



CEWIGO
MAKING POLICIES
WORK *for* WOMEN

CENTRE FOR WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE POSITION PAPER



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WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION MAKING

MIND THE GAP

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AU	Africa Union
AUEOM	AU Election Observer Mission
BDPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
BFP	Budget Framework Papers
CA	Constituent Assembly
CEWIGO	Centre for Women in Governance
EC	Electoral Commission
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
FOWODE	Forum for Women in Democracy
GBB	Gender Bench Book
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MP	Member of Parliament
NDP	National Development Plan
NRM	National Resistance Movement
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
UMI	Uganda Management Institute
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolutions
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USE	Universal Secondary Education
UWEP	Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program
UWONET	Uganda Women's Network
UWOPA	Uganda Women Parliamentary Association

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Between August 5th and November 6th 2020, the Centre for Women in Governance (CEWIGO) conducted a study to take stock of the progress, key achievements, challenges and emerging issues in regard to implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA) of 1995 with a focus on Women's participation in political decision making processes in Uganda. Special focus was placed on the period 2014 – 2020. A comprehensive report came out of this study out of which this position paper was developed to link the findings of the study to the ongoing Government and development partners' efforts at implementing the BDPfA agenda 25 years after the instrument was agreed.

The study was designed, coordinated and guided by CEWIGO with financial support of UN Women. Their support is highly acknowledged and appreciated.

2.0 THE CENTRE FOR WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE

Centre for Women in Governance is a women's rights Non- Governmental Organization legally registered as number 6338. The organization was formed in 2006 to promote knowledge and understanding of the importance of women's participation in politics, to transform Uganda's political and governance terrain through empowering the electorates and to promote solidarity and partnership among women leaders, activists and entrepreneurs.

CEWIGO envisions a society where women and men are equitably participating and benefiting from good governance. CEWIGO's mission is to mobilize women and build their capacity to influence governance at all levels and to increase awareness that where women and men share equally in the generation and maintenance of good governance, the benefits accrue to all society.

CEWIGO has 3 core programs namely: The Women's Leadership Development Program that focuses on strengthening women's leadership at national, local and grassroots levels; The Women's Rights Advocacy Program aimed at advocating for conditions that sustain women's peace and security for good governance and The Community and Citizen's Empowerment Program that aims at empowering communities and individuals with knowledge and skills of their human rights and duties to engage effectively in governance processes including holding leaders accountable to deliver quality public services.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA) of 1995 is a visionary agenda for the empowerment of women. The Declaration remains the most comprehensive global policy framework and blueprint for guidance and inspiration to realize gender equality and the human rights of women and girls across the globe.

This landmark text was the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China, in September 1995. After two weeks of political debate, exchange of information on good practice and lessons learned, and sharing of experiences, representatives of 189 Governments agreed to commitments that were unprecedented in scope. More than 30,000 people also participated in the Forum of non-governmental organizations in Huairou, a unique space of advocacy, networking, training and knowledge sharing.

Developed 25 years ago, The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action covers 12 critical areas of concern that are relevant as of today namely poverty; education and training; health; violence; armed conflict; economy; power and decision-making; institutional mechanisms; human rights; media; environment; and the girl child. For each critical area of concern, strategic objectives

were identified, as well as a detailed catalogue of related actions to be taken by Governments and other stakeholders, at national, regional and international level.

Since 1995, Governments, civil society and other stakeholders have worked to eliminate discrimination against women and girls and achieve equality in all areas of life, in public and in private spaces. Some advances have been made in this global agenda but no country has achieved equality for women and girls and significant levels of inequality between women and men still persist.

3.2 The Case of Uganda

The Republic of Uganda was one of the 189 United Nations Member States which attended the Fourth World Conference on Women that was held in September 1995 in Beijing, in the People's Republic of China. The member states committed to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the key outcome of the Conference. Since then, the Government of Uganda has submitted national reports on the progress of implementation of the BDPfA.

The last national report, which focuses on the actions and measures undertaken by the government in partnership with other stakeholders during the period 2014-2019, was prepared in 2019 for the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2020.

4.0 THE ISSUES

A study of advances made in the area of women participation in politics and decision making in Uganda 25 years after the BDPfA conducted by the Centre for Women in Governance between August and November 2020 revealed the following key issues that are critical to the sustainability of the gains already made by Uganda Government but also to further advances in this area:

4.1 Patriarchy

The persistence of patriarchy which is rooted in culture and traditional beliefs continue to reinforce gender inequalities and women's powerlessness in accessing goods and services and opportunities (MGLSD, 2019, Page 12). This was confirmed in a recent survey conducted by the EU funded Action to end violence against women and children (AWAC) in the districts of Rukungiri and Mitooma between June and September 2020 where it was established that close to 30% of the population still believes boys should be the favoured gender to access available services in the event of scarcity of resources in homes and 42.5% indicated it was women and girls to do household chores. Men are still dominant in decision making. Patriarchy manifests in the nature of the State, and its political processes provide a conducive environment to men as political actors. Parliament is patriarchal because women still have to constantly justify their presence and their issues (Ahikire et al., 2013, Page 32). Men do not allow their wives to attend meetings as they fear that women are being lured into relationships

with other (male) leaders (Kadaga, 2013, Page 35). At community level, many women belong to an association of some kind but a good majority of these hold just membership positions, rather than being in leadership where decisions are made.

4.2 Increased Militarization of Politics

The situation in Uganda reflects militarized politics¹ more than ever before. While this militarism undermines the exercise of democracy more generally, women are more vulnerable to the threat of force. The space for pushing a substantive gender-equality agenda in the political dispensation has narrowed dramatically (Ahikire et al., 2013, Page 33) as the state transited from mobilization politics to a politics of regime survival that saw Government deploy strategies that in effect undermined constitutionalism. According to Solome Nakawesi *“Women's rights activists in Uganda have been particularly concerned about the handling of women during protests in a way that is explicitly intended to humiliate and embarrass...”* Leadership according to Hon. Dr. Miria Matembe is supposed to be service delivery oriented and rendering itself to the cause. This has been substituted with self-centred leadership driven by ambition, self-centeredness and greed this negatively affects women in leadership positions.

¹ Militarism is not just about war and armed forces. It is an ideology. Ursula Franklin (1988) defines militarism as a threat system, which when stripped of all its extraneous verbiage simply says “Do what I tell you – or else”. (Ahikire et al., 2013, Page 32) Accordingly, the basic value of Militarism is power over others, where the population begins to accept the use of violence as a method for resolving conflict (Ahikire et al., 2013, Page 33)

4.3 A Poorly Managed Multiparty Political dispensation

The nature of Uganda's multiparty politics is inhibiting the emergence of a unified women's voice at national and local levels. Enemies are created on the basis of political differences. Political party leadership in Uganda is male dominated (Kadaga, 2013, Page 35; Ahikire, 2009, Page 2). Ahikire et al., (2013, Page 34) believe the majority of women are captive to patronage politics. *'In the current multi-party dispensation, some women fear being seen by their 'mother-parties' as rebels or opposing the party position in some debates and thus decide to keep silent. You are expected to pay allegiance to the party and this has affected women to a greater extent than their male counterparts', Ms Lamunu Mary Harriet.* Women largely continue to occupy the reserved seats in the national parliament and local government. Ahikire (2009) and Kadaga (2013) believe political parties continue to restrict the number of women candidates fielded for the mainstream seats or are not doing enough to encourage women to compete for mainstream seats. Many women need encouragement and support as they do not have the confidence to compete with men for such positions.

4.4 Cost of Accessing and Holding Public Office

The AU 2016 (Page 5) observed that there had been unprecedented increase in campaign spending during the 2016 elections. Most, if not all, women involved in politics believe the cost of competing for, accessing and holding public offices has reached unbearable levels for most women. According to Ms Lamunu Mary Harriet, the Program Coordinator of UWOPA, *'increasingly, politics has become too*

expensive, too costly to bear'. Hon. Justine Burisadi, the Speaker for Bushenyi District Local Council V has this to say on this matter: *'Women MPs / councilors represent bigger constituencies than their male counterparts which is more costly and yet their financial facilitation is the same.'* Hajati Saidat Kaganda Abwoli, the Woman Councilor for Central and Eastern Divisions of Jinja City said this on the matter: *'Having 50 villages in one sub-county and each looking at you the councilor for logistical support does not come easy and yet you are expected to monitor and supervise on-going government programs. Monetization of politics has led to capable women - but who are not doing well financially - falling out of the political space'.*

The AU 2016 (Page 10) observed that there is absence of a comprehensive legal framework regulating campaign financing in Uganda. AU 2016 (Page 8) noted that while the various laws have some provisions for campaign financing, the same laws are not comprehensive as they lack provisions on donation limits and spending caps for campaign purposes. This opens the electoral process to the unregulated influence of money and gives undue advantage to the candidates who have resources and as such prevents potential candidates, especially women, from contesting.

4.5 Poverty and Unemployment

The situation above is made worse by rising levels of unemployment and poverty among women in Uganda. Poverty levels increased from 19.7% to 21.7% between FY2012/2013 and 2016/2017. Poverty affects women and men differently with households headed by unmarried especially divorced and widows with the

highest poverty at 17% (UDHS² 2016/17 in MGLSD, 2019, Page 12). The unemployment rate among women is at 13% compared to 6% among men. It is higher in urban areas (14%) than in the rural areas (6%). Only 28% of the women are in paid employment compared to 46% of men and 71% of the women account for those persons engaged in vulnerable employment (UNHS³ 2016/17 in MGLSD, 2019, Page 12). The majority of women do not own productive resources such as land and property. A September 2020 study in the districts of Rukungiri and Mitooma for example put adult women ownership of productive assets at 48.7 percent yet in a bid to meet household responsibilities, women are engaged in food supply with agricultural labour and informal employment, both of which are characterized by a high workload and unpaid labour. This leaves them with no funds or time for politics or the development of leadership skills (Kadaga, 2013, Page 35).

4.6 Time Poverty

The other aspect that affects women's political participation is the burden of triple workload which women carry and, in particular, unpaid care services (Kadaga, 2013, Page 35). According to FAO (2020), 'rural women simultaneously manage triple responsibilities: at work, within the household and at community level. Women work within family businesses, as wage-workers or as self-employed. Household tasks involve looking after the family, caring for the children and the elderly,

collecting firewood, fetching water and preparing meals while community tasks are linked to preserving culture and tradition, through the organization of funerals and religious ceremonies and to ensuring the provision and maintenance of common resources such as water, healthcare and education. The competing demands linked to this triple role make women time poor'. As a result of their domestic roles, female leaders may also find it hard to keep time or meet deadlines at work, resulting in poor participation in the decision-making process (Kadaga, 2013, Page 35).

'Gender roles have not yet been well shared as women still are held up by many challenges of pregnancy, child birth, antenatal, and other related home care work', Ms. Lamunu Mary Harriet (UWOPA's Program Coordinator).

'Multiple roles of women both at home and the work place constrain women from joining and or staying in politics', Jocelyn Ekochu Bananuka (The Acting Executive Director of CEWIGO).

4.7 Relatively lower Levels of Education, Literacy and Political Survival Skills

According to Jocelyn, the education and literacy level of aspiring women political leaders affects their capacity to comprehend and engage in technical processes that the government engages in. Despite good government policies to promote education for all Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE), a large number of women are unable to access

2 Uganda Demographic and Health Surveys (UDHS)
3 Uganda National Household Surveys (UNHS)

careers in leadership due to a low level of education (Kadaga, 2013, Page 35). Also, most women leaders in Uganda lack negotiation and lobbying skills. This undermines their capacity to compete favourably with their male counterparts as well as their confidence (Kadaga, 2013, Page 35).

4.8 Limited Access to and Utilization of ICT Opportunities

Linked to low levels of education and literacy as well as increasing poverty among women, women access and use of Information, Communication and Technology (ICTs) was less than men (as of 2018). Only 46% of the women owned a mobile phone and only 8% owned internet (NITA-U in MGLSD, 2019, Page 65). Many women are constrained by affordability, and the ability to manoeuvre the gadgets, which limited their use. This reduced their chances of accessing information to empower themselves (MGLSD, 2019, Page 65). UWONET (2020), pointing at recent data, also argued that a sizeable portion of the population do not have access to media platforms where the 2021 election campaigns are planned to be held. They also pointed at the inadequacies in smart phone ownership, let alone internet access to get onto social media. UWONET (2020) further argued that on top of the high cost of using traditional and digital media, equal access to these platforms by all political aspirations will highly be impossible - unless a mechanism of regulation is put in place.

4.9 Sexualisation of Politics

The other issue is the sexualisation of politics. Sexualized politics manifests in patronizing behaviours, sexist jokes, and derogatory media representations describing women political leaders in terms of ‘best legs’, ‘big bums’ and the like. Cultural stereotyping and name-calling undermine female political leadership (IPU, 2009 in Ahikire et al., 2013, Page 35). The sexualisation of political spaces has profound effects on how women can deliver on their leadership roles. At a practical level, it disorients and diverts women and negatively affects women’s self-expression and esteem. At the same time, sexuality is deployed as an instrument of blackmail, creating a “damned if you do...damned if you do not” scenario. In such a situation, the push for a gender-equality agenda is undermined (Ahikire et al., 2013, Page 36).

4.10 The weak Link between Women in Political Offices and Women Movement

The relationships between women political leaders and the women’s movement that will consistently bring these actors together remain weak. Yet without a stronger nexus, Uganda’s women’s movement will be unable to nurture a robust feminist political agenda (Ahikire et al., 2013, Page 37).

4.11 Poor Policy Implementation

There are also policy related issues that negate efforts on gender equality. Uganda Management Institute (UMI)⁴ notes that one of the challenges facing policy

⁴ UMI undated Policy Brief titled ‘Redeem policy implementation in Uganda by tackling the political question’.

implementation is when the implementers know what is to be done but choose to selfishly do nothing and or miss use the resources allocated for implementation. It also observes that Government budgets are not well aligned with national priorities and that the missing evaluation component in Government program designs implies that there is limited understanding of why policies fail. Reference was made to the liberalization and privatization policies that are yet to be evaluated though could have realized negative consequences along implementation. The UMI also highlights the issue of poor coordination and cooperation between government agencies and the limited appreciation of the value of strategic coordination as generally impacting negatively on all Government Policy implementation.

4.12 Male Engagement

The other major factor that has been raised by women that are currently constraining women from seeking strategic decision making positions include inadequate male support for women's participation. Hellen Kabajungu, a Councilor in Rukungiri District Council and a former District Vice Chairperson of the same District narrated to the study team her experience with grassroots electioneering highlighting the fact that most women who succeed in elections have support of some males around them. It could be a husband, brother, friend etc. She indicated for example that in the current COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions, politicians are not allowed to hold public campaigns so politicians basically move from house to house and this requires a lot of energy. What

most women have decided to do is rely on their male cohorts to ride them around on a bicycle or motor bike. She also highlighted the security aspects of the campaign indicating that where things go physical, for example protecting the vote and moving at night, most women rely on the male colleagues to do the job!

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter discusses here below the major conclusions drawn from the findings discussed in chapter three above as well as key recommendations for Government, NGOs and development partners dealing with issues of gender and governance to consider for the next five years.

5.1 Government

5.1.1 To address patriarchy:

- MGLSD should build on lessons learnt from past projects and programs to sustain and scale up the ongoing campaigns and public education programs about the values and roles of women and children in society
- MGLSD should re-negotiate with religious leaders, political leaders, cultural activists and other critical stakeholders contentious areas⁵ of the marriage and divorce Bill that was rejected, reach compromise positions and re-table the bill before Parliament for endorsement
- Train and mentor women on how to reconcile and

⁵ The main areas of contention hindering the passage of the Bill are ownership and division of property among the spouses, usage of the word 'divorce' being unchristian, and bride price being non-refundable on dissolution of marriage

balance women's roles in homes and job matters.

5.1.2 To improve Uganda's political terrain with its attendant anti women characteristics, Parliament should:

- Develop strategies for nurturing the emergence of fewer but stronger political parties
- Introduce a proportional representation electoral system
- Introduce equitable quotas for women in parties such as the ones the constitution provides at parliament and local council levels.
- Lobby the Executive to create a liberated political civic space

5.1.3 To strengthen the relationship between women political leaders and the women's movement;

- MGLSD should evaluate the Gender Information Centre project implemented during the Constituent Assembly time and in collaboration with UWOPA and use the outcome in designing an intervention that can play a similar role in the next Parliament (2021-2026).
- MGLSD, Ministry of Local Government and Parliament should jointly design programs to train women MPs and Councilors in the art of caucusing and support them to use the strategy to effectively lobby and get support from gender-sensitive male members of parliament and councilors.

- Electoral Commission should prioritize holding regular consultations and dialogues with stakeholders especially members of the women movement and women leaders on election processes and rules and procedures to create a levelled political ground.
- MGLSD should lobby Parliament and development partners for increased funding to be made available to NGOs involved with gender equality related work.

5.1.4 To address the bad reputation of poor policy implementation;

- Ministry of Public Service and Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should consider increasing levels of accountability by way of creating more positive incentive systems for those who deliver services to the communities and punishing those who are ineffective
- Parliament should lobby the Presidency to consolidate the myriad policy monitoring agencies, anti-corruption bodies, government commissions, parliamentary committees and presidential initiatives into few and focused robust institutions founded on meritocracy and not ethno-regional balancing or short-term political calculations
- Parliament should approve funding for authentic community radios and other avenues for increasing citizens to access information.

- Parliament should make it a requirement that every approved policy should have a public education component to increase public scrutiny, understanding, effective utilisation and ownership of all public policies. The programs should target leaders, the media and champions of policy implementation among the users.

5.1.5 In regard to issues of increased poverty levels and the attendant high unemployment rates among especially women, low women's access to and use of ICT, low women access to media platforms, unpaid but heavy domestic work burdens and low levels of ownership of productive resources:

- MGLSD should step up gender awareness raising and sensitization efforts at all levels.
- Improve Government policy implementation (see strategies under 5.1.4)
- All arms of Government should raise their political will to fight corruption. Actions need to be louder than words!
- MGLSD should scale up and improve effectiveness of empowerment programs targeting women and youth.

5.1.6 To address the inadequate electoral legislative framework and timing of election reforms;

- Parliament, in collaboration with Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, should allocate adequate

resources to enable the Electoral Commission to conduct continuous procurement of election materials, conduct continuous voter registration and voter education

- Parliament in collaboration with Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, should come up with legislation to regulate political party and campaign financing to ensure fair access to public resources amongst political parties and independent candidates in the case of campaign finance
- Parliament should conclude electoral reforms at least a year before elections to allow for timely preparation and implementation.
- The Electoral Commission should conduct continuous voter education to address the issue of low civic competence, low voter turn up and invalid and spoilt votes.

5.2 NGOs 5.2.1 To address patriarchy, NGOs:

- Should build on lessons learnt from past projects and programs to design strategies for sustaining and scaling up the ongoing campaigns and public education programs about the values and roles of women's leadership and gender equality.
- Support MGLSD and UWOPA to take lead in lobbying parliament to re-table and pass the Marriage and Divorce Bill into law as well as re-negotiating with

religious leaders, cultural activists and other critical stakeholders to reach a compromise on contentious clauses.

- To replicate and accelerate programs on balancing domestic and public roles for both men and women.

5.2.2 To improve Uganda's political terrain with its attendant anti women characteristics, NGOs should:

- Advocate for fewer and stronger political parties
- Advocate for the introduction of a proportional representation electoral system
- Advocate for stronger women's specific spaces (e.g. leagues) within political parties that can act strategically and free from top-down manipulation and patronization
- Lobby the Government of Uganda to create a liberated political civic space

5.2.3 To strengthen the relationship between women political leaders and the women's movement, women focused NGOs should;

- Work to identify and support women (including financially) to aspire for elective political positions, run programs on gender and civic education and democracy, design mechanisms of accountability, and offer capacity-building training to which women MPs and councilors and those aspiring to be in those offices are invited.
- Support effective engagement of women

representatives in the development of a shared agenda (the Women's Manifesto) and ensure that women leaders in political positions, upcoming women leaders, and women's organizations adopt and take a center stage in its implementation as a means of accountability and bringing to the forefront gender dimensions that ought to be addressed.

- Evaluate the Gender Information Centre project implemented during the Constituent Assembly and support UWOPA to use the outcome in designing an intervention that can play a similar role in the next parliament 2021-2026
- Train women MPs and Councilors in the art of caucusing and support them to use the strategy effectively in lobbying and getting the support from gender-sensitive male members of parliament and councils whenever need arises.
- Lobby for and support regular consultations and dialogues between the Electoral Commission and stakeholders, especially members of the women movement and women leaders, on election processes and legislation

5.2.4 To address the bad reputation of poor policy implementation, NGOs should;

- Design and implement strategies and mechanisms such as "Barazas" that will help increase capacity of citizens to participate and effectively engage in

governance processes.

- Introduce community radios and other information sharing opportunities in their areas of operation to enable more citizens to access information especially during this scientific election period

5.2.5 In regard to issues of increased poverty levels and the attendant high unemployment rates among especially women, low women access to and use of ICTs, low women access to media platforms, unpaid but heavy domestic work burdens and low levels of ownership of productive resources, NGOs should:

- Step up gender awareness raising and sensitization efforts at all levels.
- Support Government to improve policy implementation (see strategies under 5.1.4 and 5.2.4)
- Advocate for stronger laws against corruption
- Advocate for a stronger political will at all levels to fight corruption. Actions need to be louder than words.
- Support the scaling up and implementation of good women and youth empowerment programs
- ***5.2.6 To help address the inadequate electoral legislative framework and timing of election reforms, NGOs should support;***
- The conduct of continuous voter and civic education including educating the public about the voter registration processes and the electoral calendar to enable a more cost effective registration process.

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