THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

STATEMENT TO THE MEDIA ON THE JOINT REMEDIAL REGISTRATION OF OLDER PERSONS WITH NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY

BY

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Good Morning, Ladies & Gentlemen of the Press,

1.0 Purpose

My purpose this morning is to brief you, and the country, on the joint arrangements that we have agreed, with the Ministry of Internal Affairs/National Identification Registration Authority (NIRA), to ensure that older persons who have hitherto not registered for the national ID, are supported to do so, and therefore enabled to access Government Programmes like SAGE, which require them to have the National IDs.

2.0 Background.

Since 2010, the Government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development has implemented the Expanding Social Protection (ESP) Programme. A core element of the ESP Programme is the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) under which the Government provides a monthly grant (the Senior Citizens Grant) of UGX 25,000 to older persons.

Between 2010 - 2015, the Senior Citizens Grant was piloted in 15 districts. As you must know by now, the pilot was extremely successful. Following this success, in November 2015, the Government approved a phased roll out of the Senior Citizen Grant Scheme from 15 to an additional 40 districts, over 5 years - starting FY 2015/16, as a foundation for establishing a National Social Protection System for the country.

This phased roll out increased demand for the Programme from older persons across the country. In November 2018, Government responded to this demand, and announced

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the national roll out of the Senior Citizens Grant, to all the 136 districts in the country, starting with older persons who are 80 years and above, with the idea of lowering the age over time.

3.0 SAGE Programme Implementation Progress

The Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development completed the national roll out. The SAGE Programme is currently reaching **332,793** older persons in all districts across the country.

4.0 The Need for the national ID

The Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development took a policy decision to use the national ID register as source data for enrolment to the SAGE Programme. Furthermore, to receive payments, bank accounts have to be opened for beneficiaries in Centenary Bank, the current payment service provider. It is a requirement by Bank of Uganda that for anyone to open a bank account, they must have a national ID.

Secondly, there are older persons who meet the SAGE eligibility criteria of 80 years and above, and this can be verified otherwise. However, their national IDs have errors on dates of birth, names, etc. Because of this, they are also missing the Senior Citizens Grant. Moreover, the process of changing one's details on the national ID is laborious and expensive for an ordinary older person.

An assessment undertaken by the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development shows that these two National ID related challenges have affected about 54,559 older persons hence excluding them from receiving the Senior Citizens Grants. Of these 11,000 have not registered with NIRA, while another 43,559 registered but have wrong details on their ID.

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5.0 Addressing the Challenge

To address this challenge the Ministry of Gender, Labour, & Social Development has been working with the Ministry of Internal Affairs/NIRA to see how best this challenge can be addressed. I am happy to inform you today, that following consultations and discussions that have been going on, the two ministries have agreed **to undertake a remedial NIRA registration exercise specifically targeting older persons, to capture all those who have had not registered for the National ID**. This exercise started on Monday February 14, 2022. Affected older persons are advised to look out for information on when this registration will take place in their district and locality.

During this exercise, the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development, the Ministry of Internal Affairs/NIRA will work with the District Local Governments to schedule the remedial registration exercise in areas that the District Local Governments (DLGs) will communicate. The DLGs will mobilize the affected older persons to turn up on designated days and times, so that their details can be taken, and their IDs prepared and issued at a later date.

6.0 Conclusion

To ensure that the remedial registration is successful and achieves the objective of having all older persons registered for the national ID, I call upon all stakeholders – Members of Parliament, Local/Community leaders the DLGs, local communities, religious leaders, relatives and friends of these affected older persons to mobilize the affected older persons to look out for this registration exercise in their districts, and turn up, so that this issue is resolved.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

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