CSO POSITION PAPER ON THE HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND MINDSET CHANGE PROGRAMMES IN RESPONSE THE MINISTERIAL POLICY STATEMENTS FOR FY 2023/24

PRESENTED TO THE COMMITTEE ON GENDER, LABOUR & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, 14TH April 2023

BACKGROUND

UDN is a national policy advocacy organization that works towards prudent management of public debt and other resources for equitable and sustainable development in Uganda. Formed in 1996- initially for Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative campaign, later to monitoring use of debt relief & other resources in service delivery, plus enabling citizens' participation for accountable governance of public resources in Uganda.

UDN works at national level with partnerships and collaborations at sub-national, regional and international levels especially working with policy makers and communities to influence policy for the benefit of the poor and marginalized people. At sub-national (District) levels, UDN currently has structures /institutional working collaborations in 25 districts in all regions across the country.

With support from UNICEF, Uganda Debt Network is implementing a project on ***'Improving Synergies between Social Protection and Public Finance Management'*** that aims at Improving Synergies between Social Protection and Public Finance Management in line with the national development priorities towards enhanced capacity of vulnerable population to meet basic needs, poverty reduction, building resilience and access opportunities for sustainable income resources. In line with the project objectives, UDN together with her partner CSOs requested this engagement with the Parliamentary Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) to share their position on the MoGLSD Ministerial Policy Statement for the FY 2023/2024.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is hinged on the "Leave No One Behind" global campaign which is the central transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is informed by Uganda's NDP III, Ministry/Agency Strategic Objectives, enabling policy frameworks as well as international commitments that Uganda has made. The paper highlights salient issues in the Ministerial Policy statements in light of social protection and proposes possible recommendations.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The government of Uganda has been steadfast in ameliorating the living conditions and overall quality of life of the people of Uganda. Steady progress has been demonstrated with the establishment of social safety net programs to safeguard Ugandans of various age groups from the impact of economic shocks, natural disasters and other imbalances created by history.

Programs including SAGE, Disability grant, the labor-intensive public works are paramount in reducing the social economic gap of the vulnerable Ugandans.

We commend Government that within FY 2022/23, capacity building on gender and equity budgeting as well as gender based violence mainstreaming in work plans and budgets was undertaken for 276 political leaders in 23 local governments; Basic rights of 1,275 children in conflict with the law promoted through the provision of food and non-food items to nine ministry institutions; 962 persons with disabilities groups supported under the Special Grant for Persons with Disabilities placing the total number of beneficiaries under the program at 7,377 persons; 306,556 older persons benefited under the senior citizens grant.

The MLGSD contributes towards the Human Capital Development; Administration of Justice as well as Community Mobilisation and Mindset Change programmes of the NDPIII. The CSO issues of concern arise from Human Capital Development and Community Mobilisation and Mindset Change programmes.

1. HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

KEY CSO ISSUES

1.1 Disability Grant Budget cuts

The Disability grant has reduced from 16.6 billion in FY2022/2023 to 3.3 billion in FY2023/2024. This is a gross budget cut which is contrary to the Ministry's strategic objective of enhancing income security and resilience for persons with disabilities to respond to the social economic shocks in their life cycles.

The World Social Protection Report 2020–22 by the ILO noted that persons with severe disabilities in Uganda are not protected by social protection systems including floors.

On 17th February 2023, at the Global Disability Sumit in Norway under the thematic area of inclusive employment and livelihoods, Government committed to increase contributions and advocate for increase in partner contributions to resource the National Special Grant for empowerment of Persons with Disabilities by 30% by 2024[1]. With the budget cut on Disability grant from 16.6bn to 3.3. Bn, it is not practical for Uganda to implement this commitment.

According to a MGLSD report on the Situational analysis of Persons with Disabilities in Uganda (2020)[2], persons who live in poverty are more likely to have a disability, while those with a disability are much more likely to be living in poverty. The report highlights that half of Ugandans in households with persons with disabilities are living in extreme poverty. This, coupled with the increasing number of persons with disabilities in Uganda due to accidents inter alia, pushes them into poverty thus the need for social economic support. The Disability grant is the answer.

Recommendation: The budget cut on disability grant be reinstated.

[1]https://mglsd.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Disability-Summit-commitments-2022.pdf accessed on 23rd of March 2023

[2] https://www.developmentpathways.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Webready-DP1294-ESP-Disability-Uganda-Sept-2020.pdf Accessed on 23rd of March 2023

1.2 The Social Registry

The Government of Uganda operationalized a National Single Registry (NSR) in 2021 to coordinate social protection programmes and enhance national-level monitoring. The NSR integrates information from various national social protection systems capturing all beneficiary information. A major constraint of this registry was its lack of coordination across various Management Information Systems of different social protection programmes. Moreover, the registry is not consistently updated.

In the wake of the pandemic, the need for a social registry was more apparent due to the lack of a reliable database to identify the most vulnerable groups. The distinction between the NSR and the proposed Social Registry is that the latter would be a comprehensive database that provides information on individual and household level data on socio-economic conditions to potential beneficiaries.

In addition, the Auditor General observed in his report (December 2022) on Government's preparedness to implement the PDM that by December 2022, 4 months after the expected completion date for data collection, only 41% of the expected data had been collected. He noted that UBOS faced challenges accessing data collected by the Local Governments, which limited the initial data editing and validation checks. This delayed retrieval, validation, cleaning and transformation of raw data into final datasets for use under the Financial Inclusion Pillar. This data should have been the basis upon which the population would be profiled to identify who qualifies as a beneficiary for the intervention.

We recognize that effective social protection schemes are underpinned by Management Information Systems (MIS), and therefore affirm the need for an all-encompassing social registry. This would provide a 'get way' for potential inclusion of the intended population into social programs as well as monitor for proper planning and interventions in case of shocks.

Recommendation: We implore Parliament to emphasize the need for establishment of a SR to MGLSD as well as the importance of consistently updating the same.

1.3 Alignment of Budget priorities to Policy Commitments

Uganda's Vision 2040 identifies human capital as a fundamental that has to be strengthened for a country's development. One of the key development strategies under the NDPIII is to increase access to social protection. It recognizes several social protection challenges and stipulates interventions to address them in order to achieve outcomes under the Human Capital Development (HCD) programme.

Table 4.1: NDP III Key Development Results

No.	Expected key targets		Baseline FY2017/18	NDP II target	NDP III target	Vision 2040 Target
34	Social Protection Coverage (%)	Health insurance 2% to 25%	2	6	25	70
		Social security	2		25	70
		Social assistance to vulnerable groups (PWDs, OVCs, elderly, poor) (%)			50	
35	Extent of hunger in the population (%)		40		20	5
36	Stunted children U5 (%)		29	25	20	0

Source: NDPIII

Article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Article 5 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) require governments to invest "the maximum extent of available resources to realize the wellbeing of children." Emphasis is placed on expenditures for child development, health, education and social protection. By signing and agreeing to the 'Social Policy Framework for Africa (2008)' the government committed to set aside 4.5 per cent of GDP for social protection. Currently Uganda spends only 0.7% of its GDP on social protection[3].

1.4 Food and non-food items for children and youth institutions

The budget for this intervention was cut by up to 80% (from UGX641M in FY2022/23 to UGX13M in FY2023/24[4]. Limiting provision of food and non-food items to children and youth in MoGLSD-run institutions excludes a large proportion of vulnerable children from social care programmes. While the allocated amount is barely sufficient to support the MoGLSD-run institutions, there is need to broaden the current scope to cover more vulnerable children including children in schools. In 2009, the cabinet directed that funding be provided for withdrawal, rehabilitation and settlement of street children who make up a proportion of vulnerable populations. This funding has not been provided despite the growing numbers and increasing vulnerability of children on the street.

Reducing the budget towards YLP and maintaining substantially low allocations for child protection services slows down the country's progress towards attaining this goal.

This by implication means the ministry cannot run these institutions and may be forced to close them (eg the news story on NTV Uganda 10th April 2023 on children and youth starving in Gulu remand home)[5]. These include Remand homes, Rehabilitation Centers, Reception Centers and youth skills centres through provision of food and non-food items to support their operationalization.

Recommendation: The budget cut be reinstated.

[4] *MoGLSD Ministerial Policy Statement for the FY 2023/2024, Key Unfunded priorities, P.113.*

[5] https://www.google.com/search?q=karamoja+children+starve+in+Gulu+remand+home&source=lmns&bih=600&biw=1366&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwio-N2uoKb-AhXqricCHUftDvkQ_AUoAHoECAEQAA#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:278657f7,vid:QjBHpIGfU0I

2. COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND MINDSET CHANGE PROGRAMME

Community Mobilization and Mindset Programme aims at empowering families, communities and citizens to embrace national values and actively participate in sustainable development. Key expected results include: increased participation of families, communities and citizens in development initiatives; enhanced media coverage of national programmes; increased household savings; increased social cohesion and civic competence; and better uptake and/or utilization of public services (education, health, child protection etc.) at the community and district level.

2.1 No funding allocated towards Community Mobilisation and Mindset Change (5th Pillar of the PDM).

The Auditor General in his report (December 2022) on Government's preparedness to implement the PDM highlighted lack of adequate funding as a hindrance to operationalization of functional working groups under agricultural[6] and social services pillars.

While the MGLSD requires UGX 5bn in the FY 2023/24 for mobilization of communities to embrace PDM, no funds were allocated for this intervention[7]. Moreover, NDP III recognizes Community mobilization for mind-set change towards development can have far reaching and 'explosive' outcomes on the lives of the people and society. Lack of funding for this pillar, which is the precursor for the rest of the PDM pillars exposes PDM funds to misuse by the programme beneficiaries.

Recommendation: Reinstate funding for the 5th pillar of the PDM to avoid anticipated wastage of the project resources since it's the precursor for the success of the rest of the six pillars of PDM.

2.2 No Funding allocated towards Social Sector Development Grant in FY 2023/24

For effective mobilization of communities, the MGLSD and other Government Entities are working towards enhancing effective mobilization of families, communities and citizens for national development and achieving strengthened` institutional capacity of central, local government and non-state actors. This can be achieved by full operationalization of the Community based Services at Local Government level.

CSOs are concerned that Social Development Grant (meant to support the coordination of Community based services in the Districts) has not been allocated funds in FY 2023/24 against a required annual budget of shs. 10 bn[8]. This implies that Community Based structures in the districts and sub-counties will not be operational.

Recommendation: Government should reinstate Social Sector Development Grant to enable functionality of Community Based structures in Districts and Sub- Counties. These funds can be generated from fast tracking the process of Rationalizing Government Entities.

For instance, Central government recruitment commissions, like the Education and Health Service Commissions could be merged into one Programme Commission. This will save

[6] production, Storage, Processing and marketing

[7] *MoGLSD Ministerial Policy Statement for the FY 2023/2024, Key Unfunded priorities, P.117.*

[8] MGLSD MPS 2023/24 Page 117

government substantial amount of funds incurred in operational costs towards actual recruitment and service delivery. For example, the HSC has spent over shs. 2bn in rent for the Commission over the last five years. Alternatively, electronic recruitments or subcontracting of independent firms to recruit teachers and health workers may reduce operational costs and enhance timely recruitments[9].

2.3 Persistent GBV Cases in spite of Government Interventions

Government of Uganda has made strides to address GBV by putting in place a strong legislative environment with numerous strong domestic policies and ratification of International treaties such as; Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2010; The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), Domestic Violence Regulations 2011, the Domestic Violence Act, 2010 inter alia.

During Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2016, the government of Uganda accepted over 200 recommendations, including dealing with sexual and gender-based violence[10]. However, during Uganda's third cycle of the UPR process in 2022, Cabo Verde noted that sexual and gender-based violence and disparities in economic opportunities persisted[11].

Furthermore, Uganda's 2022 Police annual crime report revealed that domestic violence cases reported increased from 17,533 in 2021 to 17, 699 in 2022 and UNFPA brief[12] revealed that the number of injuries due to GBV recorded increased by 11.5% from 52,836 in 2019 to 58,902 injuries in 2020. As such, it is estimated that GBV incidents cost the Ugandan economy about UGX 77 billion with UGX 18.3 billion being spent on healthcare and UGX 19.5 billion for police services annually. Moreover, 18 districts had over 100% increase in GBV cases from 2019 to 2020 (e.g Koboko -836.3%, Kayunga-538.9% and Kapchorwa-538.5%).

CSOs are concerned that interventions in the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development Ministerial Policy Statement for FY 2023/24 do not indicate government efforts to continue with interventions towards elimination of GBV.

Recommendation: Parliament should task the MoFPED to provide resources for Community Based Services department in Local Governments to progressively working with cultural, religious leaders in mobilization of communities towards mindset change on practicing negative cultural behaviors such as child sacrifice, FGM, gender-based violence (GBV).

9 Discussion paper on Trends and Status of Public Service Delivery in Uganda by BMAU (November 2021)
10 https://www.ictj.org/node/27314
11 https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/ug-index
12 Gender Based Violence and Harmful practices, Uganda – 2021.

Contributions to this position paper was coordinated by the following civil society Organizations

For more information, please contact:
Uganda Debt Network
Plot 24, P.O.Box 6552 Kampala Road, Kampala
https://www.udn.or.ug/. Email: info@udn.or.ug
Tel: (+256) 414 533840/ (+256) 414 534856
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