

Organised by:



ACFODE



ANNA MAMA
WA ACAA



Institute for Social Transformation



Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group

WOMEN'S DEMOCRACY NETWORK
Uganda Chapter



In Commemoration of International Women's Day

"RETIRE THE HOE"

WOMEN DEMAND ECONOMIC INCLUSION AND ACCESS TO RESOURCES AS UGANDA MOVES TO MIDDLE INCOME STATUS

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY PRESS STATEMENT

6TH MARCH 2017, UGANDA MUSEUM

The women's movement in Uganda joins country women and men and the rest of the world to commemorate International Women's Day (IWD) 2017. Under the leadership of Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), women and human rights organizations have organized in a concerted effort to engage, reflect, and collectively raise voices on the challenges that continue to impede women's economic empowerment and national development at large. The women's movement demands that persistent impediments to women's economic empowerment be urgently recognized and addressed. We collectively call upon the Government of Uganda to make investment choices, in fields such as agriculture, education, health, promotion of women's land and protection of their human rights that will enable women reach their full economic potential.

Marked every 8th March, the International Women's Day (IWD) brings together governments, charities, corporations, academic institutions and networks to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women while demanding for gender parity. The 2017 national theme "**Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work**" is adopted from the Commission on the Status of Women 61st Session (CSW61). It challenges society to recognize women's contribution to the economy and is a call to action to create a work world that is inclusive and conducive for both men and women.

The women's rallying cry "Retire the Hoe" reiterates the African Union call for African governments to mechanize agriculture and give women access to resources and information as a means to reduce their workload in the sector while improving food production. The hoe is a symbol of women's unappreciated economic-social burden and exclusion. Yet the most damage created by women's economic exclusion, is its effect on future generations and the creation of human capital.

Socio Economic Challenges Compounded

The landscape of women's economic exclusion is characterized by social, political and economic barriers to flourishing and achieving women's full potential.

- While poverty rates have dropped from 31.1% in 2006 to 19.7% in 2013, many women are still vulnerable and likely to slip back into poverty with studies showing that "for every three Ugandans who were lifted out of poverty, two fell back".
- 81% of the agricultural workforce is comprised of women, yet the women earn up to 50% less than their male counterparts in the same sector.
- Uganda has the highest school drop-out rate for females in East Africa. The percentage of boys who complete primary school is 53% while that of girls is 42% with economic factors are primarily to blame.

1 | Page

UWONET Membership: **Organizations:** FOWODE; ACFODE; FIDA-Uganda; CEDOVIP; SAP; SWGS; National Bahai Committee for the Advancement of Women; Send A Cow – Uganda; UMWA; UWT; Isis-WICCE; CDRN; WETSU; DWNRO; AUWMD; ECCA. **Individual Members:** Ms. Annette Tumwujukye; Ms. Debbie Kaddu Serwadda; Ms. Hope Kabuchu; Dr. Alice Kagoda; Ms. Judy Kamanyi; Dr. Mary Nabawwa Ssonko; Ms. Maude Mugisha; Ms. Veronica Namagembe; Hon. Sheila Kawamara-Mishambi.

Organised by:



In Commemoration of International Women's Day

- Teenage pregnancy is one of most frequent response given for why girls left school, in addition to early marriages yet the Ugandan Education System has double standards and discriminatorily does not provide for a girl who drops out in primary school to return especially for those who have suffered sexual exploitation
- Climate change and unpredictable weather patterns has worsened the situation of women who, because of their essential role in food production, are disproportionately affected.
- High population growth rate at 3.0% in 2014 stressed the water and sanitation services that already exist. 21% of Ugandans lack access to safe water and 87% do not have access to improved sanitation facilities. To access clean and affordable water women more often than men frequently have to walk up to two kilometers and queue for an hour or more.
- Women's unequal land rights affect their access to other resources and their economic, social and political status. In Uganda currently, only 27% of registered land is owned by women.
- The maternal mortality rates for Uganda has actually gone up from 435/100,000 live births to 438/100,000, this is worrying for women and the nation. If nothing is urgently done, Uganda not meet the SDG goal which aims at reducing maternal mortality to less than 70 per 100,000 live births.
- Failure to meet budgetary commitments such as the Abuja Declaration that calls for 15% budget allocation to the health sector and 5% to maternal health has implications to women's health, women's empowerment and the achievement of gender equality.
- Despite their fundamental role in society, Women Human Rights Defenders face obstacles and often even real psychological and physical violence in many countries, like in Uganda.
- Care work carried out in the home is usually unpaid and not reflected in national statistics or economic analyses, despite its centrality to our day-to-day wellbeing. It is perceived to be less valuable than paid work. In Uganda women spend up to 8 hours per day doing unpaid care work compared to men who spend up to 2 hours per day.
- In part because it is invisible in national statistics and less valued, local and national authorities generally fail to design social and economic policies that can reduce women's primary responsibility for unpaid care work.
- The lack of a minimum wage makes it difficult for women to negotiate for better pay and work conditions.
- In spite of clear legal provisions on maternity leave, women in employment who take time off to have children are not always guaranteed their jobs back. Some take less than the statutory 60 days leave and often return to work before they are ready to. These working conditions make it harder for women to exit poverty.

The women's movement emphasizes that a society's economic growth is stunted when women are excluded or not fully included in the economic system. People are always a country's most valuable resource. Countries that exclude women—half of their population—from participating in economic activities are tossing away half of their potential. In the words of Ephraim Kamuntu, Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, "If you have the majority of your population spending six hours of their day looking for water and carrying it in jerry cans on their heads like donkeys and after they spend three more hours again looking for firewood to cook food, you cannot expect development."

Women's Demands

2 | Page

UWONET Membership: **Organizations:** FOWODE; ACFODE; FIDA-Uganda; CEDOVIP; SAP; SWGS; National Bahai Committee for the Advancement of Women; Send A Cow – Uganda; UMWA; UWT; Isis-WICCE; CDRN; WETSU; DWNRO; AUWMD; ECCA. **Individual Members:** Ms. Annette Tumwujukye; Ms. Debbie Kaddu Serwadda; Ms. Hope Kabuchu; Dr. Alice Kagoda; Ms. Judy Kamanyi; Dr. Mary Nabachwa Ssonko; Ms. Maude Mugisha; Ms. Veronica Namagembe; Hon. Sheila Kawamara–Mishambi.

Organised by:



In Commemoration of International Women's Day

It is against this backdrop that women and human rights organizations call upon the Government of Uganda, development partners, civil society and citizens to reflect on the theme of the International Women's Day 2017 as women's economic inclusion is a critical issue in order to make a fair and prosperous Uganda. As a step toward making economic empowerment a reality for every woman, the women's movement demands:

1. Harness the demographic dividend by investing in young women and girls by developing, financing and implementing frameworks and mechanisms that give sufficient economic opportunities to young women through capacity building, access to affordable finance and entrepreneurship development;
2. Strengthen accountability mechanisms for women's economic empowerment by enforcing accountability mechanisms of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to systematically support women's economic empowerment and women's rights to and at work;
3. Repeal laws that criminalize and limit civic space for women's organizations and citizens organizing on labor rights and women's economic rights;
4. Recognize, reduce and redistribute women's burden of unpaid care and domestic work. By providing accessible, high-quality public services, women's responsibility for unpaid care work will be reduced, thereby reducing poverty and social exclusion and addressing the violation human rights to healthcare and education.
5. Support and accelerate women's right to own, access and use land, including collective and user rights to land and common property through amendments to the Succession Act and enacting the Marriage and Divorce Bill.
6. Ratify, domesticate and fully implement international and regional instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, ILO Convention 189 (2011) on domestic workers, and the Maputo Protocol;
7. Address the needs of women who experience multiple and intersecting forms of inequalities, discrimination and marginalization including women with disabilities, women caring for persons with disabilities, women living with HIV and AIDS, elderly persons, internally displaced and refugee women, to enhance their resilience through the provision of special needs public services.
8. Uganda Human Rights Commission and Equal Opportunities commission work with women's rights organizations to go on a nationwide awareness raising drive aimed at debunking stereotypes and challenging harmful cultural practices and social norms that keep women in poverty.

"Retire the Hoe" - We owe that to women and the next generation of Ugandan citizens.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY