

UGANDA



PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION (BEIJING +30) IN UGANDA (2020-2025)

Final Draft

Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

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FOREWORD

The year 2025 is a landmark to the international community as well as for the people of Uganda. The global community will celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Uganda shall commemorate thirty years of the promulgation of her progressive Constitution that accords women equal rights with men and outlaws laws, cultures, customs and traditions which are against the dignity of women. In the same vein, the Fourth National Development Plan will be launched as we observe a decade of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Constitution and the Platform for Action have guided the Government of Uganda to set an agenda for promoting the rights of women and girls. As a result, we have made commendable progress in taking services nearer to women and girls. By law, all Ministries, Departments, and Agencies, as well as Local Governments, are required to allocate resources and implement actions to reduce gender inequalities. I am glad that a greater proportion of our women and girls including those residing in rural areas can access schools and health centers within walkable distances as well as water and friendly financial services.

For this, I would like to thank H.E. The President of the Republic of Uganda for his leadership to attain women's emancipation. I am also grateful to my colleagues, the Hon. Ministers and their staff as well as members of Parliament and Local Governments for their commitment to promote the rights of women and girls. I also recognize and highly appreciate the valuable contribution of the Development Partners, Civil Society Organisations, Religious and Cultural Institutions and Leaders, the Private Sector and indeed all stakeholders who work in partnership with Government towards the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment.

The achievements notwithstanding, there remain gaps, challenges, and barriers in our quest to attain gender equality and empowerment of women. The development of the Fourth National Development Plan, 2025-2030 and the 18 Programme Implementation Action Plans, therefore provide us with an opportunity to implement bold and trailblazer actions that will not only accelerate progress for women, men and boys and girls but will also lead to sustainable holistic and inclusive development. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that all women and girls attain their full potential and enjoy their rights.

I would like to express my appreciation to all our Development Partners particularly the UN System, Bilateral and Multilateral Agencies for supporting the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. I am grateful to Dr. Maxime Houinato, Regional Director, UN Women ESARO and Ms. Paulina Chiwangu, UN Women Country Representative Uganda for the technical and financial support and guidance in the preparation of this report.

For God and My Country

Amongi Betty Ongom (MP)

Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

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The Republic of Uganda was one of the 189 United Nations Member States which attended the Fourth World Conference on Women that was held in September 1995 in Beijing, in the People's Republic of China. The Member States committed to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA), the key outcome of the Conference. Since then, the Government of Uganda has submitted national reports on the progress of implementation of the BDPfA. The last report was submitted in 2019 for the commemoration of the twenty- fifth anniversary, which was held in 2020.

In preparation for the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in 2025, the Government of Uganda has conducted a national review to establish the extent of implementation of the BDPfA. Consultations were held with actors in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), CSOs, Women Organizations, Local Governments and Development Partners.

This national report presents the actions and measures that were undertaken by the Government in partnership with other stakeholders during the period 2020-2024.

I wish to commend the staff in the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and Members of the National Task Team for coordinating the process of compiling this report and providing technical guidance.

I would also like to thank the consultancy team composed of Ms. Sanyu Jane Mpagi, Dr. Norah Madaya, Ms. Maggie Kyomukama and Mr. Eric Tumwesigye for collecting the data and information and compiling the report. Additionally, I wish to thank Ms. Agnes Kitembo for technically guiding the team.

I am grateful to all the stakeholders who willingly provided the information and participated in the meeting to validate the report. My sincere gratitude goes to all Development Partners for the support that has enabled Uganda to register the achievements in accelerating progress for women and girls.

Aggrey D. Kibenge
Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development

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ACRONYMS

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
BDPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
BpfA	Beijing Platform for Action
BFPs	Budget Framework Papers
BTVET	Business Technical, Vocational Education and Training
CEDOVIP	Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention
CEWIGO	Centre for women in Governance
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CoACT	Coalition for Action
COTLA	Council of Traditional Leaders of Africa
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CID	Criminal Investigations and Intelligence Directorate
CCOs	Customary Ownership
DCIC	Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control
DFCU	Development Finance Company of Uganda
ECD	Early Childhood Development
e-MTCT	elimination of Mother to Child Transmission
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
EPRC	Economic Policy Research Centre
FBO	Faith-Based Organisations
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FAWE(U)	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FOWODE	Forum for Women in Democracy
GEB	Gender and Equity Budgeting
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEWE	Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
GFPs	Gender Focal Persons
GSAG	Gender Statistics Advisory Group
GSC	Gender Statistics Committee
GOU	Government of Uganda
GROW	Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity of Women Enterprises
HCT	HIV Counselling and Testing
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
IECD	Integrated Early Childhood Development
IRCU	Inter-Religious Council of Uganda
ILO	International Labour Organisations
KCCA	Kampala Capital City Authority
SLAAC	Land Adjudication and Certification
LPG	Liquid Petroleum Gas
LCs	Local Councils
MZO	Ministerial Zonal Offices
MDAs	Ministries Departments and Agencies
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development
MOH	Ministry of Health

MoING	Ministry of Information and National Guidance
MoIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoJCA	Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
MoLHUD	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
MWE	Ministry of Water and Environment
NAP	National Action Plan
NEMA	National Environment Management Authority
NFIS	National Financial Inclusion Strategy
NGBVD	National Gender Based Violence Database
NITA-U	National Information Technology Authority of Uganda
NIECD	National Integrated Early Childhood Development
NDP	National Development Plan
NPA	National Planning Authority
NPGEIs	National Priority Gender Equality Indicators
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
NSI	National Standard Indicator
NSP	National Strategic Plan
NSGE	National Strategy for Girls' Education
NWSC	National Water and Sewerage Corporation
NCDs	Non-Communicable Diseases
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
OWC	Operation Wealth Creation
PWDs	People with Disabilities
PIAPs	Programme Action Implementation Plans
PMCT	Prevention of Mother-to- Child Transmission
PSFU	Private Sector Foundation in Uganda
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PPDA	Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets
RTRR	Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response
SACCOs	Savings and Credit Cooperatives Organizations
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
SAGE	Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
FIDA-Uganda	Uganda Association of Women Lawyers
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UCHL	Uganda Child Help Line
UCC	Uganda Communications Commission
UDHS	Uganda Demographic Health Surveys
UDB	Uganda Development Bant
UNMHCP	Uganda National Minimum Health Care Package
UNRA	Uganda National Roads Authority
UPDF(s)	Uganda People's Defense Forces
UPF	Uganda Police Force
UPHIA	Uganda Population HIV Impact Assessment

URBRA	Uganda Retirement Benefits Regulatory Authority
URA	Uganda Revenue Authority
UWEP	Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme
UWOPA	Uganda Women Parliamentary Association
UWONET	Uganda Women's Network
UNHS	<i>Uganda</i> National Household Survey
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNMISS	United Nations Peace Support Mission
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UPOLET	Universal Post "O" Level Education and Training
UPPET	Universal Post-Primary Education and Training
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USE	Universal Secondary Education
UWEP	Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme
VHT	village health teams
VSLAs	Village Savings and Loans Association
VAW	Violence Against Women
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WID	Women in Development
WOUGNET	Women of Uganda Network
WDG	Women's Democracy Group
WSR	Women's Situation Room
WHO	WORLD Health Organisation

INTRODUCTION

This narrative report is a result of the comprehensive national-level review of the progress made by the Government of Uganda in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA) since the compilation of the last national report in 2020.

The report was prepared according to the Guidance Note issued by UN Women to Member States. The analysis used the guiding questions to assess the progress of implementing BDPfA and the interlinkages with the 2030 Agenda. The BDPfA critical areas of concern were reviewed based on the clusters presented in the Guidance Note. For each critical area of concern, examples of the measures undertaken, achievements, and challenges encountered were discussed. Data from nationally representative surveys and programme administrative reports was used where available.

Therefore, the structure of this national report is consistent with the Guidance Note as highlighted below:

Section 1 presents the overview, highlighting the core elements of the country-level review process and the main achievements, challenges, and setbacks over the past five years. It also presents the lessons learned, best practices, and areas where Uganda requires assistance to accelerate progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

Section 2 presents the macro analysis of priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks, focusing on the past five years since the compilation of the last national review report. The section also presents measures to address the situation of women and girls who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in the spirit of leaving no-one behind. It also presents new and emerging priorities for future action.

Section 3 gives a more detailed analysis of measures taken to advance gender equality across the twelve critical areas of concern of the BPfA and the relevant SDGs during the last five years.

Section 4 provides an account of the national processes, mechanisms and tools for promoting gender equality and empowerment of women across the entire government, the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other normative frameworks such as Convention of Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Section 5 highlights progress on the availability of data disaggregated by sex and gender statistics, linking the monitoring of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action with gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Section 6 presents the conclusions and forward-looking reflections on future challenges and priority actions that will accelerate the implementation of the BPfA and the 2030 Agenda.

SECTION ONE: OVERVIEW

This section highlights the core elements of the country's review process, challenges and setbacks in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), and the interlinkages and synergies between the BPfA and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

1.1 Core Elements of the Review Process

Over the review period, the national legal and policy framework guided the actions to address the obstacles that hinder women and girls from attaining full gender equality outlined in the BPfA. The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda prohibits discrimination, guarantees equal opportunities and equality between women and men before the law and emphasises gender balance and fair representation of marginalised groups,

The aspirations of Uganda's Vision 2040 are in tandem with the 2030 Agenda principle of “leaving no one” behind entrenched in unity in diversity and equal opportunities irrespective of, among other factors, gender and recognises gender inequality as a constraint to the social and economic transformation of the country. The Vision follows international conventions and resolutions that promote equal opportunities and enjoyment of human rights for both women and men. It recognises that gender, disability, and human rights mainstreaming are at the core of the country's planning processes and the need to assist people who are vulnerable either by age, location, social class, disability, gender or who do not have income. In addition, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Party Manifesto, 2021 -2026, underscores the importance of including women, youth, older persons, and People with Disabilities in policy and resource allocation. The ruling political Party is committed to creating jobs and wealth by skilling and facilitating youth and women across the country and creating productive jobs for everyone.

During the review period, the above policy commitments were translated into programming. The third National Development Plan (NDP III) guides the country in delivering the aspirations articulated in Vision 2040. The NDP III for 2020/21 to 2024/25 aims to "increase household incomes and improve the quality of life of Ugandans". The Plan prioritises interventions for addressing underlying factors contributing to existing inequalities such as high dependency on subsistence farming, high population growth rates, youth unemployment, persistent vulnerabilities and wide regional disparities, negative mind sets, poverty, low investments in social protection systems, low quality of education, high disease burden and undernutrition among children and women among others.

The NDP III introduced the programme-based approach, which replaced the sector approach to reduce duplication and working in silos among key implementors to achieve common development results. The programme-based approach uses the human life cycle and the value chain analysis to identify challenges and the realisation of common results that guide the implementation of the programmes. Gender equality and equity commitments were integrated into the twenty (20) NDP III at the strategic programmes and the intermediate and output levels in the respective Programme Implementation Action plans (PIAPs)

NDP III introduced reforms to promote gender equality and inclusion of vulnerable groups into all development strategies. For example, the Parish Development Model (PDM) aims to transition 39% of households below the poverty line from subsistence to the money economy with ring-fenced

financial allocations for women, youth, and persons with disabilities, including the refugee population. Besides, there are other economic empowerment programmes targeting women, youth, and older persons, such as *Emyooga*, SACCOs, Agriculture credit facility fund at 12% interest, COVID-19 recovery fund, youth Livelihood Programme (YLP), the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP), Social Protection Fund for Older persons among others.

Over the implementation period, the government increased investments towards the accumulation of health and education infrastructure, safe water, appropriate energy, and GBV prevention and response services for the population. There were deliberate efforts to improve women's economic status, which resulted in substantial increase in women owning land, access to financial services and operating bank accounts, and participating in public governance.

Coupled with the above, the Government continued to strengthen the collection, accessibility, analysis, and use of gender-disaggregated data and statistics. This has supported evidence-based monitoring, implementation, and reporting of country priorities and commitments to GEWE and SDGs. The government tripled the number of gender-specific SDG indicators it can report on from 11/54 in 2018 to 32/54 in 2023. The collection of routine administrative data (e.g., expansion of the National Gender-Based Violence database and creation of the National Trafficking in Persons database) increased the availability of gender data for decision-making. Gender inclusivity was also improved in routine surveys (e.g., GEWE modules in the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey 2022 and the ongoing 2024 Population and Housing Census) and issue-based gender surveys such as the Time Use Survey 2019, the [Gender Statistics Portal \(ubos.org\)](https://ubos.org), National Governance, Peace and Security Survey (NGPSS), and Violence Against Women and Girls 2021.

Uganda, however, encountered challenges that hampered the implementation of BPfA during the period under review. The shocks from health epidemics/ pandemics (COVID-19& Ebola), natural disasters (landslides, floods, earthquakes, and insect infestations), climate change, geopolitics, armed conflicts and terrorism affected the implementation process, slowing down achievements of the desired results. Climate change had multidimensional effects ranging from rampant displacements and loss of crops and livestock, which led to food insecurity and increased burden of unpaid care and domestic work for women and girls. There were shifts in financial allocation from the planned interventions to cater for emergency expenditures. COVID-19 exacerbated gender disparities in employment. The COVID-19 containment measures, such as the lockdown, disrupted the livelihoods of many people due to increased poverty as a result of the loss of jobs and escalated cases of GBV, including increased teenage pregnancies and child marriages due to school closure.

Persistent harmful social norms contributed to increasing gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence and child/teenage pregnancy, resulting in girls dropping out of school and early marriage and the growing burden of unpaid care work and domestic work by women. The heavier burden of unpaid care work and domestic work on women and girls continues to hinder their effective participation in leadership and the economy and affect the well-being and educational outcomes of the girls.

The high population growth rate of 3% continues to exert pressure on resources, erode the gains made in economic growth and increase poverty at the household level. The unemployment, compounded by the multifaceted nature of limited women's economic empowerment, limited access to affordable energy, especially in the rural areas, barriers to access to ICT & user-friendly internet services and lack of social justice, continue to hamper progress on gender equality and women empowerment.

These barriers require a combination of interventions such as education, health, water, sanitation and hygiene, and employment, which are critical for enlarging the freedoms and opportunities for the most vulnerable, particularly women.

Critical lessons learnt in the implementation of the BPfA during the period under review include:

- Gender-responsive laws and policies without sustained financial resources and accountability to citizens do not generate the desired change
- Macro-level interventions should be accompanied by planned micro-level household actions that reflect the realities of all women and girls.
- Building community resilience to quickly overcome the effects of changing contexts and emerging challenges and scaling up timely information and communication systems, especially during crisis and emergency periods
- Scaling up interventions and services, particularly health and GBV prevention and response services, to the underserved populations and coordinating various actions to comprehensively address the critical areas of concern in the BPfA.
- Male Engagement for Positive Change is critical in all interventions beyond reproductive, maternal and child health to include initiatives for women's livelihood support, governance and decision-making, GBV and HIV and AIDS. Men who occupy positions of influence in the communities and government institutions can be gender champions in the pursuit of gender equality. Moreover, addressing social norms and practices requires male involvement to positively impact women's economic empowerment and access to social justice.
- Disasters and emergencies deepen the existing inequalities. Disaster and emergency preparedness programmes should address existing and emerging gender and equity issues.
- Emerging resistance and backlash on GEWE, require targeted interventions on transformative change and awareness on the gains and existing gaps.

1.2 Areas for Assistance /Support

According to National Annual Performance Review reports, Uganda has made moderate performance on some SDG indicators such as Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG 3); Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure (SDG 9); Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all (SDG 4); Access to basic Education (and life on land (SDG 15). The NDP IV Strategic Direction (2026/2027- 2029/2030), however, reveals that the country is still lagging behind on most indicators namely SDG1 (eradicating poverty), SDG2 (zero hunger), SDG 6 (access to clean water and sanitation), SDG 8 (decent employment), SDG11 (fostering sustainable cities and communities), and SDG 13(climate action).

To expedite action, Uganda must continue to prioritise a combination of interventions to address the multidimensional nature of poverty, such as education, health, water and sanitation, hygiene, and employment, which are critical for enlarging the freedoms and opportunities for the most vulnerable, particularly women.

In the years ahead, Uganda needs systematic and coordinated technical and financial support to tackle and empower women and men to achieve higher incomes and build their resilience towards climatic, health and social shocks to build sustainable and improved livelihoods:

- i. **Climate Change resilient Interventions:** Climate change is increasingly becoming unpredictable and requires a lot of innovations and financial assistance to support actions for climate change mitigation and adaptation and support vulnerable women to engage and

benefit from climate-resilient agriculture. These should entail supporting processes along the agricultural value chain, including scaling up small irrigation schemes, value addition, processing and storage technologies.

- ii. ***Establishment of Gender Management Information System(GMIS):*** Inadequate data and statistics disaggregated by sex, including among the vulnerable groups, hampers programming and influencing policy change. The available data in the country is obtained from demographic and national household surveys, which are conducted at intervals of 3-5 years. Even then, not all survey information is analysed, packaged and disseminated. The information from research conducted by academic institutions is often not representative. It is, therefore, necessary to support the National Gender Machinery in transitioning and positioning itself as a depository of information on the progress of implementation of global frameworks (BPfA and CEDAW) and national development plans. The Gender Machinery can be assisted with finances and build its capacity to establish a robust Gender Management Information System (GMIS) to monitor and track the progress of gender actions in the country by obtaining, storing and disseminating real-time data.
- iii. ***Collection of Gender disaggregated data:*** Despite the progress made in the availability of gender statistics, there is need to continue supporting collection of more sex-disaggregated data for some indicators, timeliness of the data collection processes, depth of gender analysis of existing data, and dissemination for use by policy makers and stakeholders.

SECTION TWO: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

2.1 Top priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in the last five years

This section presents the macro picture of the measures undertaken to implement the top priorities as articulated in the National Report of 2020, which was presented at the 25th anniversary of adopting the BpFA and the third National Development Plan (NDP III). The progress and achievements registered during the implementation of each of the following priorities are presented in **Sub-section 2.2 and Section 3**.

2.1.1. Women's Economic Empowerment

In conformity with SDG 5 and SDG1 target 1.1, the Government of Uganda prioritized actions to provide women with economic resources to reduce extreme poverty. The Government implemented complementary interventions that combine access to affordable credit and financing and other productive resources, skilling, access to market information, and innovative and time-saving technologies. Some of these are the COVID-19 Stimulus Package, the Agricultural Credit Facility Fund and support to SACCOs by the Micro Finance Support Centre.

The Government, in partnership with the World Bank, launched a US\$ 217 million Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity of Women Enterprises (GROW) Project. This five-year project targets women to grow their businesses from micro to small and from small to medium enterprises.

The Government increased funding for the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) to benefit women and enable them to grow and expand their businesses. Funds were also allocated to the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP), a Special grant for PWDs and a Special Grant for Older Persons (SEGOP), which women tapped into to get funds.

The table below shows the Government funds allocated to each livelihood support programme for the special interest groups for the years 2021/2022- 2023/2024.

Table 1 Allocation of funds for Economic Empowerment of Special Interest Groups for Fys 2021/22-2023/24

Programme	FY 2021/2022	FY 2022/2023	FY 2023/2024	Total Allocation per category
Youth Livelihood Programme	3.3bn	20.49 bn	14.31 bn	38.1 bn
Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme	32 bn	13.67 bn	19.94 bn	65.61 bn
Special grant for PWDs	9.6 bn	16.6 bn	15.9 bn	50.2 bn
Special Grant for OP	0	5 bn	5 bn	10 bn
Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE)	118.321bn	121,301 bn	121.2 bn	360.82 bn
GROW	0	21	12.7 bn	133.7 bn

Under the Parish Development Model (PDM), the Government allocates UgX. 100 million to each of the 10,595 parishes annually to support income-generating activities (IGAs) at the household level.

Eighty per cent (80%) of these funds are reserved for special interest groups, specifically 30% for women for financial inclusion.

With support from UN agencies and other Development Partners, the government implemented economic and livelihood support programmes in refugee-hosting districts where 70% and 30% of the funds were allocated to refugees and host communities, respectively.

The commercial banking sector implemented innovative gender-responsive financial products that enabled women to access affordable financial services. Some of these are the *Supa woman* of the Uganda Centenary Bank, the Women in business Programme (WIBP) by Development Finance Company of Uganda (DFCU), Stanbic for Her Initiative by Stanbic Bank and Uganda Development Finance (UDB) Women Prosper Programme.

Other priorities for women's economic empowerment were law reforms such as **Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets (PPDA) (Amendment Act)**, 2021, which accords affirmative action to women, youth and PWDs in public procurement processes.

2.1.2 Education, training and skilling of women and girls

The Government was committed to the “Education for All Policy” through Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Secondary Education (USE), and Tertiary and Business Technical and Vocational Education and Training (BTVET) initiatives consistent with SDG 4. The focus was more on expanding opportunities for the education of women and girls in formal and non-formal settings. Activities included registration of ECD Centers, construction and rehabilitation schools for primary, secondary and Business Technical Vocational and Training (BTVET) institutions to reduce congestion and increase access to education in benefiting communities. Other activities included constructing dormitories for female students in BTVET and NTCs, providing accommodation for female teachers in some hard-to-reach areas, and providing assistive devices for PWDs and bursaries for boys and girls in the Albertine region. Girls comprise 28% of the university loan scheme beneficiaries for degree and diploma courses mainly because science-based courses are prioritized under scheme as opposed to humanities and social sciences and business management sciences where majority of women and girls are admitted.

To enable girls to complete school, the Government adopted measures to address menstrual hygiene management, protection from violence in schools and the school re-entry policy, which targeted child mothers. In 2021, the Abridged Curriculum for the primary school level was adopted to compensate for lost time due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

The secondary-level curriculum was adjusted and made skills-based, where the new pedagogy provides learners with workplace-relevant skills such as critical thinking, creativity, teamwork communication and ICT.

The Government continued to implement the TVET Policy of 2019 and Skilling Uganda Strategic Plan (2012/13- 2012/22) to increase the quality of skills and achieve greater organisational and management of BTVET. The Presidential Initiative for on-the-job and skills-based training for youth was rolled out nationwide.

To equalise education opportunities for girls in universities, the government continued implementing affirmative action, where girls who qualify for university education are awarded 1.5 points on entry. The government also continued to implement the Higher Education Students Financing Fund, which

gives loans to students from poor resource households in tertiary and Universities. By the Financial Year 2022/2023, females were 25.5% of the beneficiaries compared to 74.5% males who were pursuing degree programmes.

2.1.3 Ending Gender-Based Violence and promotion of women's rights

Consistent with SDG 5.2, the Government remains committed to the full implementation of the existing laws and policies to prevent and manage the effects of GBV and end impunity for perpetrators. In partnership with CSO, the government continued to employ multistakeholder strategies to engage communities and families on the benefits of GBV prevention and response to development. Two (2) more new shelters were established in Amudat and Terego to offer safe spaces for GBV survivors, making a total of 23 shelters in the country.

The Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, in partnership with UN agencies, CSOs, private sector, cultural and religious institutions, implemented the Spotlight Initiative Programme on ending sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) and harmful practices of child marriage and female genital mutilation, paying particular attention to ending violence against children¹.

Generated evidence on the magnitude and extent of GBV through surveys such as the National Gender Based Violence Survey (2020), the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (2022) and other specific studies conducted by Academia, mainly the Economic Policy and Research Centre at Makerere University continued to be the Government priority. The Uganda Police Force continued to monitor and track the reporting of GBV, prosecution of cases, and the compilation of Annual Crime Reports.

2.1.4 Women's health

The Government prioritised expanding universal health coverage/ public health services by improving the functionality and accessibility of health infrastructure and logistics as per SDG 3 target 3.8, which is about achieving universal health coverage. The focus was on equipping referral and general hospitals, as well as Health Center IVs, which offer comprehensive obstetric and newborn care services, upgrading Health Centre IIIs, and constructing staff houses in hard-to-reach districts (Karamoja). Emergency medical care services were strengthened by establishing regional ambulance hubs and training experts.

Consistent with SDG3, Target 3.1, the Government implemented measures to promote sexual reproductive and maternal health. The Government developed the Quality of Care Implementation Guide for Reproductive Health Maternal, New Born Child, Adolescents Health and Nutrition Services in 2023. The Government used public/ private partnerships to improve the uptake of family planning in the country and provided a combination of services, including family planning supplies, HIV/ STI testing and counselling and maternal services to millions across the country.

To end HIV/AIDS by 2030, the Government continued to employ the multi-sectoral approach involving all public, private and CSO actors under the coordination of the Uganda AIDS Commission in the President's Office. The Government continued to implement high-impact HIV prevention strategies

¹ The Initiative is a multi-stakeholder programme implemented by the eight UN agencies (UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UNHCR, ION and Pulse Lab)

that are cost-effective and specific measures to prevent and manage HIV/AIDS, including prevention of mother-to-child transmission(PMTCT) and pre and post-exposure measures.

2.1.5 Gender-Responsive Social Protection

As a commitment to SDG 1 (Target 1.2), the Government expanded the scope and coverage of care, support and social protection services for the most vulnerable groups and disaster-prone communities. For example, Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) was rolled out to cover all citizens of 80 years and above in all districts in the country. Retirement benefits schemes such as the armed forces pension scheme, public service pension scheme, the parliamentary pension scheme and the national social security scheme continued to offer pensions to retired members. To cater for vulnerable employees who were affected by COVID-19 lockdown measures, the Government amended the National Social Security Act in 2022 and included a provision of mid-term access including to PWDs and also with a provision to cater for any citizen who would wish to save on voluntary basis with NSSF. The Uganda Retirements and Benefits Regulatory Authority continued to register workplace-based and umbrella retirement schemes.

The Government implemented several programmes with components for public works, particularly in Northern Uganda. These included the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund³, the Karamoja Livelihoods Improvement Programme (KALIP), the Development Response to Impacts of Displacement Project (DRDIP) implemented primarily in refugee hosting districts, and the Development Initiative for Northern Uganda Project (DINU). The public works have assisted beneficiaries in creating community assets, providing food to households affected by famine and transferring cash to poor households with labour capacity.

2.1.6 Basic social services and infrastructure

The government prioritised investment in different programmes to deliver social services to the general population, benefiting women and girls due to their gender-ascribed societal roles. The essential services offered during the review period include:

Water- The government prioritised interventions to improve the availability of adequate and reliable quality freshwater resources in rural and urban areas by focusing on improving the functionality of water sources. Emphasis was also on the establishment of functional gender-sensitive regional and zonal management committees to improve the monitoring of water resources.

Ownership of land- The government implemented measures to ensure women's tenure security. The Land Fund was capitalized to provide access to land to lawful and *bona fide* occupants on registered land. Certificates of Customary Ownership (CCOs) were also issued to households in Northern and Western Uganda, and Communal Land Associations (CLAs) in the Karamoja region and refugee hosting districts were formed, and certificates were issued. Land registration services were decentralized to 22 Zonal offices to take services nearer to the population. The National Land Information System was implemented, the zonal offices were computerized, and online land search services were started in 2021 to enable transparent land administration.

Energy- To ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, as articulated in SDG 7, the Government prioritised expansion, rehabilitation and the distribution of the energy network, including to rural and hard-to-reach areas through last-mile connections. It also promoted

the use of new renewable energy solutions, such as solar energy, for lighting, cooking, and water heating. The government further promoted the uptake of alternative and efficient cooking technologies (electricity and LPG), including in rural areas.

2.1.7 Promoting supportive environment for gender equality and women's empowerment

In conformity with SDG 5 (5. c), the Government positioned gender and equity in the NDP III, which is the national development framework. Gender and equity issues were integrated into the design of NDP III at strategic and programme levels and the respective Implementation Action Plans (PIAPs),

Additionally, in line with SDG 5 (5. c) and in pursuit of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, the Equal Opportunities Commission assessed compliance of the budget framework papers and ministerial policy statements for compliance with gender and equity requirements.

In line with SDG 5 (5.5), which mandates States to ensure full and effective participation of women in leadership at all levels, the Government strengthened and enforced laws for women's entry into Parliament and political parties and organisations.

Mechanisms to enhance women's collective voice and visibility, such as UWOPA and the Women's Situation Room, were maintained. The CSOs and Women's Rights Organisations continued to build the capacity of women leaders at all levels and trained women aspiring to join the leadership arena.

2.2 Key Achievements, challenges and Setbacks in Progress towards Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

This section presents the general key achievements and a summary for each priority area in subsection 2.2.2. The details of the progress and measures taken to implement each critical area of concern of the BPfA are presented in **Section 3**.

2.2.1 Key Achievements

i. Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice

Significant achievements were registered in promoting equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice. Consistent with SDG 5, Target 5c, which is to strengthen enforceable legislation for promoting gender equality, the Government continued to enact legal frameworks to facilitate, enforce and monitor equality and end all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere.

All the legislations enacted during this period promoted gender equality, espoused non-discrimination and use of non-discriminatory and non-stereotyping language, guaranteed women's rights, and some provided for affirmative action quotas in the implementational structures and delivery of services.²

²² Laws with quotas for women in management and service delivery are :The Parliamentary Elections (Amendment) Act 2020; The Political Parties and Organisations (Amendment) Act 2020; The National Climate Change Act (2021) and The Mining and Minerals Act 2022 and The Administration of the Judiciary Act (2020). The laws that promote the rights of women are

The key legal and regulatory policy reforms to advance gender equality and women's empowerment to actualise the SDGs include **Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets (PPDA) (Amendment Act)**, 2021, which out-laws discrimination of bidders based on gender, among other factors; provides for reservation schemes for marginalised groups and; promotes the participation of registered associations of women, youth and PWDs in public procurement processes. **The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) (Amendment Act)**, 2022, provides for gender-responsive actions, namely mid-term access of 10% of accrued benefits for contributing members aged 45 and above and 50% of accrued benefits for PWD members aged 40 and above who have saved for at least ten years. The law mandates all employers to ensure all workers contribute to NSSF regardless of the size of the enterprise or number of employees and allows voluntary contributions by the self-employed populations.

The Markets Act 2023 protects the economic rights of women operating in markets. The law allows individuals to own markets provided they meet conditions for obtaining the licence, which include accessibility by PWDs, provisions for baby care and nursing centres, separate toilets for women, men and PWDs and ample parking space. Market fees can only be set in consultation with the line minister, which empowers the public market vendor to pay fees to government authorities. These provisions outlaw the go-betweens that had hitherto exploited market women.

The **Succession (Amendment) Act, 2022** repealed unconstitutional provisions. Critical shifts the law achieved include the right to distribution of property of an intestate to apply to both male and female dependents and surviving spouse(s) in a marriage. The law protects the principal residential property to benefit the surviving spouse and lineal descendants and protects the rights of the children/ lineal descendants (75%), spouse (20%) & customary heir (1%) and reduces the rights of other dependents (4%). The law refined the definition of the customary heir to include "heiress" to remove discrimination.

The **Computer Misuse (Amendment) Act 2022** protects the right to privacy and outlaws the sharing of false and hateful information forms of cyber-related gender-based violence, such as stalking and bullying, among others perpetrated on online and social media platforms.

ii. Women's health

The government of Uganda has progressively built a health care system that has enabled the prevention, surveillance, and treatment of the population. Consequently, life expectancy increased from 63.7 years in 2021 to 64.38 years in 2023. The life expectancy at birth for women as of 2021 was 64.92 compared to 60.42 for men, and there was progress in critical maternal and child indicators as follows:

There was an improvement in fertility trends from 5.4 children to 5.2 children in 2016 and 2022, respectively, as shown in Figure 1. There were regional disparities, with the lowest TFR of 3.7 in Kampala and 6.7 in Karamoja sub-region

The Markets Act 2023; The National Social Security Act 2022; The Computer Misuse (Amendment) Act 2022 and Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets (Amendment) Act 2020.

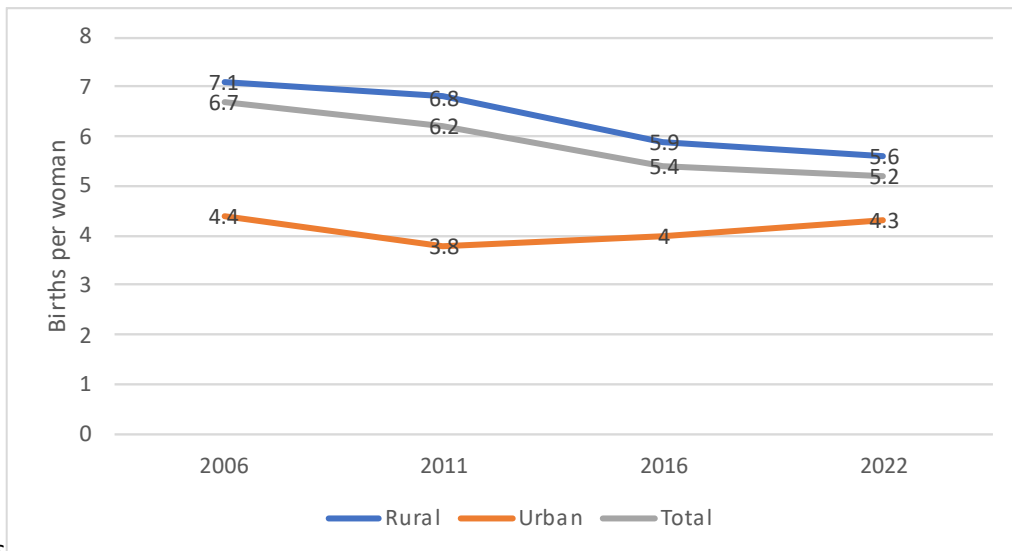


Figure 1: Fertility Trends

- There was an increase in the number of delivery cases in healthcare facilities from 73% in 2016 to 91% in 2022, and deliveries at home were reduced from 19% to 9% over the same period, as shown in Figure 2.

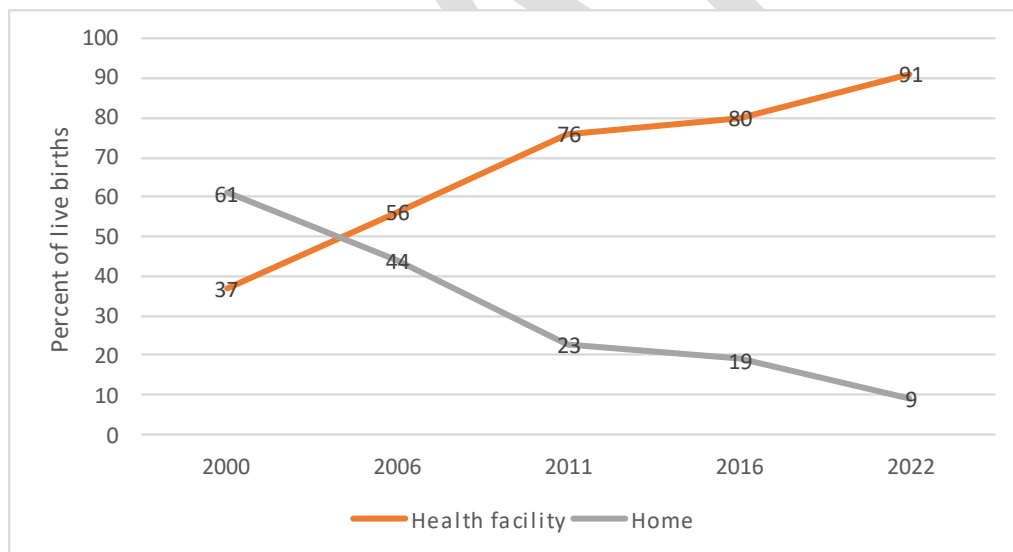


Figure 2: Trends in delivery in Health Facility

- Maternal mortality reduced from 336 deaths per 100,000 live births to 189 deaths in 2016 and 2022, respectively. The percentage of currently married women aged 15-49 years using any form of modern contraception increased from 30% in 2016 to 38% in 2022. However, 4% of the women in the same category still use traditional family planning methods.
- Childhood mortality indicators improved. For example, the under-5 mortality rate reduced from 64 deaths per 1,000 in 2016 to 52 deaths in 2022, the Infant Mortality rate from 43 to 36 and neonatal mortality from 27 to 22 deaths per live birth over the same period, as shown in Figure 3.

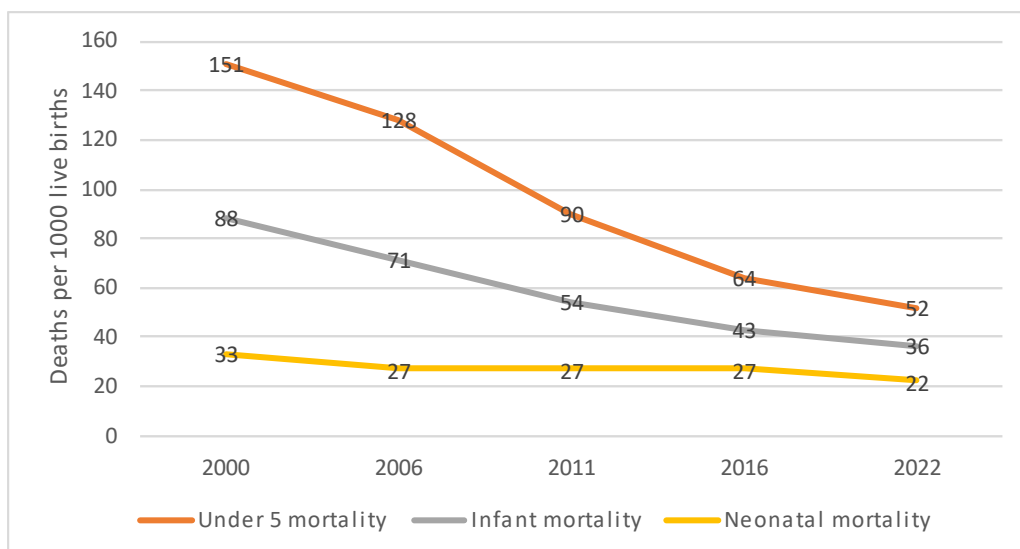


Figure 3: Trends in Childhood Mortality

iii. Gains of Women towards economic empowerment

The government enacted laws and invested in programmes to promote women's rights and access to economic resources such as finance and land. As a result, there has been progress as follows:

- The total land under title increased from 22.4% in the financial year 2021/2022 to 30% in 2022/2023. The women's ownership of titled land increased from 21.6% to 27.02% over the same period. Figure 4 shows trends of land ownership by women from FY 2020/2021- 2023.2024³

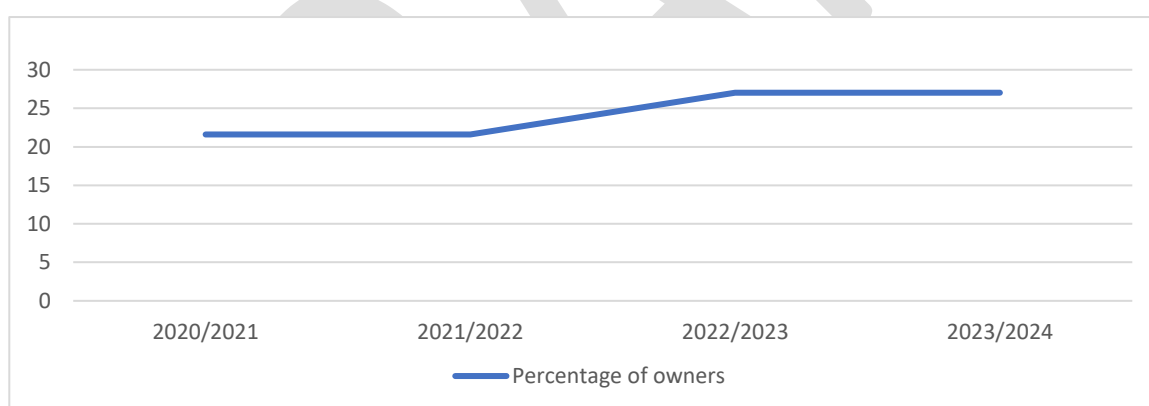


Figure 4: Trends in Land ownership by Women from FY 2020/21-2023/2024

The share of women with bank accounts increased from 53% in 2017 to 65% in 2021 compared to men, who increased from 66% to 67%.

iv Gains in political participation and decision-making

The Government pursued robust policies, including affirmative action measures to promote full and equal participation of women in political leadership and decision-making. The women's representation in the Cabinet stands at 45% (14 cabinet ministers out of 31 (24) ministers of state out of 50 and there are 189 members in the current Parliament. Figures 5 and 6 show the trends of women's representation in the Cabinet and Parliament over the last three terms.

³ Records from Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development and numbers for 2023/2024 were at half year.

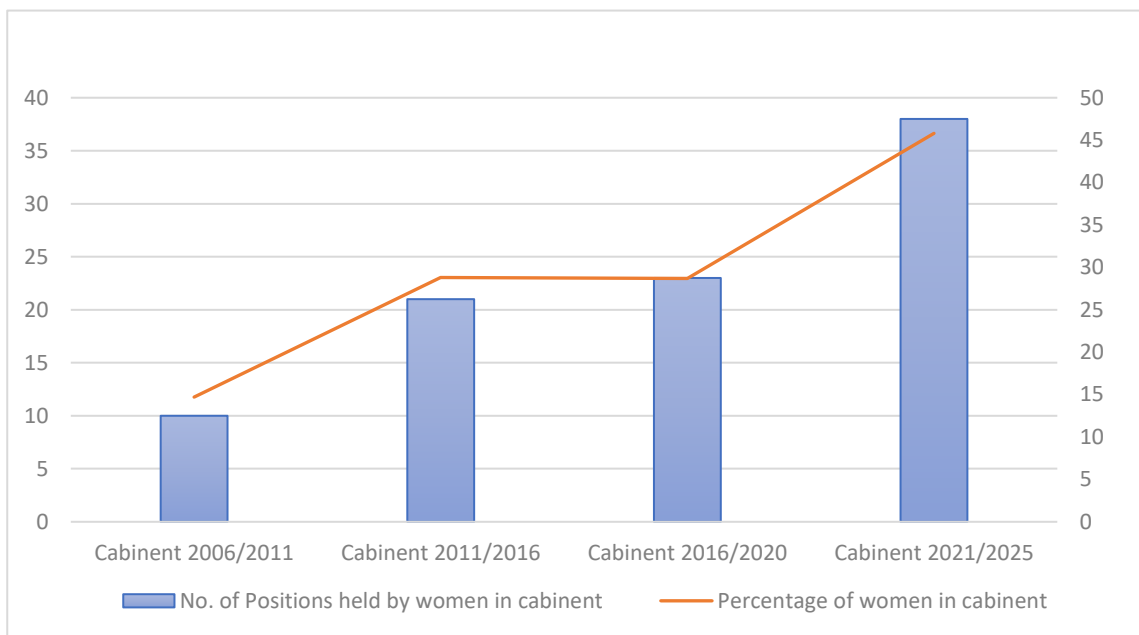


Figure 5: Trends in Composition of Women in Cabinet

Positions of the Vice President, Speaker of Parliament and Prime Minister are currently occupied by women, including critical ministries of Energy and Mineral Development, Science and Technology, on top of those traditionally occupied by women (Education, Health and Gender). Women constitute 37% of the shadow ministers (11 women and 19 men)

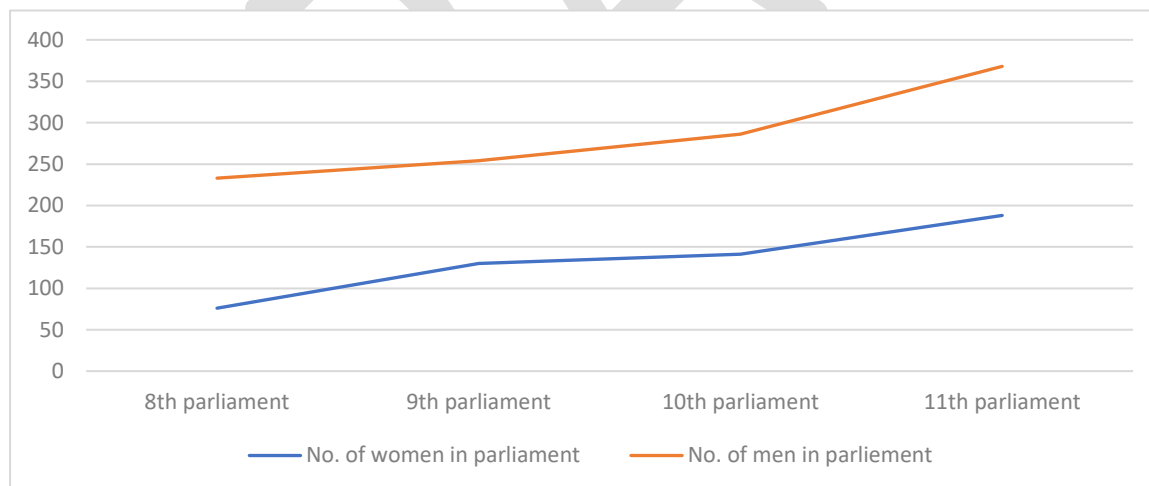


Figure 6: Trend of Women and Men Representation in Parliament

v. Gender Responsive budgeting

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) continued to enforce the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) of 2015. It tracked the various interventions and indicators under the country's Vision 2040, National and Programme Budget Framework Papers, and Ministerial Policy Statements alongside the targets of the SDGs to account for gender and equity compliance and equitable development. Every year, the Commission assesses the budgets and policy statements of 146 local

governments (Districts, municipalities, and cities) and ministries, departments, and agencies to establish how service delivery benefits everyone, especially the most vulnerable.

Over the period, compliance of the policy statements improved from 60% in 2019/20 to 67% in 2023/2024. The improvements indicate that Votes were committed to equalise opportunities for women, Youth, PWDs, Older Persons, Children and hard-to-reach places (Islands, areas for Ethnic Minorities, mountainous regions, poor communities and remote rural areas) when developing plans and budgets. The compliance of the Budget Framework Papers to gender and equity increased from 45.2% in 2021/2022 to 67.6% in 2022/2023 as shown in Figure 7.

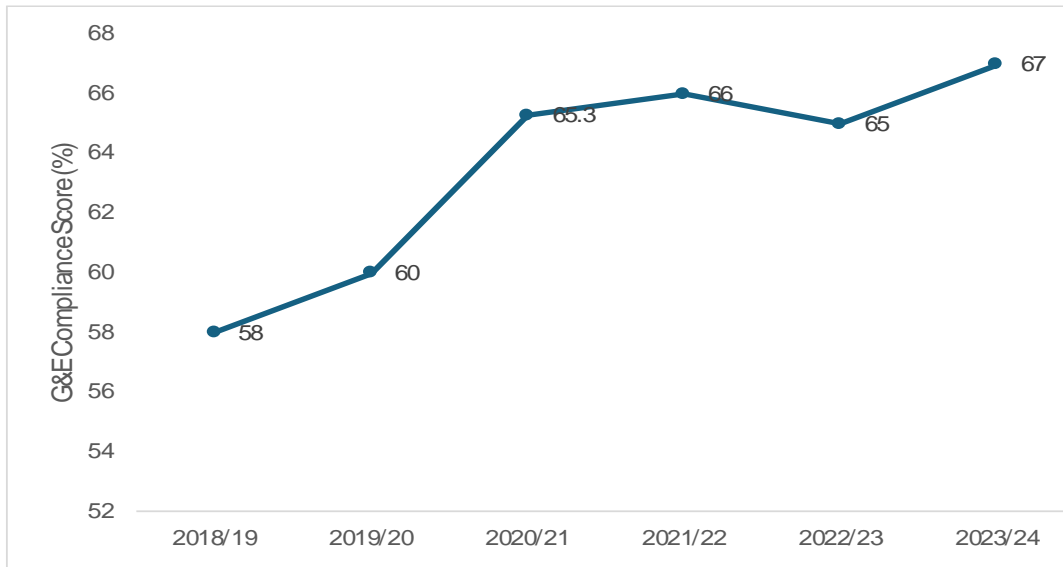


Figure 7: National Compliance with Gender & Equity Requirements for the FYs 2018/19 -2023/24

Source: EOC MPS G&E FY 2019/20-2023/24

2.2.2 Achievements for Each Priority Area

Table 2 below presents summary of progress and key achievements per each priority area. The details of the progress of implementation are presented in Section 3.

Table 2: Progress of implementation of National Priorities (2020-2025)

No	National Priorities	Planned Interventions	Summary of Progress of Implementation/ key Achievements
1	Women's economic empowerment	Women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises	-Operational livelihood schemes for women and youth- UWEP, YLP and grants for PWDs and Older Persons -Women-centric financial products in Commercial banks such as Stanbic, DFCU and Centenary Bank
		Public Procurement	-Reserved quotas for women and youth in public procurement embedded in the law (PPDA Amendment, Act 2021,
		Right to work and rights at work.	-The Public Service Standing Orders were reviewed in 2021 to strengthen the employment benefits of women in Public Service. -NSSF (Amendment) Act 2021 provides for mid-term and other benefits. -Over 100 Private sector companies adopted the Gender Equality Seal and committed to promoting gender equity and gender friendly- a friendly work environment.
		Unpaid care and domestic work	-Operational child care centres in government agencies -Markets Act 2022 requires all markets to have childcare centres. -Markets built during this period contain childcare centres.
		Strengthening women's participation in ensuring environmental sustainability	-Gender-responsive natural resources committees were established and are operational
		Digital and financial inclusion of women	-Increased ownership of phones and bank accounts by women Increased ownership and usage of mobile phones by women

		Agriculture (commercial agriculture and Agro-processing)	-Under agriculture, the government provided small-scale irrigation equipment to farmers in Local Governments) -The post-harvest handling losses for priority commodities reduced to 18.4% (NDP III target 33%), attributed to increased farmer awareness of post-harvest losses and support with post-harvest handling equipment
		Changing harmful social norms and gender stereotypes	-
2	Women and girls' education and skills training	Quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls	-Gender equality at enrolment at the primary level -Improved adult rates among women (from 67% in 2016/2017 to 73% in 2019/2020. But literacy rates for women stagnated at 66% and for males at 81%
		Vocational training, skilling and participation in STEM	-Skilling schemes in place (Presidential Skilling initiatives) - New lower secondary curriculum that emphasises skills and vocationalisation of education
		Changing harmful social norms and gender stereotypes	-
3	Women's Health	Access to affordable quality health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights	Expanding health infrastructure led to improvements in maternal and child health indicators e.g MMR, IMR, and neonatal mortality as presented in section 2.2.1.
		Changing harmful social norms and gender stereotypes	-
4	Ending gender-based violence and promotion of women's rights	Eliminating violence against women and girls	-Prevention and management of GBV cases led to a slight reduction in the prevalence of GBV
		Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice	-Progress in the enactment of gender-sensitive laws (Section 2.2.1)
		Changing harmful social norms and gender stereotypes	-

5	Gender-responsive social protection	Cash transfers, pensions and universal health coverage.	-Social protection programmes in place for older persons, formal and informal pension schemes and public works programmes -About 62.4% and 37.6% of Social Assistance Grant older persons beneficiaries were older women and men, respectively.
		Changing harmful social norms and gender stereotypes	-
6	Basic services and infrastructure	Water, sanitation and Hygiene, transport, communication, Energy, Technology and ICT	-On and off-grid electricity connectivity increased to 58%, and connectivity to rural households led to the reduction of reliance on charcoal from 85% to 80% -Access to water improved to 70% (68% in rural and 71.6% in urban areas, 70% of villages have at least one source of safe water services
		Changing harmful social norms and gender stereotypes	-
7	Promotion of supportive environment for women's empowerment	Political participation and representation of women	The percentage of women in Parliament increased from 33% in 2016 to 33.8% in 2021, and in cabinet from 28.7% to 45.8%
		Gender-responsive budgeting	-Compliance with gender and equity requirements in the national budget increased from 60% in 2019/20 to 67% in 2023/24
		Gender statistics	-Government continuously tracked SDG gender-sensitive indicators in National Annual Performance Reviews(NAPR) -Generation of Gender- disaggregated data in National surveys (UDHS and UNHS)
		Changing harmful social norms and gender stereotypes	-

2.2.3 Challenges and setbacks

The implementation of the BPfA was challenged by multilayered compounding crises, which aggravated the existing challenges to implementing the priorities in the NDP III. The health pandemics (COVID-19 and Ebola), global conflicts (war in Ukraine and Palestine), climate change and natural disasters (mudslides, floods, erratic rainfalls, drought and locust infestations) aggravated the already existing challenges to gender equality and contributed to the stalling of the progress and slowing down implementation of BPfA. The main challenges and setbacks include:

i. Poverty Levels

Despite the commitment by the Government to meet SDG1 (End poverty in all its forms), poverty is still persistent. According to the National Household Survey (UNHS 2019/2020), the population below the national poverty line reduced from 21.4% in 2016/17 to 20.3% in 2019/20, but the number of persons living in poverty increased from 8 million to 8.3 million over the same period. There are about 3.5 million persons living below the food poverty line. While rural poverty reduced by 2%, urban poverty increased by the corresponding points, but the rural poor still account for 85% of people experiencing poverty. Overall, poverty exhibits urban and rural as well as regional dynamics poverty. According to the Multidimensional Poverty Report of UBOS (2022), there is evidence of gender inequality in poverty; female-headed households have higher rates of multidimensional poverty of about 50% in 2016/17 and 2019/20, respectively, compared to 42% and 39% for male-headed households.

ii. Unemployment

Unemployment remains a challenge, especially among the youth, women and PWDs. This challenge was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted employment opportunities for all, especially the most vulnerable and prone populations, youth and women. The national unemployment rate increased from 9.7% in 2016/2017 to 11% (UBOS, 2021) and is notably higher among the youth. Youth and females in paid employment were 51.9% and 43.6%, respectively, while men were 60.5% (UBOS 2021). Women account for a larger share (62%) of the working labour force in vulnerable employment (52%).

iii. HIV/AIDS in adolescents

Over the years, Uganda's efforts to combat HIV and AIDS have registered progress. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the population aged 15-49 reduced from 6% in 2016 to 5% in 2024, and there was a significant improvement in the reduction of new infections, mother-to-child transmissions and AIDS-related deaths. The achievements resulted from scaled-up HIV prevention, treatment and behavioural change interventions. Core interventions included behavioural change communication based on abstinence, Being faithful and condom use (ABC), safe male circumcision, HIV counselling and testing, elimination of mother-to-child transmission and care and treatment.

Despite these interventions, HIV/AIDS continues to be a significant health challenge. The prevalence rate is higher among women at 6.5% than men at 3.6%. There are high levels of infections among adolescent girls and young women, low involvement of men in HIV prevention programmes and uptake of services. The infection rates among older adolescent girls are four times higher than young men of the same age and highest in the Capital City.

There has also been an increase in STI infections by 1.6% among 10-19-year-olds. HIV positivity trends among adolescents are also increasing. Female positivity rates slightly decreased from 1.3% in 2020 to 1% in 2022. Male positivity rates increased somewhat from 0.6% in 2020 to 0.3% in 2022

iv. The low pace of mindset change in Ugandan society.

There are harmful and persistent social norms and practices that continue to be barriers to women's rights and empowerment. Discrimination is deeply rooted in these norms and perpetuates gender gaps in education, employment, health and ownership and management of economic resources, hindering the progress of women, families, communities and the nation. The slow pace at which individuals, families and other social institutions are changing from practising harmful social norms affects women and girls in the following ways:

- **Persistent Gender-Based Violence and Backlash:** There is persistent and changing nature of violence against women and girls. The Violence Against Women and Girls Survey Report (2021) revealed that the prevalence among 22.1% of ever-partnered women and girls experience physical violence, 23% face sexual violence, and 34.6% endure both forms. Women with disabilities currently experience higher rates at 42.3%, compared to 33.9% for those without disabilities. The age group 15-19 years reports presently the highest levels of violence at 41.3%. Notably, there is no significant difference in violence rates between rural and urban areas. There are also increasing cases of cybercrime. The changing nature of drivers of violence against women has led to rising cases of emotional violence that are not easily quantifiable and detectable.
- Women beneficiaries of economic empowerment programmes are increasingly facing violence and harassment in families as they are forced to take on all family responsibilities on top of the care work.
- **The unequal burden of Unpaid Care and Domestic work**
Social norms continue to shape the division and perceptions about unpaid care work between women and men. Women and girls continue to disproportionately shoulder care activities such as fetching water, collecting fuel wood, and caring for household and community members. On average, women spend significantly more time on care work than on paid work⁴. Eighty-five (85%) of all women in all regions are involved in unpaid care and household work compared to 42% of men⁵.
- **Persistent teenage pregnancy and child marriages:** Teenage pregnancies and child marriages have continued to be significant social and public concerns in the country, affecting the well-being of girl children and adolescents. The rates of teenage pregnancies have remained high at 27% for two decades. Child marriage has risen since 2011, with an exponential increase during COVID-19 and is, on average, 25%. Forced marriage is common in some communities.

These beliefs further contribute to low confidence and self-esteem of women and limited access to opportunities and services (e.g. girls unable to access SRHR information and services). The negative beliefs are also reflected in the high fertility rate, increasing population, and unmet need for family planning.

⁴ EPRC (2022): From Promises to Action: A shifting Gender Norms and Public Perceptions about Unpaid Care work in Work places and Families in Uganda.

⁵ EPRC, 2022

2.3 Specific actions to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of marginalised groups of women and girls

The terms "marginalised" and "vulnerable" are used interchangeably in the country. According to the National Social Protection Policy, different individuals or population groups of people who face various risks and vulnerabilities associated with age, gender, disability, health, employment, poverty, environmental and natural disasters are known as vulnerable groups. The Public Finance Management Act 2015(as amended classifies these groups as marginalised.

Article 32 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda guarantees affirmative action in favour of marginalised groups, and the National Gender Policy mandates all Ministries, Departments and Agencies(MDAs) to mainstream gender equality issues in their policies, programmes and projects. The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) 2015, as amended, requires all Government Institutions to plan and allocate budgets for gender and equity interventions.

The above legal and policy framework prohibits discrimination against access to services by marginalised groups. Therefore, measures taken to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of marginalised groups are reported under each Critical Area of Concern in Section Three.

This section provides an account of specific affirmative action measures taken for the following marginalised groups.

2.3.1. Women and Girls with Disabilities

According to the State of Uganda Population Report (2022), the Persons with Disabilities are 4.5 million, accounting for 12.4 %, of which 49.3% are females and 50.7% are males.

The Government enacted the **Persons with Disabilities Act 2023**, which protects and promotes the fundamental human rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities. The National Policy on Persons with Disabilities was revised in 2023. The policy aligns Government actions with the UN Committee on Disability recommendations. It requires all actors in the public and private sectors to eliminate exclusion against PWDs.

To support PWDs to access financial services and create wealth, the Government increased funding for the Disability Grants. The recipients access the funds through a group approach model. Each group of five (5) people accesses five (5) million Uganda shillings. The guidelines by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development encourage all-inclusive groups with at least three (3) women in each group, but women-only groups are acceptable. Evidence shows that most PWDs use groups to access funds and group procurement but implement individual projects.

By April 2024, Ugx 26.7 bn had been disbursed benefiting 5,560 PWDs groups covering 43,398 beneficiaries in all local governments, of which 21,581 were male and 21,817 were female, representing 50% of each.

Although the programme has not been evaluated, anecdotal evidence indicates that some PWDs use funds to meet basic needs, e.g. assistive devices, while others start micro-level income-generating activities.

The Government continued to accord PWDs affirmative action to participate in politics and decision-making at national and local government levels. PWDs are represented by five (5) members of the

national Parliament. By law, there should be a female among the members representing the national level. Currently, there are three (3) women and two (2) male members.

2.3.2. Women and Girls Living with HIV/AIDS

As indicated in Section 2.2.3, HIV/AIDS continues to be a significant health challenge. The prevalence rate is higher among women at 6.5% than men at 3.6%. There are high levels of infections among adolescent girls and young women, low involvement of men in HIV prevention programmes and uptake of services. The infection rates among older adolescent girls are four times higher than in young men of the same age and highest in the Capital City.

In the quest to end HIV/AIDS by 2030, the Third (3) Presidential Hand Book on the Presidential Fast Track Initiative (TPFTI) on ending AIDS in Uganda was launched in 2022. The handbook has a 5-point plan indicated below.

- Engage men in HIV prevention and close the tap on new infections, particularly among adolescent girls and young women.
- Accelerate implementation of the Test, Treat and attainment of 95%- 95%-95% targets, particularly among men and young people.
- Consolidate progress on eliminating mother-to-child transmission.
- Ensure financial sustainability for HIV and AIDS response
- Ensure institutional effectiveness for a well-coordinated multi-sectoral response

The handbook guides all actors in implementing high-impact interventions to end HIV and AIDS by 2030. It guides the roles and responsibilities for men, women, youth and levels at all levels. Consequently, the Government has continued to employ the multi-sectoral approach involving all public, private and CSO actors under the coordination of the Uganda AIDS Commission in the President's Office. The Government continued to implement high-impact HIV prevention strategies that are cost-effective and specific measures to prevent and manage HIV/AIDS.

Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and Pre- Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) services continue to be critical measures for the prevention of HIV infection. In 2022, the Government developed the Technical Guidelines on Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for persons at substantial risk of HIV infection, such as commercial sex workers. The guidelines spell out the usage of the ring and the injectable options. In May 2024, the Government launched a self-testing initiative to curb the spread of HIV. The "**Community CheckNow**" test is self-administered, more accessible, and more convenient for women who face harmful socio-cultural norms. Evidence from the study conducted by the Ministry of Health indicates that testing will reduce the stigma associated with testing at health facilities, and more people will be encouraged to know their HIV status.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) and partners continued to roll out HIV /AIDS treatment services for adults and children as part of consolidated guidelines for HIV prevention and treatment. The new guidelines for optimised care were introduced for children and adults and rolled out to more health facilities. The health staff in facilities were supported, trained and mentored in using optimised regimes. Consequently, the ART coverage for all ages increased from 86% in 2019.2020 to 91%. The

Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) viral suppression rate increased from 89% to 93.55% over the same period. Adolescents have better coverage than children below ten years, probably due to the laxity of the caregivers.

2.3.3 Younger Women

Uganda has a predominantly young population with a median age of 16.3 years, a growth rate of 3% and a sex ratio of 94.5% by 2023. Examples of measures taken include:

In response to the high unemployment rate and poverty among youth, the Government continued to implement the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP). The programme promotes enterprise development entrepreneurship skills and extends micro-credit facilities to young people.

Between 2021 and 2023, Ugx 14.34 bn was allocated to 1,803 youth groups, benefiting about 12,218 youth, of which 49.7% were females and 50.3% were male youth.

The impact evaluation conducted by MGLSD in 2021 revealed that the programme has led to the following positive changes.

- *Employment creation*- positive contribution of 4% to job creation through the creation of over 200,000 direct jobs and 500,000 indirect jobs with a multiplier effect at household and community levels
- *Enhanced financial inclusion*-4.5% of beneficiaries with bank accounts, an increase from 21% in 2017(baseline) to 24.4% in 2018
- *Enhancement of taxes through the formalisation of businesses*- the percentage of youth paying taxes increased from 27.4% to 29,1%, and the proportion of youth registering businesses increased from 17.3% to 21.65%
- *Import substitution*- Using locally available materials to produce products to for local consumption, e.g. leather (shoes, sandals, bags and wine from bananas and pineapples).
- *Impact on lifestyle and behaviour and behaviour characteristics*- 10% reduction in the prevalence of alcohol consumption among beneficiaries; enhanced social among youth through group approach, building networks, mutual trust and support.

As presented in Section 3.2, the Government implements youth-focused and friendly skilling programmes to enable young women and men to acquire marketable skills. For example, in 2021, the Government expanded the Presidential Initiative on Skilling the Girl Child to include young men. There are 20 industrial hubs (19 spread in all regions and 1 in Kampala Capital City) where young people are trained in different trades, e. g., welding, carpentry, building and construction, fashion and design, bakery and leather/ tannery. The six (6) month residential courses attract 50/50 women and men of 18-35 years. The courses are open to all young people irrespective of prior educational status and are run in local dialects according to participants' needs. There is no sex segregation in the choice of trades.

After the courses, the trainees are certified by the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) in the Ministry of Education and Sports, which formalises their qualifications. Graduates have the option of continuing to specialise in the trades they prefer up to the graduate level. Some trainees have been linked to other government programmes for employment or access to collateral-free financing.

2.3.4 Older Women

According to the Uganda National Household Survey (2019/2020), Older persons constitute 5.4% of the total population; 23% live in rural households compared to 16% in urban households. The State of Uganda Population Report (2022) revealed that older persons increased from 1.65% in 2019 to 1.69 % in 2022, indicating an increasing ageing population.

The government is committed to increasing the voices of older women and men in politics, decision-making, and programmes. The Constitution guarantees the protection of older women and mandates the Government to take measures commensurate with their needs in Article 32. Other policy and legal frameworks that continued to provide the overall framework for affirmative action programs for older persons were the National Older Persons Policy of 2009 and the National Council for Older Persons Act 2013.

Legal Reforms measures

In 2020, the **Parliamentary Elections Act** was amended to include older persons as a special interest group (SIG) in Parliament. The law provides for five (5) representatives, with at least one (1) being female and elected as a national female representative. The other four (4) are elected on a regional basis. The women surpassed this quota, and there are three (3) women out of the five(5) Older persons representatives in Parliament.

Programmes

Consistent with SDG1, the government was committed to implementing social protection programmes to tackle the high poverty rates among older persons. The government continued to implement the **Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment Programme (SAGE)** for older persons aged 80 years who receive Uganda shillings of 25,000 (\$7-11) per month.

Since targeting is categorical, every man and woman in the specified age bracket accesses the fund. The payment is delivered through Centenary Bank as a Service Provider (PSP). By January 2024, the programme reached 299,342 out of 358,420 persons targeted, totalling 83.5%. About sixty-two per cent (62.4%) and 37.6% of the beneficiaries are women and men, respectively.

According to the 2021 impact study, the programme has positively impacted the beneficiaries. Overall, it was established that 55% of the beneficiaries reported using the SAGE funds on medical ills, 21.7% on household items, 20.4% on agricultural inputs, 17% on livestock and 13% on education. Specific benefits to beneficiaries were as summarised below:

- Fulfilment of basic needs such as household necessities(clothes, soap, sugar, salt, kerosene), eating regular meals,
- Hire of private labour for farm work
- Started income-generating activities using the stipend as start-up capital
- Cater for medical/hospital bills
- Ability to socialise and get a sense of belonging and were integrated into the community
- Pay school fees for grandchildren.

In 2022, the Government introduced a **Special Enterprise Grant for Older Persons (SEGOP)**, a five billion Shillings grant for the 1.89 million elder persons aged 60 to 79 years who are not beneficiaries

of the Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE) programme and other programmes such as Parish Development Model (PDM). The programme operates on a group model approach, although experience has shown that about 50% of the beneficiaries use groups to access funds but implement individual projects. This is because group businesses face management challenges. By January 2024, Ugx 5.5 bn had been disbursed, directly benefiting 1,130 older person groups, covering 7,625 beneficiaries, of which 3,810 were males and 3.815 were females, translating into an equal percentage of both sexes.

Evaluation of this programme has not yet been conducted. However, anecdotal evidence shows that beneficiaries utilise the funds to start income-generating projects, mostly livestock rearing and crop husbandry (mushroom growing and beekeeping)

2.3.5 Migrant Women and Girls

The most common type of migration in the country is rural-to-rural migration. According to UNHS2019/2020, four in every ten persons (42%) moved from rural to other rural areas, while 12 % moved from rural to urban areas. Overall, three out of ten people migrate to join a family, one out of five look for work and two out of ten due to marriage.

However, there are increasing cases of increased young women and men seeking employment abroad. About 98% of migrant workers are employed as casual Labourers, with only 0.2% holding professional jobs and 1.8 % working in semi-professional placements, mainly in the Middle East.

In line with SDG 8 and Targets 8.7 and 8.8, which mandate States to put measures to protect labour rights, promote safe and secure working environments for all workers and eradicate forced labour and human trafficking, the Government put in place the following measures:

- In collaboration with IOM, the Government strengthened the National Coordination Mechanism on Migration and border management information systems.
- Uganda's Citizenship and Immigration Control Act sets out requirements for temporary legal residents to obtain permanent residence. Individuals who have legally and voluntarily migrated into the country are entitled to apply for citizenship, provided they have lived in the country for at least ten years.

The government has implemented different policies through the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development to protect the rights of Ugandan emigrant workers, as presented in **Section 3.1**.

2.3.6 Refugee and Internally Displaced Women and Girls

According to the UNHCR Report 2024, Uganda hosts more than 1.6m refugees, making it the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, with women and children making up 81% of the refugee population. The refugee-originating countries include South Sudan (56%), DRC (32%), Somalia (4%), Eritrea (2%), Burundi (3%), Rwanda (2%), Ethiopia (1%) and Sudan.

Uganda has a human rights-based approach and an open-door policy towards refugees and displaced persons, anchored within the Refugee Act 2006 and policy framework. The Government adopted the

“Self-Reliance Strategy” (SRS), where refugees in the country, regardless of sex, religion, country of origin and age, enjoy the right to work, freedom of movement within the country, access basic social service within the settlements and host communities, the right to live in local communities and as well as settlements and are allocated plots of land to cultivate within rural settlements.

Through the Office of the Prime Minister, the GOU implemented the Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP) in the 15 local host community districts in West Nile, Acholi, Bunyoro and South West sub-region during the reporting period. The DRDIP is a World Bank-funded multi-regional project where funds are expended to improve service delivery, build infrastructure for local development and build capacity for regional planning. The project focuses on enhancing social and economic services and infrastructure, namely:

- Upgrading and expanding health centres, hospitals, water treatment plants, and supply systems.
- Support vocational schools with additional facilities
- Construction of intercommunity rural roads
- Construction and rehabilitation of multipurpose markets and abattoirs

The community contribution is in the form of land, labour and monitoring of the projects through user committees. The community projects are allocated up to \$ 40,000.

The project supports beneficiaries with funds for livelihood investments. The households in refugee settlements and host communities are supported to engage in traditional livelihood projects such as subsistence crop farming and livestock rearing as well as non-traditional ones, namely operating shops and restaurants, tailoring, and carpentry shops. The women and youth groups are trained, and project beneficiaries at the household level are assisted in procuring seedlings of fruit trees, ornamentals and shade trees. Beneficiaries are supported with funding to make briquettes and energy-saving stoves to enable access to efficient energy-saving sources.

The project has a component of labour-intensive public works (LIPW) targeting the poorest and most needy individuals who offer labour for conservation activities on public land and are compensated for labour. The workers are paid not more than the market rate (Ugx 5,500) and are required to save a portion conditionally to cushion them for future risks. The public works are done on conservation activities in schools, health centres, administration headquarters, and on the roadside. The activities include soil and water conservation such as terracing, contour beds, flood control dikes, establishment of plant nursery beds, valley dam construction, building wells and irrigation schemes.

The challenge, however, is that as instability in countries in the region escalates, the influx of refugees into Uganda increases. The escalating numbers of refugees put a strain on the available resources and services. Evidence shows that refugees are responsible for deforestation in the host communities when they search for fuel wood for cooking.

2.3.7 Indigenous Ethnic Minority Women and Girls

According to EOC Annual Report 2023, Indigenous Ethnic Minority Groups are defined as "non-dominant groups of individuals who share specific characteristics which single them out of any given society, often as marginalised groups. Based on this definition, Uganda is home to about 28 Indigenous Minority Groups (IMGs) that are located in different parts of the country.

Reviewing the Equal Opportunities Policy was initiated to strengthen the mechanisms for promoting the rights of ethnic minorities. This was in response to the study by the Equal Opportunities Commission of 2023, which revealed that most ethnic minority groups are excluded from government programmes, particularly livelihood support projects.

2.4 The effects of the confluence of different crises and measures to prevent the negative impact on the implementation of the BPfA and progress for women and girls

2.4.1 COVID-19 Pandemic, Epidemics and other Externalities

The implementation of BPfA coincided with global and national shocks such as health epidemics and pandemics (e.g. COVID-19 & Ebola). COVID-19 shocks affected everyone, but women and girls were impacted differently due to their socially ascribed societal roles. According to the EPRC report, the severity of the pandemic effect on businesses was heterogeneous, implying that some businesses were more affected than others depending on various factors such as business size, sector, and sex of the business owner. Evidence further indicates that fewer women-owned businesses stopped operations during lockdowns than male-owned enterprises because cultural norms and beliefs have empowered women to be more patient and persevering, even when faced with crises. However, women-owned businesses suffered more severe job losses and had slower job recovery after the full reopening of the economy. Men moved into activities traditionally dominated by women, especially in urban areas, e.g. selling vegetables by the roadside. By the end of 2020, 23% of women, compared to 16% of men, had stopped working, and a further reduction in the labour force was observed among young women and urban areas (30%).

Furthermore, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, GBV of violence against women and girls increased exponentially. Women were more vulnerable to experiencing violence from their partners, in addition to stress from economic hardships to provide for families and other effects of the lockdown. There were increased cases of defilement, teenage pregnancies and child marriages, including forced marriages, in some communities in the country.

2.4.2 Climate Crisis

The country has been grappling with natural disasters and climate change effects, mainly droughts, heat waves, and declining / erratic rainfall, which have led to frequent busting of rivers and landslides. The irregular rainfall patterns have disrupted planting and harvesting seasons, affecting crop yields and the agricultural calendar because agriculture is mainly rain-fed. Conversely, increased rainfall in certain regions has led to flooding and severe soil erosion, landslides further compromising agricultural output, population displacements, access to schools and affected infrastructure establishments such as roads and electricity dams, leading to high maintenance costs. Other natural disasters were earthquakes and insect infestations. There are also escalating man-made challenges, including pollution, deforestation and over-use of wetlands that have adversely affected natural habitats and caused environment degradation.

Climate change affected the delivery of services such as water systems due to a lack of adequate water for pumping or the machinery being unable to operate due to flooding. This led to the scarcity of services since increased demand was not matched with sufficient financial resources. The available options to increase the costs of the services disadvantaged people experiencing poverty and the vulnerable more.

In FY 2021/2022, at least 69% of the households experienced at least one weather shock, such as drought or flooding. The poorest and rural residents were affected, and more households were in the northern region (93%). Droughts and delayed rainfall were more frequent and resulted in the loss of crops, leading to food insecurity. Though rare, floods were impactful and detrimental as they led to the loss of lives and property and rampant displacement⁶.

Severe and moderate food insecurity remained remarkably high in 2021 and 2022, with half of the national population moderately insecure and 13% severely insecure. Food insecurity increased more in the Eastern and Northern Regions, attributable to weather effects and the Ukraine war⁷.

2.4.3 Actions to mitigate the effects of the crises

The government has The National Policy for Disaster Preparedness and Management, which is cross-sectoral and guides the establishment of institutions and mechanisms at national and local government levels that take actions to reduce the vulnerability of people, livestock, plants and wildlife to disasters in the country.

Following the COVID-19 outbreak, the government implemented a comprehensive range of measures to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. These were:

The Presidency led the government in instituting measures to curb the spread of the infection. The Government was able to contain the spread and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic by total lock down at the height of the rapid infections and vaccinations, substantially reducing the population's fatality rate. Eighty (83%) of the population received a vaccination dose, and 53% had the second dose. The Ebola epidemic, which came on the heels of COVID-19 in one of the districts in the central region of the country, was contained in 69 days.

In 2020, there were several self-help fundraising initiatives. A fundraising drive was initiated, and funds, vehicles, and other medical utilities were obtained and used in the pandemic response. The Red Cross and other non-governmental organisations launched a COVID-19 emergency appeal and raised \$44.3 million to support health, education, protection, and delivering services in refugee settings.

In 2021, the Government, through the Office of the Prime Minister, launched a short-term cash transfer programme for the urban population whose livelihoods had been disrupted by COVID-19 containment lockdown measures. About half a million people were reached with a payment totalling \$ 14.14 million. About 48% of the recipients were women.

Regarding education, in 2020, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), with support from UN Agencies, developed a COVID-19 response and preparation manual and home learning packages developed by the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) and distributed in refugee settlements for refugee children. The government implemented the school re-entry guidelines to

⁶ UBOS& WB: Monitoring Impacts of COVID-19 and Other Shocks, Round 8, June/July 2022.

⁷ Ditto

enable child mothers to continue with education and developed the abridged curriculum to cushion the learners against the time wasted during the lockdown.

In 2021, the Government established the Small Business Recovery Fund (SBRF) to support micro and small businesses adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government allocated Ugx 100 bn, which was matched by Ugx 100 bn pooled by participating financial institutions (PFIs), totalling Ugx 200 bn with an interest rate of 10%.

Generally, there was a low uptake of the fund at 17%. According to the Bank of Uganda report, in 2023, three of the ten beneficiaries were women, yet women dominate micro businesses as owners or workers. Also, the participation rate exhibited regional disparities, with only 3%, 11%, and 14% of the beneficiaries from the North, East and West, respectively and over 72 % from the Capital City. According to the EPRC study report, women faced barriers that included stringent collateral requirements and preferences of the existing clients by PFIs that excluded most women-owned businesses.

Uganda is prone to disasters such as landslides in the mountainous areas of Mt. Elgon and floods in the Mt. Rwenzori region and low-lying areas. Droughts are also common in arid cattle corridor districts. The Office of the Prime minister has a robust response mechanism where the affected persons and communities are supplied with essential basic relief items and accommodation. The Department of Disaster Preparedness and Management conducts routine risk hazard and disaster assessments and mapping, and sensitisation of district leaders on early warning and disaster preparedness. In 2022, OPM launched the disaster Risk Management Plan, which focuses on supporting victims of natural disasters.

2.5 Planned Priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in 2025- 2030

The next five years (2025-2030) will coincide with the implementation of the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV). The mid-term review of NDP III shows that the country attained only 17% of the targets set in the plan halfway through its implementation. The slow progress in performance is attributed to challenges of COVID-19 effects, data gaps, and the transition from the sector to the programme approach. The review of the NDP III from a gender perspective further brought out challenges and emerging issues likely to derail the country from attaining the gender targets in SDGs and recommended critical gender equality issues for mainstreaming in NDP IV. The issues paper on Gender and Equity issues to be mainstreamed in the 4th NDP has also been developed.

The NDP IV Strategic Direction (2026/2027- 2029/2030) recognises that gender and equity are critical to the inclusivity of all vulnerable groups to participate in decision-making, leadership and economic development. In the next five years, therefore, the Government shall prioritise the unfinished actions and emerging issues arising from implementation of the NDP III and priorities in NDP IV to accelerate progress for women and girls in the country. The effort shall be to maintain the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues in the NDP IV, Ministries and Local Government strategic Plans, and Budgets at all levels.

The Table xxx presents the priorities for the next five years as contained in the NDP IV (2025-2030).

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Table 3: National Priorities for the Next Five Years (2026-2030)

No	Priority Areas	Basis of selection	Interventions
1.	Improving Women's Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment	<p>1.1. Multidimensional nature of poverty affecting women and girls</p> <p>1.2. Limited entrepreneurial skills and capacity</p> <p>1.3. High levels of dependence and economic exploitation of women</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Scale up grants (UWEP, GROW, YLP) to provide start-up capital for women living in poverty. ii. Capitalise the land fund and ease access to titled land iii. Enforce laws to protect the rights of women in the world of work, especially those working in private and informal sectors iv. Incentivise and capitalise Financial Institutions to increase and ring-fence funding to women for agricultural and other businesses v. Business skills development mentoring and coaching vi. All MDAs to provide for the interventions to generate jobs for women and the youth, vii. Prevent and respond to economic violence against women
2	Women and Girls Health	<p>2.1. High maternal and child mortality rates, increasing cases of NCDs and HIV/ AID S rates among young women</p> <p>2.2. Mental health-related challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Continue the expansion of health infrastructure to access services for the most underserved. ii. Increase investment in Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), including family planning, youth-friendly services and high-impact HIV/AIDS prevention and Management interventions. iii. Develop and popularise community health insurance. iv. Prioritise mental health for the population
3	Elimination of Gender-based Violence and Promotion of Women's Rights	<p>3.1. Increasing and changing nature of violence against women and girls, high rate of teenage pregnancies (27%) and Child marriages (17%),</p> <p>3.2. Increasing cases of cybercrime.</p> <p>3.3. Prevalence of discriminatory/harmful social norms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Scale up GBV prevention, response management and legal services to the under-served regions of the country (Central and western regions), higher institutions of learning and the world of work, including domestic settings and infrastructure development programmes. ii. Design innovative interventions to tackle cyber GBV. iii. Design programmes on positive social norm change and positive parenting
4	Improved Access to Social Services (water, electricity)	<p>4.1. The country is far from attaining universal access to affordable water (clean and safe) and electricity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Continue expansion of water and electricity infrastructure to under-served rural and hard-to-reach areas. ii. Scale up programmes for alternative sources of energy to households iii. Scale-up initiatives for homestead water harvesting technologies

5	Women and Girls Education and Skilling	5.1. Low transition rates of girls at all levels of education; high drop-out rates, 5.2. Low participation of girls in STEM and mismatch of skills in the job market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Continue implementation of UPE, USE and TVET ii. Expand skilling programmes and provide start-up capital for young women iii. Design special programmes for girls in STEM
6	Women, Environment and Climate Change Mitigation	6.1. Multi-dimensional effects of climate change on women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Invest in an integrated approach to addressing the impact of climate change with a focus on climate-resilient agriculture, agroforestry, water for production and regenerative agriculture to protect the environment. ii. Develop and implement innovative models for community-based agri-insurance
7	Mindset Change for Gender Equality.	7.1. Harmful and persistent social norms contribute to increasing gender-based violence and child/teenage pregnancy, resulting in girls dropping out of school and early marriage and growing the burden of unpaid care work and domestic work by women and girls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Prioritise the budget for positive mindset and community mobilisation to address harmful social norms and practices perpetuating gender inequality. ii. Develop and implement innovative household approaches for male engagement in all programmes. iii. Integrate male engagement strategies in all programmes, including redistribution of care and support work and investing in infrastructure for the care economy (purple economy). iv. Invest in appropriate technology to reduce the burden and time poverty borne by women and girls due to unpaid care and support work. v. Scale up social protection for children, the sick, and older persons. vi. Scale up interventions to collaborate with cultural, religious institutions and civic leaders to address harmful social norms and promote mind set change for gender equality.
8	Strengthening Accountability for Gender Equality	8.1. Inadequate and shrinking funding for GEWE 8.2. Inadequate gender-disaggregated data 8.3. Limited effective participation of women in politics and decision-making 8.4. Multiple structures for GEWE coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Enforce the PFM Act to increase the financing of GEWE and vulnerable groups. ii. Advocate for legislation for 50:50 women representation in politics at the national level. iii. Build capacities of potential and existing women leaders. iv. Catalyse and build strong women's institutions and leadership across the whole spectrum, including public service, elective, CSOs, and private sectors at national and local government levels. v. Strengthen the GEWE coordination structures at all levels, including the sub-national levels. vi. Invest in GDD collection, analysis, packaging and dissemination and establish GMIS.

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SECTION THREE: PROGRESS ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

This section presents the review of the implementation progress of the BDPfA 12 critical areas of concern based on the clusters issued in the Guidance Note. For each area, selected examples of the measures undertaken, achievements, and challenges are discussed.

3.1 Inclusive Development, Shared Prosperity and Decent work

This cluster includes the following critical areas of concern in the BPfA

Critical areas of concern:

- A. Women and poverty
- F. Women and the economy
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

3.1.1 *Actions to advance gender equality in the World of work*

The government was committed to promoting decent employment including protection of the rights of workers as per SDG 8. The Human Capital Development Programme, NDP III, aims to achieve SDG 8 (full and productive employment and decent work for all) by improving labour productivity for increased competitiveness and better quality of life for all. Measures that were undertaken to advance gender equality in the world of work in legal and policy reform and programmes include the following:

Legal and Policy Frameworks Reforms

The government undertook the following legal and policy reform measures:

- i. The Labour Disputes (Arbitration and Settlement) Amendment Act 2021
- ii. The National Social Security (Amendment) Act 2022
- iii. National Social Security (Midterm Access to Benefits) Regulations 2022.
- iv. Ratification of The ILO Convention (C190) of 2019 on Sexual Harassment in the World of Work in 2023. The Convention has broadened the scope of prevention and control of violence and harassment.
- v. The Employment (Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers) Regulations, 2021
- vi. The establishment of the new Labour Advisory Board in 2023

Additionally, the Employment Bill 2023 was approved by the Cabinet and passed by Parliament. The amendment Bill, once assented to by H. E. the President, will promote and protect the rights of domestic workers and casual employees. The law aims to improve the working conditions of domestic and casual workers and provides for compulsory registration and licensing recruitment agencies for domestic and non-manual labourers. The bill also contains provisions prohibiting sexual harassment and requires all employers, regardless of the number of employees, to institute anti-sexual harassment policies.

The Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) (Amendment) Act 2023 was also presented in Parliament in January 2024. The proposed law aims to amend the OSH Act 2006 to focus mainly on health and

safety concerns in all workplaces. The amendment takes into consideration the changes in the workplace landscape and brings on board issues of virtual jobs, outsourcing and subcontracting of labour, and the evolving nature of sectors such as telecommunication and extractive industries.

There were proposed amendments to two other labour laws, namely the Labour Unions (Amendment) Bill 2024 and the Workers Compensation (Amendment) Bill 2024, which await the approval of Cabinet.

Measures to promote women in the world of work

Employment benefits

In 2021, the government revised the Public Service Standing Orders that guarantee employment benefits to civil service workers, including women. Public employees, in formal employment, men or women, access annual and paid sick leave, retirement benefits (pension for old age) and medical insurance. Female employees are entitled to eight and a half weeks (60 working days) of fully paid maternity and paternity leave of four days. The compulsory leave is four weeks after childbirth or miscarriage. The National Labour Force Survey 2021 revealed that most employees in private sector companies, especially those without job contracts, do not access employment benefits. The Employment Bill aims to protect such employees to access some benefits, including providing severance allowances and allowing workers to receive an allowance at the end of the employment relationship with the employer.

Measures to Address Sexual Harassment in the World of Work

The Employment Act 2006 is the principal Act that provides the framework for addressing matters of sexual harassment, and more specifically, the Employment (Sexual Harassment) Regulations, 2012 provides a framework for prevention and control of sexual harassment in the world of work. The Government has ratified the ILO Convention (C190) on Sexual Harassment at Work, the legal framework for enforcing standards related to eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work and drafted the Employment Bill, which contains proposals to address sexual harassment in work establishments, including the domestic setting.

As part of the measures for prevention and control of sexual harassment, a Technical Working Group (TWG) of 28 members comprising various Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs), Development Partners, and Civil Society Organizations was constituted by the MGLSD in 2023 to provide a platform for coherent coordination of the activities. One of the tasks of the TWG is to undertake a review of the Employment (Sexual Harassment) Regulations 2012. The review process will be an opportunity to address the existing gaps and make the Regulations more comprehensive in addressing prevention and response to sexual harassment.

Promotion of Skilling and Entrepreneurship

Consistent with SDG 4.7 Government implemented measures for women to acquire knowledge and skills required to promote sustainable development.

In 2021, the Government expanded the Presidential Initiative on Skilling the Girl Child to include young men. There are 20 industrial hubs (19 spread in all regions and 1 in Kampala Capital City) where young people are trained in different trades, e. g., welding, carpentry, building and construction, fashion and design, bakery and leather/ tannery. The six (6) month residential courses attract 50/50 women and men of 18-35 years. The courses are open to all young people irrespective of prior educational status and are run in local dialects according to participants' needs. There is no sex segregation in the choice of trades.

After the training, the trainees are certified by the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) in the Ministry of Education and Sports, which formalises their qualifications. Graduates have the option of

continuing to specialise in the trades they prefer up to the degree level. Some trainees have been linked to other government programmes for employment or access to collateral-free financing.

Ministry of Education and Sports continued to implement the Uganda Skills Development Project. The project targets 45,000 trainee beneficiaries across the targeted institutions to get additional skills. The project is implemented in four (4) Vocational Technical Colleges selected as centres of excellence and other public Vocational training institutes. The project targets a pool of entrants to the labour market with demand-driven, competent-based technical skills.

Entrepreneurship development is a priority measure instituted by Government to create jobs, particularly among Special Interest groups (SIGs) of women, youth and PWDs. GoU put in place economic empowerment Programmes and continued to support several social and economic transformation programmes, in particular, Operation Wealth Creation (OWC), the promotion of Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOS), The Presidential Initiative for Wealth and Job Creation (*Emyooga*), the Youth Livelihood and Uganda Women's Entrepreneurship Programmes YLP/UWEP for women and youth in business, the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) targeting older persons and Special Grants for PWDs and Older Persons as well as Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) Project. All these programmes have a component of developing entrepreneurship among women.

Promotion of Green Jobs

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development contributed to the creation of green jobs through the Uganda Green Incubation Project (Songhai Model Centre). This project has trained, coached and mentored 200 unemployed youth in organic farming practices, marketing and value addition.

The Jua Kali Programme is another initiative to support the youth in business development and entrepreneurship. Under the Initiative, 5,760 business toolkits and equipment were provided to 279 Jua-kali groups in 66 districts. The Jua Kali groups comprised 11,091 members (4,484 males and 6,607 females). In addition, Business Development Services have been provided to 285 representatives from the 279 Jua-kali groups (MGLSD Manifesto Report)

The Gender Equality Seal Initiative

The Gender Equality Seal (GES) initiative to promote gender equality outcomes within Private Sector Organizations has been implemented since 2019. The Gender Equality Seal (GES) is a mechanism by which companies can access and undertake practices that promote gender equity and a gender-friendly work environment. This certification process is based on global best practices and leads to concrete benefits such as the realization of gender-sensitive workplace environment. Certification criteria included the increased resource allocation to gender interventions at corporate level.

As of February 2024, 100 private sector companies had enrolled on the Global Gender Equality Seal and put in place strategies to address gender inequalities in the workplace. In December 2023, the Private Sector Foundation of Uganda (PSFU) conducted an assessment and awarded seventeen (17) companies gold medals for compliance with the GES. The Private Companies under the GES Certification Programme established Gender Equality Management Systems (GEMS) to level the playing field for both women and men in the workplace and make their human resource management systems equitable and more gender sensitive.

Workplace Inspection

Workplace Inspection is one of the measures to ensure a decent work environment by promoting workplace safety from injuries, accidents and health hazards. This activity was conducted nationally

by the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and by Labour Officers at the Local Government Level. Over the three years from 2021 to 2023, the following results were achieved:

- i. 34 labour inspections were conducted for compliance with labour standards in 871 workplaces in all sectors of the economy
- ii. 802 children withdrawn from Child labour, skilled and integrated into the schooling system
- iii. A draft of the National Labour Inspection Strategy and Plan was developed.
- iv. Operationalization of the National Child Labour Steering Committee
- v. 202 labour officers trained in social security contribution

Externalisation of Labour

There is a growing trend of citizens, especially young women and men, seeking employment in middle countries. The move is precipitated by the few jobs available in the country and enticing wages for unskilled labour in the countries of destination. About 98% of the young women are employed as domestic workers.

To protect the rights of the emigrant workers, the government has put in place different policies through the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development to enforce the bilateral agreements regarding outsourcing labour in Uganda. To ensure safety and ease of monitoring and to address threats of trafficking as well as violation of workers' rights, the Employment (Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers) Regulations, 2021 was enacted, and the Employment Bill (2023) introduced a provision for the employment of migrant workers within Uganda and specified the jobs that non-citizens are eligible to engage in.

Other measures undertaken by the Government include:

- i. Negotiations and signing of bilateral labour Agreements with the receiving States
- ii. Licensing all companies affiliated with the Uganda Association of External Recruitment Agencies (UERA) and encouraging job seekers to go through these companies guided by Bilateral Labour Agreements (BLAs) signed by the government and the receiving countries⁸.
- iii. Establishing a coordination among MDAs (Labour, Internal Affairs & Police);
- iv. Mandatory pre-departure training and orientation and clearance process by the ministry in charge of labour.

Additionally, Government has initiated a process to place Labour Attaches in the receiving countries. So far, two Labour Attachés have been deployed to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The government has licensed 406 recruitment Agencies, and 215,673 persons have been deployed over the review period. Over the last three financial years, the government has collected UGX 30.26 billion (US \$) as non-tax revenue from labour externalization.

To strengthen the regulation of external employment, Government rolled out the External Employment Management Information System (EEMIS) to enhance the sharing of information of migrant workers with the foreign Missions in the destination countries and other stakeholders. There is an ongoing- process to establish a 24-hour call centre to handle complaints of migrant workers.

On-job training through the National Apprenticeship and Graduate Volunteer Scheme

Government continues to implement the Uganda National Apprenticeship Framework 2018 under the oversight and coordination of the National Apprenticeship Steering Committee and the Sectoral Apprenticeship Committees under the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development. The Framework seeks to develop employability and self-employment opportunities for youth aged 16 to 35 and enhance labour productivity. Annually, the Scheme targets 3,500 youth. Operations under the Framework started with 120 apprentices in 25 hotels across the Country. The first batch of 97

⁸ Bilateral agreements with Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (domestic workers), UAE and Jordan and others in process include Oman, UAE, Qatar Kuwait, Iran and Lebanon.

graduate volunteers were placed, of which 50 were in government and 47 in the private sector. At the end of the internship, 90 out of the 97 students were passed out. During 2021-2023, 239 graduate volunteers and 95 apprentices have been placed in workplaces in the Manufacturing and Service sectors. (MGLSD Manifesto Report 2023).

Enterprise Uganda implemented a mentoring programme for young entrepreneurs between 18-35 years old who were attached for apprenticeships to established businesses to get non-financial support and guidance.

3.1.2 Actions to address unpaid care and domestic work, promote work-life and family balance and strengthen the rights of paid care workers

Legal Reform measures

The Markets Act of 2023 protects the rights of caregivers working in the markets and children's right to care. It is consistent with SDG 5.4, which mandates States to recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through public services and infrastructure provision.

In 2019, the Ministry initiated a process to formulate The Employment (Breastfeeding and Childcare Facilities) Regulations. The Regulations shall protect the breastfeeding rights of working women, the right to breastfeeding breaks, and the privacy of the mother and infant required for the mother to maintain her performance on the job. Enforcement of the Regulations will also promote the benefits of breastfeeding for infants and mothers by enabling the continuity of exclusive breastfeeding even after mothers return to work. The Regulations are for all workplaces as defined in the Employment Act.

The Regulations will set standards for establishing childcare facilities in public institutions based on the established pioneer initiatives, including those in the Parliament of Uganda. Consultations on the Regulations have been conducted with various stakeholders.

Under the GROW Project, the government plans to build a multipurpose service and production facility to boost the Women's Enterprise Productivity Centre, which will have numerous amenities, including childcare facilities, breastfeeding rooms, and sanitary facilities.

Unpaid Care and Domestic Work Services

Some Ministries, Departments and Agencies have established Institutional Child Centres and Breastfeeding Facilities. The best examples are the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, Uganda National Roads Authority and Makerere University. Kampala City Council Authority had earlier reviewed the building guidelines for developers to include childcare facilities. KCCA also modified the designs of market infrastructure to include childcare spaces to guide the contractors. The new markets built after that have functional childcare spaces where mothers and guardians drop off children for care at a modest cost. The Markets Act legitimised these practices mentioned above.

The Uganda Support to Municipal Infrastructure Development (USMID) project supported 22 municipalities in improving the road and market infrastructure with gender- and women-friendly facilities, e.g., markets with Childcare facilities. Further, there are walkways as part of the road infrastructure that aid women and other SIGs and street lights for the safety of vendors at night, most of whom are women.

The Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU) is implementing the **Early Steps Program** to promote a business case for early Childhood Development (ECD). Activities under the programme include

advocacy for policy reform for family-friendly policies in the workplace, building strategic partnerships with government, private sector companies, and communities on various ECD options, and supporting the establishment of ECD facilities in workplaces.

In addition, expanding water, energy, roads, health, schools and electricity infrastructure to the rural areas also targets reducing the time and energy women spend on unpaid care and domestic work. For example, the key mandate of the water sector is to minimise unpaid care and domestic work & GBV cases through reducing the distance to water sources. There were also efforts to popularise the use of energy-saving stoves and support women's groups in producing charcoal briquettes.

There was intensified advocacy on UCDW by Women's Rights organisations. The Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) organised sensitisation and high-level dialogue sessions for members of Parliament to understand and compel government entities to budget for UCDW, including gender and equity issues, in their budget framework papers. The CSOs affiliated with UWONET organised the commemoration of the International Day of Care and Support on 29th October 2023 to raise awareness about the importance of Care work and the contributions of caregivers to the economy.

Challenges

Cultural and gender norms regarding the distribution of care and domestic work within the household are a primary constraint to women's empowerment. For example, according to the 2017 Time-Use Survey (TUS), findings show that men spend more time (5.3 hours) than women (3.4 hours) on productive work, while women spend more time (6.6 hours) than men (5.1 hours) on unpaid work. The correlation with women who highly contribute to agriculture indicates the high levels of socio-economic inequalities between men and women in terms of sustainable development.

Despite the efforts, there has been a slow mindset change among the population. For example, UNHS (2019/2020) indicated that while more females (83%) than men (53%) engage in unpaid care work and spend 10 hours or more, the majority of people (men and women) affirm that socio-norms dictate that men should not participate in care work.

3.1.3 Actions to reduce the gender digital divide

Government has prioritized the following interventions to address the gender as well as rural and urban digital divide:

- i. Extension of broadband and ICT infrastructure country-wide in partnership with the private sector, particularly to districts, sub-counties, and schools. Hospitals, tourism sites, police stations and Local Government offices. As a result, the expansion of ICT coverage increased from **23%** to 74% of the population covered with broadband.
- ii. Promoting gender-responsive ICT Infrastructure development that supports innovations and education. For example, ICT hubs were established in schools, and WIFI spots were deployed across the country, starting in the cities. For special interest groups, there is special affirmative action for female applicants under the ICT innovation fund and rules, and young innovators are supported by direct funds and free space in the innovation hubs to further their research. ICT hubs have been established in schools for special needs, and women and PWDs are trained in digital skills.
- iii. Support to Innovation based on indigenous knowledge in medicine and appropriate technology in agriculture, rainwater harvesting and irrigation.

- iv. Digital platforms in business, marketing, and trade are used to exploit the regional markets under the East African Community, COMESA, and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Women in business were mobilised to utilize the platforms, including the 50 million African Women Speak Networking Platform supported by EAC, COMESA and ECOWAS.

The government, in partnership with UNCDF and with support from SIDA, is implementing the Inclusive Digital Economies Programme. The program supports women, youth, refugees, migrants, and medium and small-scale enterprises (MSMEs) in enhancing market participation, reducing poverty, improving livelihoods, and economic growth. The project has upstream actions for policy and regulations, digital infrastructure, inclusive innovations, and downstream activities that focus on customer empowerment. At the client level, the programme seeks to change how customers access and use digital services. 40% of the programme's target beneficiaries are women.

Progress

The growth of the internet in Uganda has been dramatic, with a 25% increase alone in internet subscriptions between October 2019 and October 2020, according to the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC). Digital content production and information consumption are relatively new and are a high-growth market in Uganda. By 2023, about 20.5 million mobile phone subscribers were translating to about 50% of the population. According to the Finscope Uganda (2023) Study, digital connectivity expanded but with gender, location and age gaps. For example, mobile phone ownership increased from 52% in 2018 to 72% in 2023. Internet access improved from 10% to 26% over the same period. However, fewer women own mobile phones and access the internet. 64% and 18% of women own mobile phones and access the Internet, compared to 80% and 34% of men, respectively.

Mobile phone ownership in urban areas was 84% compared to 67% in rural areas, while internet access stood at 48% in urban areas compared to 17% in rural areas. Mobile phone ownership was highest among 25-50-year-olds, and internet access was highest in 18-40-year-olds.

3.1.4 Macroeconomic and fiscal policy environment affecting the implementation of the BPfA

Like elsewhere in the world, the national economy experienced shocks driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, the consistent downward production trend of petroleum products, and climate change effects aggravated by the wars outside the country. The global, regional and national economic shocks lead to price fluctuations of oil and other vital commodities. Inflation rose from 3.8% in the 2000s to 10% in 2022.

The fluctuations and unstable inflation rates disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, especially low-income earners who struggle to afford essential services such as food, health care and education. The price increase eroded people's purchasing power and made it challenging to afford basic goods and services. The rise in petrol prices and some essential commodities in commodity prices affected the whole population, especially the poor households, including female-headed households. Increased costs of essential items affected more households, especially in the North and Eastern regions of the country.

Food security was disrupted by inflation coupled with the effects and the vagaries of extreme weather. Severe and moderate food insecurity remained high in 2021 and 2022. Almost half the national

population and 13% are moderately and severely affected, respectively. Food security is higher in Eastern and Northern regions, partly attributable to weather effects⁹.

Foreign exchange rates, too, oscillated, leading to weakened local currency and high costs of imported goods, leading to price increases. Although there was notable progress in economic growth in FY 2022/2023, the economy's poor performance generally affected the implementation of the BPfA aspirations.

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⁹ UBOS (June/July 2022)

3.2 Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

This review in this cluster is on the progress of implementation of the following BPfA critical areas of concern.

Critical areas of concern:

- A. Women and poverty
- B. Education and training of women
- C. Women and health
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

3.2.1 Actions to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls

Legal Reform Measures

Government enacted the following laws to protect the economic rights of women and other special interest groups:

Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets (PPDA) (Amendment Act), 2021: The Act provides for Preference Schemes under Sections 59 (a) and reservation of contracts for special Interest Groups (SIGs) under Section 59 (b). The PPD Authority has developed guidelines to bring these provisions into effect. In March 2024, the MFPED issued the Guidelines on Reservation Schemes, which require all Government Procurement Entities (MDAs and Local Governments) to reserve 15% of the value of all contracts for companies owned by women, youth and PWDs. This policy environment presents an opportunity for women-owned businesses to participate and benefit from the available resources through public procurement. Currently, women-owned businesses benefit from only 2% of the funding for public procurement.

Highlights of the reservation Schemes to promote the participation of registered Associations of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities

- 15% of the entity's annual procurement plan budget shall be reserved for award to registered associations of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities.
- A Central Government entity shall reserve procurement requirements for supplies, works, consultancy, and non-consultancy services whose value does not exceed UGX. 30 Million to registered associations of Women, Youth, and Persons with disabilities.
- A Local Government Procuring and Disposing Entity shall reserve procurement requirements for supplies, works, consultancy, and non-consultancy services whose value does not exceed UGX. 10 Million to registered associations of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities.
- The associations may take the form of Women, Youth, or Persons with Disabilities owned enterprises:

To further promote women's rights in access to opportunities to supply goods and services to the government, the law specifies that at least one-third of the tribunal members established under the law will be women.

The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) (Amendment Act), 2022, provides for gender-responsive actions. These include mid-term access of 10% of accrued benefits for contributing members aged 45 and above and 50% of accrued benefits for PWD members aged 40 and above who have saved for at least ten years; all employers to ensure all workers contribute to NSSF regardless of the size of the enterprise or number of employees and voluntary contributions by the self-employed populations.

The Succession (Amendment) Act, 2022 ensures a fair and efficient distribution of the deceased's property in cases of intestate succession, repealed unconstitutional provisions to cater for gender equality while protecting the rights and interests of the surviving spouse, lineal descendants, dependent relatives, and customary heirs. It protects the principal residential property for the benefit of the surviving spouse and lineal descendants. The share of inheritance for the children/ lineal descendants was maintained at 75%, the share of the surviving spouse was increased from 15% to 20%), The shares of the customary heir were maintained at 1%, and the shares of other dependents reduced from 9% to 4%.

Programme Measures

Since 2020, the Government has prioritised investments in economic empowerment Programmes to enable women, youth PWD and Older persons to access affordable credit to establish, grow and sustain their businesses. Initiatives have focused on promoting commercial agriculture, access to credit, training, and extension services to enhance their participation and contributions. The Programmes primarily target these SIGs operating in the informal sector to improve their access to financial services and credit and foster economic growth and inclusion. These are :

Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) and Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP): Funding for the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP), which began in FY 2015/16, has continued. UWEP is a women-specific programme that provides zero-interest loans to women for income-generating activities targeting the most vulnerable categories of women. By 2023, the programme has reached over 19,723 women groups and 230,059 individual women. (MGLSD Data)

The Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) has an affirmative action criteria for 30% of members of any group benefiting from the Programme to be female youth. YLP is designed to empower the targeted youth in Uganda to harness their socio-economic potential and increase self-employment opportunities and income levels.

By June 2023, the programme had benefited 118,551 female youth. Cumulatively, by the end of FY 2021/2022, UWEP had disbursed UGX116.8 billion to finance a total of 18,244 women enterprises, reaching 205,879 individual women. In the same period, YLP had disbursed UGX 169,414 to finance 21,280 youth projects benefiting 251,679 youth (40% of whom are female). MGLSD 2024.

Parish Development Model (PDM)

In line with NDP111, the NRM Party Election Manifesto and SDG 1 (end Poverty) and SDG 2 (End Hunger) Government started the Parish Development Model(PDM) in the Financial year 2020/2021. The PDM is a delivery mechanism to transition 39% of the households below the poverty line from subsistence to a money economy.

PDM prioritises interventions across the production value chain in agriculture, creating opportunities for job and wealth creation. It aims to deliver essential economic and social services to solve critical

challenges that have trapped women and men in poor resource households in the vicious cycle of poverty for a long time.

One crucial component of this model is ensuring financial inclusion, whose guidelines provide for 30% reservation of the resources/funds at parish level to be allocated to women, 30% for youth, 10% for Older persons, 10% for PWDs and 20% for men and other community members. The beneficiaries access funds at an interest rate of 6% instead of an 18% interest rate by microfinance institutions, commercial banks and other lenders. UgX 100m is advanced to each of the 10,595 parishes, and each family accesses Ugx 1 million.

In FY 2021/2022, the government allocated UGX234 billion (USD 65,000,000) towards implementing the Parish Development Model. For FY 2022/2023, a total of UGX 1.059 trillion (USD 294,166,666) has been allocated to implement the PDM programme. Each of the 10,595 Parishes in the country will receive UGX 100 million (USD 27,777), and women are entitled to 30% of the total funding to the Parish Development Model. The PDM integrates 3.9 million households working in the subsistence economy into the money economy to proactively create wealth and jobs.

Over Ugx 1 trillion shillings have been disbursed to the programme during the last two and half years. Evaluation of PDM revealed that 55% of the beneficiaries were women and 45% were men. Of these, the proportion of SIGs was as follows: youth 29%, older persons 13%, and PWDs 7% of the beneficiaries of PDM funds¹⁰.

Presidential Initiative on Wealth and Job Creation (Emyooga) Programme

The “Emyooga” programme was launched in August 2019 as part of the government’s continuous effort to transform Ugandans from subsistence to market-oriented production’ It is a Presidential initiative on wealth and job creation and implemented as part of the broader Government strategy to transform 68% of homesteads from subsistence to market-oriented production with the overall objective of promoting job creation and improving household incomes.

The programme targets people(women and youth) who are already in Savings and Credit Co-operatives (SACCOS) operating in enterprises like Boda-bodas, women entrepreneurship, saloon operators, restaurant owners, welders, market vendors, youth leaders, Persons with Disability (PWD), produce dealers, mechanics, journalists, tailors, performing arts, veterans, fishermen and elected leaders.

The programme is increasing employment opportunities to improve household income and enhance the entrepreneurial capacity of the beneficiaries through sensitization, skilling and tooling. The Emyooga programme operates on the principle of SACCOS, where there is saving, borrowing and returning of the received funds at interest rates of 8% and 34.4% savings rate per annum. Each SACCO receives Ugx 30 million except for the elected leaders SACCO, which was given UG 50 million. This enables other members of the SACCO to borrow funds and use them for development. The Commission sought to ascertain the level of awareness and implementation challenges of the Emyooga program among the vulnerable groups in selected districts.

By the end of 2021, about Ugx 205.34 bn had been disbursed to 29,057 Parish Associations through 6,394 Apex SACCOS. There is insufficient gender-disaggregated data to show a comprehensive picture of women benefiting from the programme. However, women are at liberty to join SACCOS in any eligible trades in addition to forming the women entrepreneurs in SACCO. Anecdotal evidence shows that women have been empowered to create and lead their own cooperatives, ranging from

¹⁰ Midterm Review of the NRM Manifesto,2024

agriculture to craft. The programme has provided women with training, financial resources, and market access, enabling them to turn their skills into profitable ventures.

Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) Project

In collaboration with the World Bank, the government started to implement the “Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) Project” The project aims to support women entrepreneurs transitioning from micro to small and from small to medium enterprises, including female entrepreneurs among refugees and host communities. The Project is funded by the World Bank to the tune of USD 217 Million, including USD 40 million for refugees and refugee host districts. The Project became effective on 20th January 2023 and will end in December 2027.

GROW will deliver a package of services that include empowerment and entrepreneurship development through skilling, access to finance through grant and credit facilities, enabling infrastructure and facilities for women's entrepreneurship growth and transition, and evidence generation for policy formulation.

The components of this project include (a) *Support for Women Empowerment and Enterprise Development Services*, including in host and refugee communities, and (b)*Access to Finance for Women Entrepreneurs* to support the transition from micro-enterprises to small and from small to medium enterprises. This component will also address the key constraints of access to finance for women entrepreneurs to expand their businesses, as well as (c) program management support, policy innovation, and evidence generation. This will support project management, policy innovation, and evidence generation.

GROW targets 60,000 women-owned enterprises (including 3000 refugee-owned businesses, 280,000 women entrepreneurs and employees (comprising 42,000 refugees and 14,000 host communities), and 1.6 million indirect beneficiaries, including community and household members. The project will operate nationwide, targeting all 135 Districts and 11 Cities in the Country¹¹.

Agricultural Credit Facility (ACF)

The Bank of Uganda, working with the Participating Financial Institutions (PFIs), continued implementing the ACF, which started 14 years ago. The fund has registered success in lending up to Shs. 859.4 billion accessed by 3,867 beneficiaries, including large off-takers that create jobs and market for smallholder farmers. Funds under the ACF have been disbursed for the acquisition of agricultural machinery to increase farm production and productivity, the acquisition of processing machinery for value addition and infrastructure for post-harvest handling such as silos, warehouses, as well as cold storage facilities for perishable agricultural products.

During the implementation of the scheme, it was realised that many smallholder farmers could not access credit due to a lack of collateral. To address this challenge, the Government of Uganda established the block allocation window, allowing farmers to access ACF to twenty million shillings (UgX 20M) without requiring registered collateral typically required in conventional banking.

By September 2023, the number of female beneficiaries to the block allocation fund had grown to 28.9%. However, men dominated access to the block allocation of the fund at 69.9%, accessing Ugx 12.27 bn (83%) of the loan portfolio compared to Ugx2.07 bn (28.7%) by women.

The low uptake is attributed to gender barriers and low literacy levels among women. In addition, many small-holder farmers belong to Tier IV institutions such as Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOS), which are not accredited to participate in the scheme. This exclusion prevents most smallholder farmers, especially women, from accessing finance under the ACF.

¹¹ Source; MGLSD documents

Other Poverty reduction measures include: The MGLSD, MWE, and MAAIF, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), are implementing the Climate Resilient Livelihood Opportunities for Women Economic Empowerment (CRWEE) in Karamoja and West Nile Regions of Uganda. This is aimed to accelerate rural women's economic empowerment through targeted interventions across the country rural women.

In November 2022, Uganda started to implement a three-year Deliver Women's Economic Resilience through Enterprise & Market Systems (DREAMS) Project with the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). The project aims to strengthen the economic resilience of 340,000 women through gender-transformative women's economic empowerment (WEE) policies, enterprise growth, and accessible market systems.

Women's access to land

Women's access to land is critical for increased security of land resources and household incomes and for improving the population's quality of life. The government continued to implement The Land Sector Strategic Plan (2013-2023), which aims at strengthening the land rights of the poor and vulnerable, including women, within and outside marriage.

Uganda has a multi-land tenure system, which includes customary, *mailo*, and freehold land tenure. Each consists of unique requirements for acquisition. The Government has undertaken measures to provide tenure security to squatters and people experiencing poverty, including women, free of charge. The government capitalised on the Land Fund and purchased land from absentee landlords to ensure access to land by lawful and bona fide occupants. The lawful and bonafide occupants and customary land owners were issued certificates of title.

The government is implementing the Systematic Land Adjudication and Certification (SLAAC) Programme to increase customary tenant rights. Over 11,441 SLAAC titles were processed and issued to beneficiaries. Certificates of Customary Ownership (CCOs) were processed and issued to the people, starting with Northern and Western Uganda, and Communal Land Associations (CLAs) in the Karamoja region were formed, and certificates were issued.

The laws do not allow refugees to own land in the customary, *mailo* or freehold land tenure systems. However, the law allows them to get lanes on lease. Under the Systematic Land Adjudication and Certification of Titles programme, communities, including refugees, are provided with freehold certificates of titles to ensure that laws are followed. Therefore, refugees in 11 districts of the programme were progressively accessing land titles.

Evidence from the Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development shows that processed land titles consider gender and equity issues to enhance the security of tenure for women, PWDs, older persons, and other vulnerable groups. For example, in FY 2020/2021, out of 26,090 certificates of titles, 3,281 were given to women.

Sensitisations (barazas) were held for the public on land rights and other land-related matters that affect women, youth PWDs, older Persons and other vulnerable groups. Sensitisations to create awareness of land rights and assess land use and ownership status were carried out in refugee hosting districts (7) in preparation for issuing Systematic Land Adjudication Certificates (SLAAC) to reduce conflicts.

Twenty-two (22) Ministry Zonal Offices were established nationwide to take services closer to the people. The National Land Information System (NLIMS) was implemented, land records in these

Ministry Zonal Offices were computerised, and online land search services were started in 2021 to enable transparent land administration. The register of customary land ownership is being developed under the LIMS Enhancement project.

As a result, the titled/ registered land increased from 21.7% in 2019/2020 to 22.4% in 2020/2021. Land registered rose from 21.8% in 2019/20 to 22 % in 2020/21. Women ownership of the titled land increased from 21.6% in FY 2020/2021 to 27.02% in FY 2023/. The low progress was attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Access to Housing

According to Vision 2040, the government commits that by 2030, it shall: “Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade slums.” This is in line with SDG 11.1, which is about ensuring access for all to adequate, safe, and affordable housing and basic services and upgrading slums.

According to UNHS 2019/20, about 81 %of households in Uganda lived in owner-occupied dwellings, 15 % rented dwellings, and 5% free dwellings. Most households in rural areas lived in owner-occupied dwellings (90%), while in urban areas, it stood at 52%.

The country has a total shortage of 1.6 million housing units due to overcrowding, sub-standard structures, rapid population growth, high cost of building materials, high interest rates and stringent terms that do not support long-term mortgage financing. To this end, the National Development Plan II gives the Government commitment to develop an inclusive housing finance mechanism, including capitalization of Banks to offer affordable mortgages including to women.

In this regard, the Government capitalised the Housing Finance Bank, which is a significant player in providing housing mortgages, to offer affordable mortgages, and the mandate of the National Housing Corporation was revisited to support housing development for all.

In line with SDG 8 (decent work), SDG 10 (reducing inequalities and SDG 17(on partnerships), the Housing Finance Bank partnered with the EU Investment Bank to secure and avail 50 million Euro in the form of affordable loans to support women businesses, 30% for companies that are 51% owned by women and to businesses with women in leadership or board compositions. The Bank also initiated the “**Incremental Home Loan**” solution called *Zimba Mpola Mpola*, which supports women with mortgage loans.

Consequently, in 2024, the Housing Finance Bank received two (2) awards for gender equality and women empowerment efforts. The first Gold award was from UNDP under the Gender Equality Seal for a private sector enterprise with deliberate equal opportunities at the workplace. The second one was from the “Empower Her” awards by Nation Media Group and KPMG under the theme “achieving an Equal Future”, aimed at exploring the challenges, successes, and strategies for creating a more equitable world for all.

The Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development developed the prototype housing plans for low-cost houses and circulated them to local governments for use by people experiencing poverty, who may be unable to afford the architectural plans' costs. The prototype plans have provisions for PWDs to access the buildings. Available data indicates that the interventions led to a reduction in urban slums.

To address the challenges of the rampant accidents engulfing the built environment, the National Building Review Board, which was established under the Building Control Act (2013), intensified sensitisations in the local Governments on building standards contained in the Building Control Act

2013 and the National Building Code (2019). This created awareness and provided a solid base for a safe, healthy, friendly environment and comfortable buildings, making accessibility easier for VGs, especially PWDs. Capacity building in gender and equity issues undertaken for implementers of the programme interventions

Despite the above measures, there are still challenges of forced evictions and displacements resulting from development programmes, which lead to civil strife and homelessness, including the growth of slums and illegal settlements in wetlands and other gazetted areas. These crises affect more vulnerable groups and exacerbate inequalities.

It is necessary that more partners are mobilised to avail themselves of cheaper sources of finances and, if possible, offer guarantees to financial institutions to access more affordable, short-term loans for housing and related infrastructure.

Measures for Women's Financial Inclusion

Financial inclusion is an enabler to attaining the National Development Plan III goal of increasing household incomes and improving the quality of life of the population, and SDG1, target 1.1 on eradicating extreme poverty for all people everywhere. The Government launched the second National Financial Inclusion (NFIS) for 2023-2028 to address this. One of the pillars of the Strategy is promoting gender-inclusive finance. It has three key initiatives, namely (i) provision of gender-inclusive finance and digital literacy, (ii) increase and improve the access and affordability of gender-responsive financial services, and (iii) creating supportive social context and regulatory environment especially compiling sex-disaggregated data for policy.

To implement the Strategy, the Uganda Bankers Association, in October 2023, launched the Women Economic Empowerment Initiative to address the challenges that hinder women's progress in the banking sector and businesses. Consequently, the Commercial banks in the country implement specific products that are friendly to women and young customers. For example, the Centenary Bank and Development Finance Company of Uganda (DFCU) implemented the 'Cente Supa Woman and Women in Business Programmes', respectively. Microfinance banks such as the Finance Trust Bank and BRAC continued to focus specifically on women individuals and women-owned businesses. These banks have adopted disbursement procedures through mobile money, which are less cumbersome and subject women clients to less pressure.

In 2022, Stanbic Bank became a signatory to the Women's Economic Empowerment Principles and committed to promoting gender equality in the workforce. It introduced gender standards and supported gender equality-themed investment products. Stanbic Bank launched the "**Stanbic for Her**" initiative, offering competitive products for individual women clients and women SACCOs. These include (i) unsecured loans for women SACCOs with an interest of as low as 12%, (ii) affordable all-round insurance for self, family and businesses, including edu-care for children, (iii) investment in treasury bills/bonds of as low as Ugx 100,000 (\$ 37), (iv) non-financial services such as training in financial literacy, market linkages and networking, The bank uses friendly platforms to disburse funds such as Flexi pay, charge zero management fees per month and provides visa card loyalty rewards.

The Financial Sector Deepening Uganda Programme developed a Gender Mainstreaming Tool kit containing practical tips for Financial Institutions to measure women's financial inclusion in their activities and the whole financial sector.

The Bank of Uganda and the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development have instituted reforms that have shifted the financial infrastructure to digital financing and cashless banking. For

example, due to the implementation of the Agent Banking Regulation of 2017, there has been an increase in banking agents from zero in 2014 to about 22,800 by 2021. Women form 30% of the banking agents running businesses across the country.

Progress

Women who own bank accounts increased from 53% in 2017 to 65% in 2021 compared to men, who increased from 66% to 67%.

Challenges

The number of bankable women is still less than that of men, and men still dominate women in the use of digital transfers (67% compared to 61%), as in the case of urban to rural areas. Moreover, more women are excluded from the formal banking sector. 57% of women, as opposed to 54% of men, belong to the informal sector of savings groups such as ROSCAs/ merry-go-arounds, VSLAs and other Community-based Savings and Credit Groups.

Agricultural Extension Services Measures

The National Agricultural Extension Strategy (2016/2017- 2020/2021) continued to guide the agricultural extension services in the country. The Agricultural Extension System has undergone several reforms, shifting from being centralised to a parallel system where the Ministry offered extension services alongside the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), an agency affiliated to the Ministry. However, the extension service was recently recentralised.

The government prioritised the delivery of extension services to all farmers in the Agro-industrialisation Programme of NDP III. It contributes to the attainment of SDGs 2, 8 and SDG 9. The Programme seeks to address critical challenges in agricultural production, agro-processing and value addition¹², including those affecting women and youth farmers who form most of the household population dependent on subsistence agriculture.

According to EPRC, the extension farmer ratio was 1.2400 in 2016/2017 and improved to the current 1:1800 but still below the recommended ratio of 1.500. The enhancement in recruitment has increased the staffing level at the local Governments to 68% across all local governments. However, the less-than-optimal staffing levels have implications for women farmers' access to advisory services.

To increase the accessibility of extension services to farmers, especially women farmers, the government recruited and equipped agricultural extension staff with motorcycles and vehicles to support the mobility of agricultural extension staff and offer good farming practices to farmers. As a result, the farmers' awareness about services in the agro-industry and the response time of the extension officer-farmer interaction was increased.

The extension services were delivered by providing farmers with advisory information and inputs. The Non-State Actors in the sector started to use digital platforms to deliver extension services to farmers to increase the efficiency of agricultural extension. These actors train women and men

¹² I) Low agricultural production and productivity; ii) poor storage infrastructure and post-harvest management; iii) low value addition; iv) poor market access and low competitiveness of agro-based products in domestic, regional, continental and international markets; v) limited access to agricultural financial services and critical inputs; and vi) poor coordination and inefficient institutions for planning and implementation of agro-industrialization

farmers in ICT mainly to register on the applications, input purchases, market information, weather updates and how to use SMS options to request for advice. To ensure coordination among extension workers, a Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (UFAAS) was formed and guided farmers in developing and using innovative technologies. It also convenes regular forums to share experiences.

MDAs such as the MAAIF, UCDA, NAADS, NARO, NAGRC & DB considered women and youth during the distribution of seeds, livestock and other technologies. Women & youth farmers were trained in the operation & maintenance of small irrigation schemes, which led to improved soil & land management practices. However, there was a slow rollout of government interventions in solar-powered micro-scale irrigation (23%) against the target of 23 new irrigation schemes. The slow progress prevented farmers, especially women and poor farmers, especially those in water-stressed areas, from accessing water for production.

Through the matching grant scheme, the government supported farmer groups to establish storage facilities in 57 districts of Uganda. Progress was registered in capacity building in value addition for smallholder farmers, especially along the different value chains, to create employment opportunities and improved livelihoods. In particular, the Dairy Development Authority skilled youth in yoghurt processing, quality control and value addition along the dairy value chain to create employment opportunities and improved livelihoods. As a result of interventions, the post-harvest handling losses for priority commodities reduced to 18.4% (NDP III target 33%), attributed to increased farmer awareness of post-harvest losses and support with post-harvest handling equipment.

Through the Uganda Agricultural Insurance Scheme (UAIS), the Government provided insurance to 150,000 farmers, reaching less than 2% of the 8 million people active in the agriculture sector.¹³ There is anecdotal evidence showing that women are gradually accessing agricultural insurance services offered by Agro-Consortium- a coalition of Insurance Companies that provide crop and livestock insurance in various districts where the consortium members operate. However, there is hardly any national gender-disaggregated data against which to gauge the extent of participation of women and other SIG farmers in accessing agricultural loans and insurance.

3.2.2 Actions to improve access to social protection for women and girls (3 examples)

Consistent with SDG1, the Government introduced and strengthened social protection programmes such as cash transfers, public works and pension schemes as outlined below:

Cash transfers

The Government recognizes that cash transfers act as a tool to alleviate poverty and increase women's economic empowerment. During this period, there have been targeted cash transfers to distressed women to ensure inclusion and that no one is left out of development. Examples are:

In 2021, the Government, through the Office of the Prime Minister, launched a short-term cash transfer programme for the urban population whose livelihoods had been disrupted by COVID-19 containment lockdown measures. About Half a million people were reached with a payment totalling \$ 14.14 million. About 48% of the recipients were women.

¹³ Insurance Resilience Fund, September, 2021

In 2023, the Financial Sector Deepening Programme, in partnership with Trade Mark Africa and 100 WEEKS, participated in an initiative to provide cash transfers, training in business, and entrepreneurship to informal cross-border women traders at one border point in the extreme north-west border with DRC (Elegu). The project offered relief to women whose trade had been disrupted by the closure of the border during the prolonged lockdown at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The cash was transferred to 500 women, each accessing about \$153, equivalent to Ugx 571,658. The women could meet their basic needs (food, school fees), and others recapitalized their businesses.

Social and formal pensions

The government expanded the scope and coverage of care, support and social protection services for the most vulnerable groups and disaster-prone communities. As presented in Section 2.3.5, the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) expanded to cover all citizens of 80 years and above in all districts in the country, in addition to those enrolled in the 61 pioneer districts who were 65 years and above (60 and above for Karamoja). By January 2024, the scheme had reached 299,342 beneficiaries on the payroll, of which 62.4% were female and 37.6% were male.

Uganda has four main retirement benefits schemes. These include the armed forces pension scheme, the public service pension scheme, the parliamentary pension scheme and the national social security scheme. While the first three offer a defined retirement benefit and life pension, the NSSF offer a lump sum at retirement. Older women who have retired from public service, the private sector, and NGOs benefit from the Public Service pension scheme and the National Social Security Fund.

The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) Act, as amended in 2022, provides for gender-responsive actions. These include mid-term access of 10% of accrued benefits for contributing members aged 45 and above and 50% of accrued benefits for PWD members aged 40 and above who have saved for at least ten years; all employers to ensure all workers contribute to NSSF regardless of the size of the enterprise or number of employees and voluntary contributions by the self-employed populations. The amended law provided an option for individuals to save with NSSF voluntarily.

By January 2024, the Uganda Retirement and Benefits Regulatory Authority (URBRA) had registered 64 private retirement pension schemes, which include 52 work-based retirement schemes and 12 umbrella benefit schemes. Some of these schemes also target women in the private and informal sector economy

3.2.3 Actions to improve health outcomes for women and girls

Actions to improve the health outcomes of women and girls were anchored in the National Development Plan III objective of enhancing productivity and social well-being of the population and aspirations of the Agenda 2030, SDG 3, which calls for ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all ages. The Government enacted laws, policies, strategies, and plans to guide the actions to improve health outcomes for women and girls in the country, namely, the Ministry of Health Strategic Plan (2020/2021- 2024/2025), The Public Health Amendment Act 2021 and the National Community Health Strategy for 2021/2022-2025/2026.

Legal Reforms measures

The laws and policies formulated during this time were:

- i. The Public Health Amendment Act 2021- makes compulsory vaccination of children against any disease declared immunisable by the health minister, outlaws misinformation about vaccination and promotes health promotion and awareness.
- ii. National Community Health Strategy for 2021/2022-2025/2026 aims to improve access to primary and preventive health care services to address community health gaps.

Key programmatic measures

The programmatic key measures included:

Expansion of universal health coverage/ public health services

One of the measures to promote women's access to health services was to improve the functionality and accessibility of health infrastructure and logistics as per SDG 3 target 3.8.

In Uganda, the health facilities consist of public, private, and private not-for-profit, of which 45.16% are government-owned, 14.44% are PNFP, 40.3% are PFP, and only 0.1% are community-owned. During the period under review, the Government focused on construction, renovation and equipping of strategic health facilities. For example, by the end of 2023, the government had constructed one regional oncology centre (Gulu), and two others were in the offing. All regional hospitals were equipped with oxygen plants, and 14 had CT Scan Machines. Three General hospitals (Gombe, Busolwe and Kambuga) were renovated and equipped. Three additional regional blood banks were constructed.

The Government constructed staff houses starting with hard-to-reach areas to support staff welfare. For example, 68 staff units were built in hard-to-reach areas of the Karamoja region.

Health Centre IV (HC 1Vs) were equipped to manage the disease burden in communities. The HC 1Vs are referral facilities that offer comprehensive obstetric and newborn care services in counties, especially with no public or private not-for-profit facilities. The number of HC 1Vs increased from 223 in 2019/2020 to 239 in 2020/2021. In FY 2020/2021, the Government constructed 138 Health Centre IIIs in all sub-counties without any health facility and by 2023, 10 HC 11s had been upgraded to HC1Vs in the rural areas and two in Kampala Capital City, where a maternity ward was constructed in one of them. There was also a systematic upgrading of Health Centre 11s, located at the Parish level, to HC IIIs. By the end of 2023, 381 of these had been upgraded.

As a result of these upgrade measures, the number of public HC IIIs increased from 1,165 in 2018/2019 to 1,536 in 2022/2023. Mothers can access quality antenatal care and delivery services; vaccination services are more accessible, and more comprehensive OPD services, including laboratory and in-patient services, are offered in these facilities. Walking distances to health facilities are reduced, leading to improved quality of health care services. For example, 77% of the population is within 3km of any health facility.

Efficient emergency medical response is critical for maternal health. To strengthen emergency medical response, the Government established regional ambulance hubs. Twelve (12) hubs were established in 2020/2021, and more established in 2022/2023. One hundred twenty (120) equipped ambulances, part of the COVID-19 response, were deployed to the regional levels to ease coordination, maintenance and accessibility. In hard-to-reach areas such as Islands, boat ambulances were supplied. By 2022/2023, 21 boat ambulances had been distributed to Local Governments with islands. To further strengthen EMC, scholarships for training emergency physicians and Emergency medical technicians were provided at Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST), Makerere University and Rubaga Hospital Training Institute. Professional health workers and lay responders were trained in primary emergency care and how to respond to emergencies, respectively.

National Ambulance Station and Call Centre was established at Naguru National Emergency and Trauma Centre for coordination. A highway traffic accident response system was established in collaboration with Red Cross Society of Uganda to address SDG target 3.6.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Maternal Health

Consistent with SDG3, target 3.1 the Government put measures for promoting sexual reproductive and maternal health. The Government developed the Quality of Care Implementation Guide for Reproductive Health Maternal, New Born Child, Adolescents Health and Nutrition Services in 2023. It is a practical guide to quality improvement activities for all levels and facilities.

Family planning

The Government uses public/ private partnerships to improve the uptake of family planning in the country. The prominent private actor is Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU), which provides a combination of services, including family planning supplies, HIV/ STI testing and counselling and maternal services to millions of people across the country.

As a result of these combined efforts, the UDHS, 2022, reveals that the percentage of married women aged 15-49 using any modern family planning methods increased from 35% in 2016 to 38% in 2022, and the percentage using traditional methods was at 4%. The total demand for services among married women stands at 64%, and unmet needs at 22%. The fertility prevalence reduced from 5.4% in 2016 to 5.2% in 2022, with regional variations at 3.7% in Kampala Capital City and 6.7% in Karamoja. Figure 8 shows trends in contraceptive use.

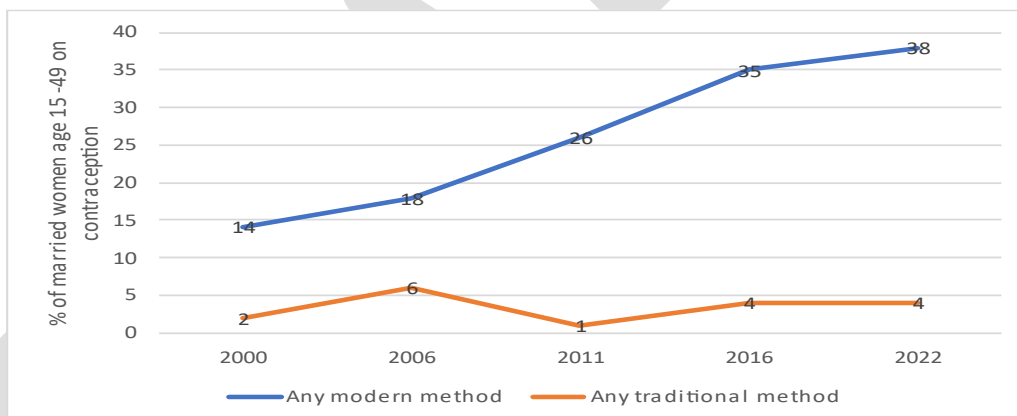


Figure 8: Trends in Modern Contraceptive Use

Maternal Mortality

The prevention of maternal and neonatal mortality and Morbidity is a joint responsibility of all health care providers, Policy makers and the communities they serve. The essential Maternal and New Born Care Guidelines developed in 2022 reinforced the safe motherhood initiatives. Pregnant women access antenatal services from HC IVs and other facilities at the upstream level. During antenatal visits, women also access micronutrient supplementation, hypertension treatment to prevent preeclampsia and immunisation against tetanus. Antenatal services also provide HIV testing and medication to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV. As a result, on average, the percentage of home deliveries reduced from 19% to 9%, and the rate of deliveries in the health facility increased from 80% to 91%.

Through the Uganda Reproduction and Child Health Services Improvement project, the Government has functionalised neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) in all regional hospitals and 25 select General Hospitals. Qualified Neonatal experts have been deployed in these facilities. Consequently, the

neonatal mortality rate was reduced from 27% to 22%, infant mortality was reduced from 43% to 36%, and under-five mortality was reduced from 64% to 52%.

Gender Approaches for chronic & non-communicable diseases

The Uganda National Household Survey, 2019/2020 indicated that there was a higher prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), i.e., diabetes, hypertension and heart diseases among females compared to male counterparts. The gender approaches for chronic NCDs include targeting women of reproductive age for screening during antenatal visits when women are screened for NCDs, especially diabetes and hypertension.

Breast and cervical cancer screening is done routinely in health facilities, and advocacy for breast cancer screening to enable early detection is intensified in the month of October every year. Breast cancer screening for women aged 30-49 increased from 7% to 11% in FY 2020/2021. Immunisation for Human Papilloma Virus was intensified among adolescent girls.

The services in all public and private health facilities target women and men without discrimination. The Government initiated the National Physical Exercise Days as one of the preventative measures for appropriate lifestyles. This initiative is, however, only practised in the capital city. The Government has also established a compulsory weekly physical exercise program in public workplaces.

Mental health measures

According to a study by Butabika Hospital and Makerere University (2023), more women are battling severe anxiety and depression than their male counterparts despite the latter taking more alcohol. Services for mental health are decentralised and integrated with Primary Health Care. Mental health inpatient units were established within regional Referral Hospitals, and preservice and in-service training has been conducted for general mental health workers.

Currently, there are no specialised services for women with mental health. However, the Annual Health Sector Performance Report 2022/2023 indicated that the percentage of women with health issues seeking care was more than that of men.

To establish the extent of mental health problems in the country, the ongoing National Population and Housing Census included a module in the interview schedule. The information accruing from the results will guide the government on what interventions to put in place to address mental health challenges in the country

3.2.4 Actions to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls

Access to quality education, professionalism, and long-life learning and skills is a priority of the Human Capital Development Programme in NDP III, the NRM Party (21-26) Manifesto objective, underpinned by SDG 4.

Legal and policy measures undertaken

In 2021, the Ministry of Education and Sports embarked on the process to review the Government White Paper on Education (*GWP*) of 1992. The Education Policy Review Commission was established by Legal Notice No. 5 of 2021 to investigate and inquire into several Education and Sports sector issues, generate recommendations and develop a White Paper (*Macro Policy*) framework for education and sports services to replace the current Government White Paper on Education of 1992. A special

position paper on Gender and Girls' Education was submitted and considered by the commission.

Actions to increase girls' access to, retention in and completion of primary and secondary education

The government is committed to education for all policies through UPE, USE and BTVET initiatives. The government continued to implement the Gender in Education Policy of 2017, which guided several initiatives in education, including a review of the curriculum for secondary and for teachers to incorporate SRGBV as a module, among others. The government continued to strengthen the implementation of policies that promote gender equality in education, such as the Universal Primary Education Policy and Universal Secondary Policies (USE) and UPPOLET). To operationalize these policies, special programmes such as the Gender for Development programme and Skilling Uganda programme were initiated in the sector to ensure the objectives of the UPE, USE and UPPOLET policies are achieved.

The Ministry of Education and Sports promoted WASH activities in school interventions and addressed menstrual health and hygiene challenges to encourage the retention and completion of girls. The WASH infrastructure designs were reviewed to include gender-responsive facilities for girls during menstruation (incinerators, washrooms and changing rooms). Guidelines on Operation and maintenance have been developed to ensure proper and regular replacement of WASH facilities. The "Three Star approach" was embraced, and initiatives where there were separate toilets for females, males, and PWDs.

In addition, guidelines on managing menstruation in schools were developed. Emergency sanitary towels, education, and skills for making pads were provided to both learners and teachers as part of the guidelines. Menstrual management programmes involve girls and boys as change agents, e.g. making sanitary pads during handcraft lessons and talking compounds with illustrations about gender-related good practices.

Awareness and education about menstrual health are crucial to making sure girls feel confident enough to go to school while on their periods. Therefore, schools continued to engage parents and community leaders in supporting girls' education and addressing cultural barriers such as early marriage.

For secondary level education, the government focused on expanding and constructing the seed secondary schools in sub-counties in line with the education policy of having a secondary school in each sub-county. By 2023, the Government had completed constructing 102 out of 117 new secondary schools during the first phase of the World Bank-supported Uganda Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfer (UgIFT) programme¹⁴.

Ensuring a safe and secure school environment.

Beliefs and practices in the home/ community and school environments mutually reinforce and impact girls' persistence and learning potential. To address gender-based sexual harassment and violence, mechanisms to systematically deal with GBV in schools, e.g. defilement, rape and sexual harassment were developed. In 2020, guidelines for senior women and men teachers were developed, and Senior women teachers were trained on how to identify and respond to specific needs and interests of girls in schools, e.g. on sexual maturation and how to cope with it.

¹⁴ Midterm NRM manifesto report, 2024

Guidelines for the prevention and management of teenage pregnancy were approved in 2020, and child mothers were provided a second chance to re-enroll in school. Girls are involved in life skills training activities to enable them to develop their self-esteem and leadership skills, as well as to relate with each other and live with others. A mentoring programme for girls is in place to guide them in making appropriate and purposeful life decisions.

To promote the enrolment and retention of girls in schools and other training institutions, the GOU 2022 launched a Life Skills Tool Kit to enable students to become agile and adaptive learners equipped with skills to navigate personal, academic and social challenges.

In addition, gender awareness creation is conducted for teachers to deconstruct gender stereotypes surrounding girls in school, and gender training was introduced as an integral part of teacher training and performance reviews. The training focuses on professional development and equipping teachers with gender-responsive pedagogies. Also, female science teachers are mentored to be models/champions and encourage girls to take up science courses. There is a systematic strategy to deploy female teachers in hard-to-reach areas where they are given accommodation and other incentives.

Actions to increase girls' access to, retention in and completion of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and Tertiary Education

The Government continued to implement the TVET Policy of 2019 and Skilling Uganda Strategic Plan (2012/13- 2021/22) to increase the quality of skills and achieve greater organisational and management of TVET. By implementing this strategy, the Government has fully revived the TVET/Skilling sector by constructing TVET institutions in every district and developed a tailor-made programme to promote female participation in science education and skilling. There is a reserved special quota for girls, at least 25 %, in all TVET courses and gender-responsive facilities are provided to ensure a safe and secure environment for girls. There is increased visibility of women's participation in all "non-traditional" courses.

The government has set up female-friendly infrastructure facilities within all TVET institutions and accommodation for women with special needs and disabilities.

The training curriculum, delivery modalities, and registration procedures were all revised, and the monitoring and evaluation systems for TVET have been established and regularized.

To promote girls' training in STEM, coding camps have been held with secondary and TVET girls and science fairs are organized in secondary schools; mathematics competitions were also held to interest girls in mathematics.

Measures in the Tertiary and University Education

To equalise education opportunities in tertiary and universities for students in poor resource households, the Government continued to implement the Higher Education Student Financing Fund. The scheme was established to provide loans for Ugandan students who qualify but cannot cater to financial expenses. By FY 2022/2023, the scheme had benefited 13,407 students, of which 74.5% were males, 25.5% were females pursuing degree programmes and 64.5% and 25.5% on diploma courses, respectively (Table 4)

Table 4: Accessibility to Loan Scheme in FY 2020/21-2022/23

Year	Sex	Selected	Degree	Diploma	PWDs
2020/2021	Male	918	657	261	23
	Female	675	550	125	07
	Total	1,593	1,207	386	30
2022/2023	Male	420	349	71	18
	Female	205	109	36	05
	Total	625	518	107	23

Actions to address barriers to successful school-to-work transitions for women and girls.

Life skills programs were instituted in TVET institutions to address some challenges. A life skills toolkit was developed in 2022 and was being rolled out. There was skilling on using and utilizing digital skills, the Ministry of Education was creating a digital learners policy, and mentorship and coaching programs were ongoing. TVET graduates undergo placement/ apprentice programs.

Gender-sensitive educational curricula Reviews and capacity building of teachers

Curriculum reviews were ongoing and in line with the new teacher policy. A module on SRGBV was developed for the Teacher Training Curriculum. To address the lockdown effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Curriculum Development Centre developed an abridged curriculum to minimize disruptions.

The lower secondary curriculum was reviewed to introduce a competency-based approach with a focus on skills acquisition over content knowledge. The implementation of the curriculum commenced in 2020. In 2022, a needs assessment study was done with a view to reviewing the Advanced Level Secondary level curriculum.

Various educational institutions continued to integrate gender into academic programmes. For example, Makerere University implements a cross-cutting gender studies course for all undergraduate courses. The National Teachers Colleges (NTCs) curriculum was revised and made gender-responsive, and teachers graduate with adequate understanding of gender in education issues.

Since the development of the Gender in Education policy, continuous professional development programs have been rolled out through teacher training colleges on Gender and STEM, SRGBV, Gender Responsive Pedagogy, and the creation of a safe learning environment, among others. The government adopted some models, such as the Journeys the Good school kit, to empower teachers with knowledge on gender equality and human rights.

Safe, harassment-free and inclusive educational environments for women and girls

Since 2015, the Ministry has been implementing the National Strategic Plan for Eliminating Violence Against Children in School (NSP/EVACiS) and creating a safe learning environment. This strategy led to the development of the Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response Guidelines for the VACiS.

In addition to the guidelines, case management registers were distributed to all schools to ensure children report. Orientation of the different service providers in the referral chain- police, health workers, and psycho-social workers was ongoing.

The Ministry of Education and Sports was implementing the child-friendly school module and using the national guidelines on reporting and integrated responses to Violence Against Children in Schools (VACiS). In 2020, the Child-Friendly Schools Module was scaled up, and teachers, half of them females, were trained and can apply child-centred pedagogy and record and report cases of VAC using the Reporting Tracking Referral and Response (RTRR) tool.

Actions to prevent teenage/adolescent pregnancies

To address the increasing cases of dropout girls due to pregnancy, which were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government developed and implemented guidelines for Re-Entry of mothers back to school.

Guidelines for preventing and managing teenage pregnancy were developed in 2020, and the Sexuality Education framework was implemented through curriculum and extracurricular activities. Other measures include strengthening school clubs, the function and roles of senior women and men teachers, and peer-led approaches.

Other actions to address teenage pregnancies and child marriages are presented in Section 3.5.4, which is about actions to eliminate discrimination against the girl child.

DRAFT

3.3 Freedom from Violence, Stigma and Stereotypes

The review under this cluster focuses on the issues identified under the following critical areas of concern in the BPfA.

Critical areas of concern:

- D. Violence against women
- I. Human rights of women
- J. Women and the media
- L. The girl child

3.3.1 Forms of gender-based violence prioritized for action

The forms of GBV prioritized for action are outlined in the National Policy on Elimination of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Uganda, 2016. They are physical, sexual, economic and psychological violations. The other forms of GBV include the Harmful Practices of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Child Marriage.

3.3.2 Priority actions to address Gender-Based Violence?

One of the priority measures implemented to prevent and respond to gender-based violence was the **EU-UN Spotlight Initiative** to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls, including Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Harmful Practices. It has been the flagship programme for addressing GBV from 2019 to 2023. The initiative was funded by the European Union to the tune of USD 42,449,024 million. The initiative has been implemented as a collaboration between over twenty Ministries, Departments, and Agencies, seven District Local Governments (Kampala Capital City Authority, Amudat, Arua, Kasese, Kitgum, Kyegegwa and Tororo; Eight UN Agencies and Entities (UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, IOM, OHCHR, and Pulse Lab as well as from 30 Civil Society and Non-State Actors, the Private Sector, Academia, Religious Leaders and Traditional/ Cultural Institutions.

MGLSD was the national coordinator of the Programme on behalf of the Government and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office on behalf of the UN Agencies. The Uganda Programme was part of the global, multi-year partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030. The Global Programme worth 250 million Euros has benefitted seven (7) other African countries of Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Zimbabwe, Niger, Mozambique and Nigeria.

The Initiative was designed to support Uganda's advancement towards NDP III and the SDGs, particularly SDG 5, prioritizing the principle of "Leave No One Behind". The goal of the Spotlight Initiative is for all women and girls, particularly the most vulnerable, to live a life free of violence and harmful practices, including child marriage and FGM. It is built around six pillars with interventions addressing laws and policies, institutional strengthening, social norms change, service delivery, data management and strengthening the women's movement and civil society engagement.

The registered achievements include the following:

- The programme reached over 20 million beneficiaries against a target of 13 million with interventions across the Six pillars (Outcome areas)
- 13 Laws and Policies were reviewed, passed or are pending approvals, and 18 Ordinances /Bye-Laws on GBV and related local social problems were developed.
- A 19% increase in District Local Governments (DLGs) compliance with Budget Framework Papers (BFPs) to Gender and Equity Requirements in 6 out of 8 districts. These districts have developed GBV-responsive plans and budgets.
- 9 Government and academia training institutions' curricula integrated with GEWE, GBV, VAWG, HPs, GRB, and SRHR.
- One thousand five hundred sixty-four (1,564) senior teachers and school administrators acquired competencies in delivering the Sexuality Education Model in the Spotlight Programme Districts, resulting in 70,456 adolescents receiving SRHR life skills.
- Supporting the coordination and capacity of the women's movement, which has had a catalytic effect on civil society coordination and facilitating a collective voice by women's rights organisations
- In 2022, the Uganda Programme Country Office was awarded for best performance out of 27 Countries.

The government, under the coordination of the Ministry of Education and Sports, has embarked on the successor initiative to the Spotlight Programme referred to as the Gender for Development (G4D) in Uganda Programme (2023-2027)

Another flagship programme was the Joint Programme on GBV, which the Government of Sweden supported **from 2018 to 2023**. The 9th GOU-UNFPA Country Programme (2021-2025) supports the MGLSD with financial and technical resources to implement Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment programmes in line with the Ministry's strategic plan and National Development Plan (NDP) III, Vision 2040 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5, 10 and 16. MGLSD has led the implementation of the GBV component.

In 2020, MGLSD received funding from UNFPA to support activities aimed at preventing and responding to GBV at national and Local Government levels. The funding is obtained under different fund codes/donors, and these include the following;

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Women, Adolescents and Youth Rights and Empowerment (WAY) Programme is funded by the Government of Denmark. - Delivering an Integrated Package of Rights in Karamoja and Northern Uganda, funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). - Advancing Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) to the last mile in Uganda: Delivery of an Integrated Package of Rights and people-centred leadership to address inequalities funded by Netherlands - The Global Programme to End Child Marriage (UNFPA/UNICEF) - The RISE programme funded by DFID - The Spotlight Initiative – to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls, funded by the EU. - The Joint Programme on Gender-Based Violence with Integrated SRHR (UNFPA/UN Women), funded by Sweden - The Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation (UNICEF/UNFPA) - UNFPA under regular resources (FPA 90) |
|---|

The Implementing Partners include Religious and Cultural Institutions¹⁵. These institutions were supported to implement agreed action plans, pronouncements and public declarations to address

¹⁵ The Ker Kwar Acholi (KKA), Lango Cultural Institution, Buganda Kingdom, Obudingiya Bwa Bwamba, Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom, Karamoja Elder's Association, Iteso Cultural Union, Lugbara Kar/Yumbe

GBV, promote positive and gender-equitable practices, HIV, SRHR, FGM prevention, Teenage pregnancy prevention and strengthening reporting.

Measures to Support Abandonment of FGM in Practising Communities:

Under the Joint Programme on FGM, the District Local Governments with practising communities are supported to work with the Cultural Institutions towards the abandonment of the practice. These included, among others, the Sebei Elders Association, which made pronouncements and declarations to abandon FGM and identify an alternative rite of passage (Sebei Women Alternative Rite of Passage).

3.3.3 Strategies to prevent gender-based violence

Advocacy campaigns and Community Mobilisation

One of the strategies to prevent GBV was to increase public awareness through sensitization and mobilization. The Gender machinery and various CSOs and women's rights organisations have been involved in awareness campaigns, sensitization, and education programs to end GBV and other harmful practices such as FGM, child marriages and harassment of widows, both in urban and rural areas. Some CSOs like FOWODE, NUWODU, and UWONET built the capacity of local government leaders to respond to GBV. FOWODE and NUWODU have built the capacity of women in local councils, including representatives of PWDs, to move motions and spearhead the development of Bye-laws against GBV, engage service providers such as police and medical personnel to offer services to GBV victims and survivors. Through its network of branches, FIDA-U encouraged women and other victims to report and offer free legal services to survivors. CSBAG trained local government staff to integrate and allocate funds for GBV in their budget framework papers and also trained women to form Budget Advocacy Groups in communities. Other community-based initiatives were supported by local civic leaders and community champions, which aim to challenge harmful cultural practices and promote gender equality, which impacts both urban and rural areas.

Religious and Cultural institutions working in the target districts mobilized communities to engage in dialogue on cultural norms and practices related to the drivers of GBV, child marriage and teenage pregnancy.

Various media were used to create awareness, mainly electronic media (TV and radio), print media workshops, community dialogues, community mobilization, and sensitization. Local governments and CSOs supported the use of behavioural change approaches such as SASA. All these aimed to foster a zero-tolerance culture to GBV for Social Behavioural Change for norms and practices that drive GBV.

At the national level, the 16 Days of Activism Campaign Against GBV and the National Commemoration of Zero Tolerance to FGM Day were organized annually by the MGLSD in collaboration with national and Local government stakeholders. The purpose of these advocacy days was to create awareness among the public on the situation of GBV and FGM in the Country, the measures in place to address these vices and strategies to eliminate all forms of GBV and lead to the abandonment of FGM in practising communities.

Evidence and data management measures

The other strategy was generating data and information to establish the magnitude of GBV and the impact of services. Apart from the National GBV Survey conducted in 2020, the UDHS continued to generate data on GBV. The recent UDHS was conducted in 2022.

In addition, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) established a National Gender-Based Violence Data Base (NGBVD) within the framework of the GBV Policy and Action Plan.

This data was vital for uniform policy formulation, programming and advocacy. This enhanced the Ministry's capacity to provide leadership and coordination in GBV prevention and response. The NGBVD was upgraded and rolled out to more districts. A Disability variable was included.

The system was expanded to 56 (UNFPA), and an additional 15 LGs (GOU) were reached, with CSOs such as Action Aid International(AAIU)in Northern and Eastern Uganda, Mifumi in Kalangala and Tororo. The system was upgraded to integrate the humanitarian response. In partnership with UNHCR, efforts are underway by the MGLSD to harmonise the humanitarian GBV MIS (which covered the refugee-hosting LGs) with the NGBVD.

Additionally, the Uganda Police release weekly, monthly, and annual reports on crime rates in the country. Data on GBV-reported cases was part and parcel of these reports.

The Child Helpline (Sauti 116) also generated data on VAC and VAWG cases that required rescue and services. The GBV Helpline (Sauti 116) is an online reporting, referral and response mechanism. The Helpline that the MGLSD managed improved the reporting of cases of GBV in the country. The Helpline enabled survivors and other members of the community to report cases of GBV online and access appropriate support services.

Capacity building of Stakeholders in planning and budgeting for GBV prevention and response

CSOs such as CSBAG trained Gender Focal Point Officers in MDAs and Local Governments in Gender and equity budgeting and integrating GBV in planning and budgeting.

Training Manual on integrating Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention and Response Interventions in Government Plans and Budgets was developed and aimed to establish a user-friendly instrument for the Training and Mentoring of Technical staff in Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and Governments Local. The manual facilitated government technocrats to adequately plan and budget for the practical programming and financing for prevention and response to gender-based violence across various government programs.

The government developed several tools to operationalize the national strategy for the elimination of violence against children in schools. These include the guidelines for reporting, tracking, Referring, and Responding to violence against children and the case management registers.

3.3.4 Actions to prevent and respond to Technology-facilitated gender-based violence

There are emerging forms of violence precipitated by information communication technologies (ICT), such as cyber sexual abuse and stalking.

The Computer Misuse Amendment Act 2022 restricts unauthorized access to information and data, sending information that promotes hate speech and malicious unsolicited information. This has controlled cyber harassment and violence emanating from information misuse. For instance, in 2022, 286 cases of cybercrime were reported.

3.3.5 Measures to resource Women's Organizations working to prevent and respond to GBV

The government of Uganda pursued a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach to addressing GBV. In this regard, Women's Rights Organizations are part of the coordination and implementation mechanism for the flagship programmes to prevent and respond to GBV.

During the reporting period, 2020-2024, WROs/NGOs benefitted from the financing under the EU/UN Spotlight Programme, the Joint Programme on GBV and the Joint Programme to address FGM. The Interreligious Council of Uganda (IRCU) receives funds from the Government through the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development to fund actions to prevent and respond to GBV.

3.3.6 Actions to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and gender bias in the media, including social media

The Anti-Pornography Act creates the offence of pornography, which is blamed for sexual crimes against women and children, including rape, child molestation and incest. The law criminalizes watching and promoting pornography with a maximum sentence of 10 years in jail or paying 500 currency points, equivalent to 10 million shillings or both, while those promoting pornographic acts among children are to be sentenced to 15 years in jail or paying 750 currency points which is an equivalent of 15 million shillings or both upon conviction. According to the law, even those who wear miniskirts or expose their sexual body parts like thighs and buttocks that may cause sexual excitement will face charges.

Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA) works on training and sensitising media personnel on GBV and gender-responsive reporting. UMWA developed a Strategy for gender and Media engagement.

Uganda initiated interventions and developed guidelines to respond to this, including the Online Cyber Act. The Uganda Communications Commission was responsible for controlling content, and a National inter-ministerial committee monitored and handled online sexual exploitation.

3.3.7 Actions to address violence against marginalized groups of women and girls

Uganda has implemented targeted awareness campaigns and legal support systems. These educate all women about their rights and offer guidance on seeking redress in cases of abuse, violence, and harassment. Collaborative efforts with law enforcement agencies address and prevent mistreatment, while advocacy and policy reform initiatives influence legal protections. Examples of targeted actions to address violence against marginalised groups of women include:

-Economic empowerment programs and health services recognize the distinct needs of older women, ensuring their right to live free from violence, sexual abuse, and discrimination based on age. The amalgamation of these programs underscores the commitment to guaranteeing all women the right to be treated with dignity, protected from violence, and empowered to seek justice.

Sectors that deal with extensive public infrastructures, such as Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA), Energy and Mineral Development, Works and Transport, and Ministry of Water and Environment, have in place infrastructural and social safeguards guidelines address gender-based violence, VAC, and child labour and established gender reporting, response and grievances mechanisms for zero tolerance to VAW/G. For example, the Environmental and Impact Assessment

tools include checklists on GBV and a guide on the GBV risk level. There are Grievance redress mechanisms to handle any GBV reported cases, and contractors are mandated to abide by the rules.

Progress

The considerable investment in gender-based violence prevention and response has yielded results with the improvement in selected indicators and overall prevalence rates of physical and sexual violence.

Overall, 48% of women and 40% of men aged 15–49 have experienced either physical or sexual violence. Women’s experience of physical violence since the age of 15 has declined steadily since 2006 although the percentage who have experienced physical violence in the 12 months preceding the UDHS2022 survey remained relatively unchanged between 2016 and 2022 (22% and 23%, respectively). Women who are currently married (25%) or formerly in a union (23%) are more likely to have experienced recent physical violence compared to those who have never been in a union (13%).

Notably, levels of sexual violence, while still high, have decreased over the last five years. In 2022, 16.7% of women ages 15-49 have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime compared to 22% in 2016, with 10.7% having experienced sexual violence in the 12 months preceding the 2022 UDHS survey (13% in 2016). Women’s experience of sexual violence from a current or former intimate partner has also reduced from 16.6% in 2016 to 12.8% in 2022.

Overall, levels of intimate partner violence have remained persistently high, with a reversal in previous gains in reducing women’s experience of spousal violence. 58.3% of ever-married women (aged 15-49) experienced some form of IPV (physical, sexual or emotional violence) during their lifetime, and 43.3% experienced such violence in the 12 months preceding the 2022 UDHS survey. Over this same period, there has been a significant reduction in men’s experience of IPV over their lifetime and in the preceding 12 months (39% of men in 2016 to 22.7% in 2022). The increase in women’s experience of IPV was driven by the rise in the experience of emotional violence in the preceding 12 months.

Access to justice for survivors of gender-based violence has improved, although much more is needed. In 2023, 26.6% of GBV-related cases reported to the police were investigated and taken to court (compared with 20.8% in 2022), and 4.8% resulted in a conviction, compared with 1.3% in 2022. However, the Conviction rate of GBV cases through the Special Court Sessions on GBV increased from 50% in 2016 to 70.1% in 2021.

Survivors of domestic violence are far less likely to access formal justice than victims of sex-related offences, although there have been incremental increases in the percentage of domestic violence cases taken to court (7.7% in 2022 to 10.4% in 2023). (Annual Uganda Police Crime Report 2022 and 2023). Also to note is that 7% of women aged 15- 49 years received a diagnosis of depression and anxiety from a doctor as per the UDHS (2022) Report.

The proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting reduced from 1.4% in 2011 to 0.3% in 2016 and further to 0.2% in 2022. The gradual decrease in the prevalence of female genital mutilation (FGM) can be attributed, at least in part, to the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Act 2010, which restricts all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-therapeutic reasons.

3.4 Participation, Accountability and Gender-Responsive Institutions

Critical areas of concern:

- G. Women in power and decision-making
- H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- I. Human rights of women
- J. Women and the media
- L. The girl child

3.4.1 Actions and measures to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making

During the period under review, the government upheld the legislation that provided quotas (affirmative action) for special interest groups to be represented in parliament and local council structures. The SIGs include women, workers, UPDF, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, and workers. The laws establishing structures for these special interest groups were also upheld. These were the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, The Local Government (as amended) Act (1997), the Women's Councils Act, the National Youth Council Act, the National Disability Council Act, and The UPDF Act.

Legal reforms Measures

The following new laws were enacted:

The Parliamentary Election (Amendment) Act (No) 2020 - included older persons as a special interest group in Parliament. The law specifies that out of the five (5) representatives, at least one should be a female and elected as a national representative.

The Political Parties and Organisations (Amendment) Act 2020- provides for political parties to promote active and equal participation of women, youth, PWDs and other vulnerable groups in all political parties' activities in the electoral process.

The Electoral Commission (Amendment) Act 2020 provides for using technology to manage elections. The above laws are consistent with Target 5.5 of SDG 5, which requires countries to ensure women's full participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels.

Participation of Women in Parliamentary Elections

A new 5-year electoral cycle started in 2021 when elections were conducted for presidential, parliamentary and upper and lower local council levels. The number of women in Parliament increased from 33% in the 10th Parliament (2016-2021) to 33.8% in the 11th Parliament (2021-2025), slightly above the critical mass percentage of 30% set in the Beijing Platform for Action. In absolute numbers, the 11th Parliament comprises 188 women out of 556 members compared to 141 in the 10th Parliament. The Women members of Parliament consist of 146, each directly elected from districts and Cities, representatives of the youth (2), PWDs (3), older persons (3), Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (3) constituency representative (14) and ex officio members appointed to cabinet by the President who are 15 out of 27.

Women's representation in Cabinet

There was an increase in women's representation at the cabinet level, which is the top policy-making organ of Government. The President appointed women to the highest positions in the cabinet as the Vice President and the Prime minister, and three (3) of the four (4) Deputy Prime ministers are women. In General, women constitute 45.8% of the cabinet compared to 5.2% of men, an increase from 28.7% in 2016-2021. Out of the 30 Cabinet ministers, 12 are females (40%), while out of 50 ministers of State, 24 are females (48%). The trends in the composition of women in cabinet positions increased from 28.7% (23) to 45.8% (38). While men's representation decreased from 71.3% (57) to 54.2% (45), they are still more than women.

Women in decision-making positions in Public Services

In the Public Service, there were 16 women Permanent Secretaries out of 31, 15 CEOs of Commissions out of 39 and 14 out of 37 Ambassadors are women.

Women in Positions in Local Government

The Local Government Act 1997 (section 117(1) as amended provides for participation of women in local government governance. Men still dominate the Local Council Chairpersons at different levels, with 97.9% at the Local Council 3 (sub-county) level, 93.5% at the Local Council 2 (Parish) level and 97% at the Local Council1 (Village) level.

At the local Government level, women constitute 45.7% of the total elected leaders, above the 30% critical mass threshold set in the Platform for Action. However, a limited number of women occupy the positions of Chairpersons at different levels. Only 3% at LC3. 6.5% at LC2 level and 3% at LC1 level. There are five (5) district chairpersons, and one (1) is a city mayor out of 146.

Capacity Building of Women in Leadership

Various women's rights organisations affiliated under the cluster of Women and Governance, such as UWONET, FOWODE, FIDA, ACFODE, NAWODU) built the capacity of women leaders, namely members of parliament district and sub-county level councillors, to articulate women's and influence positive change in policies and laws in the national assembly and Local Government Council Assemblies. There have been successes at local government levels where women in councils have influenced budget allocations for the construction of maternity centres in health facilities, separate toilet stances for girls in schools and water points in communities, and rescuing GBV victims.

At the national level, women members of Parliament, together with male MPs affiliates organised under the Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA), continuously advocate for gender-responsive legislation and conduct capacity-building sessions for all members of parliament. UWOPA successfully lobbied to enact the amended Succession Act (2021), The Markets Act, 2022, the Employment Bill and the Sexual Offenses Bill, though the latter two are not accented to. Women in leadership positions have also advocated for designing, implementing and including women in special programs and projects to advance women's economic advancement, such as UWEP, PDM, YLP, and Emyooga.

Women's Leadership in Religious Institutions.

The Interreligious Council of Uganda (IRCU), with funding from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, conducted a gap analysis of women in the governance of the religious structures. The results revealed that there were few women in leadership positions. IRCU secretariate lobbied for policy reforms in the constituent members, coupled with women's capacity building for them to take advantage of insider reforms. As a result, the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council reviewed the constitution and established a department in charge of women and children that cascades to the regional level. Similarly, the Uganda Episcopal Conference, the coalition of Catholic archbishops in Uganda, reviewed the constitution and included the Women's Guild structures in all dioceses.

Challenges

Despite the positive strides in improving participation of all categories of women in governance, they remain underrepresented in politics and decision-making at national and LG levels, which hampers their issues being prioritized during planning and budgeting. Their participation is still hindered by discrimination exacerbated by societal and cultural barriers, limited access to financial resources to run effective and successful campaigns, inadequate access to information and illiteracy, which limits their participation in assembly deliberations/ debates.

3.4.2 Actions to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media

The government recognises the power of the media as a delivery vehicle for policy decisions to the population for uptake of services and improved service delivery. The Ministry of ICT & NG continued to provide strategic and technical leadership, oversight, and coordination on all policies, laws, and regulations for the ICT sector. The Government maintained the laws regulating the media landscape and content creators' activities for responsible and ethical content creation. The Constitution of Uganda enshrines the right to freedom of expression, which encompasses the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas.

Only **The Computer Misuse (Amendment) Act (2022)** was enacted. The law prohibits unauthorised access to information or data, unlawful sharing of any information relating to a child, hate speech, and the sending or sharing of malicious or unsolicited information. It also regulates the use of social media.

The government continued licensing the country's media actors, who mainly print television, radio, and online services. By the end of 2023, the Uganda Communication Commission had in the register over 300 registered radio, 40 TV stations, and newspapers (print media) operating and circulating throughout the country. The coverage was split between state-run and privately owned outlets that communicate using English and local dialects. The wide range of media outlets has provided opportunities for women media professionals to participate in decision-making in the media.

Despite the employment opportunities offered by the proliferation of the media infrastructure, the proportion of women in top-level decision-making in media organisations remains low. Women occupied only 30% of the low-ranking jobs, such as writers and news reporters in media houses, and only 3 % at the senior management level. Noteworthy is that according to UNHS 2019/ 2020, the households owning the radio were 31.7% below 45.2% in 2016/2017, indicating a decline of 13.5%. However, according to Finscope's study (2023, the number of households that own TV sets increased to 19.2% in 2019/2020 from 17.4% in 2016/2017. This trend indicates that the radio may no longer be the leading source of information in the country, and women in the media should adjust to using TV and other emerging social media platforms.

Recommendations

- i. The media sector needs to establish a gender agenda and strategy where gender is mainstreamed in day-to-day operations, assignments are equitably allocated to female and male journalists, and women's visibility and issues in news stories are significantly elevated.
- ii. There is a need to equip female journalists and media houses, particularly small outlets, with digital skills to develop tailored online and mobile content to position themselves to expand and diversify both their audience and advertiser base.

3.4.3 Measures to strengthen the current national women's machinery

Evolution of the National Machinery

Since 1998, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development has been the national machinery for promoting gender equality and empowerment of women. Consistent with paragraph 202 of the Beijing Platform for Action, which guides member States to create or strengthen national machineries for the advancement of women at the highest possible level of Government, the Ministry is directed at the cabinet level with a full cabinet Minister and a minister of State responsible for the docket of Gender and Cultural Affairs. There are other ministers of State accountable for the functions of Youth and Children Affairs, Elderly and Disability Affairs, and Labour and Employment.

The Ministry is responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of the vulnerable population, addressing gender inequalities, ensuring cultural growth, labour and employment, and community mobilization and empowerment. Its principle mandate is to mobilize and empower communities and families to harness their potential while protecting the rights of vulnerable population groups. It also promotes labour productivity and employment, social protection, gender equality & equity, human rights, culture and empowerment.

The national machinery employs a twin-tack approach. On the one hand, it is responsible for mainstreaming gender across the entire Government; on the other hand, it implements specific women's projects. The current strategic location and consolidation of the functions into one entity also enable the Ministry to employ a life cycle approach and social inclusion in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women. Therefore, the Ministry plays a fundamental role in enhancing vulnerable persons' resilience and productive capacity for inclusive growth, a better standard of living, equity and social cohesion.

Measures to Strengthen the National Machinery

At the technical level, the Department of Gender and Women's Affairs, one of the ten(10) departments, is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Platform for Action as the actual national machinery. The department was strengthened. The position of the Director was abolished from the entire Government Structure. The Commissioner in charge of Gender and Women's Affairs reports directly to the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Executive Accounting Officer. This reform has reduced the bureaucracy and enabled faster information flow and effective decision-making.

To create constructive interaction, harmonization and efficiency in delivering the ministry mandate, some semi-autonomous organizations of the special interest groups that had been decentralized on the periphery were consolidated as part of the rationalisation of the State enterprises. The move will enhance coordination of service delivery to vulnerable groups.

Further, the Ministry was strengthened with increased financial resources. As indicated in Section 2, the Ministry implements the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) and The Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW), which are allocated funds for women business enterprises and Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) for the young men and women as well as grants for other SIGs as indicated Section 2.3

The Government shifted from a sector approach to a programme-based- Approach to Planning in implementing the Third National Development Plan (2020/2021-2024/2025). The national machinery accesses funds mainly from three (3) programmes: the Human Capital Development (HCD), the

Community and Mobilisation and Mindset Change (CM&MC) and the Administration of Justice (AJ) Programmes. Funds approved for the Ministry increased over the years from Ug. Shs. 197.3bn in 2019/2020 to Ug. Shs 376.78 in 2024/2025. Below is the trend analysis of funds accessed by MGLSD for the Financial Years 2020/2021 to 2023/2024 (Table 5)

Table 5: Analysis of Approved Budget for FY 2019/20-2024/25 (UGx bn)

NDP 111 Programme	FY 2019/2020	FY 2020/2021	FY 2021/2022	Supplementary 2021/2022	FY 2022/2023	FY 2023/2024	FY 2024/2025
CM&MC	30.87	30.35	27.93	10.754	38.764	24.363	19.474
HCD	162.92	131.29	178.09	53.4	206.88	295.561	352.609
AJ	3.533	3.8	4.98	-	4.221	4.5	4.7
Total	197.318	165.441	211.006	64.15	249.865	324.424	376.783
% of National Budget	2.1	1.8	0.9	-	1.4	2.1	2.0

Extracted from MGLSD BFPs

However, the percentage of the national budget approved by the Ministry fluctuated from 0.9% to 2.1%, and the lowest rate was during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.4.4 Mechanisms and tools to mainstream gender equality across sectors

Mechanisms

The Government has a well-structured and coordinated mechanism for mainstreaming gender equality across all government institutions, stretching from the national level and cascading to the sectors and the sub-national levels.

At the national level, the coordination structures were re-engineered to be in tandem with the National Development Plan III Programme-based approach to planning and coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). The Third National Development Plan (NDP III) adopted the programme-based approach to planning, budgeting, implementation and reporting to address challenges of uncoordinated planning, weak harmonization, and the poor linkage between outcomes and outputs. The NDP programme approach provides a framework for inter and intra-sectoral coordination to eliminate the problem of Ministries, Agencies and Local Governments working in 'silos.'

At the political level, the Apex Platform and the Policy Leadership Committee are steered by the highest political leaders and appropriate the country's resources. Steering Committee/ Programme Working Groups and LG Working Groups are at the technical levels. The PWG comprises accounting officers who are managers of resources, and each is required to set annual performance targets on gender and equity. Non-state actors such as CSOs, private sector agencies, Academia and others were

given the opportunity to contribute and bring in voices of the marginalised in the PWGs where PIAPs, BFPs and progress reports are formulated.

The government-led mechanism for coordination of the implementation of NDP offered an excellent opportunity to position gender and equity issues in the overall system of Government from the highest political level and cascade to the technical levels. The National Machinery is represented at all these forums by the political and technical staff as required. The OPM reports on the progress of the SDG gender targets in the National Annual Performance Reviews (NAPR) of the Government.

Additionally, several gender and equity structures aligned to NDP are in place to support the implementation and generate gender and equity-responsive outcomes. These include:

The Gender and Equity Budgeting (GEB) Task Force is chaired by the Director for Budget in the MFPED and composed of MGLSD, EOC and membership from the technical staff of the Parliamentary committee responsible for monitoring the progress of gender and equity-responsive budgeting across all programmes. The Gender Unit in the same Ministry serves as the Secretariat for the GEB Task Force. The Task Force meets quarterly to plan and monitor interventions across MDAs and local Governments on Gender and Equity Budgeting.

The Gender Statistics Advisory Group (GSAG) was first set up in 2008 to build capacity across MDAs as part of the National Statistical System (NSS). The GSAG aims to support the generation and use of gender statistics in Ministries, Departments and Agencies, including Local Governments. UBOS and the MGLSD jointly chair the Advisory Group.

Currently, there is ongoing dialogue to initiate the establishment of **a National Gender and Equity Focal Persons Forum** under the MGLSD, which can bring the Gender Focal Persons from MDAs, the Private Sector, Academia and Civil Society together to develop a supportive mechanism when addressing GEWE in the Country.

There are also operational issue-based sub-working groups under the National Machinery. For example, the GBV response programme had several coordination structures.

The **High-Level GBV Policy Reference Group** – is a high-level forum chaired by the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development and enables stakeholders to plan and review progress made on ending GBV in line with the provisions of the National Policy on the Elimination of GBV in Uganda 2016. The Hon. chairs this High-Level Forum.

The National GBV Reference Group – serves as the platform for monitoring GBV programming in Uganda to ensure adherence to the National Development Plans and PIAPs and that interventions respond to Sustainable Development Goal 5. Membership is multi-sectoral, including representation from health, justice, social development, security, UN agencies, CSOs, faith-based organisations, cultural institutions, and the private sector.

The National GBV Medico-Legal Working Group – is chaired by the Deputy Director of Public Prosecution (ODPP), with membership from the ODPP, Police (Medical, CIID, FCP departments), Ministry of Health (clinical Services, Reproductive Health and ACP Departments), Mulago Hospital, National Reference Laboratories, Uganda Law Reform Commission, Law School Makerere University, JLOS institutions, WHO, UNWOMEN, UNFPA and UNICEF. It is a good practice forum to address the issues of collecting medico-legal evidence, identifying challenges faced by Prosecutors in handling GBV cases, guiding the policy and legal frameworks on GBV and finally provide technical oversight on the medico-legal services offered by actors. It is a multi-sectoral team of subject matter experts from different interdependent sectors and institutions with mandates, obligations and responsibilities to prevent and respond to Gender Based Violence.

Furthermore, there are project-based mechanisms such as:

The Technical Working Group (TWG) under the Gender Equality for Development (GEfD) programme supported by the Norwegian Government was established in 2023. The purpose of the TWG is to mobilise MDAs and other stakeholders to support the implementation of the Programme, including engaging the respective MDAs in the delivery of gender equality and women's empowerment. The TWG Membership is composed of representatives from Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Academia, and Civil Society and Faith Based Organisations.

There was also a National Technical Working Group to oversee Uganda's implementation of the National Action Plan III on Women Peace and Security that domesticates UNCR 1325.

At the Ministry Department and Agency (MDA) levels, various forms of structures are responsible for gender mainstreaming and coordination of GEB activities within the institutions. These included Gender Focal Points (appointed or designated staff), Gender Committees composed of gender focal Points from different departments in a particular Agency and Gender Units/Departments with an established staff team.

Over the review period, the following Government agencies established the gender coordination mechanisms within their institutions.

- i. The Office of the **Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP)** established a Department of Gender, Children and Sexual Offences to coordinate the handling and management of prosecutions of all sexual violence offences. The department has the requisite expertise to ensure justice for the victims.
- ii. **The Parliament of Uganda** established a Gender Unit under the Corporate Governance and Planning Department. The Unit offers technical guidance on gender equality issues. The Parliamentary Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development provides oversight, scrutinises the budget for the sector, and recommends the allocation of funds to critical unfunded issues in the sector.
- iii. In the **Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF)**, the structural changes in the new UPDF establishment (2021) have seen the Directorate of Women Affairs decentralized to the Directorate of Human Resource Management in the four services of the UPDF. The restructuring enabled the Force to manage the issues of GEWE close to the combatants and also to allow proper deployment and follow-up for career growth. The Office for Women's Affairs is now nearer to operational areas where matters about GEWE are easily identified and addressed rather than where it would only go through one focal point, the Directorate of Women's Affairs.
- iv. In the **Uganda Police Force**, three units complement each other. The Women Affairs Department under the office of Deputy Inspector General of Police coordinates all gender mainstreaming and Women Empowerment programs in UPF, the Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) Unit under the Criminal Investigation Department is responsible for investigation of SGBV crimes and the Child and Family Protection under the directorate of Chief Political Commissariat which handles family and children's cases.
- v. **The Uganda Prisons** Gender Desk Committee was established to address vital and salient issues affecting the performance of female staff and inmates from diverse backgrounds. The Gender Desk Office implements the Committee's decisions.

Before 2020, several MDAs had established internal gender coordination mechanisms, which were maintained and, in some cases, strengthened. These were:

- i. The **National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO)** has an elaborate gender coordination mechanism consisting of Gender Focal Points located in the 16 Research Institutes under the leadership of the Gender & Social Safeguards Coordinator. The project implementors of each Research Institute are part of this mechanism.
- ii. The **Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development** has a Gender committee composed of staff from different directorates, affiliated agencies and project staff. The committee is responsible for gender mainstreaming.
- iii. The **Ministry of Water and Environment** has a cadre of social scientists who are gender focal points in various directorates. This cadre of staff is coordinated by the Social Scientist in the Water Resources Liaison Unit. There are also Planning focal points in all departments. These two categories of staff play complementary roles in mainstreaming gender and equity (HIV) and environmental issues and budgeting.
- iv. The **Office Auditor General (OAG)** has a unique mechanism of only women. The OAG Women's Forum is a platform for women in OAG to share experiences and a vehicle for corporate social responsibility (CSR), focusing on sector activities. The HR is the head of the GFP Unit and is supported by the Social Safeguards and Planning Unit (accountable for budget and indicators) on marginalized groups, e.g., children and minors at risk, and outreach activities. Women's Forum also handles the welfare and training of women staff in the institution.
- v. **The Education Sector** Gender Technical Working Group comprises GFPs from different departments and is coordinated by the fully established Gender Unit. The working group members are also part of the Education Sector Consultative Group, which prioritizes sectoral issues for resource allocation.

Furthermore, some of the Ministries Departments and Agencies, such as Kyambogo University, Uganda National Roads Authority, Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development and Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, instituted Gender and Equity Committees to ensure compliance with gender and equity issues in all aspects of programming and build capacities of implementers. The gender structures work closely with the planning units, particularly during budgeting.

At the Local Government level, the mandate of Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Equity Budgeting lies with the District Community Development Officers' docket, which works closely with the District Planner. The comprehensive gender coordination structures exist only in districts that implement projects funded by DPs, such as GBV and in humanitarian settings.

Participation of CSOs in the gender coordination mechanisms

Civil Society and Women's organizations are, by design, members of the Government's coordination mechanisms, such as the Working Groups and programme/Project Steering Committees. Civil Society Organizations are involved in gender mainstreaming and equity budgeting activities, especially national and district-level advocacy and capacity building for technical leadership, awareness creation, evidence generation, and documentation. CSOs, which handle budget advocacy activities, participate in the National Taskforce to implement GEB. In some instances, the national Machinery has bilateral strategic partnerships with CSOs on programming, lobbying and advocacy on Gender equality issues such as GEB and GBV.

In 2021, the Minister of Gender Labour and Social Development instituted a national forum of women of influence that offers direction to all the national sectoral and local government gender mechanisms.

Tools for Gender mainstreaming in the country

The Uganda Gender Policy is the primary tool used in gender mainstreaming across the government. The policy guides the actors to employ the gender and development (GAD) and women in

development (WID) approaches in pursuit of gender equality and empowerment of women. The policy identifies opportunities and entry points for ensuring gender equality as integral to national socio-economic development. These are the National Development plans, sectoral and local government policies, and budget framework papers.

The Public Finance Management Act 2015 legitimised the gender policy and strengthened accountability for gender equality and women empowerment by mandating that all government institutions plan and budget for gender and equity issues.

The Department of Gender and Women Affairs in the MGLSD developed the National Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines, 2023, as a tool to facilitate a standard approach to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Uganda. The Guidelines were intended to guide the mainstreaming of gender issues in development interventions. They provide an outline of what institutions should do to mainstream gender concerns in order to achieve gender equality and inclusivity and leave no one behind. MGLSD disseminated the guidelines to ministries, departments, agencies, and local governments (MDALGs), the intended users.

Over this period, a number of other tools were developed and used for mainstreaming gender across the entire government, as presented in Section 4.2. However, MDAs have specific tools, such as sectoral policies and guidelines, that guide gender mainstreaming within their respective entities.

3.4.5 National Human Rights Institution to address violations of women's rights and promote gender equality

The Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) was established by Article 52 of the Constitution to investigate human rights violations and monitor government compliance with international treaties, conventions and obligations on human rights. The Commission operates through 12 regional offices and 11 field offices across the country.

In accordance with Article 52 (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, the Commission is mandated to publish period reports on its findings and submit annual reports to Parliament on the state of human rights and freedoms in the country. The reports usually contain a section on women's status, highlight gaps and human rights concerns that hinder women's empowerment and give recommendations for action by Government Agencies. The Commission conducts periodic tribunals, receives complaints, and summons government entities in case of delayed actions regarding the recommendations.

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) was established by Article 32(4) of the Constitution. It draws its mandate from the Equal Opportunities Commission Act, No. 2 of 2007 (EOC Act) to effect the State's constitutional mandate to eliminate discrimination and inequalities against any individual or group of persons based on sex, among other factors. It monitors Article 32 and holds the State accountable to take affirmative action in favour of groups marginalised based on gender, age, disability or any other reason for redressing imbalances.

The Public Finance Management Act 2015 mandates EOC to monitor the compliance of government entities in allocating resources to Gender and Equity, a form of Gender Responsive Budgeting that the country adopted to equalise opportunities for groups marginalised on different grounds.

To effect the above mandates, EOC conducts tribunals, researches, and assesses budget framework papers and policy statements of all government entities at national and local government levels. The Commission submits periodic and annual reports on the State of Equal Opportunities to Parliament. On several occasions, the EOC has recommended to Parliament not approve the budgets of government entities that do not meet the minimum requirements on gender and equity.

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3.5 Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

The critical areas of concern in BPfA under this cluster are:

- E. Women and armed conflict
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

3.5.1 Actions to build and sustain Peace and Implement the women, peace and security agenda

The government of Uganda is committed to realising a peaceful and inclusive society, as demonstrated by the endorsement of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and 1820 and the subsequent resolutions. It ensures women's meaningful participation in promoting peace and security, conflict prevention and resolution, eliminating GBV and ending impunity at all levels. Evidence shows that 21 out of the 23 SDG 16 indicators can be reported on with more consistent regularity of data collection (2020)¹⁶.

In a bid to secure peace and security in the country and its neighbouring states, the government took the following actions among others:

Implementation of the third National Development Plan (2020/21-2024/25)

During the period under review, the GoU implemented its third National Development Plan (NDP III). The NDP III underpins the citizens' involvement in influencing peacebuilding and conflict transformation priorities. It illustrates how it should be structured and delivered and the need to support citizens' capacity to benefit from the gains of peace, security and improved socioeconomic opportunities.

Development and execution of the National Action Plan (NAP)III on Women, Peace and Security

Uganda reviewed the previous National Action Plans I and II on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and developed the National Action Plan III (NAP III) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) 2021-2025, led by the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development. The plan is aligned with SDG5, SDG 16 and National Development Plan III. It addresses issues in all UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the subsequent ten (10) UN Security Council Resolutions addressing different but complementary issues on women, peace and security. The plan also contains a comprehensive monitoring framework, a communications plan, and a costed work plan, making it cited globally as a 'high-impact NAP'.

The plan provides a strategic framework, through the WPS agenda, for mainstream women and security concerns in national development and peace strategies, focusing on strengthening women's influential roles in achieving lasting and inclusive peace in Uganda.

The Government further developed popular versions of the UNSCR 1325 NAP III that are summarised, simplified and translated into popular languages and have been disseminated in various forms to suit

the target audience. For example, with support from UN Women and CoACT 1325, this includes a translated version of “Ngakarimojong”, a region characterised by inter-tribal conflict and cattle raids and murders.

Localisation of the NAP. At the Local government level, with support from MoGLSD and UN Women, CoACT 1325, WIPC, and other stakeholders, supported the development and implementation of Twelve (14) district Local Action Plans (LAP) on women’s meaningful contribution to peacebuilding and conflict prevention processes. The LAPS serve as an accountability framework to address local-level issues that undermine the peace and human security of women and girls. The Localization strategy has been cited globally as a good practice that supports practical solutions to women, peace and security issues.

3.5.2 Actions to increase women's leadership, representation and participation in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action and crisis response.

The government made the following reforms;

- (i) Development and adoption of the Uganda Police Force Gender Policy and Plan (2019-2023)
- (ii) The Great Lakes Regional Action Plan (ICGLR-RAP) for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325(2000) for 2018-2023 addresses the participation and representation of women in this agenda.

Women’s participation in Security sector

Participation in regional peacekeeping missions. The Government of Uganda continued to contribute troops to regional peacekeeping missions, such as the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), to promote regional stability and security. It also implemented initiatives to curb internal conflicts and promote reconciliation, such as peace talks and community dialogue programs.

The Uganda Police Force and Makerere University Rotary Peace Centre, with support from the Elsie Initiative fund conducted a Barrier’s Assessment on the impediments to women’s meaningful participation in peacekeeping missions (2023). The report presents the findings of an assessment of the initiatives by the Uganda Police Force (UPF) to deploy women and ensure their meaningful participation in the United Nations (UN) Peace Operations (POs).

Integration of women in security agencies

Uganda Police Force continued to implement affirmative action measures as stipulated in the UPF Gender Policy 2018 for recruitment, such as a 30% quota for women recruits and an additional 2% points for women candidates who attain the pass mark during interviews for deployment.

Approximately 10,267 women police officers were recruited and purposely trained to record statements and manage women and children who were victims of rape, defilement, incest and indecent assault (Uganda Police Force, 2022).

The government also established and trained District Peace Committees in central, western and Karamoja regions chaired by Resident District Commissioners (also chairpersons of Security Committees), of which 30% are women. Five (5) peace committees were established in Maliba, and 75 peace committee members (Female and Male) trained on Resolution 1325, the NAP III, counties in Maliba, Kistwamba, Bugoye, Kilembe and Karambi in Kasese district¹⁷.

During the period under review, due to increased awareness about women's empowerment, reforms were made in the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) structure. The UPDF structural reforms encourage that for every deployment into the Force, at least 10% representation is of qualified women. The UPDF has fully established a Directorate of Women Affairs headed by a female officer at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. It has been decentralised into the UPDF Human Resource Management to address GEWE issues among the combatants, allow deployment of women and ensure their professional growth. The UPDF has since promoted five (5) females to Generals. Additionally, the force has three female representatives elected into Parliament. The institutions play a crucial role in developing policies related to security.

Additionally, in 2022, the UPDF commenced the development of the UPDF Gender Policy for the Ministry of Defense and Veteran Affairs. The policy will serve as an accountability tool to mainstream gender equality into the UPDF structures and ensure that the Ministry personnel have sufficient skills and resources to support gender mainstreaming initiatives and meet the needs of all women within the force.

To promote discrimination and promote the rights of women in the forces, widows and orphans have been supported for income generation. In addition, pro-bono services are available for widows and families of deceased soldiers and veterans under the legal aid clinic.

Similar to the UPDF, the Uganda Police Force (UPF) has institutionalised gender into its system. Over the reporting period, the percentage of female officers in the UPF increased from 18% (2020) to 20% (2024), although it remained predominantly filled with males. Nonetheless, female police officer participation in leadership, decision-making, and peacekeeping missions increased during the period under review (see Fig XX).

Women Peacebuilding initiatives in the country

Although still outnumbered by their male counterparts, the government enhanced the technical expertise of women to enable their meaningful participation in peace processes. The Women Situation Room Uganda (WSR) mediated post-electoral conflicts among stakeholders in Uganda after the 2021 general elections, while Civil Society organizations carried out several initiatives to enhance women in peace-building processes. Civil Society organizations invested in peace-building and conflict resolution skills training for gender equality advocates engaging in formal and informal peace-building processes. These include women peacebuilders, mediators, and young women peace ambassadors, many of whom are linked to the district task forces on LAP on the WPS agenda. This has contributed to the increase in women's participation in the different peacebuilding platforms, such as the District Peace

¹⁷ CoACT Annual report, 2021.

Committees, enabling them to support the implementation of NAP, handle conflicts in their communities and influence the decisions of peace committees at the district/grassroots level. The trained women's groups also developed action plans to guide their advocacy on UNSCR 1325, managed conflict incidents and supported fellow women in politics. (Women International Peace Centre annual reports 2020-2022)

The Government of Uganda contributed three Military Experts on Mission (1 woman), 0 Formed Police Units, 19 Individual Police (6 Women), 3 Staff Officers (1 woman) and 625 troops (93 women)¹⁸. Although the number of women involved in peacekeeping remains lower than that of men, Figure 9 shows growth since 2020 but has remained stagnant over the last two years.

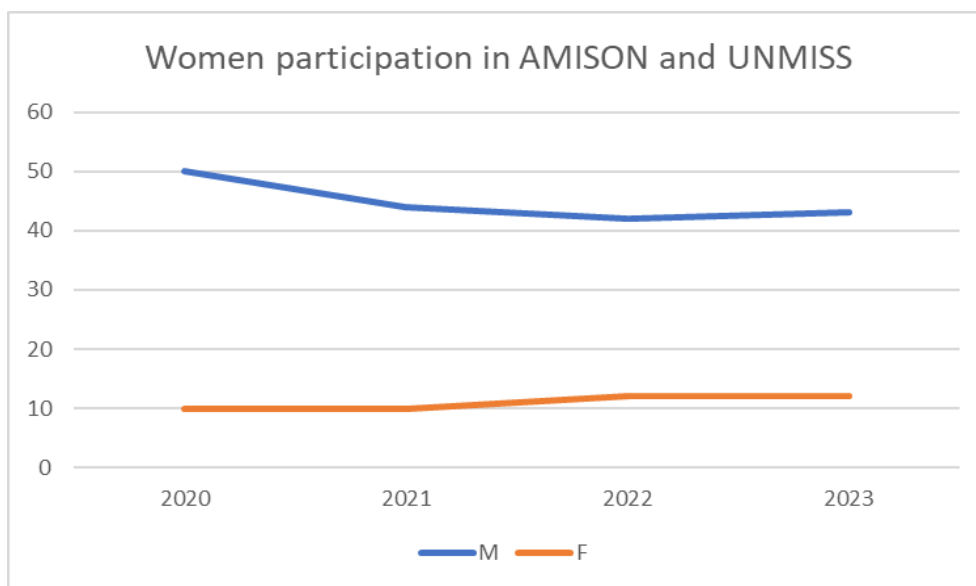


Figure 9: Women Police Officers in AMISON & UNMISS

Source: UPF Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations report 2023

In 2021, 1,464 youth and 1,366 women peace advocates were trained and deployed to monitor and observe elections in the 30 districts in Uganda (Women International Peace Centre Annual Report 2021). At a decentralised level, Youth Chapters were formed where 37 youth transformed into peace ambassadors, and six youth-led community-based organizations were launched to mobilize other youth and cascade peace-building efforts at the community level, resulting in reconciliation between families, among the youth and between community members, promoting peace before, during and after the 2021 elections. (Annual report 2021, CoACT).

Integration of gender in the humanitarian and crisis response

Uganda continues to face multiple humanitarian risks, including disease outbreaks, high numbers of refugees, climate shocks (floods, droughts), food insecurity and high rates of malnutrition. It also has a progressive refugee model: Open borders, non-camp policies, free integration of refugees, equal access to government-provided social services, a chance to work and land allocation for farming and shelter.

¹⁸ UPF Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations report (2023)

In 2022, GoU, in collaboration with IOM, continued implementing the project “Strengthening National and Local Disaster Preparedness and Response Capacities in Uganda, where District and Sub County Disaster Management Committees from districts were trained to effectively collect and manage data and use it to respond in case of disasters. (IOM report 2022). Through the Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) programme, 89% of targeted individuals trained in climate-smart agriculture, 1864 enrolled in the Voluntary Savings and Loan Scheme, and 54% of female refugees received mental and psychosocial services.

3.5.3 Actions to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response

Justice Sector and Women’s Participation in the Justice Institutions

The government enacted the **Administration of the Judiciary Act 2020**, which institutes a gender Equity committee among other committees within the Judiciary to advise on gender mainstreaming in the Judiciary and outreach programmes. Women’s participation in justice has increased over the past few years. There are 46 Justices and Judges, constituting 48.4% compared to 38 (44.7%) in 2021; Registrars constitute 56.8%; magistrates comprise 49.1% compared to 46.3% in 2021. In addition, the Judiciary has built a capacity of 148 mediators¹⁹.

Transforming the administration of justice in Uganda

The Government installed a Video Conferencing Facility in courts across the country backed by internet infrastructure improvement in court from 34% to 43%. The e-justice innovation enabled handling court proceedings without transferring prisoners and detainees to court. Victims and witnesses have been able to participate effectively in court proceedings remotely using audio-visual links, and they are protected as they give evidence without being intimidated by perpetrators. This has prevented re-victimization, especially of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) survivors, and reduced costs related to physical attendance in court.

The Electronic Criminal Records Management System also contributed to a 17.2% reduction in case backlog. E-Systems have promoted speedy trials and enhanced access to justice, and the case filing rate has increased by 2.8%²⁰. Lawyers are now filing e-submissions online, and cases are handled expeditiously. (UNDP Enhancing Access to Justice for women and girls through technology report 2023)

Embracing innovative approaches in legal aid service provision

Innovative legal aid service provision approaches were also embraced, such as a legal aid mobile call centre operated by the Legal Aid Service Providers Network (LASPNET) and a toll-free line at the Judiciary that provides legal information to lawyers and the public. These enabled women and girls, particularly victims of gender-based violence, to remotely access free legal aid services.

¹⁹ Judiciary report, 2022

²⁰ NRM Midterm Review Report, OP (2021-2026)

Combating trafficking in illicit drugs

In 2022, the GoU passed the Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Control Bill (2022). The bill provides for harsh penalties for a multitude of offences related to substance abuse, which is one of the leading causes of acts of SGBV. According to the UPF Annual Crime Report 2023, the number of reported trafficking cases in Narcotics has since reduced from 2797 in 2022 to 2113 in 2023.

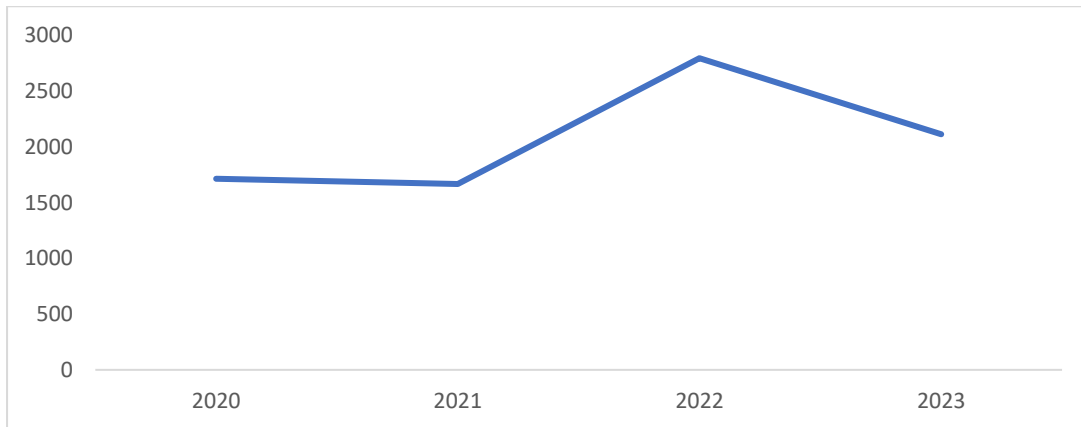


Figure 10: Trafficking in Narcotics

Source: UPF Annual Crime Report 2023

Combating trafficking in persons:

The Security agencies were on alert as Uganda is both a source and a destination for men, women, and children trafficked for forced labour and sexual exploitation. The Coordination Office to Prevent Trafficking in Persons (COPTIP) remained responsible for compiling law enforcement data. COPTIP continued to report “incidents” related to human trafficking, which included simple inquiries up to complete police investigations. As is still with the global trend, Uganda saw a surge in human trafficking. A total of 1,200 persons were trafficked during FY 2022/2023. Figure..... shows the trend in the vice from 2016 to 2022. This trend could be attributed to the full opening of the economy after the Covid-19 lockdown, the increase in public awareness and sensitization campaigns against trafficking in persons, and increased enforcement by police and prosecutors.

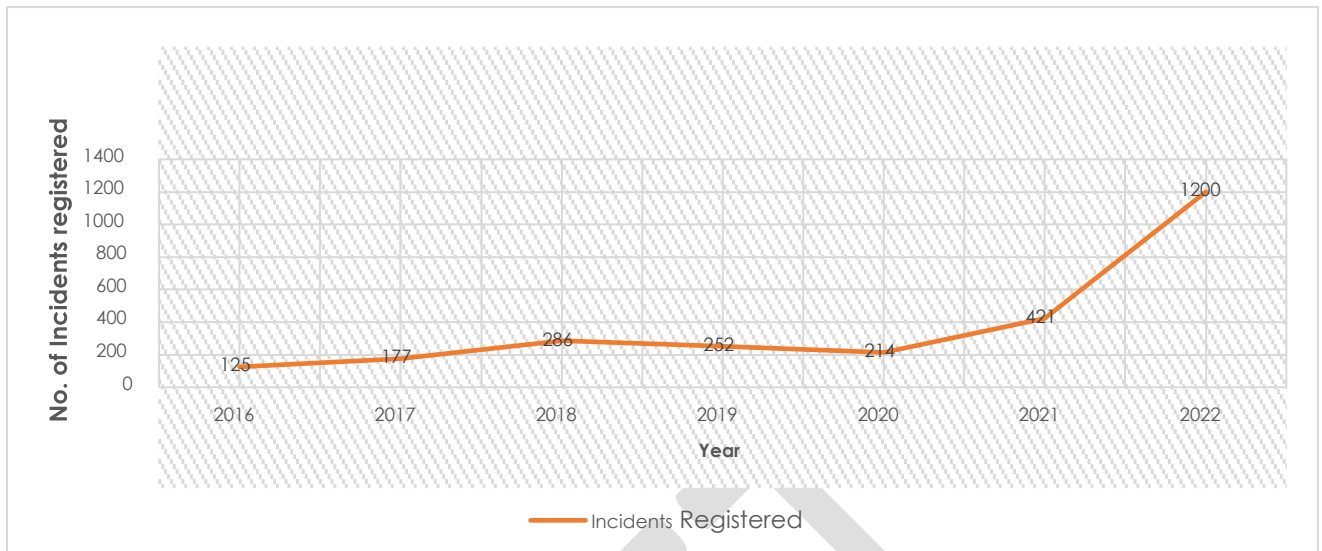


Figure 11: Trend of Incidents of trafficking in Persons from 2016-2022

Source: From NAPR, 2023

The External Security Organization (ESO) continued to monitor the exported labour force. A total of 777 suspected victims of trafficking persons were intercepted at border entry/exit points and returned. The entity supported 399 victims of trafficking with medication, feeding and welfare. In addition, ESO provided the necessary support in 20 cases under investigation. Six victims were safely brought home under ESO’s supervision and coordination. Regarding prosecutions, the ODPP registered 218 cases filed during this period. The Trafficking in Persons convictions registered were 34.

In partnership with NGOs and international organizations, the government trained police, border agents, immigration officials, and community elders on the anti-trafficking law, victim-centred investigation strategies, evidence gathering for successful prosecutions, and victim identification and referral procedures. Besides, the UPF developed a best practices guide for anti-trafficking investigations and an anti-trafficking training manual for police training academies; the UPF also partnered with ODPP to create SOPs for investigating and prosecuting trafficking cases. (US. Department of State, 2022 trafficking in person report, Uganda). This has helped in curbing down trafficking cases²¹(Figure 12)

Table xx: Trafficking in persons

²¹ UPF annual crime report (2023)



Figure 12: Trafficking in Persons(Children)

Source: UPF Annual Crime Report 2023

The Uganda Prisons Service guideline on Gender Mainstreaming for all senior prison officers (2014) remained in force. The UPS adheres to the 30% national policy on recruitment of females at the Cadet level. This has increased the number of women joining the Service. Deployment of females recognises pregnant women by giving them lighter duties, although maternity and paternity leave is offered to both in line with stipulated public service guidelines.

That notwithstanding, the Prison Service is still a dominantly male institution where matters related to females, such as the establishment of baby centres for female staff at work, are treated as ‘other’. At the senior level of the service, five (5) women, compared to 15 males, are Commissioners of Prison, while six, compared to 16 males, are at the Assistant Commissioner level. Seven (7) females, compared to 41 males, are Senior Superintendents of Prisons.

3.5.4 Actions to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child

Policy reforms measures

Government efforts to eliminate discrimination against the rights of a girl child continued in force and were supported by other reforms, including the National Strategy to End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy (2022/23- 2026-27) and the National Sexuality Education Framework (NSEF 2018).

National Strategy to End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy (2022/23- 2026-27)

The evaluation of the implementation of the First National Strategy to End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy (2014/15-2019/2020) showed that minimal success was registered, attributed mainly to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Second National Strategy to End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy 2022/23-2026/27 was formulated to address the challenges encountered during the implementation of the initial Strategy and further strengthen collaboration and multi-stakeholder engagement while improving child and adolescent well-being. The strategy envisions a society free of child marriage and teenage pregnancy and is seen as crucial in achieving national-level reforms and societal transformation. The MGLSD is coordinating the implementation of the strategy, which began in 2023, with countrywide dissemination and resource mobilization to support local governments in localizing the strategy through interventions that can best address the issues within the local context.

To curb the dropout of girls from school due to COVID-19 effects, the Ministry of Education and Sports published the “Revised Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Teenage Pregnancy in Schools”. The guidelines, among other things, directed all schools to prioritise the admission of pregnant and breastfeeding girls. The guidelines also provided directions to schools on how to tackle stigma, discrimination, and violence against learners who are pregnant or are parents.

The GoU also formulated the Employment Amendment Bill (2021). The Bill requires employers to institute measures to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace and prohibits harassment or violence against employees and abuse of human rights. Further, the Computer Misuse Amendment Bill (2022) restricts unauthorised access to information and data, sending information that promotes hate speech and malicious unsolicited information.

Coordinated National Campaign on Ending Defilement, Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy and Promote Positive Parenting

The National Campaign was launched in December 2021 by the Hon. First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Janet Kataaha Museveni, as one of the measures to address defilement, child marriage, and teenage pregnancy and promote positive parenting. The Theme of the Campaign is “*Protect the Girl, Save the Nation*”. The campaign seeks to mobilize the country to reduce cases of defilement, child marriages, and teenage pregnancies and to promote positive parenting. The anticipated goal is to reduce cases of defilement, child marriage and adolescent pregnancy while ensuring positive parenting.

The specific objectives of the campaign are to: i) Undertake a structured social dialogue with key stakeholders to create awareness about defilement, child marriage, teenage pregnancy and positive parenting and agree on sustainable solutions and ii) Direct the relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), and all Local Governments (LGs) to take the necessary action to address defilement, child marriage, teenage pregnancy and promote positive parenting in line with the law.

Initiatives to roll out the Campaign have been undertaken under the National Multi-Sectoral Coordination Committee on Adolescent Girls. The MOES chairs the Committee and has implemented a Work Plan (2022 to 2023) with activities to roll out the campaign with membership from MGLSD, among other MDAs, UN agencies, UNICEF, and UNFPA, to lead the development partners that support the campaign.

National Sexuality Education Framework (NSEF 2018)

The primary role of NSEF is to provide children and young people in formal education settings with adequate and appropriate information, values and skills on sexuality following the Country’s national, religious and cultural values.

Cultural leaders are providing leadership in their various institutions. An example of this strategic leadership is exemplified by the Campaign in the Buganda Kingdom championed by His Majesty the Kabaka, the UNAIDS Male Involvement Ambassador, who leads a crusade to encourage adolescents, men and women to test for HIV and AIDs.

Implementation of the AIDs Trust Fund as well as the HIV Mainstreaming Guidelines developed by UAC (and issued in FY 2018/19) that direct every MDA and Local Government to ensure that 0.1% of its planned recurrent budget/funds is allocated to HIV programming has enhanced interventions by public institutions.

Religious approaches

The religious institutions affiliated under the Inter-religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) implement programmes to empower adolescents and young people with knowledge and skills to negotiate issues relating to Sexuality, HIV and AIDS and education. Through their sermons, they advocate and work to influence policies and amplify the voice of the voiceless, including the girl child.

In 2024, the IRCU launched its first edition of the Interfaith Family Festival to intensify advocacy for family and parenting.

Cultural Approaches

Uganda is committed to eliminating all harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriages and female genital mutilation/cutting (SDG 5, target 5.3).

One of the measures employees took was to use a cultural approach through institutions of traditional leaders. In 2020, the Government launched the Ugandan Chapter of the Council of Traditional Leaders of Africa (COTLA-U). COTLA Africa is a Pan-African movement of progressive traditional leaders primarily established to promote gender equality, end child marriages, and end female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C) and other harmful practices in Africa by 2030. The primary focus of COTLA Africa is to preserve cultural practices, customs, and traditions while simultaneously transforming and eradicating all harmful practices, customs, and traditions, especially those that affect the human rights of girls and women.

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3.6 Environment Conservation, Protection and Rehabilitation

The critical areas of concern in BPfA under this cluster are:

Critical areas of concern:

- I. Human rights of women
- K. Women and the environment
- L. The girl child

3.6.1 Actions to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental, climate change biodiversity conservation and land degradation policies

The government committed to implementing SDG 6 on sustainable water management and sanitation for all, SDG 7 on access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable modern energy for all, SDG 9 (1) on resilient infrastructure, SDG 13 on combating climate change and its impact and SDG 15 on protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use and management of forests, and reversing land degradation. In this regard, the government developed gender-responsive laws and policies for environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation:

Legal form Measures

Strategies and policies developed in the Water and Environment sector included the following:

- i. Water and Sanitation Gender Strategy (2018 – 2022)
- ii. The Uganda National Climate Change Communication Strategy (UNCCCS) 2017 – 2021.
- iii. Clients Charter (2018 - 2022)
- iv. Uganda Energy Policy, 2023.
- v. The Environment and Natural Resources Sub-Sector Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (2016-2021)

Measures/Actions undertaken

Increasing access to Water and Sanitation: The government implemented a water supply and sanitation programme in 36 districts in 12 sub-regions, benefiting 217,950 persons. During the period under review, water distribution and supply in the country was 70%, of which 68% in rural areas and 71.6% in urban areas had access to clean and safe water services²². At the local level, 49,102 villages out of the 70,512 have access to at least one safe water source. The villages served increased by 22% from 63% to 76%, implying that the burden of fetching water among women and girls is progressively reducing.

Similarly, villages with piped water under the National Water and Sewerage Jurisdiction grew from 63% in 2021/22 to 65% in 2022/23. In 2023, the programme completed 22 water supply systems, 39 water-borne public toilets, two faecal sludge management and 9 Large Gravity Flow Schemes. This has increased access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation among vulnerable persons in

²² Midterm Review for the NRM Manifesto (2023)

rural areas and small towns. The programme provided employment opportunities during construction and economically empowered women and youths through support groups and skills development²³.

The country still faces challenges of sanitation. Eighty-three per cent of the households in the country use pit latrines, only three per cent use flush toilets, and 84% of households in rural areas do not possess hand washing facilities compared to 76% in urban areas, and there are hardly any regional variations.

However, with support from UNICEF, the Government constructed latrines and basic water facilities, which were sometimes solar-powered. Currently, 67.2% of the lower primary, 82.7% of the lower secondary, and 87% of the upper secondary have improved basic water facilities. Consequently, there was an increase in handwashing coverage in schools, which was 58% in 2020, with a pupil-to-stance ratio of 1:72, although the national standard required is 1:40.

Water harvesting and gender equality: The government promoted rainwater harvesting by reducing the cost of acquiring the necessary equipment, such as water tanks. There has been an increase in the uptake of rainwater harvesting across the country from 20,187 in FY 2020/21 to 20,367 in FY 2021/22. Women and girls are primarily responsible for water collection and often spend hours each day fetching water from distant sources. By implementing rainwater harvesting systems, families reduced the burden on women and girls, freeing up time for education, economic activities, and other pursuits.

During the reporting period, the sector capacity development division of the MWE, in collaboration with UNICEF, conducted field consultations to determine the key challenges to effective O&M of solar water systems in rural institutional facilities in the refugee hosting districts, prepared the operation and maintenance manual for institutional solar powered water systems (schools and health facilities) and conducted theoretical and practical training on the operation and repair of solar water pumping systems for forty (40) personnel (33 male and seven female) from various rural institutional facilities, as well as health facilities in West Nile region of Uganda.

The government implemented the “Enhancing Resilience of Communities to Climate Change through Catchment Based Integrated Management of Water and Related Resources in Uganda” (EURECCCA) Project. The initiative aimed to reduce forest degradation in Maziba Catchment while boosting community economic opportunities. A total of 279 community members (233 women and 46 men) from six community groups, a majority of women benefited.

With support from the African Development Bank, the Ministry has supported ten women and youth groups in establishing tree nurseries. This initiative aims to create employment opportunities, boost income, improve health and hygiene in homesteads, reduce fuel costs, and contribute to mitigation efforts for human-induced climate change.

The Multinational Lakes Edward and Albert Integrated Fisheries and Water Resources Management (LEAF II) Project was designed to, among others, ensure that Alternative Livelihoods are promoted for vulnerable communities within the Lakes Edward and Albert Basin. Through this project output:

- i. 2,256 people have been trained in business skills and alternative livelihoods (71% women; 2% PWDs & Youth)

²³ EOC Annual Report (2023)

- ii. Two hundred eighty-eight people had taken up alternative livelihoods in the districts of Ntoroko and Kitagwenda (58% women, 4% PWDs, 13% youth).
- iii. Following the training, 55 women and youth groups were established to benefit from start-up enterprises as incubators for alternative livelihoods and diversification of welfare. The start-up enterprises launched involve bar soap making, school board chalk making, baking cakes, tree nursery beds, and fish ponds.
- iv. Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) have been established by the Project in Ntoroko, Rukungiri and Pakwach. These village-level revolving funds enable members to save and borrow at low interest rates.

The Socioeconomic impact of the LEAF II Project enhanced women's economic empowerment and increased the space for participation in decision-making processes by women and people with disability (PWDs). The project ensured the inclusion of women in community-based catchment management organizations, catchment management committees, landing sites, and management committees, among others. Gender-specific action plans were integrated within the five developed catchment management plans. The project also supported training women, PWDs, and youth in various technical skills (leadership, financial literacy, improved drying system, cage fishing, alternative livelihoods, etc.). Gender inequality was, therefore, reduced through the project interventions.

Capacity building and strengthening the enabling environment. In 2021, Environment and Natural Resources - CSOs developed robust gender and youth guidelines. Content was gathered through ten consultative meetings attended by over 1,200 stakeholders (963 men and 237 women) at the national and regional levels. The guidelines identified key barriers to gender and youth engagement, including access and control of productive/economic assets and other natural resources, limiting knowledge, beliefs and perceptions of roles of women and youth in society, limited platforms for participation and decision making and constrained rights and opportunities in socio-economic development and natural resource use/management.

Capacity building targeting 2,100 youth and 750 women in northern Uganda districts of the country (Lira, Agago, Alebtong and Kapelebyong) underpinned the roles of local communities in management, enforcement, and sustainable utilisation of natural resources within the semi-arid catchment areas.

Gaps /Challenges

Despite the investments in water coverage, about 11 million people still do not have clean water; about 32% travel more than three kilometres to access safe and clean water and 19% access unsafe water from unprotected sources. There are disparities in access to water, with the crises affecting the rural people more, though urban poor populations spend more than 22% of their income on water purchases. The amount of time spent collecting water hinders women from participating in other economic ventures and girls from attending school. This calls for more investments to curtail water-related diseases and save women's time poverty.

Energy sector development for GEWE. The Energy Policy (2023) highlights the government's acknowledgement of the importance of access to clean, affordable, and reliable energy in redressing gender inequality and addressing the marginalization of persons with disabilities and youth. The on-grid connectivity to electricity covered 13 million households by December 2023, thus reducing the use of charcoal for fuel from 85% to 80%²⁴. Indeed, the Government developed her Energy Transition Plan (ETP) (2023) to ensure universal access to clean cooking in Uganda, reduce approximately 50,000

²⁴ NRM Midterm review of the Manifesto

premature deaths from indoor air pollution per year by 2030, and save households two hours per day in collecting firewood with the greatest benefits accruing to women and children.²⁵

3.6.2 Actions to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction and building environmental and climate resilience

During the reporting period, the country experienced climate change disasters such as dry spells, floods and landslides. This affected livelihoods and homesteads, including farming, especially in the western and eastern regions of the country. The major causes of natural disasters were floods, landslides, and lightning. The disaster-prone areas included Mt. Elgon (Bududa) and Mt. Rwenzori (Kasese).

To address the various externalities, the following actions were undertaken;

The Cabinet approved the National Disaster Risk Management Plan, which will inform the preparation of the National Disaster Preparedness and Management Bill.

Community mobilisation and capacity building by government and Civil Society Organisations were undertaken. For example, capacity building by *the Climate Change Department, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on gender mainstreaming gender in* understanding climate change, weather, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and gender was conducted in the Central region, with more women attending the local government level.

Setbacks and reversals in the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women.

Human mortality and missing persons were directly attributed to water and environment-related disasters per 100,000 population. During the FY 2021/22, mortality (death) related to natural disasters was 1,200.[U1] This translates to about three persons per 100,000 population. This mortality rate was higher than that in the FY 2020/21, where 26 persons died. This translated into a mortality rate of 0.06 persons per 100,000 population.

The national/ global crises that impacted our work were the COVID-19 outbreak, which made it difficult for activities to be implemented, and climate change, which caused unpredictable rainfall and prolonged dry spells.

Gaps and Challenges

The influx of refugees who settle in forest reserves and wetlands is a major threat to conservation. Forest reserves and wetlands are being degraded by refugees who target them because they are under government custody. Once settled, refugees convert forests and wetlands to farmland and cut down trees for timber and wood. [U2]

²⁵ | Uganda Energy Transition Plan (2023), International Energy Agency (IEA)

SECTION FOUR: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

4.1 National Strategy / Action Plan for Gender Equality

The government reviewed the Uganda Gender Policy, which has been the overarching framework for gender equality and the empowerment of women since 2007. This policy was reviewed based on an analytical study, the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) in 2022, which involved extensive consultations with stakeholders at various levels.

The draft Uganda Gender Policy (UGP) 2024 seeks to reaffirm the Government's commitment to transforming Uganda into a modern and prosperous society with gender equality at the centre of this aspiration. The overall goal of the revised UGP is to promote gender equality in the social and cultural construct of roles, responsibilities, attributes, opportunities, privileges, status, access to and control over resources and benefits for women and men, boys and girls.

The Gender Policy brings on board new emerging issues such as rising poverty levels, climate change, economic crisis, COVID-19 pandemic with its effects and a resurgence of conflicts, widening inequalities and inequities in key service areas; and aligning the Policy to the current legal and policy frameworks at international, regional and national levels, for instance, the SDGs, Vision 2040 and NDPII priorities.

A Costed Policy Implementation Action Plan (2023/24-2026/7) has also been developed with priority interventions by stakeholders to guide the operationalization of the new Policy within the medium term.

4.2 Gender-responsive Budgeting

The government of Uganda strengthened its commitment to realize SDG5 (Indicator5c.1) by enforcing the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) 2015. The law provides for the fiscal and macroeconomic management of the country. It legitimised gender and equity budgeting, which the Government adopted in 2003. The PFMA mandates all Sectors, MDAs and Local Governments to plan and budget in a gender and equity-responsive manner upon which a certificate of compliance is issued. The Minister of Finance Planning and Economic Development issues the Certificate in consultation with the Equal Opportunities Commission.

The GEB process is supported by several tools and resource materials developed to help technical staff in MDAs and LGs comply with the provisions of the PFMA. These include:

Guidelines for addressing gender and equity issues in the Budget Framework Paper (BFP). The Guidelines are integrated into the Budget Call Circular and overall Programme Working Group Guidelines issued every Financial Year.

Handbooks for Implementing NDPIII Gender and Equity Commitments by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, 2022. The Handbooks are available on the MFPED website. The Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit (BAMU) under the MFPED trained NDP III

programme coordinators to utilise the handbooks. The Unit has also developed a **Training Manual and a Curriculum for National GEB trainers**. (Obtain data from BMAU)

Gender and Equity Compacts, Assessment tools for National Budget Framework Paper to the National Development Plan III and the attendant PIAPs:- EOC updated and aligned the Compacts and the Gender and Equity Management Information System (GEMIS) to provide online assessment for compliance with gender and equity. In 2022, EOC worked with the GEB Task Force to review the tracking tool and assess its ability to be adopted as the monitoring tool in GEB field activities.

Other tools developed by EOC included **the Gender and Equity Budgeting Training Manual for Local Governments (LGs) and the Gender and Equity Guidelines for Political Actors in Local Governments**. The EOC trained district-and Sub-county-level (Source MTR on GEWE in NDPIII 2023)

These efforts have resulted in the improved appreciation of gender and equity budgeting by the sectors, and the overall national compliance of Budget Framework Papers to Gender and Equity requirements has improved. According to EOC, all these initiatives resulted in a 65.9% improvement in the National and Programme BFPs assessment in FY 2021/2022. (MTR GEWE, 2023)

The overall compliance of the ministerial policy statements to gender and equity requirements has improved over the review period from 66% to 67% and from 45.75% to 54% as presented in section 2.2

4.3 Mechanisms for Stakeholders participation in implementation and monitoring of BDP

The government has established the required institutional framework to implement the national, regional and international commitments on GEWE. In accordance with the National Machinery's mandate to spearhead and coordinate gender equality and women's empowerment, several mechanisms have been established to strengthen stakeholder participation, implementation and monitoring of the Country's obligations under the BDPfA, which has been domesticated in the national policy and legal frameworks. The mechanisms are presented in Section 3.4.4.

4.4 Stakeholder participation in the preparation of this report

The Report has been prepared after extensive consultations with stakeholders representing Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Local Governments, Parliament, Private Sector, Faith Based and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs including Women's Rights Organizations (WRO) and Grassroots Organizations. Agencies and Institutions of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and institutions of Cultural and Traditional Leaders also participated in the consultative process.

The methodology applied to compile the report has also involved oversight guidance by the Technical Working Group (TWG) constituted under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) and the National Committee on Uganda's International Reporting Obligations under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

4.5 National Action plan on implementation of CEDAW Recommendations

Since the ratification of CEDAW in 1985, the Government of Uganda has demonstrated commitment to the provisions of the Convention. It continues to honour that commitment by fulfilling the requirement to periodically report to the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The government's most recent report is the Combined 8th and 9th Periodic Reports on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UN CEDAW), which was presented to the CEDAW Committee on 11 February 2022.

The CEDAW Committee considered the Report and issued the "Concluding Observations and Recommendations" and the Report on Issues and Questions concerning the Combined 8th and 9th Periodic Reports of Uganda.

Progress will be reported in line with and in response to the concerns and recommendations contained in the CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations on Uganda's Combined 8th and 9th Periodic Report.

In line with the guidelines for periodic reporting by State Parties on implementing the Convention by State Parties, Uganda is expected to submit a report in 2025. The MGLSD has embarked on the preparation of the Government's 10th (Tenth) Report for the period of 2022–2025.

SECTION FIVE: DATA AND STATISTICS

5.1 Key Areas of Progress

Uganda Bureau of Statistics continued in force under its Statistics Act and supporting policy frameworks as the data steward and coordinator of the National Statistical System (NSS), continued to produce official statistics through surveys and censuses, including UDHS (2022) and ongoing 2024 National Population and Housing Census. Other ministries, departments, and agencies also produced data from administrative records to inform decision-making and report development progress and service delivery. Uganda is well positioned to provide data for reporting on approximately 122 SDG indicators and 52 gender-specific national priority gender equality indicators.

The UBOS is committed to improve the quality, relevance, and use of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) data and statistics in Uganda by strengthening the capacity of the National Statistical System to produce, disseminate, and utilize data and statistics. In collaboration with 12 UN agencies, UBOS developed the Joint Programme for Data and Statistics 2023-2025 in Uganda. This programme fully integrates gender equality perspectives in Uganda statistics.

The Economic Policy Research Centre mined existing data from surveys undertaken by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics to produce policy papers on GEWE. For example, the Policy Brief on Gender, Unpaid Care Work in Uganda: Evidence from the 2017-18 Time Use Survey examined how time use, role allocation and perceptions about work vary by gender in Uganda

The Bureau, in collaboration with the SDG indicator compilers and the SDG National Technical Working Group in 2022, provided technical statistical opinion on the SDG indicators and localised and produced the SDG metadata handbook²⁶.

The UBOS has unilaterally or in partnership with other government agencies undertaken censuses and surveys that generated disaggregated data. The litmus to this action is evident in national surveys, including;

- i. Uganda National Household Survey (2019/20);
- ii. Uganda National Panel Survey (2019/20);
- iii. National Survey on Violence Against Women and Girls (NSVAWG, 2021),
- iv. National Service Delivery Survey (2021)
- v. Uganda Annual Agricultural Survey (2021).
- vi. Uganda Demographic Health Survey (UDHS, 2022
- vii. National Population and Housing Census (2024(ongoing)

Embarked on the review, harmonization and design of a uniform tool for the compilation of Local Government Administrative Data for Trade, Investment and Local Economic Development (TILED). Most data required for monitoring and reporting on SDGs is from administrative sources, more so, service delivery occurs at the decentralised level.

The **Citizen Generated Data Toolkit** was developed to guide Civil Society Organisations and the Private Sector to collect quality data for reporting on SDG 5 and other gender related indicators (2021). This will provide opportunities for collaboration and capacity building between the different

²⁶ Metadata Handbook for Sustainable Development Goals, 2022.

agencies to produce more granular data that can contribute to census and survey data in informing policy and decision-making.

5.2 National priorities for strengthening national Statistics
Uganda is implementing its third Plan for National Statistical Development (nee NSDS) (PNSD III - 2020/21-2024/25). Broadly, the PNSD III priorities are;

- i. Strengthened coordination, cooperation and partnerships in the NSS
- ii. Increased statistical capacity in the NSS
- iii. Strengthened systems for data production and development in the NSS.
- iv. Enhanced dissemination, uptake and use of statistics.

The Plan also emphasises gender responsiveness, the Human Rights Based Approaches for Development Data (HRBAD) and other cross-cutting issues, namely, environment and climatic change (green growth), HIV/AIDS, family, and refugees to increase inclusivity in all national data production programmes. The same issue is underpinned by different sectors, local governments, and a few civil society organisations that have developed statistics plans.

Uganda Bureau of Statistics also developed the Citizen Generated Toolkit to harness data collected by Civil Society Organisations to complement data from traditional sources to inform policy and decision-making. The tool was publicised, and training was provided to key GEWE implementing partners (2023) for reference. Currently, the Civil Society for Budget Advisory Group (CSBAG), with support from UN Agencies, is coordinating ten CSOs towards producing GEWE Citizen Generated Data hinged on the Toolkit for storage in a central repository called the Gender Research and Data Hub (GERDH).

5.2 Prioritised gender-specific indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs

Uganda has broadly prioritised gender-specific indicators under the following topical areas for monitoring progress on the SDGs;

- i. Gender equality
- ii. Women's Economic Empowerment
- iii. Access to education
- iv. Healthcare for women and girls
- v. Gender-Based Violence
- vi. Economic Participation, and
- vii. Political participation and Representation.

The notion of Leaving No One Behind is emphasised across all the above areas through the production of disaggregated data and mainstreamed during questionnaire design, collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting.

With support from Development Partners, the government implemented initiatives to streamline the compilation of gender-specific indicators. For example, the initiative on strengthening mechanisms for the collection of Gender Based Violence (GBV) data in the Justice, Law and Order Sector (JLOS) (2020) was implemented to define the systematic collection of data to inform relevant GBV priority indicators.

The UBOS will conduct its next Time-Use Survey and integrate subjects like GBV prevalence, rates, and classification in the surveys, planned after the 2024 Population and Housing Census (NPHC, 2024). The NPHC (2024) will increase the availability of data about women and girls to be analysed under key topics, including gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, and disability.

Consequently, the government tripled the number of gender-specific SDG indicators it can report on from 11/54 in 2018 to 32/54 in 2023. The evidence further shows that 21 out of the 23 SDG 16 indicators can be reported on with more consistent regularity of data collection (2020)²⁷.

5.4 Data disaggregation routinely collected in major national surveys

The notion of data disaggregation in national surveys is consistent with the SDG Global Indicator Framework,²⁸ which recommends mainstreaming the concerns of those left behind in data production²⁹. The government has underpinned the need for all datasets to be disaggregated by location, sex, age, income status, marital status, education level, ethnicity, and disability. Efforts to support the Ministry of Education and Sports to produce data to monitor gender parity annually were ongoing between the two agencies.

Challenges

Some of the documented challenges affecting gender statistics production and use to inform policy and decision-making in the country include;

- i. **Inadequate gender-disaggregated statistics** to inform ex-post impact evaluations of all essential government programmes.
- ii. **Inadequate gender analytical skills:** while various trainings have been conducted targeting government and civil society organisations, the gender lens answering to the ‘so what’ is still limited.
- iii. **Incomparable data:** The information from the different sources is not comparable, and no single institution can provide a comprehensive national picture of the status of GBV in the country.
- iv. **Governance Capacity gaps:** Significant capacity gaps and coordination challenges in most public institutions hinder the production of high-quality data. The state institutions that produce administrative data on GBV need technical and methodological assistance in the medium term.
- v. **Limited information on gendered travel patterns, mobility,** and gender mainstreaming into transport policy, planning and practice.

SECTION SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The government of Uganda has continued on a steady path of progress toward achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. There are supportive legal and policy frameworks and the programmes and interventions implemented to translate the laws and policies into realities for communities, households and individuals. Evidence from surveys and research demonstrates that increased investments have brought some achievements for GEWE. Some of these include women’s ownership of productive resources such as land, access to credit and accumulation of capabilities

²⁸ Global Indicator Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ([A/RES/71/313](#)) Annex; <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>

²⁹ United Nations - ECOSOC, 2017a. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/Global%20Indicator%20Framework%20after%202020%20review_Eng.pdf

through education. However, persistent harmful social norms continue to perpetuate gender inequality in the country.

Uganda's development frameworks are well aligned with the regional and global development agenda, namely the SDGs, the BPFPA, CEDAW, the Maputo Protocol, the AU Agenda 2023, and other normative frameworks. This reflects the political will to ensure equitable social-economic transformation that prioritizes women's meaningful participation and benefit from the development process.

The biggest challenge to implementing measures to achieve GEWE is the limited human and financial resources, which in turn limit (constrain) the outreach of Programmes and interventions regarding the number of beneficiaries (communities and individuals) and impact. The various crises (COVID-19 and other epidemics, as well as economic and climate change) experienced since 2020 have further constrained the efforts towards adequate financing for GEWE. This situation affects progress towards meaningful transformation since social norms are deeply entrenched, and it takes long to achieve change for positive norms. Funding is limited, yet social norm change requires comprehensive and consistent engagement.

The next five years mark the last leg towards the end of the 2030 Agenda. The Government shall, therefore, strive to prioritise investments that will accelerate progress towards gender equality and empower all women and girls. The thrust of the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV) and the positive economic growth prospects place the country at a high level for accelerated progress over the next five years up to 2030. Emphasis shall be on tackling socio-norms perpetuating gender inequalities alongside capacitating households to increase incomes and create jobs and wealth.

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