence.

**Paragraph 26: The Committee calls upon the State party to continue to fully involve women in the peacebuilding, reconciliation, rehabilitation and recovery processes, including in the context of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan.**

60. Uganda's legal and regulatory framework has remained open and accepting of internally displaced persons, refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons. Government has partnered with CSOs to develop district local action plans to implement the National Action Plan (NAP) on UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1325, 1820 and The Goma Declaration. The Plan, developed in 2008 and revised in 2011, aims to ensure the protection of women and girls from GBV and to increase representation and participation of women at all levels of decision-making in conflict resolution and peace processes. The MGLSD has reviewed the implementation of the Second NAP to inform the development of the Third NAP on Women, Peace and Security. Government put in place the First, Second and Third Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) and the Third Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF, 2015–2020) to resettle and economically empower those displaced by the conflict, including women. NUSAF aims to support and build the resilience of poor and vulnerable households by engaging women in rearing animals, metal work and fabrication, carpentry and poultry. PRPD 3 sets out to consolidate peace, develop the economy and reduce the vulnerability of displaced persons. PRDP and NUSAF have alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms

to address concerns regarding land and ethnic conflict. The Transitional Justice Policy provides for legal aid, livelihood support, medical assistance, security and shelter for SGBV survivors.

**Paragraph 28: The Committee urges the State party to fully implement article 6 of the Convention, including through the effective implementation of the new legislation on trafficking, ensuring that perpetrators are punished, and victims adequately protected and assisted.**

61. The 1995 Constitutional National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy provide that Uganda's foreign policy shall be based on, among other principles, "the prohibition of all forms of domination, racism and other forms of oppression and exploitation." The Constitution also protects children from social or economic exploitation under Article 34(4), including in the employment or performance of work that "is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with their education or to be harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development."

*Trafficking in persons*

62. In Uganda, trafficking occurs at both the national and transnational levels, typically in the form of sexual commercial exploitation domestic servitude of girls and women in the 13–24 age range, child labour and forced begging in Kampala and other urban centres. Most at risk are refugee women and asylum seekers, children in rural areas and prisoners or women in pre-trial detention. Many Ugandan women are also fraudulently recruited for employment opportunities in other countries, where they are exploited for commercial sex and forced labour.

63. The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (PTIP) Act (2009) provides for an Office under the Minister of Internal Affairs to coordinate, monitor and ensure the implementation of the Act. The Coordination Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons (COCTIP) was established in 2012 to serve as the National Rapporteur on issues related to TIP and is composed of an Inter-Ministerial Task Force which implements its programmes.

64. The Task Force which includes women's NGOs prepares the National Plan of Action on prohibition of TIP; formulates policies to support and protect victims of TIP; updates the national data bank on TIP cases and; trains and engages in dialogue with MDAs about best practices in anti-trafficking efforts. In addition, COCTIP has developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to guide stakeholders and a National Awareness Strategy on the prevention and management of TIP.

65. The MGLSD vets labour recruitment agencies, terminating the licenses of agencies that are non-compliant with regulations and screening persons entering and leaving the country. Enforcement agencies are trained on practical investigation techniques, victim identification and handling, the role of law enforcement institutions in the prevention of TIP and on the development of efficient national strategies to counter TIP in accordance with international standards.

66. Government has put in place agreements and arrangements to ease the repatriation of TIP survivors. These survivors have access to special travel documents and are authorised to hold residence in a host country if repatriation would result in greater adversity. In addition, JLOS has been capacitated with UGX 18.325 million to improve the protection of TIP victims. The State is increasingly prosecuting cases of trafficking in persons. More transnational TIP cases were reported in 2018 compared to 2017, with increased prosecution of child trafficking cases (16 cases in 2018 compared to 11 in 2017) and trafficking in adults' cases (254 cases in 2018 compared to 123 in 2017). Of 286 registered cases/incidents in 2018, 77 were taken

to court, with 19 suspects convicted in 14 cases (MIA 2018). Refer to Figure 11 and Tables 7–11, Annex 5.

#### *Prostitution*

67. Although profiting from the proceeds of prostitution is illegal under the Penal Code Act (Cap. 120), prostitutes are beneficiaries under the national framework to prevent the exploitation of women. The underlying root causes that pressure women into the latter are addressed through various Government programmes that aim to ensure the economic empowerment of women, eliminate GBV and alleviate other predisposing factors to prostitution. Ultimately, women engaging in sex work benefit from the same Government interventions accorded to all women, despite the prohibition of the practice. Ministry of Health also provides information and services including contraceptives and care and support for HIV and AIDS to Key Priority Populations, including commercial sex workers.

#### *Child sacrifice*

68. The Children (Amendment) Act of 2016 criminalises all rituals that result in child sacrifice. The Penal Code Act criminalises the act of murder; with provisions that apply to child sacrifice. Government developed a National Action Plan against Child Sacrifice in 2011 and is implementing it across the various sectors, in cooperation with relevant MDAs. The Police and ODPP have increased arrests and prosecution of acts relating to child sacrifice. Convictions of the crime have increased in the High Court, with over 20 convictions evidenced from 2010 to 2014.

69. Through children’s clubs and societies, Government has hosted school sensitisation campaigns on child safety, imparting advice on safety precautions that children must take on their way to and from school. The Uganda Human Rights Commission has supported rights awareness and safety through its Peace Clubs in School and NGOs are using their advocacy platforms to campaign for an end to child sacrifice. MGLSD established a national Child Helpline (116) to facilitate the reporting of violence against children including suspected incidents of child sacrifice and abuse. Government and private media continue to raise awareness on child sacrifice.

**Paragraph 30: The Committee recommends that the State party pursue sustained policies aimed at the promotion of women’s full and equal participation in decision-making as a democratic requirement in all areas of public, political and professional life.**

70. Article 1(1) of the 1995 Constitution states that “all power belongs to the people who shall, through regular free and fair elections, express their will and consent on how and by whom they shall be governed.” Article 59 of the Constitution guarantees this by according every person the right to vote. Government has significantly increased its focus on the promotion of women’s full and equal participation in decision-making in all areas of public, political and professional life.

71. The State remains committed to meeting and exceeding the minimum threshold of 30 per cent for women in leadership. The current 10th Parliament has 157 female Members of Parliament (MPs), which is 34.86 per cent; 76.25 per cent of these being direct women representatives.

72. The 10th Parliament featured two female leaders of the Opposition for the first time and the Speaker for the 9th and 10th Parliaments has been female. Increasingly, women are leading parliamentary committees, with 11 committees out of 28 being chaired by women. Additionally, women make up 46 per cent of Chairpersons of the standing committees and 41 per cent of standing committee Vice Chairpersons. The

first Member of Parliament for a constituency established in 2015 to ensure the participation of the marginalised Ik people, is a woman.

73. Currently, there are 33 senior ministers, 12 of whom are women (36 per cent). Out of 46 ministers of State, 14 are women (30.43 per cent). Within the opposition shadow cabinet, eight out of 39 shadow ministers (20.5 per cent) are women. Within Local Government (LG), women's representation has consistently remained above the 30 per cent Constitutional requirement. In 2016, women represented 45.7 per cent of all local government representatives (27,755 persons). This is attributable to the affirmative action provision in the Local Governments Act, which stipulates that one third of all Local Government Councils shall be women.

74. Within the Judiciary, the Chief Registrar is female. Women represent 44 per cent of judges of the High Court, 36 per cent in the Court of Appeal and 44 per cent in the Supreme Court. In comparison with 46.7 per cent male composition in the Deputy/Assistant Registrar positions, female composition stood at 53.3 per cent. The composition of other Judiciary positions e.g. in administration, finance etc. is fairly balanced at 49.4 per cent for women and 50.6 per cent for men.

75. The Office of the Auditor General's Gender Audit in 2013 noted that women held only 33 per cent of the positions in Government and men held 67 per cent. The composition of women across different occupations was also low.<sup>6</sup> By 2014, this figure had risen notably to 44 per cent.<sup>7</sup> Men dominated the technical fields of engineering and works (94 per cent); accounts (73 per cent); auditing (80 per cent) and survey and Architecture (77 per cent) while women who dominated the secretarial (92 per cent) and housekeeping fields (55 per cent).<sup>8</sup> The Ministry of Public Service disseminated guidelines in 2011 which call for the appointment of gender focal points to ensure compliance with gender mainstreaming standards.

76. Female representation in Government positions consistently remained above the 30 per cent threshold (Table 11, Annex 3). The EOC Report on the Status of Women Employment in the Public Sector in Uganda found that women account for 39.8 per cent of the staff in 21 Ministries compared to 60.2 per cent of men. 3 Ministries (i.e. MGLSD, Office of the President and MOJCA) have female staffing levels of 50 per cent and above.

77. The State Party has made progress in integrating women into the armed forces, a historically male-dominated field. Temporary special measures being implemented by Uganda People's Defence 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 employees 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 deployed to peace-keeping operations.

78. Lastly, UPDF's fully-fledged Gender Unit, the Directorate of Women Affairs, is headed by a female officer at the rank of a Colonel, the second highest rank among female offices. In January 2017, Government appointed the first female Major General in the UPDF, paving the way for better representation of women in the public sphere and creating a role model for women looking to work in stereotypically male professions such as defence.

79. Representatives of Government at international levels are mainly Ambassadors and High Commissioners and the number of women holding these positions has been

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<sup>6</sup> Office of the Auditor General, 'Report on Government's Efforts to Achieve Gender Equality'.

<sup>7</sup> FOWODE, 2014, 'Women in Leadership Positions in Uganda'.

<sup>8</sup> Office of the Auditor General 'Report on Government's Efforts to Achieve Gender Equality' 2013.

increasing. By August 2014, 13 (23 per cent) out of a total 57 Ambassadors and High Commissioners were female.

80. In FY 2012/2013, a total of 69 female officers were deployed to the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), constituting the second highest deployment of women since the start of the Mission. Ugandan women represent the State at the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA); the African Union (AU); Parliamentary Committee on Peace; the Amnesty Commission; the Human Rights Commission; the Disarmament Committee.

81. For every deployment in UPDF, at least 10 per cent must be women. However, out of 228 personnel deployed in foreign missions, only 51 (22.3 per cent) were women. Women in command positions constituted only 17.3 per cent compared to men, who represented 82.7 per cent. UPDF continues to recruit and deploy women in Peace Keeping Missions and is institutionalising a zero-tolerance policy for GBV to ensure women's full enjoyment of their right to represent the State at the international level. UPDF is employing its Military Police (MP), Military Intelligence (MI), Counter Intelligence (CI) and Special Investigations Branch (SIB) to conduct investigations, arrests and prosecution of perpetrators of GBV in conflict areas.

82. Ugandan women have been empowered to serve in international organisations such as the United Nations. In 2013, the former Vice President of Uganda was appointed as the UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa. Until 2014, the UN Secretary-General's Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders was a Ugandan woman.

**Paragraph 32: The Committee urges the State party to enhance its compliance with article 10 of the Convention and to raise awareness of the importance of education as a human right and the basis for the empowerment of women.**

83. Article 30 of the Constitution of Uganda recognises education as a fundamental human right. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) introduced Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997 and Universal Secondary Education (USE) in 2007 to provide affordable education to all school going children. The Gender in Education Policy of 2017 was developed in line with the Education Sector Strategic Plan which guides gender mainstreaming in the Sector. The policy is complemented by other initiatives and strategic plans that address barriers to girls and women's education, including the Gender in Education Strategic Plan 2015–2020 and the National Strategy for Girls' Education 2014–2020. Government-aided primary schools also educate refugees and girl children from surrounding regions (refer to Tables 23 and 24, Annex 7).

84. In 2012, MOES established a Gender Unit to coordinate and provide technical support for gender mainstreaming in the Education Sector and made budgetary provisions to facilitate the work of the Unit. At the Local Government level, legislation is being passed in the form of by-laws, ordinances and Council Resolutions to end child labour, child marriages, teenage pregnancies and FGM. These efforts are important because they support access to education and address gender-specific barriers to the education of women and girls.

85. Government's introduction of USE in 2007 had the positive effect of increasing girls' enrolment at the secondary school level by 136.2 per cent. USE gross enrolment increased from 518,931 in the year 2000 (290,176 boys; 228,755 girls) to 1,225,692 in 2010 (654,971 boys; 570,721 girls). Female enrolment in Secondary School was 46.9 per cent of the total enrolment in 2016 (MoES Factsheet, 2016). In 2015, enrolment at the secondary school level stood at 1,391,250 (738,391 boys; 652,859 girls, or 46.90 per cent). Secondary School pass rates improved from 93.3 per cent in 2006 to 95 per cent in 2016 (MoES Factsheet, 2016).

86. Literacy rates remain higher in men (80.8 per cent) than women (67.2 per cent) (UNHS 2016/17). To address this imbalance, Government has invested heavily in education for the girl child and has attained gender parity in primary school enrolment. In 2016, out of a total enrolment of 8,655,924 pupils in primary education, 4,294,473 (49.6 per cent) were male and 4,361,451 (50.3 per cent) were female. Girls' primary education completion rates have also increased significantly, from 42 per cent in 2006 to 63.4 per cent in 2016 compared to boys who had 55 per cent and 59.7 per cent (MoES Factsheet). In 2016, the primary seven pass rate was 85 per cent for girls and 89 per cent for boys.

87. Through the School Facilitation Grants (SFGs), Government continues to construct, expand and renovate school structures (including girls boarding and sanitation facilities) to address the needs of the girl child. In 2012, an Inter-Sectoral Committee was established to tackle violence against children in schools. The Committee developed the Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response Guidelines on Violence against Children in Schools. These Guidelines are being implemented alongside the National Strategic Plan on the Elimination of Violence against Children in Schools (2015–2020).

88. Government through the MGLSD, established a national toll-free Child Helpline (Sauti 116) to facilitate the reporting of and response to violence against young persons. The helpline provides children with information and links them with child service providers across the country. Additionally, The Education Sector introduced a set of Guidelines on Teenage Pregnancy and HIV that provide for the re-admission of girls into their respective school communities after pregnancy.

89. Government is implementing the Equity in the Classroom (EIC) programme to facilitate equal participation of girls and boys in the classroom. Under the programme, teachers are provided with technical support, training and sensitization about specific issues affecting girl-child education and teaching methods that progressively 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.

90. The National Integrated Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy guidelines mandate parents to ensure protection for their children against harm and abuse while moving to and from school. The number of ECD centres has progressively increased over the years, from 4,956 in 2014 to 6,798 in 2016 (refer to Figure 14, Annex 7). The enrolment of female students in these centres is higher than that of male children, (MoES 2016; Figure 15, Annex 7). In 2016, women dominated the ECD sector as teachers (18,887 compared to 2,854 men). Refer to Table 22, Annex 7.

91. At the tertiary level, gender differences in subject uptake remains pronounced. While men and women are almost equally enrolled in computing, economics, arts, management and the social sciences, males continue to dominate the agriculture industry (81 per cent), forestry (72 per cent), sciences (69 per cent), veterinary medicine (82 per cent) and education (75 per cent). Furthermore, female lecturers constituted only 30 per cent of all lecturers in Uganda's public universities (EMIS 2015).

92. Government enacted the Higher Education Students Financing Board Act (2014) that provides loan schemes to enhance young women's access to tertiary education. The overall enrolment of females in tertiary education improved slightly from 43.2 per cent in 2007 to 44.3 per cent in 2016 (MoES Factsheet).

93. Government has undertaken deliberate interventions to promote equal opportunities for boys and girls in Business Technical Vocational Education and Training (BTVET) by mainstreaming gender in the BTVET Strategic Plan 2011–2020 (aka Skilling-Uganda) and providing scholarships for the best performing students.

94. Government is implementing the Presidential Initiative on Science and Technology in conjunction with the Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI), the Uganda National Council of Science and Technology (UNCST) and Makerere University Institute of Science. These initiatives have led to the increased enrolment of girls in BTVET from 28.5 per cent in 2007 to 34.6 per cent in 2016 (MoES Factsheet).

95. The District and Sub County Local Governments are responsible for ensuring that access roads to schools are passable, safe and properly maintained. Districts are mandated under the Local Governments Act Cap, 243, and the Presidential Directive of 2010 to provide adequate road infrastructure.

96. In the last four years, Government has progressively worked towards achieving the policy targets on minimum distance to ECD centres and primary schools. Government adopted the education sector guidelines which provide that “no child should travel for more than 4 km to reach a school”. Government continues to encourage private investors to establish ECD centres within the proximity of primary schools, hence ECD centres and schools have been set up within the guiding framework as shown in Figure 14, Annex 7.

97. In 2016, MoES committed US\$10 million to the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples’ Planning Framework (IPPF) which addresses the reluctance of Ik women to send their girl children to school (MoES, IPPF, 2016). MoES’ Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups Framework for the USE expansion project of 2019 is being developed in consultation with the Benet, Batwa, Ik and the Karimajong in the districts of Bundibugyo, Kabale, Kasese, Moroto, Kaabong, and Kween.

98. Government facilitated the construction of 22 boarding schools in Karamoja, with assistance from development partners. Promoting girl child education in Karamoja has been prioritized given that it is a hub for FGM and early marriage. Female hostels have been constructed in seven vocational training institutions across the Karamoja, Rwenzori and Albertine regions (MGLSD, 2019:48). Lastly, Government has rehabilitated five national teacher training colleges in Unyama, Kabale, Mubende, Kaliro and Muni to promote safe and accessible learning environments. These training colleges have been fitted with female-friendly facilities; including incinerators, childcare centres and facilities for women with disabilities and supported to design and implement gender responsive programmes.

**Paragraph 34: The Committee requests the State party to ensure equal opportunities for women in the labour market, in accordance with article 11 of the Convention.**

99. Women are entitled to work in the same conditions as men, for equal remuneration and with the same rights and protections as their male counterparts. Article 33(3) of the Constitution provides for the protection of women and their rights, taking into account their unique contributions to society in the form of unpaid care work and, where applicable, their status as mothers in the community. Article 40 of the Constitution empowers Parliament to enact laws that ensure safe working conditions for all and Article 40(4) provides that employers shall accord women protection “during pregnancy and after birth, in accordance with the law.” The Government has also ratified various international human rights conventions that protect the rights of workers, including multiple ILO Conventions.

100. MGLSD through the Directorate of Labour, Employment and Occupational Safety and Health is responsible for labour administration in the country. The Occupational Safety and Health Act (2006), the Employment Act (2006), the Employment Regulations (2011), the National Employment Policy for Uganda (2011) and the Employment (Sexual Harassment) Regulations (2012) all aim to ensure

decent, remunerated employment for all persons, including women. Under the Employment Act, women are entitled to maternity leave of sixty working days on a fully paid basis and the right to return to their jobs.

101. The Employment Regulations of 2011 which operationalize the Employment Act (2006), provide for access to social security, paternity and maternity leave, annual leave with pay, protective gear where applicable at work, medical assistance and non-discrimination in all workplaces. The Regulations also empower Labour Officers in Local Governments to conduct labour inspections and ensure that employers meet the abovementioned workplace standards. To eliminate horizontal and vertical occupational segregation and promote equal opportunities for women and men in the work place, Government put in place the National Employment Policy which stipulates that all persons shall work in free, equal and dignified conditions, for fair remuneration.

102. The Employment (Sexual Harassment) Regulations (2012) operationalise Section 7 of the Employment Act. The Regulations state that all employers shall have a written sexual harassment policy, establish a Sexual Harassment Committee and complaint mechanisms and procedures to encourage proper reporting and handling of sexual harassment cases in the workplace. Further, Section 9(4) of the Employment Act requires that every District Service Commission shall appoint a Labour Officer and such other Officer for purposes of administering the Act. Hence, cases of sexual harassment can be reported to the MGLSD at both the district and headquarter level. This ensures that sexual harassment cases are taken seriously at all levels of governance and encourages zero tolerance of sexual harassment in workspaces around the Country.

103. Government has established strong partnerships with CSOs and the private sector in its efforts to address the needs of women entrepreneurs, who constitute 52.4 per cent of the 16.3 million working-age population (Employment Diagnostics Analysis Report, 2018). Women in paid employment constituted 33 per cent of the employed female population, whereas those in self-employment made up 51 per cent. Figure 18 and Table 25, Annex 8 provide a detailed comparison of women and men employment in various sectors.

104. Together with UN partners, Government established the Green Jobs Programme which targets both educated and uneducated women and youth in the promotion of environmentally friendly and sustainable work. Under this project, women are empowered with tools to engage in “jua kali”<sup>9</sup> enterprises such as the manufacturing of eco stoves, recycling, garbage collection and tailoring.

105. In 2018, Government piloted a Graduate Volunteer Scheme (GVS) targeting youth with graduate diplomas into a one-year volunteer placement with a host organisation. The GVS required that 50 per cent of beneficiaries be young women. Additionally, the Skilling the Girl Child programme empowers girls with practical skills such as tailoring, weaving, embroidery, knitting, shoemaking, bakery, etc.

106. The Local Content Policy (2007) places priority on the employment of Ugandans, on the contracting of local companies in capital projects and the use of locally manufactured goods. The policy principally aims to benefit Small and Medium sized enterprises thus targeting women entrepreneurs. The Policy is being implemented with 67 per cent of contract sums being awarded to local enterprises, a rise from 61 per cent in 2016/17. Refer to Figure 27, Annex 14.

107. Over 95 per cent of women work in the informal sector and constitute 48 per cent of employees in informal businesses (EDA 2018). EOC in its assessment of

<sup>9</sup> Small-scale artisanal work, such as making crafts, textiles, etc.



Budget Framework Papers (BFPs) and Ministerial Policy Statements (MPS) has highlighted the need for interventions in the informal economy.

108. The EOC has audited programmes such as the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) and the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) to gauge their compliance with equal opportunities standards regarding the distribution of services across the districts in Uganda (EOC, 2017/18). The results of the EOC's studies in this area will contribute greatly to the streamlining of the Government's response to female workers in the informal economy. The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MTIC) is equipping street vendors with artisan skills and supporting vendors in the formalisation of their businesses.

109. The Ministry of Local Government (MOLG) with assistance from the African Development Bank invested in the construction of Central Markets for traders in the municipalities of Kampala, Jinja, Mbale, Lira, Gulu, Hoima and Fort Portal under the Markets and Agriculture Trade Improvement Programme (MATIP). The intervention aimed at upgrading and redeveloping urban markets to better suit the needs of traders and to alleviate the current structural concerns such as poor sanitation, lack of accessibility for persons with disabilities and lack of childcare facilities.

110. Government, in collaboration with International Labour Organisation (ILO) developed the Decent Work Country Programme (2013–17) to enhance maternity protection for women working in the informal sector. The Employment (Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers Abroad) Regulations (2005) and Guidelines on Recruitment and Placement of Migrant Workers Abroad (2015) provide guidance on licensing companies, recruitment and protection for migrant workers. These Regulations aim to prevent trafficking in persons and to make migrant work safer for Ugandans.

**Paragraph 36: The Committee calls upon the State party to take all necessary measures to improve women's access to health care and health-related services, within the framework of the Committee's general recommendation No. 24 on article 12.**

111. The 1995 Constitution accords all Ugandans the right of “access to education, health services, clean and safe water, work, decent shelter, adequate clothing, food security and pension and retirement benefits.” Uganda Vision 2040 identifies the need to develop a Universal Health Insurance System through public-private partnerships.

112. Government has developed various strategic plans to address the intersecting health needs of Ugandan women and promote accessibility to a wide range of healthcare solutions in all districts, including hard to reach areas. The Health Sector Development Plan (HSDP 2015/16–2019/20), the National Health Policy (NHPII 2010) and the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan (2015–2020) are the key guiding policies on healthcare provision for women.

113. At 64.2, the life expectancy of women in Uganda is higher than the 62.2 years of men (NPHC, 2014). Although the Ugandan population remains a predominantly youthful population, the life expectancy of women has been steadily increasing from 47 in 1969 to 50 in 2002 and 62.2 in 2014, reflecting Government's advanced efforts to address women's issues, including in rural and hard-to-reach contexts where women experience higher levels of HIV/AIDS, FGM and GBV (refer to Figures 9 and 10, Annex 5).

114. The Health Sector in Uganda has directed UGX 700 million to the construction of a specialized Neonatal and Maternal Unit in Mulago Hospital, UGX 1 billion towards a Regional Hospital for Pediatric Surgery, UGX 83.4 billion to the Uganda Reproductive Maternal and Child Health Services Improvement Project and

UGX 753. 66 billion to a Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria control and management (MoFPED, 2018). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is establishing a pharmaceutical plant in Jinja/Mukono worth about US \$10 million in collaboration with Pearl Health Sciences Limited company from India (EOC 2018/19).

#### *Maternal healthcare*

115. Improved maternal healthcare is a priority in the efforts to reduce Uganda's Maternity Mortality Rate (MMR). The Maternal Perinatal Death Review report (2014/15) showed that MMR is largely caused by delays in seeking help (60 per cent) and lack of spousal support (24 per cent). Addressing MMR and SRHR is a strategic priority in the Health Sector Development Plan (HSDP, 2015/16–2019/20). as Trends in health sector performance indicators revealed an improvement over the years in maternal health, with a 20.2 per cent decline in the MMR from 524 reported deaths in 2000/2001 to 368 in 2016 (UDHS, 2016).

116. The National Health Plans prioritise obstetric care for pregnant women and focus on skilled birth attendance as a priority in the delivery of healthcare services. In 2017, 47.6 per cent of expectant mothers had visited the doctor four times or more during their pregnancy as recommended by the WHO (NHPS 2017). The percentage of women receiving some form of antenatal care from a skilled provider increased from 95 per cent in 2011 to 97 per cent in 2016. The proportion of women whose births were attended by a skilled provider rose from 58 per cent in 2011 to 74 per cent in 2016. The proportion of women who delivered in a health facility increased from 57 per cent in 2011 to 73 per cent in 2016.

117. Government introduced the Uganda National Minimum Health Care Package (UNMHCP) that provides antenatal and emergency obstetric care for women and advises on nutrition plans for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers.

118. Under-five mortality rate has reduced over the years from 90 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2011 to 64 deaths in 2016 (UDHS, 2016). The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) reduced from 54 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2011 to 43 deaths in 2016 while the child mortality rate declined from 38 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2011 to 22 deaths in 2016, indicating improvements in child healthcare.

#### *Teenage pregnancy*

119. Through the MGLSD, Government set up the National Strategy to End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy as a holistic approach to the issue of child marriage, teenage pregnancy, child motherhood, child widowhood, violence against girls and the spread of STIs and HIV/AIDS. The UDHS 2016 reports that 25 per cent of adolescents aged 15–19 in Uganda have begun childbearing, a figure that has not changed since 2005. Government has taken steps to mainstream sexual and reproductive health in primary and secondary education. The National Sexuality Framework was developed in 2018 to standardise sexuality education in the Country. Government is implementing 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 clinics to sensitise young persons, especially girls, on family planning. These interventions precipitated in the increased use of contraceptives among women, from 30 per cent in 2011 to 39 per cent in 2016. UDHS 2016 indicated an increase in the use of family planning methods by the female population aged 15–49 years, from 13.4 per cent in 1995 to 50.6 per cent in 2016 (Table 30, Annex 9).

*Cancer*

120. The National Strategic Plan for Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control in Uganda (2010–2014) was implemented to improve accessibility to primary and secondary prevention measures. The Health Sector is also implementing an integrated strategy that provides for immunisation, Emergency Obstetric Care (EMOC) and screening and testing services for cervical and breast cancer in women and teenage girls.

*Mental health*

121. Parliament of Uganda made strides in protecting the rights of mentally ill persons including women by passing the Mental Health Act (2014). The Act recognises mental health illness as a public health concern and provides effective legal protections and standards for the treatment of persons with mental illness including women in incarceration. Mental health has been integrated into the Uganda National Mental Health Care Policy (UNMHCP) which provides for decentralized mental healthcare services at Regional Referral Hospitals.

**Paragraph 38: The Committee calls upon the State party to ensure the expeditious passage of the draft National HIV/AIDS policy and the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Bill.**

*HIV/AIDS*

122. Despite huge strides in eliminating HIV/AIDS, women and girls still face disproportionate risk to HIV infection due to biological, social, cultural and economic factors. As of 2017, the HIV prevalence in persons aged 15 to 64 was 6.2 per cent, or approximately 1.2 million people. The prevalence was 7.6 per cent among women and 4.7 per cent among men (Uganda Population Based HIV Impact Assessment 2016–2017).

123. Ugandan girls and young women aged 15–24 had an HIV prevalence four times higher than that of the young men in the same age bracket. Women living in urban areas had a higher prevalence (9.8 per cent) than those in rural areas (6.7 per cent), with women in the South West, Mid North and Kampala experiencing the highest prevalence (UPHIA 2016–2017, refer to Figures 22 and 23, Annex 9).

124. Government has put in place laws, policies, plans and programs to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Uganda adopted the Global Guidance to End the HIV epidemic including goals to end AIDS by 2030, Towards Zero New Infections, Zero HIV/AIDS-related Mortality, Zero Discrimination and an AIDS-free generation.

125. Government's HIV/AIDS policy provides a guiding framework in the efforts to prevent the spread of HIV and to mitigate the socioeconomic impacts of HIV/AIDS. The HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Act (2015) addresses the prevention, control, protection, counselling and testing of persons for HIV and AIDS. The Guidelines for HIV and AIDS prevention, Care and Support for Workers have been developed.

126. Other guiding frameworks include the HIV/AIDS Multi-Sectoral Resource Mobilization Strategy (2015/16–20) and the National Policy on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work which promotes the principles of non-discrimination, gender equality, confidentiality and greater involvement of PLWA in the prevention, treatment and care of patients in the world of work. Government also launched a Handbook on HIV/AIDS for Judges and other legal practitioners to increase their awareness of HIV/AIDS.

127. His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Uganda, launched the Fast Track Initiative in June 2017 which identifies male engagement in HIV control, care

and support as a strategy to reduce the rate of new infections among young women. Additionally, the Guidelines for Male Engagement in Sexual and Reproductive Health (SHR) have been developed to garner male participation in reproductive health activities and encourage greater awareness of positive sexual and reproductive health practices, especially in rural areas.

128. MGLSD has engaged cultural institutions in dialogue to design culture-sensitive pronouncements on epidemics like HIV/AIDS and to conduct research on the behavioural changes that are needed to successfully fight HIV/AIDS. MGLSD developed a National Score Card to monitor Gender and HIV/AIDS programming. The score cards have enhanced the institutional response to HIV/AIDS across multiple sectors. The National AIDS Information Centre has established a National HIV Knowledge Management Portal online to serve as a one-stop centre for all HIV information. It includes a database of stakeholders and a mapping of their activities at local and national level.

**Paragraph 40: The Committee urges the State Party to continue to intensify the implementation of gender-sensitive poverty reduction and development programmes in rural and urban areas and to pay particular attention to the Batwa women in the development of such programmes.**

129. Uganda strives to become a middle-income country by 2040 and is implementing policies and programmes that progressively empower women. Ugandan Courts have understood the principle of progressive realization to mean that the State must set achievable targets and implement them gradually and sustainably for the people's enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. These efforts must be placed in the context of the resources available to the State party.<sup>10</sup> This notwithstanding, the Government of Uganda is obliged to take concrete and targeted steps to bridge the equality gap between men and women through the implementation of socio-economic schemes.

130. Government is committed to increasing diversity and equal opportunities for all, regardless of gender, tribe, ethnicity or religion and providing care and protection of vulnerable groups in the achievement of its economic goals (Vision 2040). Government is also committed to increasing the average income earned by a Ugandan per year from 1.8 million (2010) to 34 million in 2040 and to reduce the prevalence of poverty from 21.4 per cent (2016/2017) to 5 per cent in 2040. (Uganda Vision 2040) Within this context, the Second National Development Plan (NDP II) provides an overarching framework to realise the socio-economic empowerment of women.

131. The EOC is monitoring the compliance of MDAs with gender and equity in budgeting and planning, to ensure that the needs of vulnerable groups such as women, youth, children with special needs, ethnic minorities, older persons, the rural poor and other marginalised groups are adequately planned and budgeted for.

132. In the passing of the National Budget, Parliament requires MDAs to present a certificate of compliance with gender and equity as a pre-condition for budget approval. CSOs such as FOWODE, ACFODE and UWONET have been active in advocating for gender and equity budgeting.

133. The Public Finance Management Act 2015 empowers the EOC to review Ministerial Policy Statements (MPSs) for gender-responsiveness and compliance with gender and equity budgeting and planning standards (GEB) to ensure interventions for women in planning and budgeting. Out of 142 votes assessed in 2018, 140 votes (98.6

<sup>10</sup> In the case of Centre for Health, Human Rights and Development (CEHURD), Mubangizi Micheal and Musimenta Jennifer versus the Executive Director, Mulago National Referral Hospital & Attorney General.

per cent) reflected Mission Statements with a demonstrated commitment to inclusion. The Strategic Objectives of 81 votes (56 per cent) were found to be at least 80 per cent compliant with GEB standards.

134. EOC, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED), Parliament and the Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA), undertook the training of 35 certified National Gender and Equity Budgeting Trainers. These officers train staff at the Central and Local Government level as a capacity building initiative to mainstream gender and equity in planning and budgeting. To accommodate the increasingly growing number of refugees, the Office of the Prime Minister is procuring land in Namanve for the construction of another Central Warehouse/Relief Store, at UGX 800 million. This would enhance the real-time response to the intersecting needs of refugee women, including girl children, pregnant women, older women and women with disabilities.

135. Additionally, Government allocated UGX 16.743 billion to persons with disability and older persons, UGX 65.667 billion to the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) and UGX 3.782 billion to the Social Protection for Vulnerable Groups programme. Other programmatic interventions for women's economic empowerment include the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme UWEP, (allocated UGX 38.734 billion), the Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE), Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) and the Community Driven Development programme (CDD). UWEP and YLP target women and youth for wealth creation through provision of affordable credit that they would otherwise not obtain from commercial banks for value addition and facilitating access to markets for their goods and services, entrepreneurship skills and encouraging savings. Although UWEP loans are unsecured, they have evidenced high repayment rates of 80.1 per cent. By April 2019, 9,381 women projects had been financed, directly benefitting 117,551 women, including those in rural areas who comprise 80 per cent of programme's beneficiaries. Since its inception in FY 2013/2014, YLP has financed 17,850 projects reaching 216,366 beneficiaries, 46 per cent of which are young women.

136. In FY 2017/18, MGLSD invested a total of UGX. 17.5b in the Youth Capital Venture Fund (YCVF), financing over 4,450 projects that directly benefit young women in the 18–30 age group who are seeking to work independently or in groups. Notably, 90 per cent of the youth that have accessed the money since its inception are individual borrowers. Government also introduced the Special Grant for PWDs, including women.

*Vulnerable and marginalised women, including the Batwa*

137. Article 32 of the 1995 Constitution provides for affirmative action in favour of historically disadvantaged groups. The Uganda Constitution refers to 'indigenous people' as 'vulnerable and marginalized groups', a term that is adopted in this section of the Report.

138. Government has expanded the reach of existing poverty reduction initiatives to include vulnerable groups. MGLSD has documented the culture heritage of the Alur, Ik and Basongora to preserve their cultural norms and inform decision making regarding their protection.

139. Government has been creative in its efforts to empower the marginalised Batwa women. Most recently, the Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities (MTWA) initiated the 'Batwa-Bwindi' experience that includes Batwa women in tourism initiatives, with proceeds returning to the community. MTWA aims to reduce poverty among Batwa women by empowering them with contemporary skills that match their lifestyles, e.g. basket weavings.

**Paragraph 42: The Committee calls upon the State party to take the necessary measures to increase and strengthen the participation of women in designing and implementing local development plans, and to pay special attention to the needs of rural women, in particular women heads of household, by ensuring that they participate in decision-making processes and have improved access to health, education, clean water and sanitation services, fertile land and income-generating projects.**

*Rural women*

140. In 2017, 70.6 per cent of women resided in rural areas compared to 72.9 per cent of men (NGPS 2017). The prevalence of poverty remained consistently high in rural areas, from 34.2 per cent in 2005/06 to 30.8 per cent in 2016/17 compared with 13.7 per cent in 2005/06 and 15.2 per cent in 2016/17 in urban areas (Employment Diagnostics Analysis Report 2018). Hence, under NDP II, several sub-sector projects concerning water and sanitation, resource management and access to land schemes are being implemented. Initiatives are in place to enhance rural women's quality of life, which includes access to the best attainable healthcare, education, water and electrical facilities, as well as availability of cooperatives and income generating schemes to break the cycle of poverty that disempowers rural women and their ability to provide for their families.

*Women heads of household*

141. In 2016/17, women-led households made up 30.5 per cent of the total population compared to 69.5 per cent of male-headed households. Poverty was much higher in female-led households, particularly where women have been divorced or widowed. (NPHC, 2014). As household leadership determines the ownership and distribution of productive assets, education attainment, economic empowerment and familial involvement and participation in public life, Government has made it a priority to evaluate the specific needs of female-headed households in its strategy to achieve gender parity (Draft Uganda Gender Policy 2019).

142. Government promotes gender inclusive leadership at the local government level to improve gender-responsive planning and programme implementation. The Local Governments Act (2015) provides for women's representation in decision-making at all levels of governance. Women constitute 33 per cent of Land Board members, 34 per cent of Area Land Committees, and at least a third of Water User Committees.

143. In 2015, the Ministry of Local Government launched the Project for the Restoration of Livelihoods in the Northern Region (PRELNOR) to increase income and food security for vulnerable households in the rural North and to support the reestablishment of the region. The project aims to empower at least 140,000 households, or 40 per cent of the coverage area. Government, with significant contribution from IFAD, has allocated \$70.9M to the project.

144. The Uganda Women's Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) is paying special attention to women in subsistence farming and the informal sector, benefitting particularly rural women who lack the collateral required to access finances. The Programme also seeks to promote women's access to appropriate technologies, entrepreneurship skills and markets for their products and services. Additionally, women are trained in on decision-making prior to receiving funds in order to benefit effectively from the programme.

145. The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) policy 2015 enhances gender equity, promotes inclusiveness and supports environmentally friendly business models for sustainable development. The policy complements UWEP in the

promotion of women's economic and social independence by addressing the geographical, historical, and structural disadvantages against them.

146. The Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) Programme provides regular and reliable cash transfers to senior citizens. The program targets the poorest people among the population including women, with 90 per cent of beneficiaries based in rural Uganda. To date the program reaches 149,091 older persons, of which 88,890 (60 per cent) are female and 60,201 (40 per cent) are male. As of July 2017, the program had reached 112 districts.

147. Bank of Uganda introduced the National Financial Inclusion Strategy which proposes a framework to strengthen links between Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) and the financial sector to bridge accessibility gaps in the rural setting. It is envisaged that the Strategy will bolster the inclusion of rural women in formal financial processes.

#### *Land and agriculture*

148. Government aims to transform the agriculture sector by upgrading its population from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture. As subsistence farmers are predominantly rural women (53 per cent), the initiatives aim to directly enhance women's livelihoods. The Agriculture Sector allocated UGX 117.601 billion to the licensing of 300 firms/individuals in the exportation of agricultural products and trained over 1,000 persons in post-harvest crop handling technologies to benefit rural farmers and those in hard-to-reach areas (FY 2018/19). Government also provides land to refugee women for cultivation to improve their livelihoods.

149. Women's ownership of agricultural land has increased from an average of 15 per cent in 2012 to 28 per cent in 2017 (UNHS 2012/13–2017/18). Government passed the Land Act Cap 227 in 2010 and the Land Policy in 2013 to promote the security of tenure for women. The Land Act outlaws discrimination against women and children in respect of ownership, occupation and use of land, and requires mandatory consent before disposal, mortgaging or transferring of land where the family derives sustenance.

#### *Access to healthcare*

150. Government has increased its operationalisation of Health Centre III's (HCIII's) in all sub counties in the country to reach more people especially those in rural areas. HCIII's are headed by clinical officers and offer basic health services including antenatal, family planning and immunisation for women and children.

151. Conversely, Health Centre IV's (HCIV) have been capacitated to provide specialised services like antenatal, immunisation, family planning, adolescent reproductive health and access to operating theatres and labs. They also provide separate wards for women that enable provision of more specialised services.

152. The Health Sector Strategic Plan (2010/11–2014/15) established the Village Health Systems Strategy which reserves one third of the Village Health Team (VHT) membership for women. VHTs have been instrumental in mobilizing and sensitizing communities about primary health care services and poverty reduction strategies.

#### *Rural electrification*

153. In 2017, 22 per cent of Uganda's population had access to electricity; 57 per cent of the urban population had access to electricity in 2017, compared to 11.4 per cent of rural households (World Bank SE4All, 2017).

154. Women-led households in rural areas are disproportionately affected by the high initial costs for electricity connection, including wiring of houses, complex installation processes that require trips to service providers offices and high connection costs. Government has continued its rural electrification programmes taking into consideration the need to boost uptake of electricity by catering to the needs of these vulnerable households.

155. Government provides an enabling environment for private sector investments in energy and resource distribution, most notably with UMEME. To increase accessibility, UMEME has been developing its social media-based presence to allow individuals to pose concerns, queries and complaints via mobile phones. UMEME also has toll-free lines where women can report emergencies and complaints and the 'Yaka' system, a prepaid option for electricity in connected homes.

156. The Uganda grid-based Output Based Aid (OBA) is being rolled out in partnership with the World Bank to subsidise household electricity connections to offset the initial connection costs that prevent rural families and female-led households in particular, from obtaining electricity. The project aims to benefit newly electrified areas where poverty mapping reveals gaps in electricity uptake.

157. UBOS is making efforts to increase the gender disaggregated data in this area so as to measure the effect of these programmes on rural women. Efforts in this area have been undertaken to realise Uganda's goals under Vision 2040 (80 per cent electrification by 2040), NDP II (30 per cent electrification by 2020) and the Rural Electrification Strategy and Plan (26 per cent rural electrification by 2022).

#### *Water and sanitation*

158. 85 per cent of Uganda's population depends on rural water supplies (WES 2017). In 2012, the average distance to safe drinking water in rural and urban areas was 0.7km as opposed to the target 0.2km. The Water and Sanitation Gender Strategy (WSGS) 2018–2022 was formulated to guide gender mainstreaming in water and sanitation. WSGS aims to increase water supply coverage in rural areas from 65 per cent to 79 per cent by 2020; to achieve 80 per cent rural sanitation coverage and 100 per cent coverage in urban areas by 2020.

159. The National Water Policy (1999) provides for the management of water resources and sets a requirement to have at least a third of women in the composition of Water Supply Boards and User Committees. Women represent 31 per cent of total National Water and Sewerage Corporation staff, and 44 per cent of the Executive Management of the Corporation. The percentage of women who held key positions in Water Source Committees (WSC) remained consistently high, at 86 per cent in 2015 and 85 per cent in 2018. Notably, 53 per cent of women held key positions on Catchment Management Committees (CMCs).

160. The Water and Environment Sector facilitated the rehabilitation of water infrastructure in districts where women were facing water insecurity, including Pallisa, Gomba and Bushenyi districts. The Sector drilled multiple production wells under the Orom Project and led construction projects to increase women's connections to water sources. Water point functionality has increased from 53 per cent in 2011 to 84 per cent in 2017 (Water and Environment Sector Performance Report 2017).

161. Government allocated UGX 42.094 billion to the Water and Environment Sector, to enhance rural women's access to water and sanitation, specifically under the Solar Powered Mini-Piped Water Schemes in rural areas. Government has also allocated UGX 7.469 billion to improve sanitation at border police stations and police posts. At the Local Government level, Government allocated UGX 1.475 billion to



pilot road water harvesting technologies and other Renewable Energy Technologies (RETs) to enhance access to energy resources for vulnerable households and selected public institutions in 5 sites.

**Paragraph 44: The Committee calls on the State party to decriminalize homosexual behaviour and to provide effective protection from violence and discrimination against women based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.**

162. Article 21 of the Constitution of Uganda (1995) provides for equality of all persons before and under the law. The Anti-Homosexuality Act (2013) was challenged in the Constitutional Court of Uganda, resulting in its nullification. There is no data indicating that women have been discriminated against on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity. Nonetheless, same-sex relations and marriages in Uganda remain illegal under Article 31 (2) of the 1995 Constitution and other laws such as the Penal Code Act, Cap 120.

**Paragraph 46: The Committee calls upon the State party to pay special attention to the precarious situation of older women and women with disabilities and to take all necessary measures to combat stigma and discrimination against them, both by private actors and in government programmes.**

163. Older persons increased in population from approximately 1.6 million in 2012/13 to 1.7 million in 2016/17 and constitute about 5 per cent of Uganda's population (UBOS 2017). Government identified older persons as a priority under the Social Development Sector, which implements Social Protection Programs targeting women with disabilities and older women.

164. The Government programs include the Community Based Rehabilitation program (CBR) and the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE). Government allocated Shs 9Bn to SAGE in FY 2015/2016 and committed Shs. 149Bn for the ensuing five years, evidencing its commitment to addressing the needs of older persons.

165. Under SAGE, Government provides the Senior Citizens Grant (SCG), a social pension that benefits older persons, including women. Government is rolling out the SCG to all persons that are 60 years of age and above, under a phased implementation plan to reach an additional 40 districts in FYs 2015/16–2019/20. SAGE has led to increased access to education, food security, employment opportunities and health care for older women.

166. The CBR program aims to sensitise service providers, policy makers, families of persons with disabilities and their respective communities on the rights, needs and abilities of PWDs. SAGE incorporates a national social protection system that benefits the poorest of the population. By July 2017, the program had reached 149,091 older persons in all the target areas, 60 per cent (88,890) of whom were female and 40 per cent male (60,201).

167. The National Council for Older Persons Act (2013) established the National Council and Secretariat for Older Persons. The Council's structure runs from the village to the national level and requires that one third of the committee membership be held by older women. The National Council for Older Persons Act and the Local Governments Act provide for the representation of older persons, both male and female, at various levels of Local Government.

168. The National Older Persons Policy (2009) and the National Policy on Disability in Uganda (2006) provide an overall framework for initiatives targeting older persons

and PWDs. Government has deliberately embarked on media and advocacy campaigns during international days to commemorate the rights of women, older persons and persons with disabilities.

169. Government has created an environment for women to form and manage Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs) as a source of capital and mobilization for income generation. Women in SACCOs are provided information to be shared with other women in their communities. Members can borrow up to 80 per cent of their deposits with nominal interest.

170. Older women who have retired from public service and the private sector benefit from the Public Service Pension Scheme and the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), respectively. In 2017, the NSSF operationalised its “NSSF GO APP”. The application was established in partnership with a mobile platform to ease access to NSSF funds for all, including older women in rural and hard-to-reach contexts.

#### *Women with disabilities*

171. Government’s Policy on GBV (2016) targets all persons including women with disabilities and older women. The 2014 National Population and Housing Census estimated the disability prevalence rate at 12.5 per cent and older persons with disabilities (65 years and above) comprising 2.1 per cent of the population.

172. Government has made efforts to improve the lives of women with disabilities by enhancing their access to adequate facilities in the education system. By the end of FY/2017/18, the Education Sector had carried out a Special Needs assessment in 20 schools; constructed a carpentry workshop at Mbale; trained 120 teachers in functional assessment for SNE learners; trained 65 teachers in sign language at Wakiso and Mbale schools for the deaf; procured and distributed 28 Perkins Braille Machine & Braille papers to 18 schools (EOC 2018/19).

173. For FY 2018/19, Government has allocated UGX 3.320 billion to Special Needs Education (SNE) and an additional UGX 1.036 billion to develop the monitoring, evaluation and scaling up of infrastructures for children with special needs, including girl children.

#### *Access to justice*

174. Government enacted the Poor Persons Defence Act (2000) and the Advocates (Amendment) Act (2002) to increase access to justice for vulnerable women, including women with disabilities. The State also passed the Advocates (Student Practice) Regulations (2004) and the Advocates (Legal Aid to Indigent Persons) Regulations (2007) to ensure accessibility to free legal aid services in the country. The National Legal Aid Bill which aims to ensure that all persons in Uganda have access to legal aid and legal solutions is under review.

175. The State Briefs Scheme, the Uganda Law Council Pro-Bono Scheme and the Justice Centre Project under JLOS aim to enhance access to justice for indigent persons, including older women with disabilities. Other institutional mechanisms include the EOC Tribunal, the Uganda Human Rights Commission, the Vulnerable Persons Desk and Non-State actors in the NGO sector.

176. Justice Centres Uganda serves as a one-stop model for legal aid. These government centres support women with disabilities and their numbers increased from 23 to 459 in 2013/14. The Justice Centres provide legal representation offer counselling and referrals for medical services. The centres are currently operating in 10 districts, running community outreach programmes and engaging in community dialogues to provide legal counselling, representation and mediation services that ultimately raise girls and women’s awareness of their rights.

177. JLOS is working with the Uganda Law Society and FIDA Uganda to bolster legal aid service delivery to over 20,000 women and girls. As elaborated in paragraph 42 under Article 5, JLOS has also piloted special sessions on GBV as a precursor to establishing a court for sexual offences. In 2018, JLOS Secretariat piloted a project to dispose of GBV cases through special criminal court sessions in 14 select sites at High Court and Magisterial level. Following the success of the pilot project, Government is considering the establishment of a special division of the High Court to handle these cases.

178. EOC developed a Gender and Equity Compact for JLOS for the period 2016/17–2019/2020. The Compact identifies priority interventions that address gender and equity issues and provides performance indicators at the outcome/output levels. Further, JLOS produced a report examining the implementation of plea bargaining in Uganda, including barriers to women’s access to justice. The reports have become the basis for developing plea-bargaining prosecutor guidelines and other institutional reforms on women’s access to justice.

**Paragraph 48: The Committee urges the State party to harmonize civil, religious and customary law with article 16 of the Convention and to complete its law reform in the area of marriage and family relations.**

179. Article 31(1) of the Constitution sets the minimum age of marriage at 18 years and Article 33(6) prohibits “laws, cultures, customs or traditions which are against the dignity, welfare or interest of women or which undermine their status.” Article 31(3) of the Constitution provides for the equal status of men and women in marriage and at its dissolution.

180. Uganda has four marriage regimes mostly based on religious and cultural grounds. In 2012 Government drafted the Qhadi’s Courts Bill in accordance with Article 129 (1) (d) of the Constitution which empowers Parliament to establish Qhadis courts for marriage, divorce, inheritance of property and guardianship. As it stands, girls at the age of 16 can marry under customary law or Islamic laws and even under the Marriage Act, parents can give waivers to children below the age of 21 to marry. The Marriage Bill (2009) seeks to bring the various forms of marriages in Uganda in conformity with the 1995 Constitution, Article 16 of CEDAW and SDG Goals 3, 4 and 5.

181. In 2013, the 9th Parliament deferred the Marriage and Divorce Bill (2009) for further consultations on contentious provisions. Contentious provisions included the exchange of marriage gifts (bride-wealth); parental consent at the time of marriage; definition of matrimonial property; property sharing at the dissolution of a marriage, irretrievable breakdown of marriage as a ground for divorce; cohabitation as form of marriage and property rights of cohabitees; denial of conjugal rights; and the title of the Bill, ‘Marriage and Divorce’. The Marriage Bill 2017 is now before the 10th Parliament.

182. The Ugandan judiciary has been instrumental in handing down judgements that protect the rights of married and cohabiting women despite the delay in the passing of the Marriage Bill. In *Mifumi & Others v Attorney General and Anor*, the judiciary outlawed wife inheritance and the practice of demanding a refund of bride price. In the case of *Uganda v Yiga Hamidu & 2 others*,<sup>11</sup> the judiciary outlawed marital rape and denied the argument that bride price payment had the effect of allowing the husband full rights to his wife’s body. In *Hajj Musa Kigongo v Olive Kigongo*,<sup>12</sup> the

<sup>11</sup> Criminal Session Case number 005 of 202.

<sup>12</sup> High Court Civil Suit No 295 of 2015.

court found that contested property between parties who had cohabited for 27 years should be owned in equal shares under the doctrine of proprietary estoppel.

#### *Child marriage*

183. Section 29 of the Penal Code (amendment) Act (Cap. 120) outlaws sexual engagement with children, or persons under 18 years. The Children Act as amended in 2016 prohibits formal and informal marriages of persons under 18 years and categorises the practice as violence against children. Government developed the Strategy to End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy 2014/2015 – 2019/2020 with a focus on transformational strategies that will address communities' mind-sets and influence social behaviour to reject this harmful practice. The Strategy's planned interventions include improving access to education for the girl child; improving the quality of sexual and reproductive health services; empowering communities to protect children and influencing social norms.

### **Optional Protocol**

**Paragraphs 49–50: The Committee calls upon the State party to accelerate its efforts to ratify the Optional Protocol. The Committee encourages the State party to accept, as soon as possible, the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee.**

184. The process of ratifying the Optional Protocol to CEDAW has been initiated, with consultations ongoing among MGLSD, the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs (MOJCA) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). These consultations will culminate in a recommendation to Cabinet for ratification of the Optional Protocol.

**Paragraph 51: The Committee urges the State party, in the implementation of its obligations under the Convention, to fully utilize the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.**

185. The National Action Plan on Women (NAPW) is the guiding framework for the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA). The Plan guides all stakeholders in identifying priorities for women's empowerment. The BPfA has guided the Government in setting its agenda for gender parity, the advancement of women and inclusive, equitable and sustainable development. In preparation for the 25th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the BPfA in 2020, Government conducted a national review to gauge the extent to which BPfA has been implemented across the country. The review involved consultations with local governments, MDAs, NGOs and women organizations and concluded with the publication of a status report in 2019.

**Paragraph 52: The Committee emphasizes that full and effective implementation of the Convention is indispensable for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.**

186. In 2016, the Government of Uganda officially began taking steps to localise the SDG Agenda in national planning processes by adopting the National Coordination Framework for the implementation of the SDGs.

187. In 2017, UNDP identified Uganda as one of the first countries to fully align with the 2030 Agenda, with 76 per cent of the SDGs embedded in NDP II. Uganda was also the first country in Africa to have 13 companies adopt the UNDP's Gender Equality Seal, a tool for the implementation of SDG 5. The Seal complements

Uganda's existing Gender Equity Certificate under the PFM Act to ensure a harmonised and holistic approach in implementing Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda.

188. With support from UN agencies, Government launched the Roadmap for Creating an Enabling Environment for Delivering on SDGs in Uganda (2018). The Roadmap presents guidelines on planning and mainstreaming SDGs, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of progress resource mobilisation and the collection of gender disaggregated data.

189. Government is working concertedly with civil society and local leaders to scale up the production of gender disaggregated data, which would increase the measurability of Uganda's progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Government is facilitating a Capacity Building Programme for Gender Statistics in the National Statistical System (2018/19–2022/23) that will provide technical support to stakeholders in the production and use of gender disaggregated data. The Programme has already identified capacity gaps already that need to be addressed (refer to Table 38, Annex 12).

190. The National Priority Gender Equality Indicators are used to monitor the mainstreaming of gender concerns in the implementation of plans /programmes and align with Agenda 2030, incorporating human rights as a priority indicator in illuminating the path towards gender equality in Uganda.<sup>13</sup> The Indicators were conceptualised as an essential tool to monitor Uganda's progress towards achieving the SDG targets, particularly under Goal 5. Hence, Government re-affirms its commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and illuminating the path towards equality for women and men in Uganda.

**Paragraph 53: The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Uganda of the present concluding observations in order to make the people, Government officials, politicians, parliamentarians and women's and human rights organizations.**

191. Shortly after the 2010 reporting process, Government disseminated the Combined Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Periodic Report and the CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations to MDAs political, religious and cultural leaders, law enforcement agents, women leaders and youth representatives, among others.

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<sup>13</sup> The National Priority Gender Equality Indicators were developed in 2018 and adopted by MGLSD in 2019.

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