



## Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD)

### Strengthening National and Local Coordination, Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence

**Intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV) remain rampant throughout Uganda, not only violating the human rights of victims, but also severely undermining the nation's economic and social development and security.**

While the Government of Uganda has put in place impressive laws to protect the rights and interests of women and girls – including the Domestic Violence Act 2010, the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act 2010, the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2009 and the National Policy on the Elimination of Gender Based Violence (NGBV Policy) – implementation remains limited and abuse rampant. Reporting of GBV remains low, investigations poor, and legal cases experience dismissal more often than conviction, resulting in impunity for many GBV-related crimes. Survivor support services remain extremely limited and uncoordinated. Many communities and duty-bearers continue to believe that GBV is acceptable, silencing survivors and pressuring them not to report the abuse or seek help.

There are myriad complex reasons that GBV remains so pervasive – ranging from negative cultural and gender norms, to limited understanding of the law and critical gaps within the administration of justice and institutional weaknesses. **A critical reason why Uganda has been unable to curb these abuses is the failure of sectors, including the MGLSD, to adequately fund interventions necessary to implement the law, prevent and respond to GBV, coordinate interventions, and provide critical support to survivors.**

56% of Ugandan women (age 15-49) experience spousal violence<sup>1</sup>

One million Ugandan women (13%) experienced sexual violence last year<sup>2</sup>

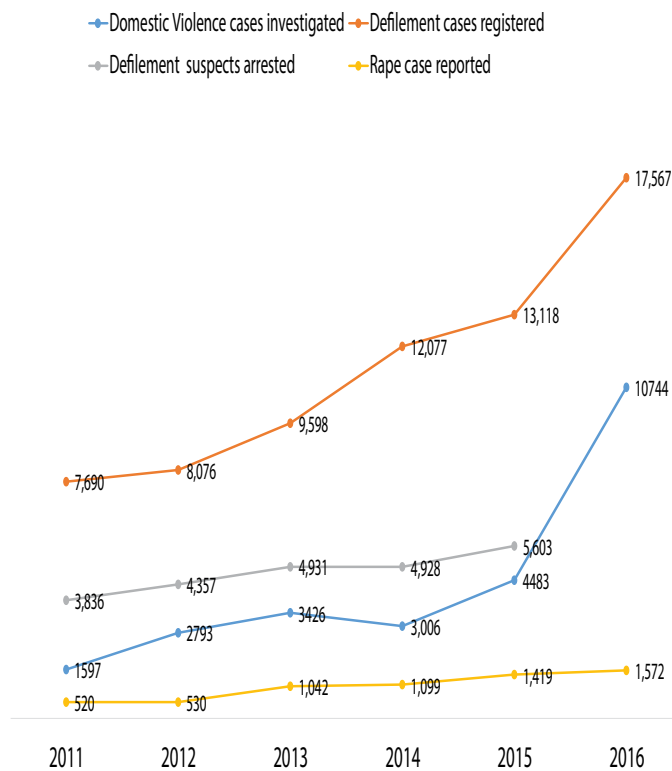
Only 1% of the MGLSD's budget is allocated to the Department for Gender and Women Affairs<sup>5</sup>

49% of women and 41% of men believe a man is justified to beat his wife for specific reasons<sup>1</sup>

GBV costs 77.5 billion UGX annually in expenses and lost profits.<sup>3</sup>

**The 2016 National Action Plan on the Elimination of Gender-Based Violence requires the MGLSD to prioritize and fund the coordination and monitoring of implementation of the NGBV Policy and action plan at all levels.**

# Sector Priorities in the National GBV Action Plan



**Table 1: UPF Annual Crime Reports<sup>4</sup>**

The number of GBV cases reported and investigated continues to increase annually. Without an adequate increase in budget allocation for GBV prevention and response services, this trend will continue to negatively impact Uganda's citizens, society and economy. Based on 2014 population figures, an estimated 4 million women have experienced GBV (out of 7 million total). The MGLSD must prioritize and adequately fund efforts to curb this rampant human rights violation.

Through national, regional and global policies and agreements, Uganda has committed to eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, recognizing that this is a prerequisite for sustainable national and social development. The **MGLSD plays critical coordination, monitoring, and capacity-building roles** in GBV prevention and response, particularly in the implementation of the National Action Plan on the Elimination of Gender-Based Violence ("NGBV Plan"). Under the NGBV Policy, as well as National Development Plan II, the MGLSD is required to commit adequate resources to implement enumerated GBV-specific interventions. However, the MGLSD budget fails to prioritize and fund GBV prevention and response activities.

**The NGBV Policy requires the MGLSD to lead and adequately fund the following critical strategic actions:**

- Coordinate and manage the overall implementation of the NGBV Policy and plan, including monitoring and evaluation;
- Establish effective coordination mechanisms at all levels to ensure effective stakeholder implementation;
- Provide capacity building of duty bearers and stakeholders to prevent and respond to GBV, including training, sensitization, and curriculum development and implementation;
- Establish, disseminate, and monitor GBV prevention and response guidelines and standards;
- Develop standard tools for collecting GBV data at all levels, including managing a national GBV database;
- Conduct community mobilization, sensitization, education and dialogues at all levels; and
- Provide or advocate for survivor services, including economic empowerment, emergency shelters, health care, paralegal support, and psychosocial services.

## Recommended Sector Priorities 2018/2019

### Improve GBV Coordination and Oversight Functions

A core function of the MGLSD is to monitor, set standards, and coordinate implementation of the NGBV Policy and action plan, and establish effective coordination mechanisms at all levels. However, the department responsible for such oversight – the Gender and Women's Affairs Department – has only 11 staff members. Coordination of GBV interventions is not effectively catered-for in the annual budget. The lack of sufficient staff and resources drastically hinders the department from fulfilling its mandate. For example, MGLSD lacks resources to support Local Governments (LG) to integrate GBV coordination, prevention, and response into LG programming. During the current fiscal year, the MGLSD was able to support only 20 LGs out of 121 LGs with funds designated for gender mainstreaming, with no LGs receiving funds specially designated for GBV activities. This is unacceptable considering the burden of GBV on the economy and is an abrogation of the MGLSD's crucial responsibilities under the NGBV Policy.

**MGLSD must designate adequate resources (human and financial) to improve its coordination and oversight functions, thus enabling it to implement the NGBV Policy and action plan.**

### Dedicate Resources for GBV Prevention

Protecting women and girls from violence, and providing survivor services are core government functions which must be sustainably funded out of the national budget. The decreased attitudes towards wife beating and reduced prevalence of sexual violence among women and men age 15-49 in Uganda<sup>1</sup> is evidence that GBV can be eliminated. The MGLSD allocates to the Department for Gender and Women Affairs only 1% of its overall budget,<sup>5</sup> with much of this allocated to gender mainstreaming and economic empowerment programmes, and a limited sum designated to GBV prevention or response. The National Budget Framework Paper FY 2018-19 does not include objectives or indicators for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (Programme 10-02), which would include GBV coordination, prevention, and response. MGLSD's efforts to prevent and respond to GBV are consistently over reliant on donor funding. Donor funding is implemented on a project basis, over limited timeframes, and often only in select geographic areas. Dependence on such external financing does not create sustainable grounds for sectors to mainstream GBV prevention and response services, nor does it ensure adequate national coverage of GBV interventions.

**Prevention of GBV is possible yet costly and requires long term investment, designated funds must be provided-for in the MGLSD budget to scale up evidence based GBV prevention and response interventions.**

## Streamline Systems for Collection and Reporting of GBV Data

The NGBV Policy requires the MGLSD to develop and operationalize a National GBV Database; through ongoing training, mentoring, and accountability for local governments and other stakeholders who populate the database. This also corresponds to the NDP II priority of improved statistical data production in LGs. While the MGLSD has developed a GBV Information Management System (GBVIMS), and agreed to roll-it out it in at least 58 local governments (2017-18 Ministerial Policy Statement), only a fraction of District Local Governments have been trained on and are using GBVIMS. Overall operationalization remains inadequate. Moreover, GBVIMS is not connected or harmonized with the JLOS data collection systems (including UPF, ODPP and Judiciary), who have the primary mandate to respond to incidents of GBV, nor the health sector's Health Management Information System (HMIS). Given the inadequate nationwide usage and unreliable data from JLOS Institutions, the statistical data and reports from GBVIMS are insufficient to identify trends, ensure systemic accountability, or inform budget, policies, and capacity planning. The Ministry itself cites the 'lack of sufficient and up to date Gender Statistics as a key sector challenge, yet its current sector plan does not mention strengthening the GBVIMS.

**Reliable data is required to effectively report on key national indicators. Financial resources are needed to strengthen the capacity of LGs to effectively utilize GBVIMS and to streamline data collection systems and protocols across JLOS institutions, Health HMIS and the MGLSD to ensure timely reporting of gender-disaggregated data.**

### References

- 1 Uganda Bureau of Statistics: Uganda Demographic and Health Survey 2016. Kampala, Uganda.
- 2 Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey, Kampala, Uganda, and Calverton, Maryland, USA.
- 3 Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP). 2012. Economic Costs of Domestic Violence in Uganda. Kampala, Uganda.
- 4 Uganda Police Force.2012, 2013, 2014 Annual Crime and Traffic/Road Safety Reports.Kampala, Uganda; UPF Budget Framework Paper FY 2016/17; Preliminary 2016 Annual Crime Report.
- 5 National Budget Framework Paper FY 2018/19 – FY 2022/23; see also Ministerial Policy Statement FY 2017/18 for Social Development Sector.