



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

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



Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

AUGUST 2024





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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 celebrates the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Uganda will also commemorate thirty years of the promulgation of the progressive Constitution that accords women equal rights with men and outlaws 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 put in place frameworks and strategies for promoting the rights of women and girls. As a result, Uganda has made commendable progress in taking services nearer to women and girls. The Public Finance Management Act, 2015 mandates all Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) and Local Governments to allocate resources and implement actions to reduce gender inequalities. The improvements on resource allocation among MDAs and Local Governments have contributed to better service delivery. Majority of women and girls including those residing in rural areas have access to schools, health centres and clean water within walkable distances as well as friendly financial services.

I would like to thank H.E. The President of the Republic of Uganda for his good leadership that has made it possible to accelerate women's emancipation. I am 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 the 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 strategic 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 UN Women's leadership Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, Country Representative Uganda for the technical, financial support and guidance in the preparation of this report.

For God and My Country

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Ammoo'.

Amongi Betty Ongom (MP)
Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development.



Acknowledgements



The Republic of Uganda is committed to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA). 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 recognise the substantial contributions of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN) for financial and technical guidance, the Civil Society Organisations, National Gender technical working team for the several reviews and technical contributions in fine tuning the quality of the report.

I am grateful to all the stakeholders who participated in the generation and finalisation of this progress 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. D. Kibenge'. The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial 'A' and 'D'.

A. 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
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	Certificates of 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- Uganda Chapter
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 for 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	Systematic Land Adjudication and Certification
LPG	Liquid Petroleum Gas
LCs	Local Councils
MZOs	Ministerial Zonal Offices



MDAs	Ministries Departments and Agencies
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MFPED	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
MLHUD	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
MoWE	Ministry of Water and Environment
NAP	National Action Plan
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
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 Organisations
SASA	Start Awareness Support and Action
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 Bank
UNMHCP	Uganda National Minimum Health Care Package
UNRA	Uganda National Roads Authority

UPDF(s)	Uganda People's Defense Forces
UPF	Uganda Police Force
URBRA	Uganda Retirement Benefits Regulatory Authority
URA	Uganda Revenue Authority
UWEP	Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme
UWOPA	Uganda Women's Parliamentary Association
UWONET	Uganda Women's Network
UNHS	Uganda National Household Survey
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UN WOMEN	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
VSLAs	Village Savings and Loans Association
VAW	Violence Against Women
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WOUGNET	Women of Uganda Network
WDG	Women's Democracy Group
WSR	Women's Situation Room
WHO	WORLD Health Organisation



Structure and Content of the Report

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 Platform for Action (BPfA) since the compilation of the last national report in 2020.

The report was prepared based on the Guidance Note issued by UN Women to Member States. The analysis based on the guiding questions to assess the progress in implementing BPfA and ensuring close interlinkages with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Data from nationally representative surveys and programme administrative reports were used. Therefore, the structure of the report is consistent with the Global Guidance Note.

Section 1 presents the overview, highlighting the core elements of the country-level review process focusing on the legal, policy and planning frameworks as well as the significant reforms that guided the implementation of the BPfA. The section also presents the summary of the challenges, 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, the overarching achievements, challenges and setbacks, focusing on the past five years since the compilation of the last national review report. 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” are presented in this section. The section also presents new and emerging priorities for future action.

Section 3 gives a more detailed analysis of the measures taken to advance gender equality and progress for women and girls across the twelve critical areas of concern for the BPfA and the relevant SDGs during the last five years. For each critical area of concern, examples of the measures undertaken, achievements, and challenges encountered are discussed.

Section 4 provides an account of the national processes, mechanisms and tools for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women across the entire Government, the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing 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



Photo credit UN Women

This section highlights the core elements of the country's review process in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and the interlinkages as well as synergies of 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 actions to address obstacles hindering women and girls from attaining their full rights and gender equality as 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**” and recognise that gender inequality is a constraint to the social and economic transformation of the country. The Vision is consistent with international conventions and resolutions that promote equal opportunities and human rights for women and men. It recognises that mainstreaming gender, disability, and human rights is at the core of the country's planning processes. In addition, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Party Manifesto, 2021 -2026, underscores the importance of women, youth, older persons, and Persons with Disabilities inclusion in policy and resource allocation.

Efforts to translate policy commitments into actions through programming were captured under the Third National Development Plan

(NDP III) (2020/21- 2024/25). The Plan aims to “increase household incomes and improve the quality of life of Ugandans”. The Plan highlights reforms to promote gender equality and inclusion of vulnerable groups into all development strategies. For example, the Parish Development Model (PDM) focuses on improving the incomes of 39% of the households below the poverty line. The PDM provides ring-fenced financial allocations to women (30%), youth (30%), Persons with Disabilities and the Older persons getting 10% each.

In addition, the Government invested in strategic economic empowerment programmes at subsidised interest rates of 10% - 12%, targeting women, youth, and older persons, including the Presidential Initiative for Wealth Creation (*Emyooga*), Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs), Agriculture Credit Facility Fund (ACF) COVID-19 Recovery Fund, Joint Programme for Youth Livelihood and Women Entrepreneurship (YLP/UWEP), and the Special Enterprise Grant for Older Persons (SEGOP), among others. Social norms of fishing activities being a male domain have been challenged by women embracing the fishing activity as a potential source of income and coming out of poverty.

The Government increased investments towards health, education, safe water and appropriate energy infrastructure, access to justice, and GBV prevention and response services. There were deliberate efforts to improve women's access to productive resources, with substantial increase in women owning businesses and land, accessing financial services and operating bank accounts, and participating in public and private sector governance spaces.

Additionally, the Government continued to prioritise and strengthen the collection, analysis, access and use of gender-disaggregated data and statistics. This has supported evidence-based monitoring, implementation, and reporting of the country's priorities and commitments to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Government increased the number of gender-specific SDG indicators it can report on from 11 out of 54 in 2018 to 32 out of 54 in 2023. The collection of routine administrative data, such as the expansion of the National Gender-Based Violence database and the 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, namely GEWE modules in the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS) 2022 and the 2024 Population and Housing Census and issue-based gender surveys such as the Time Use Survey, the [Gender Statistics Portal \(ubos.org\)](https://ubos.org), National Governance, Peace and Security Survey (NGPSS), and Violence Against Women and Girls Survey (2021).

Challenges that hampered the implementation of BPfA include the shocks from the COVID-19 pandemic, other epidemics such as Ebola, natural disasters, landslides, floods, locust infestations, climate change, armed conflicts and sporadic terrorism acts. 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. The COVID19 containment measures, such as the lockdown and isolation of the affected, disrupted the livelihoods of many people, resulting in the loss of jobs and increased poverty. It also escalated cases of GBV, including increased teenage pregnancies and child marriages due to school closure. As a result, there were shifts in financial allocation from the planned interventions to cater for emergency expenditures.

Persistent harmful social norms contribute to the prevalence of Gender-Based Violence, particularly sexual violence, child/teenage pregnancy and early marriages, resulting in girls dropping out of school. They also contribute to the heavier burden of unpaid care work and domestic work by women and girls. The burden continued to hinder their effective participation in leadership and the economy and affected the well-being and educational outcomes of the girls.





Lessons learnt

The critical lessons during the implementation of the BPfA include:

- (i) Gender-responsive laws and policies should be accompanied by adequate financial resources and accountability to citizens in order to generate the desired change.
- (ii) Macro-level interventions should be accompanied by planned micro-level household actions that reflect the realities of all women and girls.
- (iii) Building community resilience and scaling up timely information flow are prerequisites for managing emerging challenges, especially during crises and emergencies.
- (iv) Scaling up interventions and services in health, skilling, ICT, GBV prevention and response services, particularly to the underserved, is critical for attaining GEWE aspirations.
- (v) Coordination among key stakeholders enhances effectiveness and efficiency to deliver on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) results.
- (vi) Male engagement is critical in all development interventions and should therefore be promoted in all initiatives, including women's livelihood support, women economic empowerment, governance and decision-making, addressing GBV, and HIV and AIDS among others.

1.2 Areas for Assistance /Support

Uganda will require systematic and coordinated technical and financial support to empower women and men to achieve higher incomes and build their resilience towards climatic, health and social shocks to build sustainable and improved livelihoods. In this regard, the two critical areas which can lead to high impact are:

(i) Support to improving women's livelihoods and economic empowerment - Financial and technical assistance is required to support women to grow their businesses, enhance their entrepreneurship and business

development skills, and access market information in order to enable them to attain wealth creation, growth and productivity, and economic justice. The focus shall be on supporting women to engage in enterprises in agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, mining, tourism, science, technology, and innovations (ATMS), which are the government's priorities. Emphasis shall also be put on providing financial assistance to support actions for climate change mitigation and adaptation and to support vulnerable women to engage and benefit from climate-resilient economic activities.

Support can be extended in two forms:

- (a) Women engaged in micro, small and medium-scale enterprises, particularly those in rural and refugee settings, can be supported through low interest financial services, value addition and grants.
- (b) In partnership with identified, selected, and capitalised financial institutions, women centric financial products (loans) can be developed for women who own medium- and large-scale enterprises.

These should entail supporting processes along the agricultural value chain, including scaling up small irrigation schemes, value addition, processing and storage technologies.

(i) Collation of Gender-disaggregated data and Establishment of gender monitoring System:

- (a) The Uganda Bureau of Statistics requires technical and financial support to continuously collate all gender-disaggregated data from surveys, censuses and administrative data sources, as well as other non-traditional data sources, into the gender statistics web portal for ease of access by the data users
- (b) The National Gender Machinery requires financial assistance and capacity building to develop and implement a robust gender monitoring framework as a repository for information on the progress of implementing global frameworks (BPfA and CEDAW), regional and national legal and policy frameworks.



SECTION TWO: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

Source UN Women



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 taken to implement the top priorities articulated in the BPfA National Report of 2020.

2.1.1. Women's Economic Empowerment

In conformity with SDG 5 and SDG 1 target 1.1, the Government of Uganda prioritised actions to increase women's access to economic resources to reduce extreme poverty. Different complementary interventions were designed and implemented, facilitating women's access to affordable credit with subsidised interest rates, skilling, access to market information, and appropriate time-saving technologies. Some of these are the COVID-19 Stimulus Package, the Agricultural Credit Facility Fund and support to SACCOs by the MicroFinance Support Centre.

In partnership with the World Bank, the government launched a US\$ 217 million Generating Growth Opportunities and

Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) Project in 2023. 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 1 below shows the Government funds allocated to each livelihood support programme for the special interest groups for 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 Persons With Disabilities	9.6 bn	16.6 bn	15.9 bn	50.2 bn
Special Enterprise Grant for Older Persons	0	5 bn	5 bn	10 bn
Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE)	118.321bn	121,301 bn	121.2 bn	360.82 bn
Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises	0	21	12.7 bn	133.7 bn

Source: Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development Records (2023)



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* by Centenary Bank, the Women in business Programme (WIBP) by the Development Finance Company of Uganda (DFCU), the *Stanbic for Her* Initiative by Stanbic Bank and Women Prosper Programme by Uganda Development Bank (UDB).

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 (BTJET) 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 regulation of ECD Centers, construction and rehabilitation schools for primary, secondary and Business Technical Vocational and Training (BTJET) institutions to reduce congestion and increase access to education in benefiting communities. Other activities included constructing dormitories for female students in BTJET and National Teachers Colleges (NTCs), providing accommodation for female teachers in some hard-to-reach areas, providing assistive devices for PWDs and enhancing remuneration for Secondary level Teachers

of Science. 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 BTJET. The Presidential Initiative for on-the-job and skills-based training for youth was rolled out nationwide.

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.

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 institutions 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. Generally, girls comprise 28% of the university loan scheme beneficiaries for degree and diploma courses. This was an increase from 26% in 2019. The wide gender gap is basically due to the low numbers of girls and women taking sciences in lower and upper secondary schools.

2.1.3 Ending Gender-Based Violence and Promotion of Women's Rights

Consistent with SDG 5.2, the Government remained committed to fully implementing the existing laws and policies to prevent and manage the effects of GBV and end the impunity of the perpetrators. In partnership with development partners, CSOs and the private sector, the Government continued to employ multi stakeholder strategies to engage communities and families on the benefits of GBV prevention and response. Civil society organisations continued to offer GBV prevention and response services i.e. shelter, legal aid and advice, psychosocial, health and referral, mediation with family members of the survivors and resettlement services, and training on income generating activities. Two (2) new shelters were established in Amudat and Terego to provide safe spaces to GBV survivors, making a total of 23 shelters in the country. Another GBV Shelter is under construction in Kasese to serve the Rwenzori Region.

The Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, in partnership with UN agencies, CSOs, the private sector, cultural and religious

institutions, successfully implemented the Spotlight Initiative Programme. The Programme aimed at 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.

Further, the Government prioritised evidence generation on the magnitude and extent of GBV prevalence 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 (EPRC) at Makerere University. The Uganda Police Force continued to monitor and track the reporting of GBV, prosecution of cases, and the compilation of Annual Police Crime Reports, which provide data on cases of GBV reported. [ANNUAL CRIME REPORT 2023 - Uganda Police Force \(upf.go.ug\)](#). As a result, physical violence has reduced from 50% in 2016 to 45% in 2020.

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



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 Centre 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. In 2023, the government developed the Quality of Care Implementation Guide for Reproductive Health, Maternal, New

Born Child, Adolescents Health and Nutrition Services. 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 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 affected by COVID-19 lockdown

measures, the Government amended the National Social Security Act in 2022 to provide mid-term access to members above 40 years and People With Disabilities (PWDs) who had saved for ten years. The Uganda Retirements and Benefits Regulatory Authority (URBRA) 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 Fund 3, 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 components 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 included:

Water - The Government prioritised interventions to improve accessibility of adequate and reliable quality freshwater resources in rural and urban areas by focusing on improving the functionality of water sources as articulated in SDG 6. Emphasis was also on establishing functional gender-sensitive regional and zonal management committees to improve the monitoring of water resources. The population with access to safe water in 2023 was 72.8% in urban and 67% in rural areas respectively.

Land ownership - In line with SDGs 1.4.2, 2.3 and 5.a.1, the Government implemented measures to ensure women's tenure security. The Uganda Land Fund was given additional funds to purchase land from landlords and given to lawful and *bona fide* occupants living on that registered land. Households on unregistered land were issued with Certificates of Customary Ownership (CCOs),

especially 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 decentralised to twenty-two (22) Zonal offices to take services nearer to the population. The National Land Information System (LMIS) was implemented, the zonal offices were computerised, 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 a 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 Programme 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 (WROs) continued to build the capacity of women leaders at all levels and trained women aspiring to join the leadership arena.

2.2 Overarching Achievements, Challenges and Setbacks in Progress towards Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls

This section presents the overarching achievements the country has registered over the last five years and the challenges hindering the implementation of the BPfA. The details of the progress and measures taken to implement each critical area of concern of the BPfA and the challenges that women and girls still face are presented in Section 3.

2.2.1 Overarching Achievements

i. Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)

The most unique achievement is that the Government made commendable progress towards SDG 5 by implementing Gender and Equity Budgeting (GEB), the form of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) adopted by Uganda. Uganda is among the 13 countries globally that met 100% of the SDG indicator

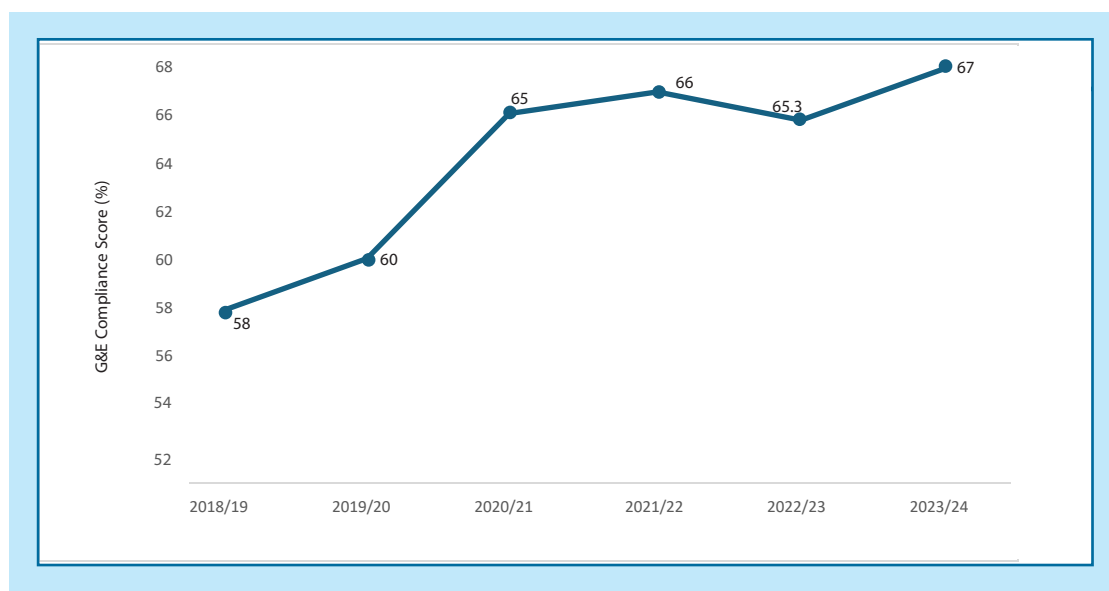
5.C.1 on strengthening public finance management systems for gender equality and women's empowerment. The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) 2015 has progressive clauses for gender equality that require all Government Ministries, Agencies, and Departments (MDAs) to prioritise financial allocation for gender and equity interventions.

The Government continued to implement gender and equity-responsive planning and budgeting to eliminate discrimination and inequalities against marginalised/ vulnerable groups. The Government budget remained the largest source of financing for gender and equity interventions despite the COVID-19 shocks. For example, according to the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) Annual Report ([EOC-Annual-Report-2023.pdf](#)), 36% of the national budget was allocated to interventions for gender and equity in the 20 NDP III programmes, of which 33% was for gender interventions and 32% for geographical location inequalities.

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) continued to enforce the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) of 2015 and

monitor SDG 5 indicator 5c1. Over the period, compliance of the ministerial policy statements to gender and equity requirements improved from 60% in 2019/20 to 67% in 2023/2024, as shown in Figure 1. The improvements indicate that Ministerial Votes were committed to equalising 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. Whereas there is registered improvement in commitment, performance on Gender and Equity outcome indicators remains a challenge for most of the Ministries, Departments and Agencies, with an overall rating of 52% attributed to the decreasing funds released for implementation during this period.

FIGURE 1: NATIONAL COMPLIANCE WITH GENDER & EQUITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FYS 2018/19 -2023/24



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



ii. 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 5 c), all the legislations enacted during this period promoted gender equality, espoused non-discrimination and use of non-discriminatory and non stereotypical language, guaranteed women's rights, and some provided for affirmative action quotas in the implementational structures and delivery of services.² The prominent legal and regulatory policy reforms to advance gender equality and women's empowerment to actualise the SDGs are presented below;

Legislation	Year of enactment	Summary of Gender-responsive provisions
Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets (PPDA) (Amendment Act),	2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Out-laws discrimination of bidders based on gender, among other factors; Provides for reservation schemes for marginalised groups and; Encourages the participation of registered associations of women, youth and PWDs in public procurement processes
The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) (Amendment Act),	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides for mid-term access of 10% of accrued benefits for contributing members aged 45 and above and 50% of accrued benefits for PWDs members aged 40 and above who have saved for at least ten years. All employers are required to ensure all workers contribute to NSSF regardless of the size of the enterprise or number of employees Allows voluntary contributions by the self-employed populations and Individuals can save with NSSF on a voluntary basis
The Markets Act	2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Membership of market women in market management committees

²Laws 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 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.

The-Succession (Amendment) Act.	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Repealed unconstitutional provisions and included 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/ linear descendants (75%), spouse (20%) & customary heir (1%) and ▪ Reduced the rights of other dependents (4%). ▪ The adopted gender sensitive language and terms e.g. 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.

iii. Women's Health

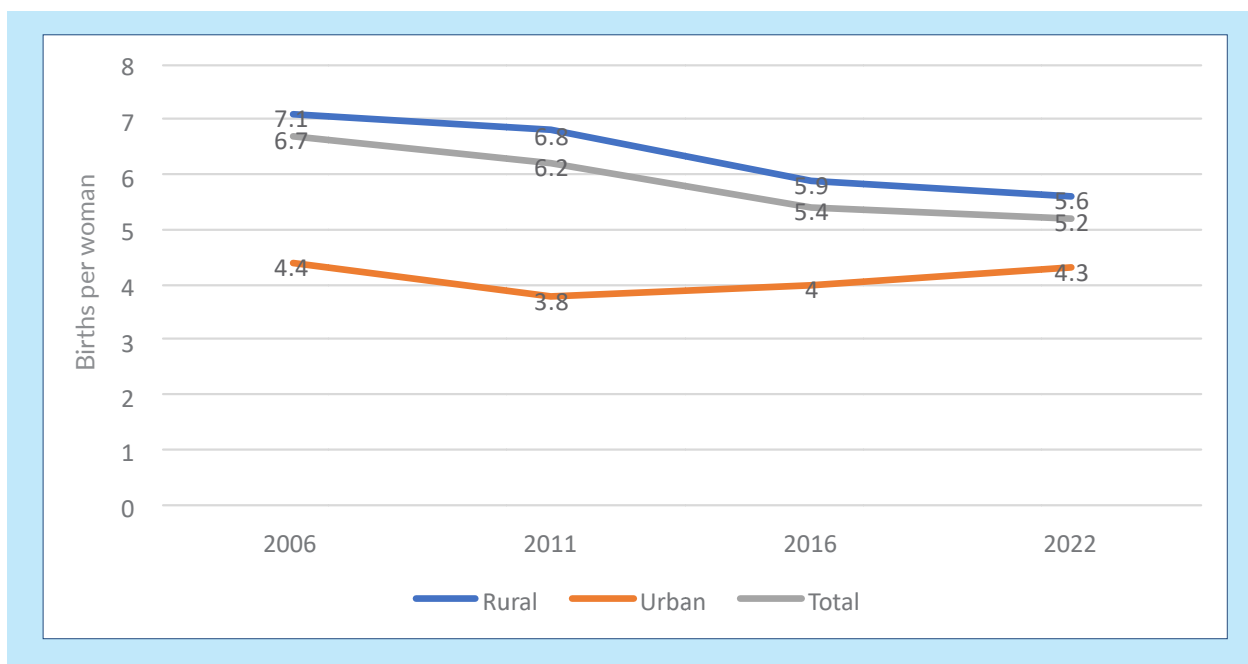
The Government progressively built a healthcare system that enabled the prevention, surveillance, and treatment of diseases among the population. Consequently, there was improvement in key health indicators such as: By 2022 maternal mortality ratio (MMR) had declined. It was at 188 deaths/100,000 live births compared to 336/100,000 in 2016 UDHS. The proportion of women and men that experience physical violence has continued to decline; Sexual violence against women aged 15–45 shows a similar trend, halving to 10.7% in 2022 from 22% in 2016. Other negative gender practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and cultural tolerance of domestic violence, also are on the decline. Notably, access to justice for survivors of GBV

improved. However, child marriage remains a challenge in most communities of Uganda.

Life expectancy increased from 63.7 years in 2021 to 64.38 years in 2023. The women's life expectancy at birth as of 2021 was 64.92 compared to 60.42 for men. There was also progress in critical maternal and child indicators; there was an improvement in fertility trends from 5.4 children to 5.2 children per woman in 2016 and 2022, respectively, as shown in Figure 2. However, there were regional disparities, with the lowest total fertility rate (TFR) of 3.7 children per woman in Kampala and the highest of 6.7 children per woman in the Karamoja sub-region.



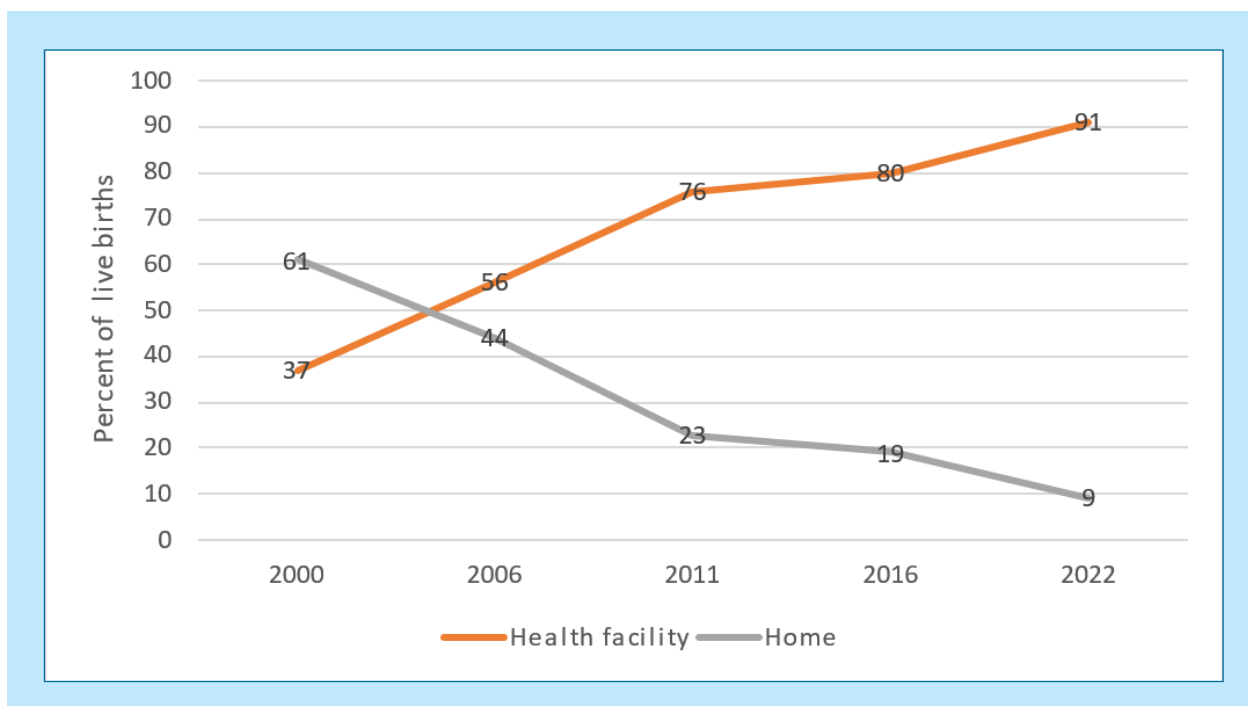
FIGURE 2: FERTILITY TRENDS



Source: UDHS (2022)

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 3.

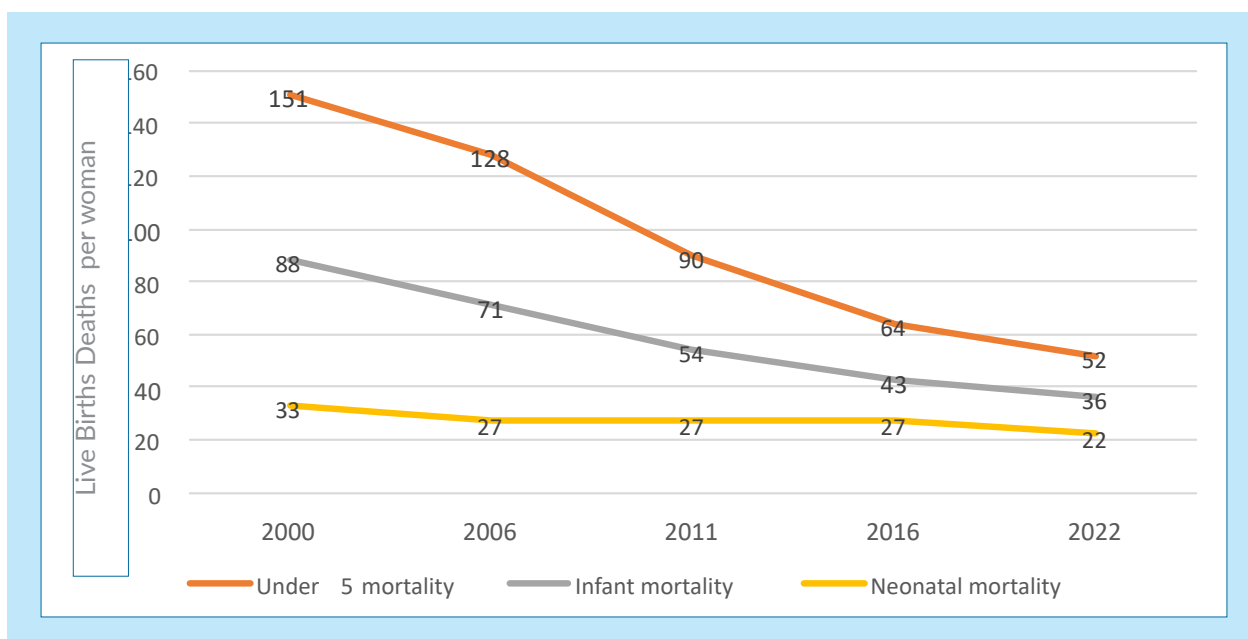
FIGURE 3: TRENDS IN DELIVERY IN HEALTH FAC



Source: UDHS (2022)

The maternal mortality rate (MMR) 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. As a result of the consistent expansion of immunisation services in the country, 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 4.

FIGURE 4: TRENDS IN CHILDHOOD MORTALITY



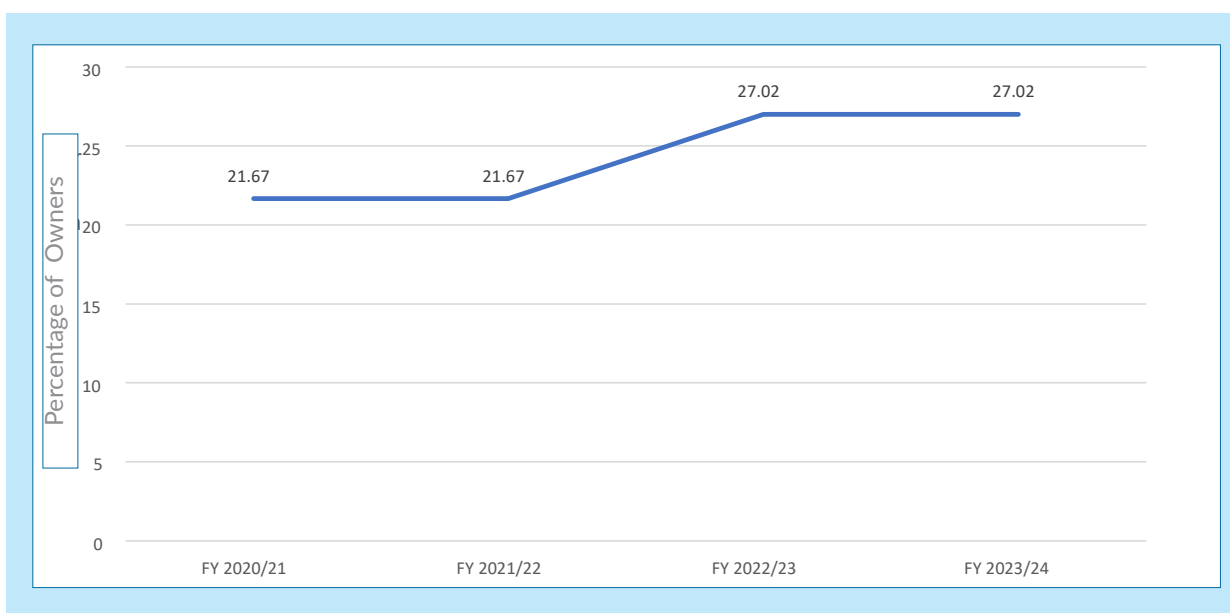
Source: UDHS (2022)

iv. Gains of Women towards Economic Empowerment

The Government enacted laws and invested in programmes to promote women’s economic rights and access to economic resources such as finance and land. As a result, titled land 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% during the period. Figure 5 shows trends of land ownership by women from FY 2020/2021- 2023.2024.



FIGURE 5: TRENDS IN LAND OWNERSHIP BY WOMEN FROM FY 2020/21-2023/2024



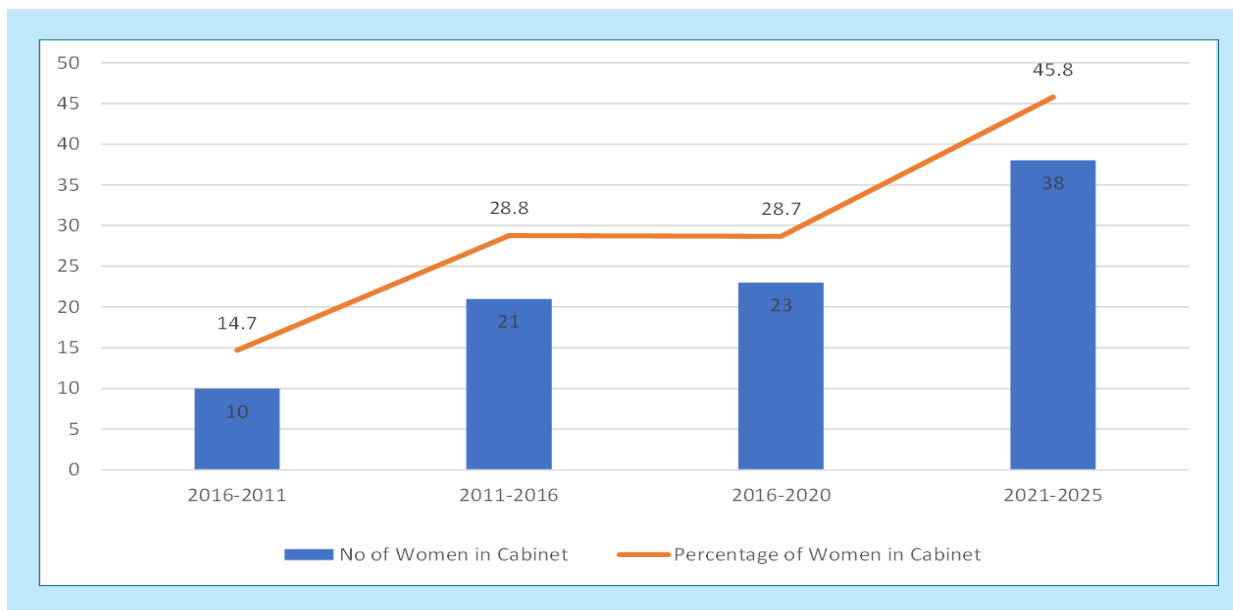
Source: Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD)

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%. According to the Master Card Global Index of Women Entrepreneurs, an estimated 38.4% of businesses are owned by women. ([Report - Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs \(just4womenafrica.com\)](#)). In Uganda, registered companies women own account for 38.2% of the total.

v . Gains in Political Participation and Decision-Making

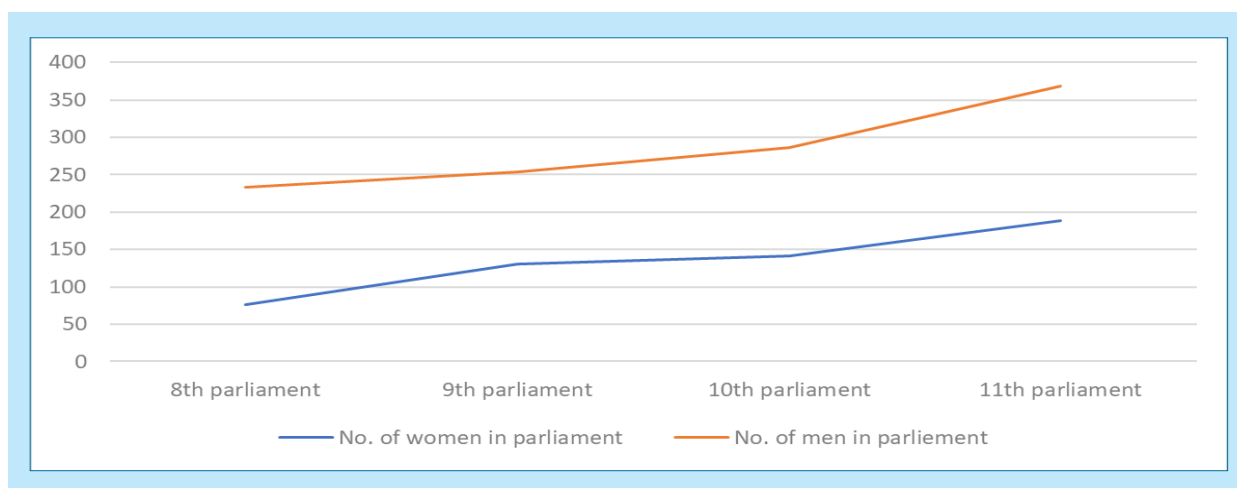
The Government enacted laws and pursued robust policies, including affirmative action measures, which promoted the participation of women in political leadership and decision-making. The women's representation in the Cabinet stands at 45% (14 Cabinet Ministers out of 31). The women ministers of state were 24 out of 50, accounting for 48%. There are 189 women members in the current Parliament out of 556 members, accounting for 33.8%. Figures 6 and 7 show the trends of women's representation in the Cabinet and Parliament over the last three parliamentary terms.

FIGURE 6: TRENDS IN COMPOSITION OF WOMEN IN CABINET



The positions of vice president, speaker of parliament, and prime minister are currently occupied by women, including critical ministries of energy and mineral development (MEMD) and science and technology (S&T). This was in addition to the portfolios that are traditionally occupied by women, such as Education, Health and Gender. Women constitute 37% of the shadow ministers (11 women and 19 men).

FIGURE 7: TREND OF WOMEN AND MEN REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT



2.2.2 Achievements for Each Priority Area

Table 2 below presents the summary of progress and key achievements for each priority area.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 are committed to promoting gender equity and gender-friendly work environments.
		Unpaid care and domestic work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased ownership of phones and bank accounts by women Increased ownership and usage of mobile phones by women

		Agriculture (commercial agriculture and Agro-processing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 postharvest losses and support with post-harvest handling equipment
		Changing harmful social norms and gender stereotypes	Popularised Gender Action Learning systems (GALS) in refugee settings, West Nile and Karamoja Sub-regions
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skilling schemes in place (Presidential Skilling initiatives) New lower secondary curriculum that emphasises skills and vocational education Provision of "second chance" education for child mothers and pregnant girls.
		Changing harmful social norms and gender stereotypes	National Campaign on ending child marriage and teenage pregnancy and promoting positive parenting led by the First Lady and Minister for Education and Sports (2021)
3	Women's Health	Access to affordable quality health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights	Expanding health infrastructure improved 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	Implementation of the National Male Involvement/Participation Strategy in RH, maternal health, adolescent health and rights – nutrition and HIV and AIDS and GBV prevention and response.



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	Popularised Start Awareness and Support Action (SASA) methodology in GBV programme areas and refugee settings
5	Gender-responsive social protection	Cash transfers, pensions and universal health coverage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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.
6	Basic services and infrastructure	Water, sanitation and Hygiene, transport, communication, Energy, Technology and ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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
7	Promotion of a 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Compliance with gender and equity requirements in the national budget increased from 60% in 2019/20 to 67% in 2023/24
		Gender statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Government continuously tracked SDG gender sensitive indicators in National Annual Performance Reviews (NAPR) – Generation of Gender- disaggregated data in National surveys (UDHS and UNHS)

2.2.3 Overarching Challenges and Setbacks

Apart from the health pandemics, global conflicts, climate change and natural disasters, which slowed down the economy and loss of household incomes, other overarching challenges and setbacks included:

i. Poverty Levels

Despite the commitment of 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 21.3% (2017) to 20.3% (2020), 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. According to the Multidimensional Poverty Report by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (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. Climate Change

The impact of climate change on Uganda's economy has far-reaching, affecting all sectors and even spilling over into other countries. This has a direct effect on women's economic activities and livelihoods. The agricultural sector which employs more than 65% of the women is largely vulnerable to climate change

because of its impact on critical sectors, land, soil erosion, loss of fertility, effect on water resources, forestry, energy, health, infrastructure, and settlements. The negative effects of climate change on these sectors hinder efforts to reduce poverty and improve people's well-being and household incomes. Considering the key areas of attention, Uganda is committed and focused at addressing the insufficient capacity to manage climate-related risks, enhancing adaptive capacities and resilience, developing gender responsive strategies, allocating inadequate financial resources to mitigate climate change, and raising awareness among the population to be resilient with the changes in climate change risks and how to mitigate them, among others.

iii. Unemployment

Unemployment remained a challenge, especially among the youth, women and Persons with Disabilities (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. According to the UBOS Labour Force Survey (2021), the national unemployment rate increased from 9.7% in 2017 to 11% in 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 at 62% of the working labour force in vulnerable employment³ compared to 52% of men. According to the World Bank, the vulnerable employment rate among women increased to 82.2% in 2022 compared to 68.2% among men in Uganda.

³Workers in vulnerable employment are the least likely to have formal work arrangements, social protection, and safety nets to guard against economic shocks; thus, they are more likely to fall into poverty



iv. HIV and AIDS among Adolescents

The high rate of HIV and AIDS is still a significant health challenge. Evidence shows that HIV and AIDS prevalence is four times higher among adolescents. The infection rates among older adolescent girls are four times higher than young men of the same age and highest in the Capital City. The total prevalence rate was higher among women at 6.5% compared to 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.

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 over the same period.

v. The Slow Pace of Mindset Change in Ugandan Society.

Persistent harmful social norms and practices continued to present obstacles to women's rights and empowerment. Discrimination is deeply rooted in the norms that perpetuate gender gaps in education, employment, health and ownership and management of economic resources, hindering the progress of women, families, communities and the nation. The resistance and slow pace at which individuals, families and other social institutions are changing from practising harmful social norms affects women and girls in multiple ways, as indicated below:

vi. Gender-Based Violence:

Gender-based violence, particularly against women and girls, is still a big obstacle and setback. 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 of 15-19 years reported the highest levels of violence at 41.3%. Notably, there was no significant difference in violence rates between rural and urban areas. There were also increasing cases of cybercrime. The changing nature of the drivers of violence against women and girls led to rising cases of emotional violence that were not easily quantifiable and detectable.

- (i) Anecdotal evidence further revealed that women beneficiaries of economic empowerment programmes increasingly faced violence and harassment in families as they were forced to take on all family responsibilities on top of their care work.
- (ii) **The unequal burden of Unpaid Care and Domestic work:** Social norms continued to shape the division and perceptions about gender roles and unpaid care work between women and men. Women and girls disproportionately shouldered care activities such as fetching water, collecting fuel wood, and caring for household and community members. A study by the Economic Policy and Research Centre (EPRC) in 2022 revealed that, on average, women spent significantly more time on care

work than on paid work⁴. Eighty-five (85%) of all women in all regions of the country were involved in unpaid care and household work, compared to 42% of men⁶.

- (iii) **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 and denying them the right education, health, protection and participation. The rates of teenage pregnancies have remained high at 24%. Child marriage increased during COVID-19 to 25%. Forced marriage is common in some communities.

These beliefs further contributed to low confidence and self-esteem of women and limited access to opportunities and services (e.g. girls unable to access Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) information and services). The negative beliefs were also reflected in the high fertility rate, increasing population, and low uptake of family planning services.

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, 2015 and the Equal Opportunities Policy, 2006, different individuals or population groups of people who face various risks and vulnerabilities associated with either age, gender, disability, health, employment, poverty or environmental and natural disasters are either classified as marginalised or vulnerable.

Article 32 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda guarantees affirmative action in favour of marginalised groups, and the Uganda Gender Policy, 2007, mandates all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to mainstream gender equality issues in their policies, programmes and projects. The Public Finance Management Act (2015) requires all Government Institutions to plan and allocate budgets for gender and equity interventions. The above legal and policy framework among others 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 3](#).

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

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. ⁶ EPRC, 2022



2.3.1. Women and Girls Living in Remote and Rural Areas

According to the Uganda National Household (2019/2020), 73.4% of the Ugandan population predominantly resides in rural areas, a slight reduction from 75.5% in 2016/2017. The population in the urban areas increased slightly from 24.5% to 26.6% over the same period indicating rural-urban migrations. Therefore, all main government flagship programmes were implemented mainly in rural areas to benefit women, men, and children. These included the Rural Electrification programme, Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Secondary Education (USE), Primary Health Care (PHC), Agro-Industrializations, as well as Markets, Agriculture and Trade Improvement programmes.

In addition, the Government continued to deepen fiscal decentralisation by implementing the Uganda Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers Programme (UgiFT). In 2020, the World Bank approved \$300 million as additional funding for this programme to strengthen the financing of Local Governments (LGs) to reduce the disparities in funding for service delivery across Local Governments. As indicated in the table below, the UgiFT supported LGs, including refugee hosting districts to improve access to education, agriculture, health and water, which benefit rural people, including women and girls.

Sector	Actions
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support smallholder farmers with a land acreage of not more than one hectare to purchase and use individual micro-irrigation equipment through matching grants (co-financing) and provide extension support in irrigated agriculture. Government introduced the 4 acre-model; one acre is dedicated to a cash crop, 1 acre to fruit trees, third acre to staple food crop for household consumption and the fourth acre to pasture for livestock. In addition, farmers are encouraged to rear poultry, piggery and fish farming especially those living along swamp watersheds.
Education	Construct and equip seed secondary schools in sub-counties; provide development grants to refurbish and equip facilities in existing primary schools; construct laboratories in secondary schools; and recruit staff in secondary and primary schools in least-staffed districts.
Health	Rehabilitate, expand, equip, staff, and upgrade health facilities, hire staff, and supply essential drugs.
Water & Environment	Install or repair safe water sources in the least served sub-counties, improving the functionality of existing potable water sources and water supply in public institutions.

Women and girls in hard-to-reach areas: The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) continued to monitor the extent to which ministries, departments, and agencies deliver services to women and girls in hard-to-reach areas. Over the period, there were positive commitments to address the needs of populations in islands, mountainous regions, remote areas and areas occupied by ethnic minorities. The Uganda National

Roads Authority (UNRA) operates 13 ferries to connect Islands on different Lakes to the mainland. The Ministry of Health also supplied boat ambulances to the Islands. However, evidence from studies by EOC reveals that populations in remote areas continue to face challenges of insufficient amenities such as transport means, schools and health centres, which are essential for the well-being of women and girls.

2.3.2. Women and Girls with Disabilities

According to the State of Uganda Population Report (2022), the Persons with Disabilities were 4.5 million, accounting for 12.4 %, of which 49.3% were females and 50.7% were males. Over the period, the government implemented the following measures:

Legal and policy reforms

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.

Livelihood Support Programmes

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. Majority of PWDs use funds to meet basic needs, e.g. assistive devices, while others start micro-level income-generating activities.

Participation in Governance

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, one woman should be among the members representing the national level. Women surpassed this quota, and there are three (3) women and two (2) male members in the 11th Parliament (2021-2026).



2.3.3. Women and Girls Living with HIV/ AIDS

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. However, as presented in **Section 2.2.3**, HIV/AIDS continues to be a significant health challenge, with higher prevalence rates

among women at 6.5% than men at 3.6% and high levels of infections among adolescent girls and young women.

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 guides all actors in implementing high-impact interventions to end HIV and AIDS by 2030. It guides on the roles and responsibilities of men, women, and youth at all levels. Consequently, the Government continued to employ the multi-sectoral approach involving all public, private and CSO actors under the coordination of the Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC) in the President's Office. The handbook has a 5-point plan indicated below:

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

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 Check Now"** test is self-administered, more accessible, and therefore more convenient for women who face harmful socio-cultural norms while seeking testing services from health facilities. Evidence from the study conducted by the Ministry of Health indicated that self-testing

would reduce the stigma associated with testing at health facilities, and more people would be encouraged to know their HIV and AIDs 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 Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) coverage for all ages increased from 86% in 2019 to 91% in 2020. The ART viral suppression rate increased from 89% to 93.55% over the same period. Adolescents had better coverage than children below ten years, probably due to the laxity of the caregivers.

2.3.4 Younger Women

According to the preliminary results of the 2024 National Population and Housing Census, Uganda has a predominantly young population, with 50.5% of the total population aged 17 years and below, while the youth aged 17-30 years are 22.7%. The population growth rate is 2.9%, and females account for 51% of the total population. Examples of measures taken include:

Livelihood Programmes for Economic Empowerment

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 female youth and 50.3% were male youth. The impact evaluation study by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development in 2021 revealed that the programme had led to the following positive changes.

- (i) *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,
- (ii) *Enhanced financial inclusion:* 4.5% increase in beneficiaries with bank accounts, an increase from 21% in 2017(baseline) to 24.4% in 2018,
- (iii) *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%
- (iv) *Import substitution:* Using locally available materials to produce products for local consumption, e.g. leather for shoes, sandals, bags and wine from bananas and pineapples,
- (v) *Impact on lifestyle and behaviour and behaviour characteristics:* 10% reduction in the prevalence of alcohol consumption among beneficiaries; enhanced social capital among youth through group approach, building networks, mutual trust and support.





The Government implemented youth-focused and friendly skilling programmes to enable young women and men to acquire marketable skills. Under the Presidential Initiative on Skilling, twenty (20) industrial hubs (19 spread in all regions and one (1) in Kampala Capital City) are operational and young people were 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 was 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 can continue to specialise in the trades they prefer up to the degree level. Some trainees were linked to government programmes for employment or access to collateral-free financing, start-up capital, and equipment, and they could utilise the equipment in the Industrial Hub for their businesses.

2.3.5 Older Women

The Uganda National Population and Housing Census 2024 preliminary results show that older persons constitute 5 million persons in the total population. However, the Uganda National Household Survey (2019/2020) had earlier revealed that 23% of the older population live in rural households compared to 16% in urban households.

Legal and Policy Reforms

The Parliamentary Elections Act was amended in 2020 to include older persons as a special interest group (SIG) in the national 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. During the elections in 2021, the women surpassed this quota, and there are three (3) women out of the five (5) Older persons representatives in Parliament.

Cash Transfers for Social Pensions

Consistent with SDG 1, the Government continued to implement the **Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment Programme (SAGE)** for older persons aged 80 years and above

who receive Uganda shillings of 25,000 (\$7-11) per month as a social pension. About sixty-two per cent (62.4%) and 37.6% of the beneficiaries were women and men, respectively. Every man and woman in the specified age bracket is eligible to access the fund. The payment is delivered through Centenary Bank as a Product Service Provider (PSP). By January 2024, the programme had reached 299,342 out of 358,420 persons targeted, totalling 83.5%.

According to the 2021 impact study, 55% of the beneficiaries reported using the SAGE funds on medical bills, 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:

- (i) Fulfil basic needs such as household necessities (clothes, soap, sugar, salt, kerosene) and the ability to eat regular meals.
- (ii) Hire of private labour for farm work
- (iii) Start income-generating activities using the stipend as start-up capital.
- (iv) Cater for medical/hospital bills.
- (v) Ability to socialise and get a sense of belonging and integration into the community and
- (vi) Paying school fees for grandchildren.

Livelihood Support Programme for Economic Empowerment

In 2022, the Government introduced a **Special Enterprise Grant for Older Persons (SEGOP)**, a five billion Shillings grant targeting the 1.89 million elderly persons aged 60 to 79 years who were 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



for both sexes. Most beneficiaries utilised the funds to start income-generating projects, mostly livestock rearing and crop husbandry (mushroom growing and beekeeping).

2.3.6. Migrant Women and Girls

The most common type of migration in the country is rural-to-rural migration. According to UNHS 2019/2020, 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.

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 for migrants into the country:

- In collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the Government strengthened the National Coordination Mechanism on Migration and border management information systems.
- Continued to enforce Uganda's Citizenship and Immigration Control Act (2015), which 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.

However, there are increasing cases of 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. The Government implemented different policies through the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development to protect the rights of Ugandan immigrant workers, as presented in **Section 3.1**.

2.3.7 Refugee and Internally Displaced Women and Girls

According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees Report (UNHCR) of 2024, Uganda hosts more than 1.6 million refugees, making it the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, with women and children making up 81% of the refugee population hosted in about 15 out of 135 districts. The refugee-originating countries include South Sudan (56%), DRC (32%), Somalia (4%), Eritrea (2%), Burundi (3%), Rwanda (2%), Ethiopia (1%) and Sudan.

Uganda has adopted 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 embraced 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, and access to essential social services within the refugee settlements and host communities.

They are also guaranteed the right to live in local communities and settlements and are allocated plots of land to cultivate within rural settlements.

During the reporting period, one of the projects implemented by the GOU was the **Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP)** in the 15 local host community districts in West Nile, Acholi, Bunyoro and South West sub-regions. The project is a World Bank-funded multi-regional project coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister, of which 70% of the funding is for supporting refugees and 30% for the hosting communities. The funds are expended for social and economic services, infrastructure development to improve service delivery, building infrastructure for local development and capacity building.

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. To protect

the environment and mitigate the effects of climate change, 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. Also, 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 in public community institutions such as schools, health centres, roadsides and administration offices and are compensated for labour. Evidence shows that participating individuals could cater for their basic needs and save for future risks.

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 amidst dwindling financial resources. Evidence shows that refugees are responsible for deforestation in the host communities when they search for fuel and wood for cooking.

2.3 8 Indigenous Ethnic Minority Women and Girls

According to the Equal Opportunities Commission's Annual Report of 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) living in different parts of the country.

The Government, in collaboration with the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU), organised the commemoration of the Day of the Indigenous Peoples on 20th May of every year as a platform to advocate for the rights of IMGs.

A study by the Equal Opportunities Commission (2023) revealed that most ethnic minority groups were excluded from



Government programmes, particularly livelihood support projects. In response, a review of the Equal Opportunities Policy of 2006 was initiated to strengthen the mechanisms for promoting the rights of ethnic minorities. In 2023, the MGLSD developed a national Affirmative Programme for Indigenous/ Ethnic Minorities. The

programme has eight (8) components: access to justice, health, education, land resources, elimination of exclusion, and the right to practise their cultures and participation in governance. However, the programme has not yet been implemented due to insufficient financial resources.

2.4 The Effects of the Confluence of Different Crises and Measures to Prevent the Negative Impact on the Implementation of the BDPfA

2.4.1 COVID-19 Pandemic

According to the Economic Policy and Research Centre (EPRC) report (2022), the severity of the pandemic effect on businesses was not 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. Further evidence from the report showed that fewer women-owned businesses closed down during lockdowns than male-owned enterprises because cultural norms and beliefs have, over time, strengthened 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. Also, men moved into some 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, Gender-based 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. In some communities, there were increased forced marriages for the economic benefit of families⁵.

Additionally, the Government's response to COVID-19 resulted in adjustments in budget allocations. The Government had to prioritise interest payments, which were allocated one-third of the budget. While some sectors, like health, education, agriculture, and water, experienced modest increases, there were no significant shifts in the budgets of other sectors.

⁵Information from consultations with the Karamoja region Key informants. ⁸ UBOS& WB: Monitoring Impacts of COVID-19 and Other Shocks, Round 8, June/July 2022. ⁹ Ditto

2.4.2 Climate Crisis

Some districts in the country experienced incidences of natural disasters and climate change effects, mainly droughts, heat waves, declining and erratic rainfall, flooding and severe soil erosion, which led to frequent bursting of rivers and landslides. In FY 2021/2022, at least 69% of the households experienced at least one weather shock, such as drought or flooding. The landslides compromised agricultural output, leading to population displacements and loss of lives. They also affected infrastructure such as roads and electricity dams, leading to high maintenance costs. The irregular rainfall patterns disrupted the planting and harvesting seasons, affecting crop yields and the agricultural calendar since agriculture in Uganda is mainly rain-fed. Other escalating

man-made challenges included pollution, deforestation, and over-use of wetlands, which adversely affected natural habitats and caused environmental degradation.

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. Floods led to the loss of lives and property and rampant displacement⁸. 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 global wars⁹.

2.4.3 Actions to Mitigate the Effects of the Crises

The actions to mitigate the effects of the crises were guided by the National Policy for Disaster Preparedness and Management, 2010. The policy is multisectoral and provides for the establishment of institutions and mechanisms at national and local government levels that take action 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. The Presidency led the Government to institute measures to curb the spread of the infection and the fatality rates. By 2024, eighty (83%) of the population had 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.

The Government launched a food distribution campaign for poor urban households and a domestic fundraising drive called the “National Response Fund to COVID-19” to raise additional funds. Individuals and private sector companies contributed funds for vehicles and medical utilities, which were 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 (OPM), 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. The Government introduced an economic stimulus package to small and micro enterprises affected by COVID-19. In April 2020, the Government passed a supplementary budget of Ugx 304 bn (\$82.1 million). 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%. To increase access to credit, the Bank of Uganda lowered the lending interest rates by 1% from 8% in 2020, followed by a 0.5% reduction to 6.5% in June 2021

However, there was a low uptake of the fund at 17%. According to the Bank of Uganda report (2023), only 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, the low participation of women resulted from the barriers they faced, which included stringent collateral requirements and preferences of the existing clients by PFIs that excluded most women-owned businesses.

In 2020, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), with support from UN Agencies, developed a COVID-19 response and preparation manual, home learning packages developed by the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), which were distributed to children in the refugee settlements. The Government implemented the school re-entry guidelines ([Revised-GuidelinesPrevention-Management-Teenage-Pregnancy-School-Settings-Uganda-2020-eng.pdf \(ungei.org\)](#)) to enable child mothers to continue with education and developed the abridged curriculum to cushion the learners against the time lost during the lockdown.

To respond to disasters such as landslides in the mountainous areas of Mt. Elgon, floods in the Mt. Rwenzori region, low-lying areas and droughts common in arid cattle corridor districts, the Office of the Prime Minister supplied the victims with essential basic relief items and accommodation. The Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Bududa District, devastated by landslides, were resettled in Kiryandongo District. The Department of Disaster Preparedness and Management conducts routine risk hazard and disaster assessments and mapping and sensitises district leaders on early warning and disaster preparedness. Additionally, 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 2026-2030

The next five years (2025-2030) will coincide with the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV) period. The mid-term review of NDP III showed that the country attained only 17% of the targets set in the plan halfway through its implementation. The slow progress in performance was 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 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. The issues paper on Gender and Equity issues to be mainstreamed in the 4th NDP and the Programme Implementation Actions Plans (PIAPs) has also been developed.

In the next five years, therefore, the Government shall prioritise the unfinished actions and emerging issues arising from implementing NDP III and priorities in NDP IV to accelerate progress for women and girls in the country. Emphasis shall be placed on mainstreaming cross-cutting issues in the NDP IV, ministries and local Government strategic plans, and budgets at all levels. Table 3 presents the priorities for the next five years as contained in the NDP IV (2026-2030).



TABLE 3: NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS (2026-2030)

No	Priority Areas	Basis for 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> <p>1.4. Multi-dimensional effects of climate change on women</p>	<p>(i) Scale up grants (UWEP, GROW, YLP) to provide start-up capital for women living in poverty. Capitalise the Land Fund and ease access to titled land for women, including vulnerable women.</p> <p>(ii) Enforce laws to protect women's rights in the world of work, especially those working in private and informal sectors.</p> <p>(iii) Incentivise and capitalise Financial Institutions to increase and ring-fence funding to women for agriculture and businesses, prioritizing Agro-industrialisation, tourism, manufacturing and Science, technology and innovation (ATMS),</p> <p>Business skills development, mentoring and coaching,</p> <p>All MDAs to provide for the interventions to generate jobs for women and the youth,</p> <p>(iv) Design and promote actions to prevent and respond to economic violence against women.</p> <p>(v) 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.</p> <p>(vi) Develop and implement innovative models for gender-responsive community-based agri-insurance</p> <p>(vii) Mainstream gender in the national tax policies</p>

2	Improved Access to Social Services (Health, Education, training and skilling, water, energy)	<p>2.1. High maternal and child mortality rates, increasing cases of NCDs and HIV/AIDS rates among young women</p> <p>2.2. Mental health-related challenges</p> <p>2.3. Low transition rates of girls at all levels of education; high drop-out rates,</p> <p>2.4. Low participation of girls in STEM and mismatch of skills in the job market</p> <p>2.5. The country is far from attaining universal access to affordable water (clean and safe) and electricity.</p>	<p>(i) Continue the expansion of health infrastructure to access services to the most underserved populations.</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>(iii) Develop and popularise affordable community health insurance.</p> <p>(iv) Prioritise mental health programmes for the population</p> <p>(v) Continue implementation of UPE, UPOLET, USE and TVET programmes</p> <p>(vi) Expand skilling programmes and provide start-up capital for young women entrepreneurs.</p> <p>(vii) Design special programmes to increase girls' participation in STEM</p> <p>(viii) Increase investments to expand safe and clean water infrastructure to all households, including water harvesting technologies.</p> <p>(ix) Continue expansion of rural electrification programmes to all households.</p> <p>(x) Scale up programmes for alternative sources of energy to households, including the under - served rural and hard-to-reach areas</p>
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>	<p>(i) Scale up GBV prevention, response management and legal services to the under-served regions of the country (Central and western regions),</p> <p>(ii) Design special programmes to address GBV in higher institutions of learning, the world of work and infrastructure development programmes (e.g. Roads, oil& gas),</p> <p>(iii) Design innovative interventions to tackle cyber GBV.</p> <p>(iv) Design programmes on positive social norm change and positive parenting using cultural and religious approaches.</p>



4	Mindset Change for Gender Equality.	4.1 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) Revamp the campaigns for positive male masculinities and male engagement, focusing on young men. (iv) Integrate male engagement strategies in all programmes, including redistribution of care and support work and investing in infrastructure for the care economy (purple economy). 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 mindset change for gender equality.
5	Strengthening Governance and Accountability for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	<p>5.1 Inadequate and shrinking funding for GEWE.</p> <p>5.2 Inadequate gender disaggregated data</p> <p>5.3 Limited effective participation of women in politics and decision-making</p> <p>5.4 Multiple structures for GEWE coordination</p>	<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. Invest in the collection of gender-disaggregated data, analysis, packaging and dissemination and establish a central Gender Monitoring framework.

SECTION THREE: PROGRESS ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF THE BPfA



Photo credit UN Women

This section presents the review of the implementation progress of the 12 critical areas of concern in the BPfA, 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's commitment to promoting decent employment, including the protection of workers' rights as per SDG 8 is reflected in prioritising the Human Capital Development Programme (HCDP) in the National Development Plan III, 2021-2025. The HCDP aimed 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. Measures were undertaken to advance gender equality in the world of work in legal and policy reform and programming. These include the following:

Legal and Policy Reforms

- (i) **The Labour Disputes (Arbitration and Settlement) Amendment Act 2021** - increased the powers of the Industrial Court to summon and administer oaths to witnesses and included representatives of employers and workers as the court members.
- (ii) **The National Social Security (Amendment) Act 2022** - expands coverage to all workers, provides for voluntary contributions by workers and allows midterm access to benefits to workers.
- (iii) **Ratification of the ILO Convention (C 190) 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 and will promote interventions that will support the prevention of violence and harassment, enhance decent work delivery in the Country, and increase labour productivity.

- (iv) **The Employment (Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers) Regulations, 2021** strengthened the legal framework to guarantee decent, safe, and secure jobs for Ugandans abroad.
- (v) **The Labour Advisory Board, in 2023**, was established to guide the governance of labour related issues in the Country.

The Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) (Amendment) Act 2023 was also presented in Parliament in January 2024. The proposed law seeks to amend the OSH Act 2006 and has gender-progressive provisions to promote workplace health and safety. 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 awaited the approval of the Cabinet.

Other measures to Promote Women's Rights in the World of Work

(i) 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 male employees are entitled to four days of paternity leave. 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. Once enacted into law, the Employment Bill would guarantee such employees access to some benefits, including providing severance allowances and allowing workers to receive an allowance at the end of the employment relationship with the employer.

(ii) Measures to Address Sexual Harassment in the World of Work

The Employment Act 2006 remained the principal Act that provides the framework for addressing sexual harassment matters. More specifically, the Employment (Sexual Harassment) Regulations, 2012 provide a framework for preventing and controlling sexual harassment in the world of work. **The Employment Amendment Bill 2023** was approved by the Cabinet and passed by Parliament. Once assented to, the amendment Bill will address sexual harassment at workplaces because it contains provisions prohibiting sexual harassment and requires all employers, regardless of the number of employees, to institute anti-sexual harassment policies. By ratifying the ILO Convention (C190) on Sexual Harassment at



Work, the Government showed commitment to enforcing standards related to eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work and drafted the Employment Bill contains proposals to address sexual harassment in the domestic setting in addition to all other work establishments.

As part of the measures for the prevention and control of sexual harassment, a Technical Working Group (TWG) of twenty-eight (28) members comprising various Ministries, Departments, Agencies

(MDAs), Development Partners, and Civil Society Organizations, was constituted by the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development in 2023. The TWG provides a platform for coherent coordination of the activities. One of the TWG's tasks was to review 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. In 2022, MGLSD developed Guidelines for monitoring compliance to the minimum requirements for preventing and responding to gender-based violence in the workplace. The guide provides a framework for planning, reporting and providing feedback on how workplaces have mainstreamed and adopted measures to prevent and respond to GBV.

Promotion of Green Jobs for Youth

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development implemented the Uganda Green Incubation Project (Songhai Model Centre). A model farm established at Kampiringisa in Mpigi District hosts demonstration sites for crop and animal husbandry using organic

methods. This project trained, coached and mentored 200 unemployed youth in organic farming practices, marketing and value addition. The project contributed to the creation of green jobs for young people.

Another component of the Green Jobs Programme was the Jua Kali initiative that supported the youth in the informal sector in business development and entrepreneurship. The project supported the Jua Kali groups, comprising 11,091 members (4,484 males and 6,607 females). Under the Initiative, 5,760 business toolkits and equipment were provided to 279 Jua-kali groups in 66 districts. In addition, Business Development Services were provided to 285 representatives from the 279 Jua-kali groups (MGLSD NRM Party Manifesto Report 2023).

The Gender Equality Seal (GES) Initiative

Since 2016, the Private Sector Foundation of Uganda (PSFU), in partnership with UNDP, has been implementing the Gender Equality Seal (GES) initiative to promote gender equality outcomes within Private Sector Organizations in line with SDG 5. The Gender Equality Seal (GES) was a mechanism by which companies undertook practices that promote gender equity and a gender-friendly work environment using a certification process based on global best practices. The certification criteria included increased resource allocation to gender interventions at the corporate level, and it led to concrete benefits such as the realisation of a gender-sensitive workplace environment in these companies.

As of February 2024, 100 private sector companies had enrolled on the Global Gender Equality Seal and implemented strategies to

address gender inequalities in the workplace and their investments. In December 2023, the Private Sector Foundation of Uganda (PSFU) conducted an assessment and awarded companies for promoting investments that promoted gender in their work environment and business strategies. About 76 companies were recognised for compliance with GES, with seventeen (17) companies receiving gold medals for excellent compliance, eleven (11) silver and five (5) bronze medals. 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 made their human resource management systems equitable and more gender sensitive.

Workplace Inspection

Workplace inspection was one of the measures to ensure a decent work environment by promoting workplace safety from injuries, accidents and health hazards. The checklists for inspections included inspection of the existence of women-friendly facilities at the workplaces. This activity was conducted nationally by the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and by Labour Officers at the Local Government Level. 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 was a growing trend of citizens seeking employment in Middle Eastern countries, especially young women and men. The move was precipitated by the few jobs available in the country and enticing wages for unskilled labour in the destination countries. About 98% of the young women are employed as domestic workers. To protect the rights of the emigrant workers, the Government 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. The Employment Bill (2023) also introduced a provision for the employment of migrant workers within Uganda and specified the jobs that non-citizens are eligible for.

Other measures undertaken by the Government included:

- Negotiations and signing of Bilateral Labour Agreements with the receiving States,
- 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 countries⁶.

- Establishing coordination among MDAs namely the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Internal Affairs and
- Mandatory pre-departure training and orientation and clearance process by the ministry in charge of labour.
- The Government initiated a process to place Labour Attaches in the receiving countries. For example, two Labour Attachés were deployed to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Government licensed 406 recruitment Agencies, and 215,673 persons were deployed over the review period.
- The Government rolled out the External Employment Management Information System (EEMIS) to strengthen the regulation of external employment through sharing of information about migrant workers with foreign Missions in the destination countries and other stakeholders. It established a 24-hour call centre to handle complaints from migrant workers.

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

The government continued implementing the Uganda National Apprenticeship Framework (2018) 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 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 and 35 years old who were attached to apprenticeships for established businesses to get non-financial support and guidance.

Despite the efforts to advance gender equality in the world of work, women are still underrepresented in public and private sector employment. According to NSSF data, women represented about 35% of the formal sector workers. Much as over one-third (33.8%) of all the businesses in the country were owned by women, women-owned firms earned 30% less in profits than male-owned businesses. Women owned only 10% of the firms with 100–500 employees. Women were predominantly engaged in fragile informal sector businesses and agricultural-based SMEs since the sector presented the most uncomplicated entry requirements for women.

⁶Bilateral agreements with Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (domestic workers), UAE, Qatar and Jordan and others in process include Oman, UAE, Qatar Kuwait, Iran and Lebanon.

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 and Policy Reforms

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.

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development initiated the process of formulating the Employment (Breastfeeding and Childcare Facilities) Regulations. The Regulations are for all workplaces as defined in the Employment Act 2006 and the Bill of 2023. When completed, 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. The Regulations will set standards for establishing childcare facilities, including those already established in centres.

Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW) Services

The establishment and operation of institutional child centres and breastfeeding facilities continued in the Ministries, Departments, Agencies, and private sector agencies. The institutions with model facilities were the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, Uganda National Roads Authority, Makerere University and some commercial banks, particularly those that had signed on to the gender equality seal principles. The Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) reviewed the building guidelines for developers to include

childcare facilities and modified the designs of market infrastructure to include childcare spaces to guide the contractors. Subsequently, new markets built after the guidelines were issued had functional childcare spaces where mothers and guardians drop off children for care at a modest cost.

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, improved access to water, walkways as part of the road infrastructure that aid women and other Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and street lights for the safety of vendors at night, most of whom are women. The Markets Act of 2023 legitimised these practices.

The Private Sector Foundation of Uganda 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 and support for establishing ECD facilities in workplaces.

In addition, expanding water, energy, roads, health, schools and electricity infrastructure to the rural areas also targeted reducing the time and energy women spend on unpaid care and domestic work. For example, the key mandate of the water sector is to reduce the distance to water sources, which consequently minimises unpaid care and domestic work, and GBV cases. There were



also efforts to popularise the use of energy-saving stoves and support women's groups in producing charcoal briquettes to reduce the time spent on cooking.

There was intensified advocacy on UCDW by Women's Rights organisations. With the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Care International in Uganda in a Consortium with the Makerere University School of Women and Gender Studies, the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) implemented a 3 years (2022-2024) project to shift gender norms around unpaid care work. with the support of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Care POWER Model was tested in a randomised Control Trial in Four Districts in Uganda (Masindi, Mbarara, Mpigi and Pallisa) for its efficacy in shifting gender norms around unpaid care work. Several WROs under the leadership of the Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) scaled up policy advocacy and sensitisation of the public on unpaid care work. UWONET organised high-level dialogue sessions for Members of Parliament to understand and compel Government entities to budget for UCDW, including gender and equity issues, in the budget framework papers. The Government and CSOs 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.

Strengthening the Rights of Paid Care Workers

In 2023, the Government ratified the ILO Convention 2011 No. 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers. The Ministry developed the Employment (Domestic

Workers) Regulations 2020 that seek to regulate the employment of domestic workers, and the provisions in these regulations include some of the aspirations of ILO C 189. **The Employment Bill 2023** was approved by the Cabinet, passed by Parliament and assented to by H. E. the President. This 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.

Challenges

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 social-norms dictate that men should not participate in care work. 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. There calls for proactive male engagement especially through the cultural and religious institutions in advocating for redistribution and reducing unpaid care work in Uganda.

3.1.3 Actions to Reduce the Gender Digital Divide

The government prioritised 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, schools, hospitals, tourism sites, Police stations and Local Government offices.
- (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 nationwide, starting in the cities. For special interest groups, there was special affirmative action for female applicants under the ICT innovation fund, and young innovators were supported directly with funds and free space in the innovation hubs to further their research. ICT hubs have been established in schools for groups with special needs, and women and PWDs are trained in digital skills.
- (iii) Support for Innovation based on indigenous knowledge in medicine and appropriate technology in agriculture, rainwater harvesting and irrigation.
- (iv) Digital business, marketing, and trade platforms were 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 utilise the platforms, including the 50 million African Women Speak Networking Platform funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and implemented by EAC and COMESA.

The Government, in partnership with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and with support from SIDA, implemented the Inclusive Digital Economies Programme. The program supported women, youth, refugees, migrants, and medium and small-scale enterprises (MSMEs) to enhance market participation, reduce poverty, and improve livelihoods. 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 sought to change how customers accessed and used digital services. Forty per cent (40%) of the programme's target beneficiaries were women.

Civil society and women's rights organisations continued to provide ICT solutions to women, especially in rural areas. For example, Uganda Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) implemented a project to strengthen women's livelihoods and build resilience to COVID-19 by supporting the effective use of digital technologies. Evidence showed that women in the farming industry could use ICTs to monitor crops, track market prices and spread good practices. As a result, the expansion of ICT coverage increased from 23% to 74% of the population covered with broadband. The growth of the internet in Uganda was 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 were relatively new and were a high-growth market in the country.



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. Mobile phone ownership in urban areas was 84% compared to 67% in rural areas. Mobile phone ownership was highest among 25-50-year-olds. Internet access improved from 10% to 26% over the same period; internet access stood at 48% in urban areas compared to 17% in rural areas especially among the 18-40-year-olds. There is a wide gender digital divide; 64% and 18% of women own mobile phones and access the Internet, compared to 80% and 34% of men, respectively. Most women remained digitally marginalised due to lack of income to purchase devices and bundles to access the internet, coupled with insufficient digital skills and capacities to use devices, services and platforms. The increasing cyber harassment further discourages women from regularly using digital devices.

3.1.4 Macroeconomic and Fiscal Policy Environment Affecting the Implementation of the BPfA

Uganda is known to be one of the world's most resilient countries. It has a fast-growing financial sector, supportive financial market regulation and large ambitions for green infrastructure. However, like elsewhere in the world, the national economy experienced shocks driven by the COVID-19. According to the third Voluntary National Review (VNR) report on the progress made towards the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda (2024), the recent global shocks which led to a worldwide recession and a reduction in development funding had adverse impact on Uganda's macro economy, negatively impacting the fiscal space for poverty reduction interventions. Consequently, the NDP III (2020/21-2024/25) implementation attained only 17% of the targets halfway through its implementation. Therefore, the economy's poor performance generally affected the implementation of the BPfA and progress for women and girls.

3.2 Poverty Eradication, Social Protection and Social Services



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

3.2.1 Actions to Reduce/Eradicate Poverty among Women and Girls

Legal and Policy Reforms

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:

In Uganda, 60% of the national budget is spent on public procurement of public goods and services ([Sustainable Public Procurement National Action Plan .pdf \(finance.go.ug\)](#)). The Amended Act (2021) gives women, youth and PWDs the opportunity to access

procurement funds. The Act provides for Preference Schemes under Sections 59 (a) and reservation of contracts for Special Interest Groups (SIGs) under Section 59 (b). In March 2024, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED) issued the Guidelines to all Government Procurement Entities (MDAs and Local Governments) on Reservation Schemes. This policy environment presents an opportunity for women-owned businesses to participate and benefit from the available resources through public procurement. Before the enactment of the law, women-owned businesses benefited



from only 2% of the funding for public procurement. The highlights of the reservation schemes to promote the participation of registered Associations of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities in the law are as follows:

- 15% of the MDAs and LGs annual procurement plans and budgets 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.

Poverty Eradication and Women's Entrepreneurship Development 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 to implement interventions in NDP III and the NRM Party Election Manifesto, which are aligned with SDG 1 (end Poverty) and SDG 2 (End Hunger). The Programmes primarily target Special Interest Groups (SIGs) operating in the informal sector to improve access to affordable financial services and credit and foster economic growth and inclusion. These are:

The Joint Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) and Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP):

Funding for the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP), which began in FY 2015/16, 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. 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. By 2023, the programme had reached over 19,723 women groups and 230,059 individual women. (MGLSD Data).

The Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) has an affirmative action criterion for 30% of members of any group benefiting from the Programme to be female youth. YLP was 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. In the same period, YLP had disbursed UGX 169,414 to finance 21,280 youth projects benefiting 251,679 youth, 40% of whom were female (MGLSD 2024).

Parish Development Model (PDM)

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 the money economy. The PDM integrates 3.9 million households working in the subsistence economy into the money economy by creating jobs and wealth. The PDM prioritises interventions across the production value chain in agriculture, creating opportunities for employment and wealth creation. It aims to deliver essential economic and social services to solve critical challenges that have trapped women and men in the vicious cycle of poverty.

One crucial component of the PDM is ensuring financial inclusion, whose guidelines provide that reservation of the resources/funds at the parish level would be allocated as follows: 30% for 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. One hundred million shillings (UgX 100 M) are 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) was allocated to implement

the PDM programme. Each of the 10,595 Parishes in the country received UGX 100 million (USD 27,777). By 2024, 10,584 out of 10,594 Parishes formed Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOS) nationwide had received funding. Over Ugx 1 trillion shillings was disbursed to the programme during the last two and half years. Evaluation of PDM revealed that 47% of the beneficiaries were women and 53% were men. Of these, the proportion of SIGs was 29%, were youth, older persons 13%, and PWDs 7% of the beneficiaries of PDM funds⁷.

Presidential Initiative on Wealth and Job Creation (Emyooga) Programme

The “Emyooga” programme continued to operate as part of the government’s effort to transform Ugandans from subsistence to market-oriented production. It is a presidential initiative on wealth and job creation and is implemented as part of the broader government strategy to transform 68% of homesteads from subsistence to market-oriented production so as to promote job creation and improve household incomes.

The programme targets people (women and youth) who are already in Savings and Credit Cooperatives (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.

⁷Midterm Review of the NRM Manifesto, 2024



The 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. This enables other members of the SACCO to borrow funds and use them for development. Each SACCO received Ugx 30 million except for the elected leaders' SACCOs, which were given UG 50 million. By the end of 2021, about Ugx 205.34 bn had been disbursed to 29,057 Parish Associations through 6,394 Apex SACCOs.

There was insufficient gender-disaggregated data to show a comprehensive picture of women benefiting from the programme. However, women were at liberty to join SACCOS in any eligible trades in addition to establishing the women entrepreneurs in SACCO. Anecdotal evidence showed that women had been empowered to create and lead their own cooperatives, ranging from agriculture to the crafts industry. The programme 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 implementing the "Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) Project" in 2023. 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 to the tune of USD 217 Million, including USD 40 million for refugees and refugee host districts.

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 women entrepreneurs' access to finance to expand their businesses, (c) enabling infrastructure and facilities for women enterprise growth and transition, (d) 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 Country⁸.

Agricultural Credit Facility (ACF)

The Bank of Uganda, working with the Participating Financial Institutions (PFIs), continued implementing the ACF countrywide. The fund registered success in lending up to Shs. 859.4 billion accessed by 3,867 beneficiaries, including large off-takers that created jobs and markets for smallholder farmers. Funds under the ACF were 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.

⁸Source: MGLSD documents

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 was 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, which are not accredited to participate in the scheme. This exclusion prevents most smallholder farmers, especially women, from accessing finance under the ACF.

The NSSF HI- Innovator Programme

In 2020, NSSF, in partnership with MasterCard Foundation, started to implement this programme to support entrepreneurs with small and growing businesses. The NSSF works with 12 enterprise support organisations (ESOs) to support women-owned businesses, 50% women-owned, or 70% women in leadership positions. The programme conducts business training academies and provides catalytic seed capital to enable entrepreneurs to become competitive. In the last four (4) years, over 30,000 entrepreneurs were trained, committed to over USD 20,000, and supported 368 businesses over six (6)

cohorts. About 170,000 work opportunities were created, of which over 120,000 were for youth (18-35 years). Over 92,000 women got job opportunities. Specific to training, three (3) out of the six (6) cohorts were designated for women, and 198 businesses were supported with seed capital and technical support.

The Climate Resilient Livelihood Opportunities for Women Economic Empowerment (CRWEE) in Karamoja and West Nile Regions of Uganda collaboratively implemented by the MGLSD, MWE, and MAAIF, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). This was aimed at accelerating rural women's economic empowerment through targeted interventions across the country.

In November 2022, Uganda started to implement a three-year Project code-named **Deliver Women's Economic Resilience through Enterprise & Market Systems (DREAMS)**, 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

As indicated in Section 2.1, the Government still prioritised women's access to land, which is critical for increased security of land resources and household incomes and for improving the population's quality of life in line with SDG 1.4. The Government continued to implement The Land Sector Strategic Plan (2013-2023), which aims to strengthen the land rights of the poor and vulnerable, including women, within and outside marriage.



Uganda has a multi-tenure system, which includes customary, *mailo*, and freehold land tenure systems. Each consists of unique requirements for acquisition. Only land under *mailo* and freehold tenure systems is titled. The Government undertook measures to provide tenure security to squatters and people experiencing poverty, including women, free of charge. The Government increased funding to 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 national laws do not allow refugees to own land in the customary, *mailo* or freehold land tenure systems. However, the law allows them to get land on lease. However, under the Systematic Land Adjudication and Certification of Titles (SLAC) programme, communities, including refugees, were provided freehold certificates of titles to ensure that laws were followed. Therefore, refugees in 11 districts of the programme were progressively accessing land titles. Evidence from the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD) on 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.

Sensitizations (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. Sensitization 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 measures instituted to curb the spread of 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,” which is in line with SDG 11.1. Through the National Development Plan III, the government was committed to developing

an inclusive housing finance mechanism, including the capitalization of Banks to offer affordable mortgages including to women. It 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.

The Housing Finance Bank initiated the “**Incremental Home Loan**” solution called *Zimba Mpola Mpola*, which supports women with mortgage loans. Consequently, in 2024, the 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 sensitization 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 Vulnerable Groups (VGs), especially PWDs. Capacity building in gender and equity issues undertaken for implementers of the programme interventions

Despite the above measures, there is a total shortage of 1.6 million housing units due to overcrowding, substandard structures, rapid population growth, high cost of building materials, high interest rates and stringent terms that do not promote long-term mortgage financing. In addition, there are still challenges of forced evictions and displacements resulting from development programmes, which include 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.

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 Strategy (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, commercial banks in the country implemented 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 adopted disbursement procedures through mobile money, which were less cumbersome for women clients.

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 education 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, charges zero management fees monthly, and provides

Visa card loyalty rewards.

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 and secured 50 million Euros to support women's businesses with affordable loans. Priority was given to women-owned companies and those with women in leadership or board compositions. To mainstream gender in their operations, the Financial Institutions (FIs) were guided by the Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit developed by the Financial Sector Deepening Uganda Programme. The guide contained practical tips to measure women's financial inclusion in the activities of individual FIs and the whole financial sector.

Furthermore, the Bank of Uganda and the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development instituted reforms that shifted the financial infrastructure to digital financing and cashless banking. For example, due to the implementation of the Agent Banking Regulation of 2017, there was an increase in banking agents from zero in 2014 to about 22,800 by 2021. Women formed 30% of the banking agents running businesses across the country. Subsequently, as stated in Section 2.2.1, the number of women who own bank accounts increased from 53% in 2017 to 65% in 2021 compared to the number of men who owned bank accounts, which nominally increased by only one percentage point from 66% to 67%. About 38.4% of the businesses were owned by women.

Despite this progress, the number of bankable women is still less than that of men, and men still dominate 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. Fifty-seven per cent (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 Government was committed to delivering extension services to all farmers as prioritised under the Agro-industrialisation Programme of NDP III, which contributes to attaining SDGs 2, 8 and 9. The Agro-industrialisation Programme addresses critical challenges in agricultural production, agro-processing and value addition⁹, including those affecting women and youth farmers who form most of the household population dependent on subsistence agriculture.

Government through the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), which is mandated to promote and support sustainable and market-oriented agricultural production, food security and household incomes, developed **the National Agricultural Extension Strategy 2021/22–2025/26** as a successor to the National Agricultural Extension Strategy 2015/16 – 2020/21. This strategy, anchored in the agriculture sector policy framework, aims to transform the extension from a system of parallel institutionally fragmented public and non-state actors to a well-coordinated, harmonised, and regulated service.

To increase the accessibility of extension services to farmers, especially women farmers,

⁹i) 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

the government equipped agricultural extension staff with motorcycles and vehicles to support their mobility to reach and offer advice on appropriate 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. In Uganda, agricultural extension services are delivered by government and non-state actors (NSAs) to facilitate farmers, their organisations, and other value chain actors to access knowledge, information, and technologies. According to the Annual Agricultural Survey (AAS) 2020 ([07_2023AAS_2020_REPORT.pdf \(ubos.org\)](https://ubos.org/07_2023AAS_2020_REPORT.pdf)), government agencies were the primary source of extension advisory services. Over 40% of the agricultural households that received agricultural extension services received advice from local government agencies, 27% from NGOs, 21% from input suppliers and the rest from cooperatives/associations and model farmers.

The Non-State Actors in the sector started innovative digital platforms to deliver extension services to farmers so as to increase the efficiency of agricultural extension. These actors trained women and men 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. A Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (UFAAS) was formed to ensure coordination among extension workers. The forum guided farmers in developing and using innovative technologies. It also convenes regular forums to share experiences.

Government and other critical actors in the sector considered women and youth during the distribution of seeds, livestock and other technologies. Women and youth farmers



were trained in operating and maintaining small irrigation schemes, which led to improved soil and land management practices. 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, women and youth were skilled in value addition along the dairy, coffee and horticultural value chains. However, access to extension services by agricultural households remained low. Only 14.3% of the households received extension services in 2020, although there was an improvement from 5% in 2019. There were gender disparities in access to these services. Of all the agricultural households that accessed extension services, male recipients were 48%, 35% were women and 17% for both genders. The scenario could partly be attributed to inadequate extension staff at the District Local Government levels. For instance, in FY 2021/22, the extension workers/staff filled at the national level was at 4,031 (43.7%) compared to the approved staffing number of 9,275, leaving a gap of 5,220 (56.3%). This was lower than the recommended ratio of 1: 1500 (MFPED,2022)¹⁰.

Agricultural Insurance

Through the Uganda Agricultural Insurance Scheme (UAIS), the Government provided insurance to 150,000 farmers, although less than 2% of the 8 million people active in the agriculture sector were reached ([ISF Annual Report 2021 – Insurance Resilience Global Partnership](#)).¹¹ Available evidence showed that women were gradually accessing agricultural insurance services offered by the Agro-Consortium coalition of Insurance Companies that provide crop and livestock insurance in various districts where the consortium members operate. However, there was 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

Consistent with SDG 1, the Government introduced and strengthened social protection programmes such as cash transfers, public works and pension schemes. Some of the examples are outlined below:

Legal Reform Measures

The **National Social Security (Midterm Access to Benefits) Regulations 2022**.- was enacted to protect workers from vulnerability. The instrument guarantees the rights to a member who has saved with funds to access not more than 20% of his /her accrued benefits if he /she is 45 years and above and has made contributions for at least ten years. A member with a disability who is 40 years old and above and has contributed for at least ten years is eligible to access 50% of his/her accrued benefits.

¹⁰Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit, Briefing Paper (2022)

¹¹Insurance Resilience Fund, September, 2021

Cash Transfers

The Government recognizes that cash transfers act as a tool to alleviate poverty and increase women's economic empowerment. During this period, targeted cash transfers were given to individuals in distress, including women, to ensure inclusion. The Office of the Prime Minister implemented a short-term cash transfer initiative for the urban population whose livelihoods had been disrupted by COVID19. The initiative is elaborated in **Section 2.4.3**.

Other short-term cash transfer interventions were also implemented. For example, in 2023, the

Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED), under the Financial Sector Deepening Programme, partnered with non-state actors¹² to provide cash transfers, business training, and entrepreneurship skills to 500 informal cross-border women traders at Elegu border point located at the extreme north-west border with DRC. 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.

Social Pensions

The Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) Programme is a form of social pension that provides cash transfers to older persons. As presented in **Section 2.3.5**, SAGE was 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 and 60 years 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.



Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE) beneficiary. File Photo

¹² Trade Mark Africa and 100 WEEKS



Formal Pensions

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 Fund (NSSF) scheme. While the first three offer a defined retirement benefit and life pension, the NSSF provides a lump sum payment at retirement. Older women who have retired from public service benefit from the Public Service pension

scheme, and those from the private sector and NGOs are catered for by the National Social Security Fund. The amended NSSF Act 2022 provided an option for individuals to save with NSSF on a voluntary basis. By January 2024, the Uganda Retirement and Benefits Regulatory Authority (URBRA) had registered 64 private retirement pension schemes, which include 52 work-based and 12 umbrella benefit schemes. 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 for Sustainable Development, SDG 3, which calls for ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all ages.

Legal and Policy Reform Measures

The Government enacted laws, policies, strategies, and plans to guide the actions to improve health outcomes for women and girls in the country, namely:

- (i) **The Public Health Amendment Act 2021**- makes compulsory vaccination of children against any declared disease as immunisable by the health minister, outlaws misinformation about vaccination and promotes health promotion and awareness.
- (i) The Ministry of Health Strategic Plan (2020/2021- 2024/2025), and

- (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

Expansion of Universal Health Coverage

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, health care is delivered through a systematic, well-coordinated system that facilitates a smooth referral pathway for patients. These consist of the national and regional referral hospitals, the general/district hospitals and the sub-district health care system composed of Health Centre IVs at county/ constituent levels, Health Centre IIIs at sub-county levels and Health Centre IIs and clinics at parish levels.

During the period under review, the Government focused on the construction, renovation and equipping of some of the above 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 new-born care services at the county level. 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 IIIs had been upgraded to HC1Vs in the rural areas and two in Kampala Capital City. There was also a systematic upgrading of Health Centre IIIs, 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 Outpatient (OPD) services, including laboratory and in-patient services, are offered in these facilities. Walking distances to health facilities were 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. One hundred twenty (120) equipped ambulances, procured under the COVID-19 response, were deployed to the regional levels to ease coordination, maintenance and accessibility. By 2022/2023, 21 boat ambulances had been distributed to Local Governments with islands. To further strengthen Emergency Medical Care (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.

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

Sexual and Reproductive and Maternal Health

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



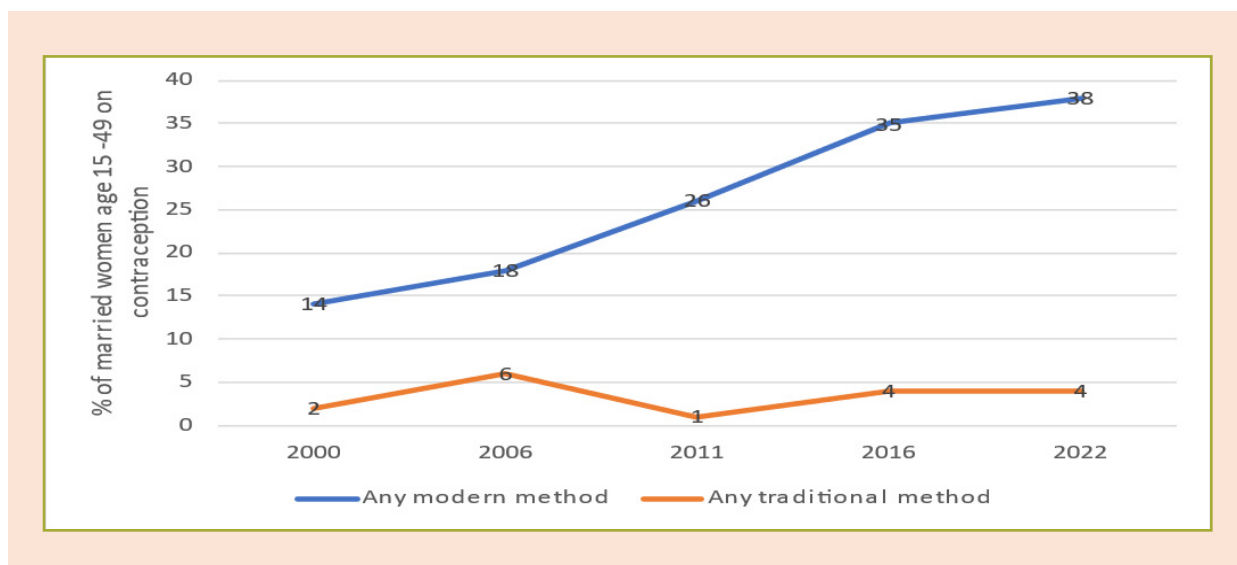
Child, Adolescents Health and Nutrition Services in 2023. It is a practical guide to quality improvement activities for all levels and facilities.

Family Planning

In line with the public/ private partnerships policy, the government improved 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, revealed 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 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 below shows trends in contraceptive use.

FIGURE 8: TRENDS IN MODERN CONTRACEPTIVE USE



Prevention of Maternal Mortality

The prevention of maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity was a joint responsibility of all healthcare providers, policymakers and the communities they serve. The essential Maternal and New-born Care Guidelines developed in 2022 reinforced the safe motherhood initiatives. Pregnant women accessed antenatal services from HC IVs and other facilities at the upstream level. During antenatal visits, women accessed

m micronutrient supplementation, hypertension treatment to prevent preeclampsia and immunisation against tetanus. Antenatal services also provided 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% (ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/UDHS-2022-Report.pdf)

Through the Uganda Reproduction and Child Health Services Improvement project, the Government had functional neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) in all regional hospitals and 25 select General Hospitals. Qualified Neonatal Experts had 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%. ubos.org/wpcontent/uploads/publications/UDHS-2022-Report.pdf

Gender Approaches for Chronic & Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs)

Although 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 rising tide of cancer and other non-communicable diseases in the whole population is a public health concern in the country. Therefore, the services in all public and private health facilities target women and men without discrimination. The government emphasises strengthening laboratory services for cancer screening and other NCDs at all levels and coordination between the Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI) and Uganda Heart Institute (UHI) with all health centres across all regions.

As a prevention measure, the Government promoted and initiated the National Physical Exercise Days as one of the preventative measures for appropriate lifestyles and increased advocacy on regular screening for early detection and treatment. The Government also established a compulsory weekly physical exercise program in public

workplaces. In 2024, the Ministry of Health launched the Africa Test and Treat (ATT) Initiative to intensify the efforts to curb the spread of cancer and other NCDs. The gender approaches for chronic NCDs included advocating for mandatory screening of prostate cancer and free screening for cervical cancer in women. Women of reproductive age are targeted for screening for NCDs during antenatal visits, 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% in 2016/2017 to 11% in FY 2020/2021. Free immunisation of adolescent girls against Human papillomavirus (HPV) is conducted in all health facilities, starting with HC IIIs. However, the magnitude of the problem overwhelms the available services. The community health interventions at the house level are limited. The population still lacks information on appropriate lifestyle strategies to prevent the onset of NCDs.

Mental Health Measures

Mental health is a public health concern in the country, and 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.

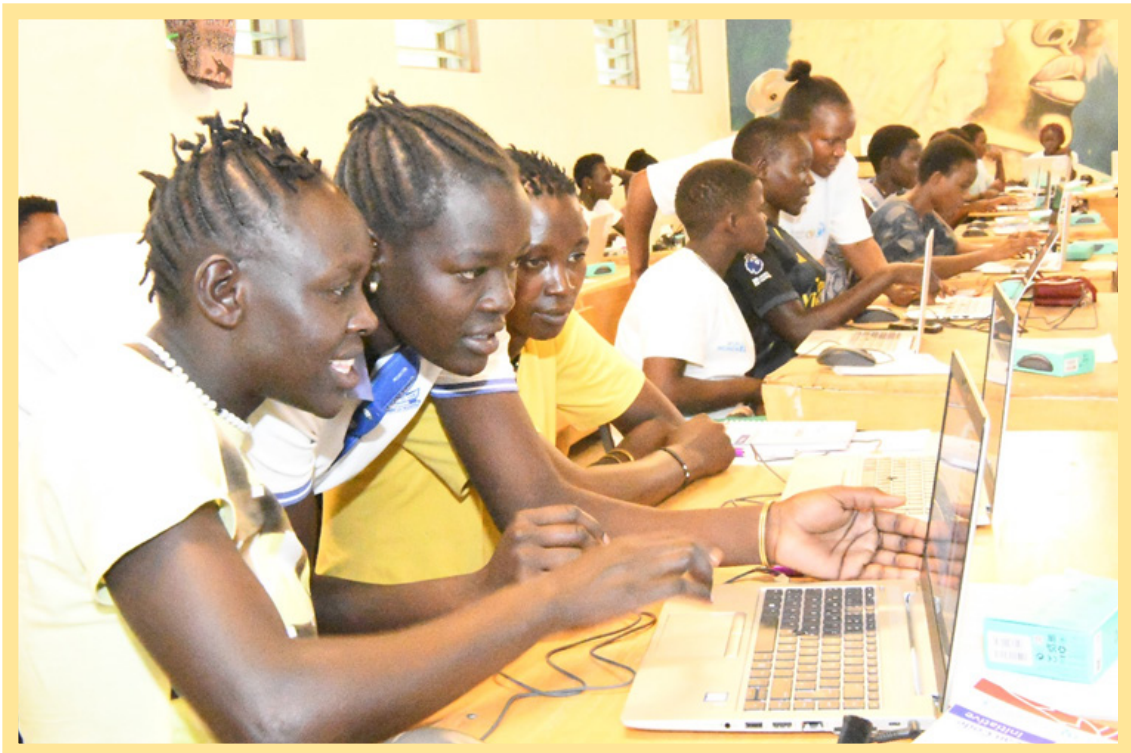
Mental health services in the country are decentralised and integrated with primary health care. Mental health inpatient units were established within regional Referral Hospitals, and pre-service and in-service



training was conducted for general mental health care workers. Butabika National Referral Mental Hospital offers general and specialised mental health treatment and support to the population of Uganda, as well as conducting mental health-related research, teaching medical, nursing, clinical, and other trainees in psychiatry and mental health. Both women and men with mental health access the services. 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, indicating the need to target men more with information and services.

To establish the extent of mental health problems in the country, the recently concluded National Population and Housing Census (2024) had a module on mental health in the interview schedule. The information from the results will guide the Government on what interventions should be implemented to address mental health challenges in the country. The major challenge is insufficient mental health experts; the available few are in urban centres, and the services available in private settings are too expensive for ordinary citizens.

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), the Ruling Political Party Manifesto objective, and consistent with SDG 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all).

Legal and Policy Measures

In 2021, the Ministry of Education and Sports commissioned a review of the 1992 Government White Paper on Education (GWP). The Review Commission established by Legal Notice No. 5 of 2021 investigated and inquired into several Education and Sports sector issues, generated recommendations and is developing a White Paper (*Macro Policy*) framework to guide the Education and Sports services in the country. A 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 attaining education for all as per SDG 4. It continued to strengthen the implementation of policies that promote gender equality in education, such as the Universal Primary Education Policy, Universal Secondary Policies (USE) and Universal Post O-Level Education and Training (UPOLET). In line with the education policy, the Government focused on expanding and constructing seed secondary schools to meet the target of one school in each sub-county. By 2023, 102 out of 117 new secondary schools had been completed under Phase 1 of the World Bank-supported Uganda Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfer (UgIFT) programme¹³.

To operationalize these policies, special programmes, namely, the Gender for Development programme and Skilling Uganda programme, were initiated in the sector to ensure the objectives of the UPE, USE and UPOLET policies are achieved.

The Gender in Education Policy of 2017 continued to guide gender initiatives, including a review of the curriculum for secondary school students and teachers, incorporating School Related Gender -Based Violence (SRGBV) as a module, among others.

The Ministry of Education and Sports promoted Water Sanitation and Hygiene (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 were developed to ensure proper and regular replacement of WASH facilities. In addition, a "Three Star approach" for separate toilets for females, males, and PWDs was promoted.

Guidelines on managing menstruation in schools were developed. Emergency sanitary towels, education, and skills for making pads were provided to learners and teachers as part of the guidelines. Menstrual management programmes involved 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.

¹³Midterm NRM manifesto report, 2024



Safe and Inclusive Educational Environments for Women and Girls

The Ministry of Education and Sports continued to implement the National Strategic Plan for Eliminating Violence Against Children in School, which was developed in 2015 (NSP/ EVACiS). The Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response Guidelines for the VACiS and the case management registers were developed and 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 MoES implemented the child-friendly school module using the national guidelines on reporting and integrated responses to Violence Against Children in Schools (VACiS). In 2020, the Module was scaled up, and teachers, 50% of whom were females, acquired training and could apply the child centred pedagogy, record and report cases of VAC using the Reporting Tracking Referral and Response (RTRR) tool. Mechanisms to systematically deal with GBV in schools, notably defilement, rape and sexual harassment, were developed. For example, in 2020, guidelines for Senior women and men teachers were developed. The teachers were trained on how to identify and respond to specific needs and interests, such as the sexual maturation of girls and boys in school and how to cope with it.

Guidelines for the prevention and management of teenage pregnancy were revised and approved in 2020, ([Revised-Guidelines-Prevention-Management-Teenage-Pregnancy-School-Settings-Uganda2020-eng.pdf](#) (ungei.org)). The

Guidelines provided a second chance for child mothers to re-enrol in school. Girls were involved in life skills training activities to enable them to develop their self-esteem and leadership skills. The government developed and distributed the Life Skills Toolkit to promote the enrolment and retention of girls in schools and other training institutions in 2022 to enable students to become agile and adaptive learners. A mentoring programme for girls is in place to guide them in making appropriate and purposeful life decisions. In addition, gender awareness creation was 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 focused on professional development and equipping teachers with gender-responsive pedagogies. Also, female science teachers were mentored to be models/champions and encourage girls to take up science courses. There was a systematic strategy to deploy female teachers in hard-to-reach areas where they are given accommodation and other incentives.

Despite the above interventions, beliefs and practices in the home, community and school environments mutually reinforce each other and impact negatively on girls' enrolment, retention and learning potential in the school environment. As a result, the national net enrolment rate for girls in secondary school is lower than that of boys, and fewer girls complete Senior four (lower secondary school).

Actions to Increase Girls' Access to, Retention in and Completion of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Tertiary Education

Measures for Promotion of Girls' Participation in TVET

The BTVET Policy of 2019 and Skilling Uganda Strategic Plan (2012/13-2021/22) continued to guide the sector in increasing the quality of skills and achieving greater organisational and management of BTVET. The Government 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 was a reserved special quota for girls, at least 25

%, in all TVET courses, and gender responsive facilities were provided to ensure a safe and secure environment for girls. There was increased visibility of women's participation in all "non-traditional" courses.

Measures in the Tertiary and University Education

The Government's affirmative policy of awarding 1.5 points to all girls who qualify for entry into public universities continued to be applied. In addition, various public universities instituted other affirmative action measures that increased the number of girls in these institutions. The example of Makerere University, the oldest institution in the country, is presented below:

Makerere University Affirmative Action Measures

- The admission policy passed by the University Senate allows for a ratio of 60:40 maximum for either sex in STEM courses.
- Awards scholarships to 40 female students every academic year under the Female Scholarship Programme.
- In partnership with the MasterCard Foundation, an equity programme for disadvantaged students (PWDs, refugees, and the poor) is implemented, with 70% females and 30% males.

As a result of the different affirmative actions implemented by the University, the proportion of female graduates to the total students for the last two (2) years was 52%, an increase from 10% in the 1990s.

To equalise education opportunities in tertiary and universities for students in poor resource households, the Government continued

implementing 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

Gender-Sensitive Educational Curricula Reviews and Capacity Building of Teachers

Curriculum reviews continued in line with the new teacher policy. A module on school-related GBV was developed for the Teacher Training Curriculum. To address the lockdown effects of the COVID19 pandemic, the National Curriculum Development Centre developed an abridged curriculum to minimise disruptions. The lower secondary curriculum was reviewed to introduce a competency-based approach focusing on skills acquisition over content knowledge. The implementation of the curriculum commenced in 2020. In 2022, a needs assessment study was conducted to guide the review of the Advanced Level Secondary level curriculum. Various educational institutions continued to integrate gender into academic programmes. For example, Makerere University implemented 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 an adequate understanding of gender in education issues.

Since the formulation of the Gender in Education policy, continuous professional development programs were rolled out through teacher training colleges on Gender and STEM, school-related GBV, Gender Responsive Pedagogy, and creating a safe learning environment, among others. The Government adopted some models, such as *the Journeys and the Good school toolkit*, to empower teachers with knowledge on gender equality and human rights.

Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

The Government's commitment to promoting STEM is reflected in the preferential enhancement of salaries for teachers of science in secondary schools which was started in 2021.

The Secondary Science and Mathematics Teachers (SESEMAT) program continued to be one of the significant interventions implemented to improve students' academic performance and attitude towards science. Through the programme supported by JICA and implemented by the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Government has been able to achieve the following:

- (i) expand infrastructure for teaching science in secondary schools, such as building new laboratories and renovation of the existing ones,
 - (ii) supply of laboratory equipment, chemicals and science textbooks.
 - (iii) Recruitment of more science teachers
 - (iv) Establishment of teachers' resource centres and
 - (v) Imparting computer and ICT skills to teachers and students
- (iv) Public and Private Universities, too, had initiatives. For example, Makerere University, in addition to providing scholarships, started a mentorship programme for girls in STEM in 2023. The programme under the Innovations Hub aims to reduce gender disparities in STEM and involves assigning national and international mentors to the students to assist them in acquiring employable skills. As a result of such innovative actions, the enrolment of girls in STEM at this University increased from 35% in 2020 to 42% in 2023¹⁴.

There were several other initiatives by public and private sector institutions to promote the participation of women/ girls in STEM courses. Examples of these were:

- (i) The Ministry of Education and Sports encouraged coding camps, which were held with secondary and TVET girls, and science fairs were organised in secondary schools. Mathematics competitions were also held to interest girls in the subject.
- (ii) Capacity-building sessions to promote gender-responsive STEM were conducted by UNESCO and some CSOs in the education sector for STEM teachers, school administrators, teacher educators, and NGOs.
- (iii) Women's rights organisations in STEM, such as FAWE-U, conducted mentoring sessions for girls in secondary schools and assisted them to appreciate the importance of STEM.

¹⁴Speech of the Vice Chancellor at the launch of the Mentorship Programme for Female students in Stem on 6th April 2023.



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 Prioritised for Action

The forms of GBV prioritised for action are outlined in the National Policy on Elimination of Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Uganda, 2016. These forms were prioritised for action based on the realisation that GBV remains a critical human right, public health, social and

economic concern. The prevalence of all forms of violence is still unacceptably high, and the negative consequences of the vice affect the survivors, individuals, families, communities and the country at large. The forms were:

Physical Violence

Findings from the UDHS 2022 showed that 44% of women and 39% of men aged 15- 49 had experienced physical violence since age 15. Although this was a reduction from the findings of the UDHS, 2016, which reported that 51% of women and 52% of men experienced physical violence since the age of 15, the prevalence rates are high. Societal attitudes towards wife-beating have not changed significantly since 60% of respondents agreed on one or more reasons to justify wife-beating (VAW/G Survey 2021). Also, according to the Survey, 7% of physically abused women who initiated violence against men was 7%.

Sexual Violence, including Sexual Harassment, in the Workplace

The National Survey on Violence in Uganda (2021)([02_2022UBOS_VAWG_Report_-_Quantitative_report.pdf](#)) indicated that 95% of respondents had experienced physical or sexual violence, or both, by partners or non-partners since the age of 15 years. The Survey findings further revealed that across all generations, over half of the girls experienced childhood sexual abuse before the age of 15 years. The lifetime prevalence of intimate partner sexual violence was 36%, whereas physical violence among ever-partnered women was 45%. Sexual harassment at workplaces is an increasingly reported problem causing severe harm to women employed in public and private institutions. Findings from the VAW/G Survey 2021 reveal that 86% of women had experienced acts of violence, either verbal abuse or written or physical harm, in the workplace.

Economic Violence and Psychological Violations.

Approximately 50% of the women in Uganda (47%) face economic violence. Two in every ten women (23%) are forced to give their earnings to their partners, one in every ten women (10%) gave up paid jobs because their partners refused then to work, one-quarter of the women (25%) had their partner refuse to give them money for household expenses([02_2022UBOS_VAWG_Report_-_Quantitative_report.pdf](#)).

Harmful Practices of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Child Marriage.

According to data from the UDHS, 2016 and 2022, the prevalence of FGM remains lower than that in other countries in Africa at 0.3% among women aged 15-49 years. Although the national prevalence rate appears low, the problem is intense among the Sabiny in the districts of Kapchorwa, Kween and Bukwo, where 50% of women and girls undergo the practice, and among the Pokot, Kadam, Tepth, and Ike in the Karamoja Region, with 95% of women and girls being subjected to FGM. Despite the practice having been made illegal under the Prohibition of FGM Act 2010, the prevalence among practising communities is high. Programming efforts have focused on individual and community-based approaches to achieve abandonment of the practice. Child marriage is widespread in many communities in the country.



3.3.2 Priority Actions to Address Gender-Based Violence

The Government continued to ensure enforcement of the existing Laws and implementation of Policies and Guidelines for the prevention and response to GBV. These include The Domestic Violence Act 2010 and Regulations, The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2009, and The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act 2010.

Legal and Policy Reforms

- (i) The Children Act 2020
- (ii) The National Child Policy 2020
- (iii) The Succession (Amendment) Act, 2022
- (iv) The Male Involvement Strategy (2021)
- (v) The Guidelines for Establishment and Management of GBV Shelters, first released in 2013, were revised in 2022.

The above frameworks strengthened the legal and policy framework for addressing GBV in Uganda.

Programme Measures

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 and implemented as a collaboration between over twenty Ministries,

Departments, and Agencies, seven District Local Governments¹⁵ including Kampala Capital City Authority, eight UN Agencies and Entities¹⁶, as well as from 30 Civil Society and Non-State Actors, the Private Sector, Academia, Religious Leaders and Traditional/Cultural Institutions.

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development 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 supported Uganda's advancement towards NDP III and the SDGs, particularly SDG 5, prioritising the "Leave No One Behind" principle. The goal of the Spotlight Initiative was 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 was 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.

¹⁵Amudat, Arua, Kasese, Kitgum, Kyegegwa and Tororo;

¹⁶UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, IOM, OHCHR, and Pulse Lab

The registered achievements include the following:

- (i) The programme reached over 20 million beneficiaries against a target of 13 million with interventions across the Six pillars (Outcome areas)
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) 9 Government and academia training institutions' curricula integrated with GEWE, GBV, VAWG, HPs, GRB, and SRHR.
- (v) 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.
- (vi) 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

- (vii) 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 in Uganda (G4DU) 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 Third National Development Plan (NDPIII), 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 grant is disbursed under different fund codes/donors, and these include the following;

- 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 the Netherlands.
- The Global Programme to End Child Marriage (UNFPA/UNICEF).
- The RISE programme is 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 included Religious and Cultural Institutions¹⁷. These institutions were supported to implement agreed action plans, pronouncements and public declarations to address GBV, promote positive and gender-equitable practices, HIV, SRHR, FGM prevention, teenage pregnancy prevention and strengthening reporting.

GBV Special Court Sessions

With the support of the United Nations Joint Programme on Prevention and Response of GBV (2020- 2023), the Government established Special Courts Sessions for GBV cases, which reduced case backlogs and made it more effective in addressing GBV cases. The Judiciary handled the cases, and their judgements advanced equality between men and women.

The Special Gender Based Violence (GBV) Court Sessions in the Judiciary and an Implementation Plan to Fast Track the Management of GBV cases in the Judiciary is in place. The Justice, Law and Order Sector has been conducting Special SGBV Court Sessions since 2019, which has contributed to improvement in the conviction rate, especially capital offences such as aggravated defilement, murder because of GBV and rape. According to available evidence in table 5 below, the conviction rate of GBV cases improved from 59.8% in 2019/20 to 64.7% in 2023/24

¹⁷The 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

Table 5: Data on Key Indicators on Prosecution of Sexual & Gender related cases since 2018/19

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Newly Registered Cases Files	6594	12,233	9,957	11,460	13,722	9,515	12,311
Sanctioned Files	3781	7,346	5,944	6,463	8,028	5,672	7,429
Closed Files	1423	2,530	1,748	1,967	2,228	1,575	2,092
Convictions	522	1,291	1,249	1,506	2,307	1,849	2,081
Acquittals	31	73	61	54	37	68	92
Dismissals	402	990	642	440	770	851	945
Withdrawals	56	120	136	66	75	67	100
Conviction Rate	51.6%	52.2%	59.8%	72.9%	72.3%	65.2%	64.7%

Deliberate efforts have also been made to institute Justice for Children Coordinators at High Courts to provide technical support to ensure gender-sensitive and child-friendly case management in the justice system. The coordinators support in adjudicating and disposing of 5,362 criminal cases involving children, 2,492 of whom were girls for the period 2020-2023. In 2022, 1,509 GBV survivors in refugee settlements were supported with individual case management by recruiting seven additional GBV staff, establishment of one-stop centres and protection safe houses.

Measures to Support Abandonment of FGM in Practicing Communities:

Under the Joint Programme on FGM, the District Local Governments in the practising communities were 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). Also, under the Joint Programme, a simplified version of the FGM law was disseminated to 34 “high-risk” sub-counties. MGLSD, with support from UNFPA, developed a Training of Trainers manual to prepare community facilitators to carry out dialogues on the FGM law at the grass-roots level. 500 Local law enforcement officials and community-level advocates were trained to enforce the legislation.

Other strategies against FGM involved investments in the education of the girl child, e.g. Kalas Girls School in Amudat, putting in place health care for emergency cases and management of adverse events, the establishment of GBV (safety) Centers in Amudat, Moroto and Kween District Local Governments where girls escaping FGM can be sheltered FGM Cutters were offered alternative income sources under existing Government Programmes such as UWEP and the Parish Development Model (PDM) Programmes to persuade them to abandon



the practice which had been taken as an income generating activity. In 2021, an Inter-Ministerial Committee was established, and meetings were organized between the Government of Uganda and neighbouring countries to address cross-border FGM.

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 mobilisation. The Gender machinery and various CSOs and women's rights organisations were 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. Another strategy was conducting in-school and out-of-school outreaches on ending FGM, teenage pregnancies and child marriage. Additionally, the Government adopted the male Involvement Strategy, which aimed to galvanise the support of men and boys against VAWG.

Local Governments and CSOs were supported to use behavioural change approaches such as SASA. Some CSOs like FOWODE, NUWODU, and UWONET have 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. Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group trained local government staff to integrate and allocate funds for GBV in their budget framework papers. It 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 mobilisation, and sensitization. Local Governments and CSOs supported the use of behavioural change approaches such as Start Awareness Support and Action (SASA). All these aimed to foster a zero-tolerance culture to GBV for Social Behavioural Change for norms and practices that drive GBV.

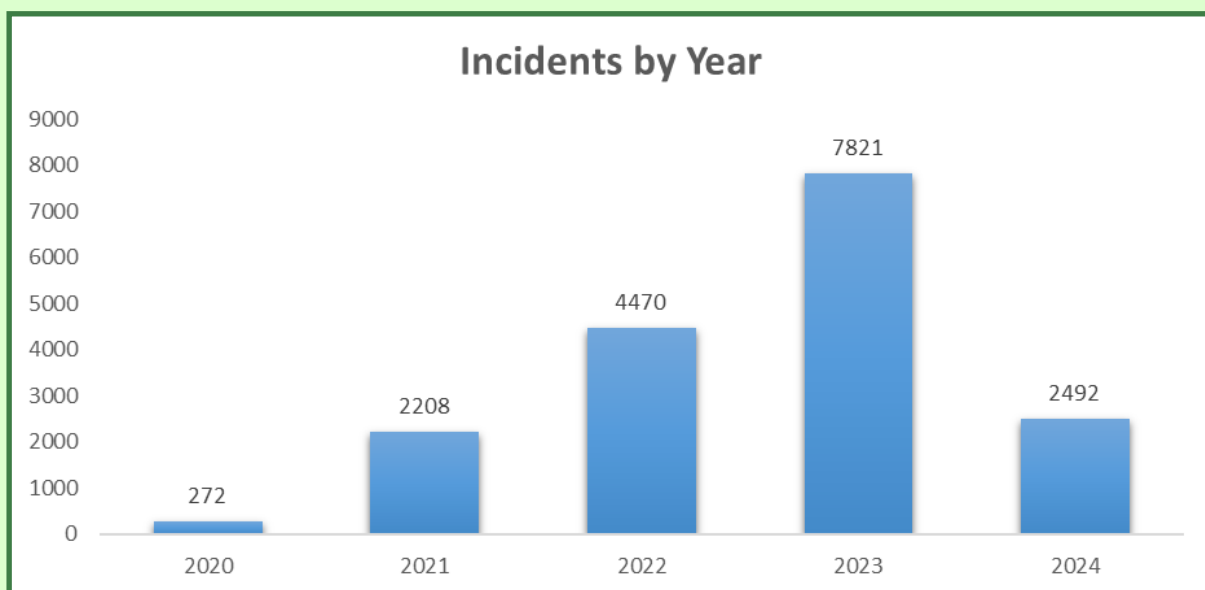
At the national level, the 16 Days of Activism Campaign Against GBV and the National Commemoration of Zero Tolerance to FGM Day were organized annually by the MGLSD in collaboration with national and Local Government stakeholders. The purpose of these advocacy days was to create awareness among the public 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.

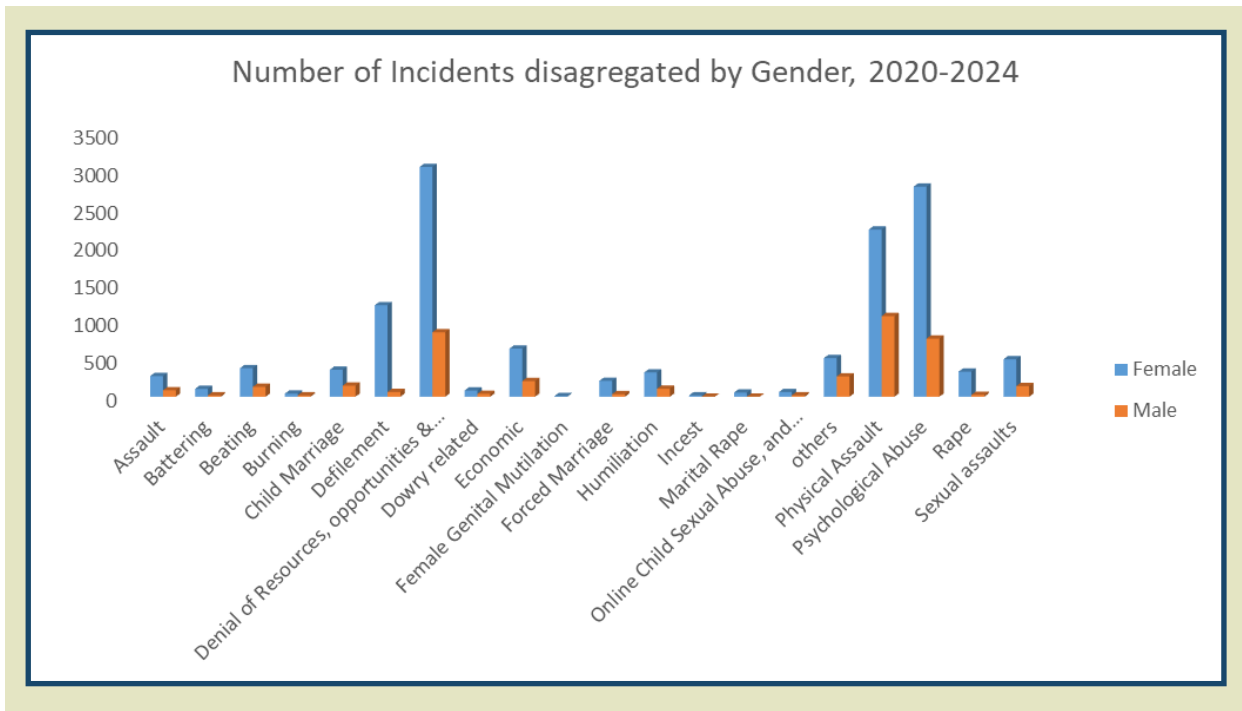
Evidence and Data Management Measures

Generating data and information to establish the magnitude of GBV and the impact of services has been a key strategy in informing GBV prevention and response efforts in Uganda. The Government under the leadership of UBOS, conducted a National GBV Survey in 2020 and the UDHS 2022 continued to generate data on GBV.

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) established a National Gender-Based Violence Database (NGBVD) within the GBV Policy and Action Plan framework. This data was vital for uniform policy formulation, programming and advocacy, and 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 including capturing variables on disability. The NGBV system was expanded to 71 districts with the support of 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. Figures 9 and 10 below highlight the number and incident types of cases reported through NGBVD from 2020-2024.





The Uganda Police released weekly, monthly, and annual reports on crime rates in the country. Data on GBV-reported cases was part 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. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, with support from UN Women and other actors, conducted the Gender Assessment and Analyses to provide evidence, sex and age disaggregated data and information for planning and programming.

Capacity Building of Stakeholders in Planning and Budgeting for GBV Prevention and Response

The Ministries of Finance Planning and Economic Development, Gender Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Public Service and the Equal Opportunities Commission conduct capacity building on gender and equity budgeting and GBV prevention and response. CSOs under the leadership of Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG), trained Gender Focal Point Officers in MDAs and Local Governments in gender and equity budgeting and integrating GBV in planning and budgeting.

A 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 Ministry of Public Service developed a module on

GBV prevention and response that has been utilised to orient and train Civil Servants on GBV prevention and response as well as supporting the development of plans of actions.

The Government under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) 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 Amplified Gender-Based Violence

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

The Computer Misuse Amendment Act 2022 restricts unauthorised access to information and data, sending information that promotes

hate speech and malicious unsolicited information. To a certain extent, the law has created awareness about cyber harassment and violence amplified from information misuse. For instance, in 2022, over 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 pursues a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach to addressing GBV. In this regard, Women's Rights Organizations (WROs) 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 (2019-2023)

the UN Joint Programme on GBV and the UN Joint Programme to address FGM. The Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) receives funds from the Government through the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development to implement actions to prevent and respond to GBV especially on positive social norms change and male engagement.



3.3.6 Actions to Address the Negative Portrayal of Women and Girls, Discrimination and Gender Bias in the Media, including Social Media

The Anti-Pornography Act 2014 prohibits production, trafficking in, publishing, broadcasting, procuring, importing, exporting, selling or abetting any form of pornography. 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. The law also applies and imposes charges to those who expose their sexual body parts.

Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA) trained and sensitised the 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 implemented targeted awareness campaigns and legal support systems. These educated all women about their rights and offered 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), Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD), Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT), and Ministry of Water and Environment (MoWE), have in place infrastructural and social safeguards guidelines address gender-based violence, violence against children including 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 (GRMs) to handle any GBV-reported cases, and contractors are mandated to abide by the rules.

Progress Made

The considerable investment in GBV 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. The percentage of women who experience physical violence since the age of 15 has declined steadily since 2016 from 51% to 23% in 2022. 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 the same period, there has been a significant reduction in men's experience of IPV over their lifetime and during 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.

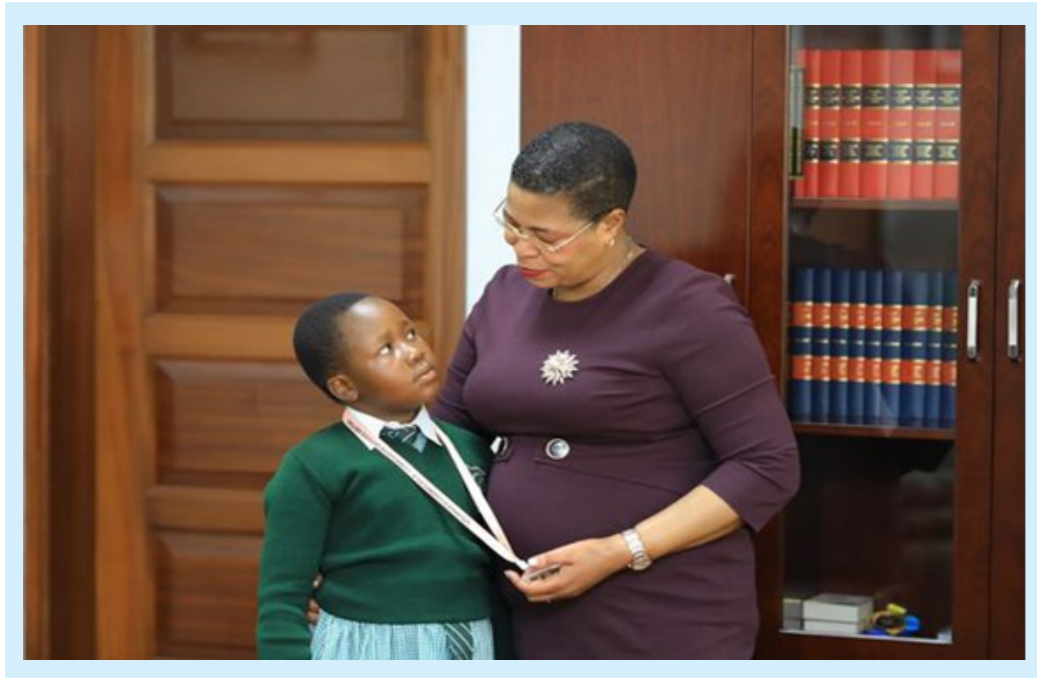
Access to justice for survivors of gender-based violence has improved, although much more is needed. In 2023, 26.6% of GBV-related cases reported to the police were investigated and taken to court (compared with 20.8% in 2022), and 4.8% resulted in a conviction, compared with 1.3% in 2022.

The Conviction rate of GBV cases through the Special Court Sessions on GBV increased from 50% in 2016 to 64.7% in 2023/2024. 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 from 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, which has informed interventions on mental health by the Ministry of Health.

The proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) 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 FGM/C 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



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

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

The Government upheld the affirmative provisions in the Constitution and the laws¹⁸ that provided quotas (affirmative action) for special interest groups (SIGs)¹⁹ to be represented in parliament and local council structures.

Legal and Policy Reforms

The following new laws were enacted and 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.

¹⁸The laws establishing structures for these special interest groups were 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

¹⁹ The SIGs include women, workers, UPDF, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, and workers.

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.

Participation of Women in Parliamentary Elections

A new 5-year electoral cycle started in 2021 when elections were conducted for presidential, parliamentary, and lower local council levels. The number of women in Parliament increased slightly from 33% in the 10th Parliament (2016- 2021) to 33.8% in the 11th Parliament (2021-2025). 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 54.2% of men. 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).

Women in Decision-Making Positions in Public Services

In the Public Service, there were 16 women Permanent Secretaries out of 31, 15 women Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of Commissions out of 39 and 14 women Ambassadors out of 37 Ambassadors.

Women in Positions in Local Government

The Local Government Act 1997 (section 117(1) as amended provides for the 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. 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) women district chairpersons, and one (1) city mayor out of 146.

Women's Leadership in Religious Institutions.

The Inter-Religious 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 secretariat lobbied for policy reforms in the constituent members, coupled with women's capacity building 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.

Women's Leadership in Refugee Settings

In refugee and humanitarian settings, the leadership training, mentorship and participation in English for Adults (EFA) programme strengthened women's confidence levels, enabling them to articulate issues during community meetings and to take on community leadership roles in churches and savings groups, among others. Women who participated in leadership training are actively engaged in the community mobilisation process and are awaiting Refugee Welfare Committees (RWC) elections to participate as candidates. Women's representation in the RWC increased. For example, in Adjumani and Yumbe districts, they increased from 46% in 2021 to 55% in 2023 and from 15% to 46%, respectively.

Capacity Building of Women in Leadership

Various Women's Rights Organisations (WROs) affiliated under the cluster of Women and Democracy Group, 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 Members of Parliament 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 Offences 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, and YLP, among others.

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 and the uptake of services for improved service delivery by the population. The Ministry of ICT & National Guidance continued to provide strategic and technical leadership, oversight, and coordination on all policies, laws, and regulations for the ICT sector.

Legal and Policy Reforms

The Constitution of Uganda enshrines the right to freedom of expression, which encompasses the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas. The Government maintained the laws regulating the media landscape and content creators' activities for responsible and ethical content creation.

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.

Programme Measures

The Government continued licensing the country's media actors, mainly printing television, radio, and online services. By the end of 2023, the Uganda Communication

Commission (UCC) 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 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%. According to Finscope 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.



3.4.3 Measures to Strengthen the 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 women's empowerment. 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 4 more 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 mobilisation and empowerment. Its principal mandate is to mobilise 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 and equity, human rights, culture and empowerment.

The national machinery employs a twin-track approach; mainstreaming gender across the entire Government and implementation of specific women's projects. The current strategic location and consolidation of the functions into one entity also enables the Ministry to employ a life cycle approach and social inclusion in promoting gender equality

and empowerment of women and girls thus playing 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 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 Government Agencies and Public Expenditure (RAPEX). Once completed, this reform will enhance service delivery coordination to vulnerable groups.

Further, the Ministry was strengthened with increased financial resources. As indicated in Section 2.3, the Ministry implements the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) and the Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women

Enterprises (GROW), which were allocated funds for women business enterprises and Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) for the young men and women as well as grants for other SIGs.

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 (CMMC) 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 as presented in the trend analysis of funds accessed by MGLSD for the Financial Years 2020/2021 to 2023/2024 in table 6 below.

TABLE 6: 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
CMMC	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

The percentage of the national budget allocated to 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

(i) National Level Policy Coordination Mechanisms and National Development Plan Coordination 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 programme-based approach to planning, budgeting, implementation and reporting addressed the challenges of



uncoordinated planning, weak harmonization, and the poor linkage between outcomes and outputs. The 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 (OPM) and appropriate to the country's resources. Steering Committee/ Programme Working Groups (PWGs) 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 Programme Implementation Action Plans (PIAPs), Budget Framework Papers (BFPs) and progress reports are formulated.

The above Government-led mechanism for coordination of the implementation of NDPIII 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. Several gender and equity structures aligned to NDPIII were in place to support the implementation and generate gender and equity-responsive outcomes. These include:

The National Women Leaders Forum (NWLF)

The Forum is an initiative by the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, the Head of the National Gender Machinery and brings together women leaders at strategic levels from public and private sectors. The NWLF is convened annually and is attended by women leaders in strategic positions, including Ministers, Members of Parliament, Women on National Boards and Commissions, Women in Business, Permanent Secretaries, Directors and Commissioners, Members of the Gender Development Partners' Group, National, Non- Government Organisations, Women in the Forces, the Media, Religious Institutions and the Private Sector. The Forum builds on the achievements registered towards gender equality and empowerment of women, and through it, the women leaders collectively work together to address the key concerns of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the Country and chart out the women's agenda in the Country. The first Forum meeting was convened in 2022 and the second in 2023, with the support of UN Agencies and other Development Partners. The outcome of the NWLF is a set of commitments on agreed priority areas identified as critical for moving the GEWE agenda forward.

The National Women's Council

This is a six-tier structure of elected women leaders beginning at the village, parish, sub-county, and district levels and continuing up to the national level with the National Women's Council Secretariat, which runs the day-to-day activities of the Council. The council unites all the women in the country into one forum, which is used to advocate for women's rights, development and access to

services delivered by all government agencies. Government agencies use the structure to provide health, agricultural inputs, information and financial services to women. During this period, the Council mobilised women to participate in peace and security as members of peace committees in LGs, socio-economic empowerment groups and PDM. Since 2020, the council has trained about 21,370 women leaders nationwide.

(ii) National Level Technical Gender Mechanisms:

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 MFPEd 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.

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 comprises representatives from ministries, departments, agencies (MDAs), academia, civil society, and faith-based organisations.

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

(iii) National 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's empowerment by mandating that all government institutions plan and budget for gender and equity issues.

The National Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines, 2023: The Department of Gender and Women Affairs in the MGLSD developed the guidelines to facilitate a standard approach to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Uganda. The Guidelines outline what



institutions should do to mainstream gender concerns 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. Other tools for mainstreaming gender across the entire Government are presented in Section 4.2. MDAs have specific tools, such as sectoral policies and guidelines, that guide gender mainstreaming within their respective entities.

(iv) Gender-Based Violence Working Groups coordinated by the MGLSD on GBV response and prevention include:

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 prosecutors face in handling GBV cases, guiding the policy and legal frameworks on GBV and finally, providing 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.

(v) Gender Mainstreaming Mechanisms/ Structures at the MDA Level

At the Ministry Department and Agency (MDA) levels, various structures are responsible for gender mainstreaming and coordinating 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.

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.

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.

In the *Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF)*. There were structural changes in the new UPDF establishment of 2021 where the Directorate of Women Affairs was decentralised to the Directorate of Human Resource Management in the four services of the UPDF. The decentralised structure addresses GEWE issues among the combatants, undertakes deployment of women Officers and ensures their professional growth. The restructuring enabled the Force to manage the issues of GEWE close to the combatants and also to enable 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.

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 Unit under the Directorate of Chief Political Commissariat which handles family and children's cases.

The Uganda Prisons established the Gender Desk Committee 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:

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 implementers of each Research Institute are part of this mechanism.

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.

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.

The Office Auditor General (OAG) has a unique mechanism for 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 marginalised groups, e.g., children and minors at risk, and outreach activities. The Women's Forum also handles the welfare and training of women staff in the institution.

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 prioritises sectoral issues for resource allocation.

Furthermore, some of the MDAs and Institutions, 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.

(vi) Tools for Gender Mainstreaming at the MDA Level

Gender-specific policies, Strategies and Action Plans are the primary tools for mainstreaming gender at the MDA level. Before 2020, several MDAs had in place sectoral policies that were operational during this period. The following MDAs formulated and implemented specific gender policies, strategies and action plans in line with Uganda Gender Policy.

The Uganda Women's Land Rights Agenda 2021-2030 was developed by the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD) to promote gender equality and women's land rights, which in turn will facilitate development in all sectors of the economy, including agriculture.

The Judiciary Strategic Plan V 2020/21-2024/25 is a successor of the Judiciary Gender Policy and Strategy 2012 and conforms with NDPIII.

The Defence Gender and Equity Policy in 2023 was developed by the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs (MoDVA). The policy, when approved, will promote gender responsiveness in the operations and institutions of MoDVA.

Uganda Energy Policy, 2023, was developed by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development to guide gender mainstreaming in human resources and its operations.

(vii) Mechanisms at the Local Government Levels

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.

(viii) Participation of CSOs in the Gender Coordination Mechanisms

Civil Society and Women's organisations 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.

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 of the Republic of Uganda 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, 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 sections on women's status, highlighting gaps and human rights concerns that hinder women's empowerment. Based on the issues established, the Commission can provide recommendations for action by Government Agencies but can also summon Government entities in case of delayed actions regarding the recommendations. The law mandates the Commission to conduct periodic tribunals, receive complaints and take appropriate actions on any government entity.

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 EOC monitors 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 in accordance with Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), 2015.

To effect the above mandates, EOC conducts tribunals, research, 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 guided Parliament on approval of budgets of Government entities based on the level of compliance based on the minimum requirements on gender and equity.

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 remained 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. These Resolutions ensure women’s meaningful participation in promoting peace and security, conflict prevention and resolution, eliminating GBV and ending impunity at all levels. In a bid to secure peace and security in the country and with its neighbouring states, the Government took the following actions among others:

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

The Government, through the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development, reviewed the National Action Plan I and II on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and developed the Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP 111 WPS), 2021-2025. The Plan is aligned with SDG 5, SDG 16 and Third National Development Plan (NDPIII). 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 NAP provides a strategic framework for mainstreaming 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 local languages, including a version in "Ngakarimojong", for the Karamoja Region, which is characterised by conflict due mainly to cattle rustling. The Popular versions were disseminated in various forums to suit the target audience.

Localisation of the NAP.

At the Local Government level, with support from the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development and UN Women, Women's Rights Organisations, namely, CoACT 1325, the Women's International Peace Centre (WIPC) and other stakeholders, supported the development and implementation of fourteen (14) District Local Action Plans (LAPs) 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. This case of localization strategy has been cited globally as a good practice that supports practical solutions to women's 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.

Policy Reforms

The Government made the two key policy reforms: (i) Development and adoption of the Uganda Police Force Gender Policy, Strategy and Action Plan (2019-2023) and (ii) The International 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 peacebuilding.



Women's Participation in the Security Sector

Participation in Regional Peacekeeping Missions. In accordance with SDG 16, target 16.3 (promote the rule of law at national and international levels) and Target 16.7 (ensure inclusive representation in decision-making at all levels), the Government was committed 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.

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, which include a 30% quota for women recruits and an additional two percentage (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). In partnership with CSOs, the government also established and trained District Peace Committees in LGs, mainly in central, western, north and Karamoja regions, chaired by the Resident District Commissioners (RDCs), chairpersons of District Security Committees). Thirty per cent (30%) of the members of the Peace Committees are women.

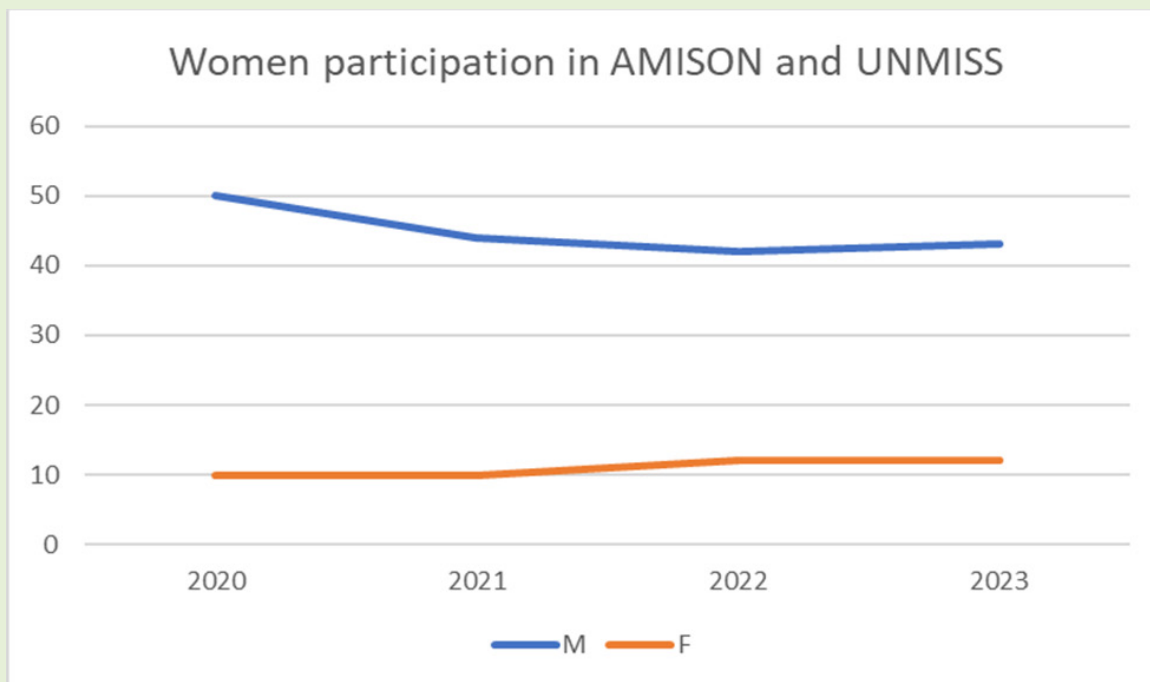
As a result of increased awareness about women's empowerment, reforms were made in the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) organisational structure. The UPDF

structural reforms encourage at least 10% representation of qualified women in every deployment into the Force. The UPDF established a Directorate of Women Affairs headed by a female Officer at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, as discussed in Section 3.4.4. The UPDF has since promoted five (5) females to the rank of General. Additionally, the Force has three female representatives elected into Parliament. The institutions play a crucial role in developing policies related to security.

In 2022, the UPDF commenced the development of the UPDF Gender Policy for the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs. Once approved, 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 eliminate discrimination and promote the rights of women in the Forces, widows and orphans were supported through income-generating projects. In addition, pro-bono services were available for widows and families of deceased soldiers and veterans under the Legal Aid Clinic. Like the UPDF, the Uganda Police Force (UPF) institutionalised gender-responsive measures into its system. Over the reporting period, the percentage of female officers in the UPF increased from 18% (2020) to 20% (2024). Although the number of women involved in peacekeeping remains lower than that of men, Figure 11 shows increased numbers since 2020 but remained stagnant over the last two years.

FIGURE 11: WOMEN POLICE OFFICERS IN AMISON & UNMISS



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

Women Peacebuilding Initiatives in the Country

In collaboration with UN Agencies and CSOs, the Government enhanced women’s technical expertise 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 organisations carried out several initiatives to enhance women in peacebuilding processes. Civil Society Organisations 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 Local Action Plans (LAP) on the WPS agenda.

These efforts contributed to the increase in women’s participation in the different peacebuilding platforms, such as the District Peace 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’s International Peace Centre Annual Reports 2020-2022).

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 organisations were launched to mobilise 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).

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 to advise on gender mainstreaming in the Judiciary and outreach programmes. Women's participation in justice has increased over the past few years. There were 46 women Justices and Judges, constituting 48.4% compared to 38 (44.7%) in 2021; Registrars constituted 56.8%; magistrates comprised 49.1% compared to 46.3% in 2021. In addition, the Judiciary built a capacity of 148 mediators²⁴. As of Dec 2022, the number of women Justices and Judges increased to 43 out of 95, although the percentage reduced to 45.2% compared to their male counterparts, who were 52 at 54.7%²⁵.

Transforming the Administration of Justice in Uganda

The Government installed a video conferencing facility facilitated by improved internet infrastructure in courts across the country. 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 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 promoted speedy trials and enhanced access to justice, and the case filing rate has increased by 2.8%. Lawyers were filing e-submissions online, and cases were 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.

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, as indicated in Figure 10.

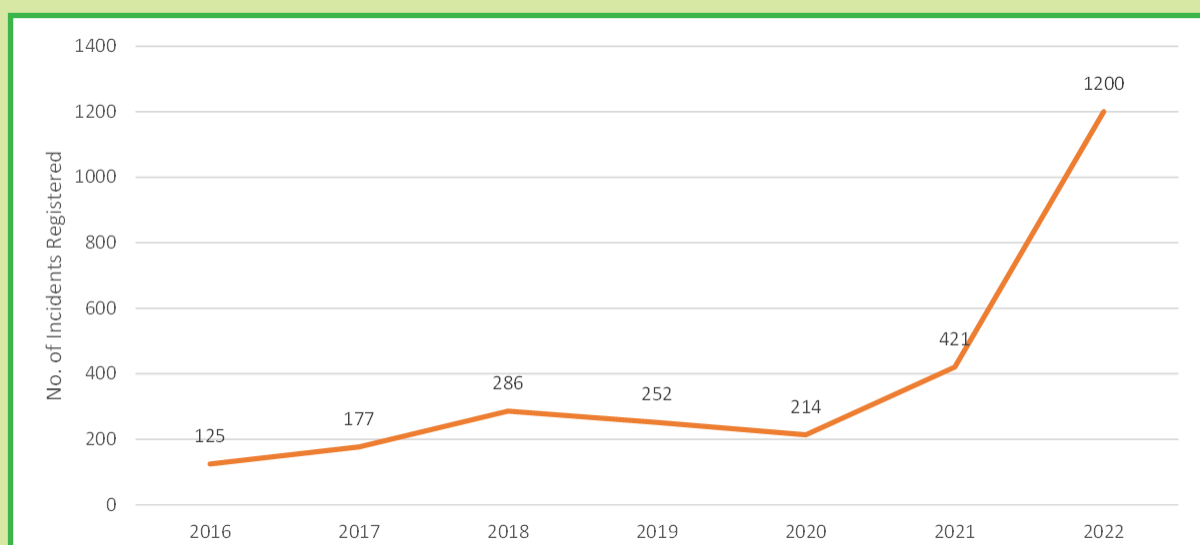
Combating Trafficking in Persons:

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.

Like the global trend, Uganda saw a surge in human trafficking. A total of 1,200 persons were trafficked during FY 2022/2023. Figure 11 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, increased public awareness and sensitization campaigns against trafficking in persons, and increased enforcement by police and prosecutors.

FIGURE 12: TREND OF INCIDENTS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS FROM 2016-2022



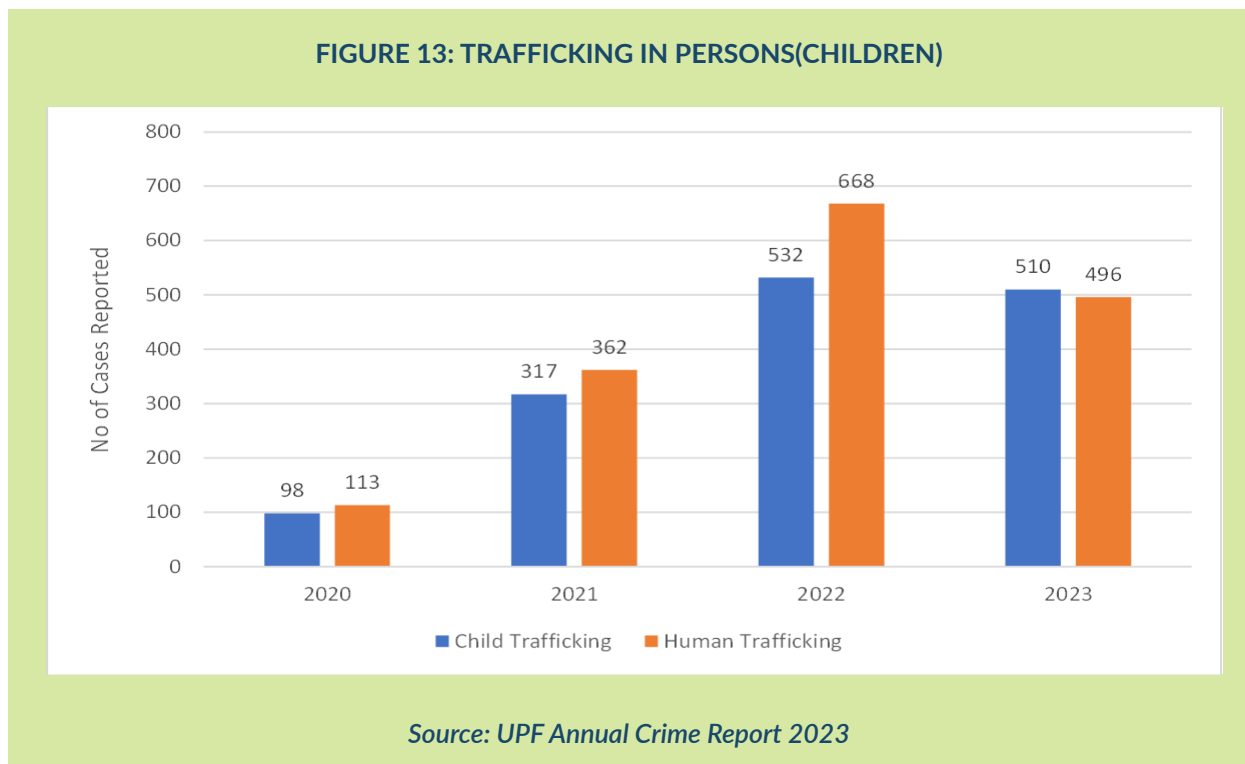
Source: From NAPR, 2023

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 organisations, 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 practice 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 helped in curbing trafficking cases²⁰, although the cases were not at the levels before the COVID-19 pandemic. As shown in Figure 12, the cases of child trafficking remained high.



Programmes Measures in Prisons

The Uganda Prisons Service (UPS) guideline on Gender Mainstreaming for all senior prison officers (2014) remained in force. The UPS adhered to the 30% national policy on recruitment of females at the Cadet level. This increased the number of women joining the Service. The deployment of females recognised the fragile nature of pregnant women and assigned them lighter duties, and maternity and paternity leave were 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 a priority. 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.

²⁰UPF annual crime report (2023)

3.5.4 Actions to Eliminate Discrimination against and Violations of the Rights of the Girl Child

Policy Reforms

The Government's efforts to eliminate discrimination against the rights of a girl child, such as the implementation of the National Sexuality Education Framework (NSEF 2018), continued in force and were supported by other reforms as follows:

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

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 first Strategy, which achieved minimal success attributed mainly to the COVID-19 pandemic. The successor plan further aimed to strengthen collaboration and multi-stakeholder engagement while improving child and adolescent well-being in a society free of child marriage and teenage pregnancy. The MGLSD coordinated the implementation of the strategy, which began in 2023, with countrywide dissemination. Resource mobilisation to support local governments in localising the strategy was also undertaken.

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.

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 as one of the measures to address defilement, child marriage, and teenage pregnancy and promote positive parenting. The Theme of the Campaign was to "Protect the Girl, Save the Nation". The campaign sought to mobilise 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 through the use of a multisectoral strategy involving relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), and all Local Governments (LGs)

Initiatives to roll out the Campaign were undertaken under the National Multi-Sectoral Coordination Committee on Adolescent Girls. The Ministry of Education and Sports chairs the Committee and implemented the Work Plan of 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.

The above measures were in addition to the legal reforms mentioned earlier, such as the Employment Amendment Bill (2021),



which institutes measures to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace and the Computer Misuse Amendment Bill (2022), which restricts unauthorised access to information and data, sending information that promotes hate speech and malicious unsolicited information.

National Sexuality Education Framework (NSEF 2018)

The primary role of NSEF was 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. The government implemented the framework in partnership with cultural leaders who provided 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.

Religious Approaches

The religious institutions affiliated under the Inter-religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) implemented 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 was 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 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.

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 and Policy Reforms

The key strategies and policies developed in the Water and Environment sector included (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 and (v) The Environment and Natural Resources Sub-Sector Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (2016-2021).

Programme Measures

Increasing access to Water

As a commitment to meet the targets of SDG 6, the Government, through the Natural Resources,

Environment, Climate Change, Land and Water Management (NRECLWM) programme of the National Development Plan III, ensured the availability of adequate and reliable fresh water for all uses. The Government, in collaboration with partners, invested in the extension of piped water supply to urban and rural areas, including institutional settings, as well as improving the functionality of water sources.

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 services²¹. At the local level, 49,102 villages out of the 70,512 have access to at least one safe water source. The number of villages served increased by 22% from 63% to 76%, implying that the burden of fetching water among women and girls is progressively reducing. The percentage of Water and Sanitation Committees with at least one woman holding a key position, improved from 86% in FY 2019/20 to 87% in 2021/2022. According to UNHS 2019/2020, 96% of the households had a water source within 3 kilometres, 98% in urban areas and 96% in

rural areas. On average, the time taken to and from the water source was 22 minutes, and the waiting time at the water source was 21 minutes. This scenario depicts the struggles that women and girls go through, bearing in mind that they bear the burden of fetching water.

The country still faces challenges of poor 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 was 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.

²¹Midterm Review for the NRM Manifesto (2023)

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Water and Environment, in collaboration with UNICEF, prepared the operation and maintenance manual for institutional solar-powered water systems (schools and health facilities), including the refugee hosting districts and trained forty (40) personnel (33 male and seven female) from various rural institutional facilities, as well as health facilities in West Nile region of Uganda on the operation and repair of solar water pumping systems.

With support from the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Ministry supported some women and youth groups in establishing tree nurseries aimed at creating employment opportunities, boosting income, improving health and hygiene in homesteads, reducing fuel costs, and contributing to mitigation efforts for human-induced climate change.

The Socio- Economic 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 organisations, 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, and alternative livelihoods). 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. 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.

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 in poverty.



Energy Sector Development for GEWE Legal and Policy Reforms:

- (i) The National Energy Policy (2023) – revised the policy of 2002 and highlights the Government’s acknowledgement of the importance of access to clean, affordable, and reliable energy in redressing gender inequality and addressing the marginalisation of persons with disabilities and youth.
- (ii) The Electricity (Amendment) Act 2022 - It promotes gender equality by specifying that one-third of the members of the Ministry must be women in conformity with global recognition that constraints related to energy projects’ success are gender specific.
- (iii) The National Energy Transition Plan (ETP) (2023) ensures universal access to clean cooking in Uganda, reduces approximately 50,000 premature deaths from indoor air pollution per year by 2030, and to save households two hours per day in collecting firewood with the greatest benefits accruing to women and children.²²
- (iv) The Sector-Specific Gender Strategy was developed in 2022/2023 and is currently under implementation.

Programme Measures

To attain SDG 7, the Government set a target in NDP III to increase access to grid energy from 24% to 60% in addition to other renewable energy sources. The government invested in rural electrification programmes to expand access to electricity in districts and provided subsidies for last-mile connection to rural households and small and medium enterprises

near the existing grid that don’t require grid extension. The government introduced prepaid energy meters to intensify the last mile connections and reduce the cost of LPG in 2019, but the benefits of the gesture were eroded during the COVID-19 mass economic downturn. Smaller solar solutions and biogas programmes were implemented with private agencies to overcome energy affordability challenges, especially for women.

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%³⁰. Currently, 15% of Uganda’s population has access to clean cooking technologies. Despite recent progress driven by solid Government programmes, electricity and clean cooking access rates remain low, at around 45% and 15%, respectively.

Since the launch of the distribution of free Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders in 2022, approximately 45,000 cylinders have been distributed to various households to encourage clean and faster cooking and reduce the use of biomass and charcoal cook stoves. Efforts by the Sector to address Gender Based Violence and discrimination include the development of an **Anti- Sexual Harassment Policy** for the Ministry, Training of Staff at the Ministry and contractors on various energy projects, setting up **Grievance Redress Committees** in communities for ease of monitoring of GBV cases, ensuring the contractors and staff sign and follow the codes of conduct exclusively prohibiting sexual exploitation and abuse.

²² Uganda Energy Transition Plan (2023), International Energy Agency (IEA) 30 NRM Midterm review of the Manifesto

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 which affected livelihoods and homesteads, including farming, especially in the western and eastern regions of the country. The major causes of natural disasters were floods and landslides. 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. 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 significant 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.





SECTION FOUR: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES



Photo credit UN Women

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 NDP II 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 realise SDG5 (Indicator 5c.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 the 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.*



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.

The Gender and Equity Budgeting Training Manual for Local Governments (LGs) and the Gender and Equity Guidelines for Political Actors

in Local Governments which have been used to train 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. The overall compliance of the Ministerial Policy Statements (MPS) and BFPs to gender and equity requirements has improved over the review period from 66% to 67% and from 45.75% to 54%, respectively, as presented in section 2.2.

4.3 Mechanisms for Stakeholders Participation in Implementation and Monitoring of BPfA

The Government established the required institutional framework to implement the national, regional, and international commitments of 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 BPfA, 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) especially Councils 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 implementing 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. The Government has embarked on a consultative and participatory process to enable the generation of the Progress Report on the Concluding Observations and Recommendations of the CEDAW Committee that will be submitted in December 2024.

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



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5.1 Key Areas of Progress

The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) 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 MDAs 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.

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 utilise 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 handbook²³. Evidence shows that 21 out of the 23 SDG 16 indicators can be reported on with more consistent regularity of data collection (2020)³².

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.

²³ Metadata Handbook for Sustainable Development Goals, 2022.



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 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).

5.3. 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 principle 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 to strengthen 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 critical 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)³³.

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,²⁴ which recommends mainstreaming the concerns of those left behind in data production²⁵. 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;

²⁴Global 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/>

²⁵United Nations - ECOSOC, 2017a.https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/Global%20Indicator%20Framework%20after%202020%20review_Eng.pdf



- (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 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



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The Government of Uganda 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 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 BPFA, CEDAW, the Maputo Protocol, the AU Agenda 2023, and other normative frameworks. This reflects the political will to ensure equitable social-economic transformation that prioritises women's meaningful participation and benefits 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 a long time 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 social-norms perpetuating gender inequalities alongside capacitating households to increase incomes and create jobs and wealth.

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