



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

STATEMENT

BY

**THE MINISTER FOR GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT,**

AMONGI BETTY ONGOM (MP)

ON THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY PREPARATIONS

7TH MARCH 2023

AT

**THE UGANDA MEDIA CENTER,
KAMPALA.**

A handwritten signature in blue ink is located at the bottom center of the page. The signature is stylized and appears to be the name of the Minister, Amongi Betty Ongom.

Fellow countrymen, women and girls,

Uganda will join the rest of the world to commemorate the International Women's Day on 8th March 2023. The National Celebrations will take place at Sanga Play Grounds, Sanga Town Council in Kiruhura District.

The national theme for this year's celebrations is "*Equal Opportunities in Education, Science and Technology for Innovation and a Gender Equal Future*". The theme emphasizes the promotion of innovation in the digital age through equity in education, science and technology for women and girls for a gender equal future.

Ladies and Gentlemen, bringing women and girls and other disadvantaged groups into science, technology, engineering and innovations results in more creative solutions and has greater potential for solutions and innovations that meet their needs and interests and therefore promoting gender equality.

The Government of Uganda has put in place an enabling legal and policy frameworks to regulate the development and utilization of information communication technologies (ICTs), promote science, mathematics and engineering education in the digital age, focusing on the various categories of women and girls.

At the international level, government is committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which recognizes that the spread of information and communication technology (ICTs) and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies.

The Uganda Vision 2040 identifies ICT as a fundamental aspect to foster Uganda's transformation into a modern and prosperous country. This is evidenced in the National Development Plan (NDP III 2020/21 -2024/25) under program 14 (Innovation, Technology Development and Transfer). The goal of this program is to increase development, adoption, transfer and commercialization of Technologies & Innovations through the development of a well-coordinated Science Technology and Innovation (STI) eco-system.

ICT covers Radios, Television Sets, Mobile Phones as well as other technologies such as pesticides and irrigation pumps, automotive technologies such as cars and tractors, household electricity main switches, security equipment and devices.

Studies have established that 78.2% of men compared to 63.4% of females own mobile phones.

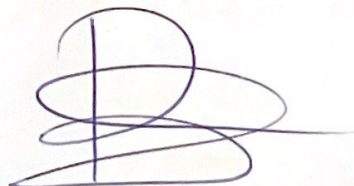


The “Women’s Rights Online Survey showed that out of 1,013 women and men surveyed in selected poor residential areas, only 21% of respondents had accessed the internet in the six months prior to the survey. Significantly, 44% of the male participants had access to a computer, as compared to only 18% of their female counterparts.

Studies have also shown that females remain disproportionately underrepresented in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) subjects. For example, there are 6,193 medical professionals in Uganda, women constitute only 37% compared to 63% of men and a similar pattern can be seen in engineering only 7% females and 93% males and architecture 20% females and 80% males.

What is Government doing about this situation?

1. Uganda has revitalized efforts to deploy Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) as catalysts of economic and social transformations.
2. The Government has invested in aeronautics and space science, this will go a long way to play active of innovation in aeronautics, space exploitation and earth observation systems. For the first time in the history, Uganda launched into space its own satellite which will be used to gather information of weather patterns, mapping mineral wealth and securing the country.
3. The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) introduced a bridging and conversion programme in July 2019 as part of university education to enable students who did not offer STEM subjects at A-Level take science courses and obtain certification after 1 year of study.
4. The Uganda Science Education Policy (2005) made the study of Physics and Chemistry compulsory for O-Level secondary school students in addition to Biology, English and Mathematics.
5. Implementation of affirmative action in education policy for women and girls Science, Technology and Innovation has inspired many women and girls to take up Science, Technology and Innovation in Advanced Level of Education and Higher Education.
6. A total of 102 Agro-Processing Facilities- Incubation Centres have been established by the Ministry of Local Government in various Districts and Sub-Counties. These incubation centers support the identified households to undertake key crop and fruit growing as well as dairy farming with emphasis

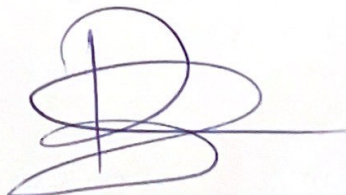


on zero grazing, poultry farming, piggery, fish farming, mushroom growing, vegetable growing and bee keeping.

7. Over the years, H.E President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni has been supporting Scientists and Innovators through the Presidential Support to Scientists. This has been done through direct support to individual scientists and institutions including among others. The Presidential Initiative on Banana Industrial Development (PIBID) and the Presidential Initiative on Science and Technology (PIST) at Makerere University including support to the Kira Electric Vehicle Project as well as other projects led by professors in Universities are contributing to national development.
8. The Uganda National Council of Science and Technology (UNCST) has also been operating a Science and Technology Fund to support scientists. Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI) has also been supporting various innovators and incubators using its development budget.

Policy Recommendations

1. Strengthen research in science and industrial leadership in innovation, including investment in key technologies, access to capital and support for Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) is important in the application of STI to address societal challenges.
2. The gender dimension must be incorporated in all national STI and other development/sector policies - especially linking the STI policies to policies on food and agriculture, water, energy, infrastructure and industry.
3. The science preference policy in education and all other STI complimentary policies should integrate a gender lens, especially in their implementation.
4. Implement measures that bridge the gender divide as well the rural-urban divide by making the internet accessible to all including women and the rural populace.
5. Advance women and girls' participation in the knowledge society including public education and awareness against negative cultural norms that hinder their participation in science and technology.
6. Train law enforcement/ Police to be able to deal with cases of technology related violence against women and girls, and enhancing digital literacy training in schools.
7. Expand the National coverage of the national broadband to bring on board parts of the country especially the rural areas where majority of women live.



8. Put in place counter strategies and mechanisms for cyber harassment of women; cyber stalking, online sexual harassment, blackmail through the use of private and often sexualized information, photographs and videos that promote, perpetuate and normalize violence against women.

As I conclude, I take this opportunity to inform the nation that the national celebrations will be held at Sanga Playground, Sanga Town Council, Kiruhura District. I take this opportunity to invite you to join us for national celebrations on 8th March 2023 at Sanga playground, Sanga Town Council.

H.E President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni will be the Chief Guest.

Through the National Women's Council, we disbursed Sh3 million per District toward the District Celebration of the International Women's Day. I implore all Districts to organize events to mark the day as per the theme.

Lastly, I extend our appreciation to partners like UNFPA, UN Women, UNDP, Care International in Uganda, Enabel and BRAC for the support extended to the organization of the National Celebrations. Special thanks to our Development Partners for the continued support to the implementation of our Programmes.

For God and My Country.



D. Ammann
7/3/23