



ASSESSING IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMITMENTS BY POLITICAL PARTIES TO THE WOMEN OF UGANDA:

2011–2016



Gender Transformation &
Empowerment



2015



Women, you were created in the image of God, but people have made you think that you are chickens, and you yourselves think so; but you are actually eagles. Straighten your wings and fly, do not be content with chicken feed. With your own efforts and with the support of your friends take yourselves out of this state of weakness in which you are today, so that you can enjoy freedom and justice in a peaceful world!

– Mwalimu Julius Nyerere (1944)

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SECTION ONE:

INTRODUCTION

The year 2015 is a particularly significant one for women across the world and in Uganda. In the first place, it marks 20 years after the conclusion of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Domestically, the year marks 20 years since the promulgation of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda, and will also witness the start of yet another round of political campaigning that will culminate in general elections in 2016.

It is thus an opportune time to reflect upon the road travelled so far in terms of women's inclusion in critical electoral processes as a basis for devising means to achieve even more significant progress in this regard.

This study attempts one such reflection. It assesses the extent to which the major political parties have lived up to the commitments expressed in their various manifestos, as a basis for holding these political actors accountable to the women of Uganda. Importantly, it also captures the voices of women across the country in terms of changes they would like to see in their relationship with the main political actors in Uganda. It should be noted from the outset that the study is concerned with **political parties** as such. In the case of the National Resistance Party, therefore, the focus is as to the extent to which the ruling party has used the mandate given to it in the 2011 elections to implement the commitments made in its 2011 manifesto.

This report is divided into 4 sections. Section 1 introduces the study and outlines its major aims and objectives as well as the methodology adopted. Section 2 outlines the international, regional and domestic framework providing for women's participation and inclusion in electoral processes. Section 3 analyzes the extent to which the main political parties in Uganda have implemented the commitments made to women in Uganda in the last electoral cycle. Section 4 contains broad conclusions and recommendations arising from the study, drawing heavily upon the voices of women from across the country and across the breadth of the political landscape.

SECTION TWO:

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES

2.1 Introduction

This section analyzes the legal framework for the participation and inclusion of women in electoral processes. This analysis is undertaken at the international, regional, sub-regional and domestic levels.

2.2 The International Legal Framework

2.2.1 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)¹ is a cardinal document in the development of human rights, which has continued to inspire the progressive development of binding norms and standards.

Under Article 2 of the Declaration, everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

In terms of Article 7, all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.

¹ Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10th December 1948.



Additionally, under Article 21 of the Declaration, everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.² It is further stated that the will of the people shall be the authority of government and that this will must be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.³

2.2.2 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

According to Article 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966),⁴ the States Parties to the Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights set forth in the Covenant.

In terms of Article 25, every citizen must have the right and opportunity: to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;⁵ and to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors.⁶

Finally, under Article 26, all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law.

2.2.3 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

Under Article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),⁷ States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake, among other things, to embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle.⁸

² Article 21 (1).

³ Article 21 (3).

⁴ Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI) of 16 December 1966; entry into force 23 March 1976, in accordance with article 49.

⁵ Article 25 (1).

⁶ Article 25 (2).

⁷ Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 1979 (resolution 34/180) and entered into force on 3 September 1981.

⁸ Article 2 (a).

In terms of Article 7, States Parties must take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, must ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: to vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;⁹ to participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;¹⁰ as well as to participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.¹¹

2.2.4 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were issued at the close of a conference of States held in Beijing, China, in September 1995.

Under the Declaration, States affirmed their commitment to the equal rights and inherent human dignity of women and men and other purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations; to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Declaration on the Right to Development.¹² In the same vein, they recommitted themselves to ensure the full implementation of the human rights of women and of the girl child as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.¹³

States recognized that women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the *decision-making process* and *access to power*, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace.¹⁴

To this end, the Platform for Action dedicated substantial treatment to efforts required to achieve full participation of women in decision-making processes and access to power.¹⁵

In particular, in terms of Paragraph 190 of the Platform for Action, governments were required to, among other things, commit themselves to establishing the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and

9 Article 7 (a).

10 Article 7 (b).

11 Article 7 (c).

12 Paragraph 8.

13 Paragraph 9.

14 Paragraph 13.

15 Paragraphs 181–195.



committees, as well as in public administrative entities, and in the judiciary, including, *inter alia*, setting specific targets and implementing measures to substantially increase the number of women with a view to achieving equal representation of women and men, if necessary through positive action, in all governmental and public administration positions.¹⁶ In addition, they were mandated to: take measures, including, where appropriate, in electoral systems that encourage political parties to integrate women in elective and non-elective public positions in the same proportion and at the same levels as men;¹⁷ protect and promote the equal rights of women and men to engage in political activities and to freedom of association, including membership in political parties and trade unions;¹⁸ review the differential impact of electoral systems on the political representation of women in elected bodies and consider, where appropriate, the adjustment or reform of those systems;¹⁹ monitor and evaluate progress in the representation of women through the regular collection, analysis and dissemination of quantitative and qualitative data on women and men at all levels in various decision-making positions in the public and private sectors, and disseminate data on the number of women and men employed at various levels in Governments on a yearly basis; ensure that women and men have equal access to the full range of public appointments and set up mechanisms within governmental structures for monitoring progress in this field;²⁰ support non-governmental organizations and research institutes that conduct studies on women's participation in and impact on decision-making and the decision-making environment;²¹ encourage greater involvement of indigenous women in decision-making at all levels;²² encourage and, where appropriate, ensure that government-funded organizations adopt non-discriminatory policies and practices in order to increase the number and raise the position of women in their organizations;²³ recognize that shared work and parental responsibilities between women and men promote women's increased participation in public life, and take appropriate measures to achieve this, including measures to reconcile family and professional life;²⁴ and to aim at gender balance in the lists of national candidates nominated for election or appointment to United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and other autonomous organizations of the United Nations system, particularly for posts at the senior level.²⁵

16 Paragraph 190 (a).

17 Paragraph 190 (b).

18 Paragraph 190 (c).

19 Paragraph 190 (d).

20 Paragraph 190 (e).

21 Paragraph 190 (f).

22 Paragraph 190 (g).

23 Paragraph 190 (h).

24 Paragraph 190 (i).

25 Paragraph 190 (j).

For their part, under Paragraph 191 of the Platform for Action, political parties were mandated to: consider examining party structures and procedures to remove all barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against the participation of women;²⁶ consider developing initiatives that allow women to participate fully in all internal policy-making structures and appointive and electoral nominating processes;²⁷ and finally to consider incorporating gender issues in their political agenda, taking measures to ensure that women can participate in the leadership of political parties on an equal basis with men.²⁸

2.2.5 The Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are a set of objectives agreed to by States Parties at the close of the Millennium Summit in September 2000. This Summit was the largest meeting of world leaders in the history of the world,²⁹ which clothes the MDGs with significant political and normative weight. The goals identified and agreed to were aimed at being achieved by the year 2015.³⁰

The third goal (MDG 3) was stated as being '[t]o promote gender equality and empower women.' Under this goal, one of the indicators established to measure the achievement of the objective, is the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (Indicator 12).³¹

This also constitutes a specific and measurable commitment undertaken by the State of Uganda, a member of the community of nations, to increase the participation of women in the politics and governance of the country.

2.2.6 United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000³²

This Resolution is significant in so far as it constitutes the first time in the history of the Security Council that body particularly addressed itself to the effect of war on women as well as the need to involve women to achieve effective resolution of conflicts and sustainable peace.³³

In terms of this Resolution, the Security Council expressed concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees

26 Paragraph 191 (a).

27 Paragraph 191 (b).

28 Paragraph 191 (c).

29 <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/index.htm>

30 As above.

31 <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/gti.htm> For statistics in this regard, tracking various countries, see <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/SeriesDetail.aspx?srid=557><http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/SeriesDetail.aspx?srid=557>

32 Adopted unanimously on 31 October 2000 as Resolution (S/RES/1325).

33 <http://www.peacewomen.org/pages/about-1325/scr-1325-the-text>



and internally displaced persons; further recognized that they are increasingly targeted by combatants and armed elements and also noted the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation.³⁴

The Security Council also reaffirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressed the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, as well as the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution.³⁵

To this end, among other things, the Security Council urged Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict.³⁶

2.3 Regional Instruments

2.3.1 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

Under the Protocol, States Parties undertake to combat all forms of discrimination against women through appropriate legislative, institutional and other measures.³⁷

States parties further affirm that women and men are equal before the law and that women must have the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.³⁸

In terms of Article 9, in particular, States Parties are required to take *specific positive action* to promote participative governance and the equal participation of women in the political life of their countries through affirmative action, enabling national legislation and other measures to ensure that: women participate without any discrimination in all elections;³⁹ women are represented equally at all levels with men in all electoral processes;⁴⁰ and that women are equal partners with men at all levels of development and implementation of State policies

³⁴ Preamble to the Resolution.

³⁵ Preamble to the Resolution.

³⁶ Paragraph 1.

³⁷ Article 2 (1).

³⁸ Article 8.

³⁹ Article 9 (1) (a).

⁴⁰ Article 9 (1) (b).

and development programmes.⁴¹ States are further required to *increased* and *effective* representation and participation of women at all levels of decision-making.⁴²

Additional guarantees for the inclusion and participation of women in the political life of the country are found in Article 10 of the Protocol, in terms of which States are required to take all appropriate measures to ensure the increased participation of women, among other things, in the structures and processes for conflict prevention, management and resolution at local, national, regional, continental and international levels.⁴³

2.3.2 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance

The Principles that underpin the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance are stipulated in Article 3 of the document. These principles include the promotion of a system of government that is representative;⁴⁴ and the promotion of gender equality in public and private institutions.⁴⁵

In terms of Article 8 of the Charter, States Parties must eliminate all forms of discrimination, especially those based on political opinion, gender, ethnic, religious and racial grounds as well as any other form of intolerance.⁴⁶ To this end, States must adopt legislative and administrative measures to guarantee the rights of women, ethnic minorities, migrants, people with disabilities, refugees and displaced persons and other marginalized and vulnerable social groups.⁴⁷

Article 29 of the Charter particularly addresses the rights of women in governance and decision-making. Under this provision, States Parties must recognize the crucial role of women in development and strengthening of democracy.⁴⁸ States are also required to create the necessary conditions for full and active participation of women in the decision-making processes and structures at all levels as a fundamental element in the promotion and exercise of a democratic culture.⁴⁹ States are additionally obligated to take all possible measures to encourage the full and active participation of women in the electoral process and ensure gender parity in representation at all levels, including legislatures.⁵⁰

41 Article 9 (1) (c).

42 Article 9 (2).

43 Article 10 (2) (b).

44 Principle 3.

45 Principle 6.

46 Article 8 (1).

47 Article 8 (2).

48 Article 29 (1).

49 Article 29 (2).

50 Article 29 (3).



2.4 Sub-Regional Standards

2.4.1 Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community

Article 5 of the Treaty⁵¹ sets out the objectives of the Community, among which are to ensure the mainstreaming of gender in all its endeavours and the enhancement of the role of women in cultural, social, political, economic and technological development.⁵²

A concern for the inclusion of women is also reflected in Article 6 of the Treaty, which established the principles of the Community. One of the fundamental principles of the Community is good governance including adherence to the principles of democracy, the rule of law, accountability, transparency, social justice, equal opportunities, gender equality, as well as the recognition, promotion and protection of human rights in accordance with the provisions of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.⁵³

This concern is also reflected in Article 50 of the Treaty, which provides for election of Members of the East African Legislative Assembly. Under this provisions, the National Assembly of each party must elect, not from among its members, nine members of the Assembly, who shall represent as much as it is feasible, the various political parties represented in the National Assembly, shades of opinion, gender and other special interest groups in that Partner State, in accordance with such procedure as the National Assembly of each Partner State may determine.⁵⁴

The most comprehensive provision in the Treaty providing for the participation of women in political governance is Article 121. In terms of this Article, Partner States recognize that women make a significant contribution towards the process of socio-economic transformation and sustainable growth and that it is impossible to implement effective programmes for the economic and social development of the Partner States without the full participation of women. To this end, the Partner States undertake, through appropriate legislation and other measures, to: promote the empowerment and effective integration and participation of women at all levels of socio-economic development especially in decision-making;⁵⁵ abolish legislation and discourage customs that are discriminatory against women;⁵⁶ promote effective education awareness programmes

51 http://www.eac.int/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=158&Itemid=163

52 Article 5 (3) (e).

53 Article 6 (d).

54 Article 50 (1).

55 Article 121 (a).

56 Article 121 (b).

aimed at changing negative attitudes towards women;⁵⁷ create or adopt technologies which will ensure the stability of employment and professional progress for women workers;⁵⁸ and take such other measures that shall eliminate prejudices against women and promote the equality of the female gender with that of the male gender in every respect.⁵⁹

2.5 Domestic Framework

2.5.1 The Constitution

According to Objective VI of the National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, the State must ensure gender balance and fair representation of marginalized groups on all constitutional and other bodies. In addition, under Objective XV the State must recognize the significant role that women play in society.

This commitment is also reflected in Article 32 of the Constitution, which provides for affirmative action in favour of marginalized groups. Under Article 32 (1), the State must take affirmative action in favour of groups marginalized on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom, for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them. In terms of Article 32 (2), laws, cultures, customs and traditions which are against the dignity, welfare or interest of women or any other marginalized group to which clause (1) relates or which undermine their status, are prohibited by the Constitution.

The most specific provision, however, is the often cited Article 33. Under Article 33 (1), women must be accorded full and equal dignity of the person with men. The State is also enjoined to provide the facilities and opportunities necessary to enhance the welfare of women to enable them to realize their full potential and advancement.⁶⁰ The State must also protect women and their rights, taking into account their unique status and natural maternal functions in society.⁶¹ Similarly, women must be guaranteed the right to equal treatment with men and this right must include equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities.⁶² Further, notwithstanding the terms of Article 32 and without prejudice to them, women have the right to affirmative action for the purpose of redressing the imbalances created by history, tradition or custom.⁶³

57 Article 121 (c).

58 Article 121 (d).

59 Article 121 (e).

60 Article 33 (2).

61 Article 33 (3).

62 Article 33 (4).

63 Article 33 (5).



Similar guarantees for participation and inclusion of women are also reflected in Article 71 (multiparty political system). Under Article 71 (1), a political party in the multiparty political system must conform to a number of principles, which include the following: membership of a political party must not be based on sex, ethnicity, religion or other sectional division;⁶⁴ and members of the national organs of a political party must be regularly elected from citizens of Uganda in conformity with the provisions of a process reflecting national character and eschewing sectional divisionism as well as with due consideration for gender.⁶⁵ In addition, under Article 71 (2), Parliament is obligated to, by law, prescribe a code of conduct for political organisations and political parties and provide for the establishment of a national consultative forum for political parties and organisations with such functions as it may prescribe.

The same guarantees for participation are provided in respect of local government structures. Under Article 180 (2), Parliament is required to, by law, prescribe the composition, qualifications, functions and electoral procedures in respect of local government councils, except that, among other things, one-third of the membership of each local government council must be reserved for women.⁶⁶ This stipulation is extremely important since, in terms of Article 180 (1), the council is the highest political authority within a local government's area of jurisdiction and has substantial legislative and executive powers.

A substantially similar requirement is provided for regional governments as envisaged in Article 178 of the Constitution. In terms of the Fifth Schedule to the Constitution, the composition of a regional assembly of a regional government must be prescribed by Act of Parliament and must consist of, among others, representatives of women, who must not be less than one-third of the membership.⁶⁷

2.5.2 The Local Government Act

The Local Government Act⁶⁸ reflects the commitment in the Constitution to participation and inclusion of women in governance.

In the first place, one of the objectives of the Act is stated as being to establish a democratic, political and gender-sensitive administrative setup in local governments.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Article 71 (1) (b).

⁶⁵ Article 71 (1) (d).

⁶⁶ Article 180 (2) (b).

⁶⁷ Clause 2 (1) (b).

⁶⁸ Cap 243 of the Laws of Uganda.

⁶⁹ Section 2 (c).



To this end, under Section 10 of the Act, district councils must consist of, among others, women councilors forming at least one-third of the council.⁷⁰ Similar stipulations are provided relating to the composition of a subcounty council;⁷¹ city division council;⁷² municipal council;⁷³ municipal division council⁷⁴ and town council.⁷⁵

In addition, under Section 47 (3) of the Act, at least one-third of the executive committee members at the parish or village level shall be women.

Further, regarding the demarcation of electoral areas, the population quota for demarcation of electoral areas for women representatives must be determined by the requirement of women constituting one-third of any local council being considered.⁷⁶

A shortcoming in the Act appears to be the provision relating to women representatives to councils. Under Section 117 (3) of the Act, the presiding officer must conduct such an election by allowing the electorate to cast their votes by lining behind the candidate, an agent or a portrait of the candidate of their choice. This is buttressed by the terms of Section 128 (1), which provides that voting at every election for a district, city or municipal council, *other than for women councillors*, must be by secret ballot using one ballot box at each polling station for all candidates.

2.5.3 The Political Parties and Organizations Act

Curiously, for such an important piece of legislation, the Political Parties and Organizations Act⁷⁷ is rather muted regarding the full inclusion and participation of women.

Indeed, the only gender-specific provision is to be found in Section 10 (internal organization of political parties or organizations), in terms of which every political party or organization must elect such persons to its executive committee as may be determined by its members, with due consideration for gender equity.⁷⁸

70 Section 10 (e).

71 Section 23 (1) (e).

72 Section 23 (2) (e).

73 Section 23 (3) (e).

74 Section 23 (4) (e).

75 Section 23 (5) (e).

76 Section 108 (3).

77 Act No 18 of 2005.

78 Section 10 (2).



This anomaly is not cured by Section 10 (1), which incorporates by reference, the provisions of Articles 71 and 72 of the Constitution, since those provisions are themselves too broad to offer substantive, effective and measurable benchmarks for enhancing the participation and inclusion of women.

Related to the above, the Act in effect constitutes an abdication by Parliament of the imperative contained in Article 71 (2) of the Constitution:

Parliament shall by law prescribe a code of conduct for political organisations and political parties and provide for the establishment of a national consultative forum for political parties and organisations with such functions as Parliament may prescribe.

Instead of clearly establishing the same by Act of Parliament, under Section 19 (1) the Minister is empowered, in consultation with the Electoral Commission and the political parties and organizations and with the approval of Parliament, by regulations made under Section 27 of the Act, prescribe a code of conduct for political parties.

2.5.4 The Equal Opportunities Commission Act

The Equal Opportunities Commission Act of 2007 was a long overdue enactment meant to finally comply with the mandate under Article 32 of the Constitution.

Under Section 14 (1) of the Act, the functions of the Commission are to monitor, evaluate and ensure that policies, laws, plans, programs, activities, practices, traditions, cultures, usages and customs of organs of state at all levels that is to say, statutory bodies and agencies; public bodies and authorities; private businesses and enterprises; non-governmental organizations, and social and cultural communities, are compliant with equal opportunities and affirmative action in favour of groups marginalized on the basis of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, tribe, creed, religion, social or economic standing, political opinion, disability, gender, age or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom.

A notable omission from this listing appears to be a specific provision for political parties and other organizations of a similar nature.

This may be cured, in part, by the terms of Section 14 (4), which empowers the Commission to hear and determine complaints by any person against any action, practice, usage, plan, policy programme, tradition, culture or custom followed by any organ, body, business organization, institution or person which amounts to discrimination, marginalization or undermines equal opportunities.



However, the lack of a specific mention and focus on political parties in the Act does not bode well for the exercise by the Commission of a robust mandate in this regard. This is a real missed opportunity, and constitutes a substantial lapse in the legislative framework for the full inclusion and participation of women in the political sphere.

2.6 Conclusion

The preceding analysis demonstrates that, notwithstanding important guarantees under international, regional and sub-regional law, crucial gaps still remain in the domestic legislative framework, especially that which specifically relates to the regulation of political activity.

SECTION THREE:

ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF POLITICAL PARTY MANIFESTOS WITH REGARD TO INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

3.0 Introduction

This Section seeks to assess the extent to which the major political parties—National Resistance Movement (NRM), Forum for Democratic Change (FDC),⁷⁹ the Democratic Party (DP) and the Uganda Peoples’ Congress (UPC)—have implemented the commitments made in their 2011–2016 manifestos to women’s participation and inclusion.

3.1 A survey of commitments made in the 2011 Party Manifestos

In general, the commitments made by the major political parties can be identified under the following categories:—political participation, socio–cultural inclusion; economic welfare; health, and in particular sexual and reproductive health rights. The analysis of commitments is therefore undertaken under this broad heads.

3.1.1 Political participation

Under this head, the NRM noted that it had in the past promoted the empowerment of women, and that, in particular, it had taken affirmative action measures which had enhanced women’s roles in decision–making and participation

⁷⁹ The FDC Manifesto was produced and published under the auspices of the Inter Party Cooperation (IPC), constituted by the FDC, Conservative Party (CP), Justice Forum (JEEMA), the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Suubi.

at all levels of society.⁸⁰ It noted, for instance, that the proportion of women in Parliament was by then over 30%.⁸¹ To this end, the NRM undertook the following:

- i. To continue enhancing gender equity and equality⁸²
- ii. To uphold all the affirmative action clauses in the Constitution of Uganda⁸³
- iii. To enact laws that empower women in the political sector⁸⁴

The FDC Manifesto contained ***no direct*** commitment with regard to enhancing the political participation of women. The closest commitment in this regard was the following:

- i. To ensure greater participation of women at all levels in the planning, management, and preservation of the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources⁸⁵

The UPC committed to:

- i. Ensure that, within 1 year, women are appointed to 50% of all national leadership positions; these include cabinet ministers, permanent secretaries, commissioners, heads of statutory bodies, and ambassadors.⁸⁶

DP promised to:

- i. institute and enforce policies that promote gender equality⁸⁷
- ii. Increase the quota for women seats from 30%–40% in public elective positions.⁸⁸

On Decision Making, Politics and Public Life, women therefore demand as follow:

1. Increase numbers of women in political leadership at all levels to at least 50% representation in line with the Africa Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance⁸⁹. This should also apply to leadership within political parties and organizations.
2. Revise electoral systems to proportional representation and raise resources to increase the numbers of women who contest on the “direct” seats that will ultimately increase the number of women in politics.

⁸⁰ NRM Manifesto, pp 6, 36.

⁸¹ NRM Manifesto, p. 6.

⁸² NRM Manifesto, P.36.

⁸³ NRM Manifesto, P.37.

⁸⁴ NRM Manifesto, P.37.

⁸⁵ FDC Manifesto, p.37.

⁸⁶ UPC Manifesto, p.27.

⁸⁷ DP Manifesto, Section 2.1.

⁸⁸ DP Manifesto, Section 2.1.

⁸⁹ See Article 2 (11) of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2004) as well as The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality (adopted by the AU in July 2004), as well as the African Union Gender Policy, which under Commitment 1(3) restates the AU 50/50 Gender Parity Principle.



3. Allocate at least 50% of all political party funds to women leagues and activities to ensure establishment of structures, programmes that enhance women's effective participation in political parties.
4. Allocate resources for capacity building for women and initiate programs that include both men and women to ensure that both groups understand the importance of gender equality in politics⁹⁰.
5. Take action to transform political cultures that are gender insensitive to women, make politics, public and private decision making spaces more transparent, accountable and sensitive to the needs and concerns of women partly in fulfillment of Objective (VI) of the national objectives and principles of state policy on gender balance and fair representation of marginalized groups'.⁹¹
6. Increase budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development to at least 5% of the total national budget to enable it implement programmes towards enhancing gender equality in socio-economic and political spheres⁹².

3.1.2 Socio–Cultural Inclusion and Empowerment

The NRM observed that over the previous decade, it had concluded and implemented a national gender policy, in which it had outlined various strategies for the empowerment of women. It noted, in particular, the strengthening of the legal framework, introducing legislation with respect to domestic relations, sexual relations and employment.⁹³ To the NRM, the gender policy it oversaw meant that 'national machinery' was now tasked with overseeing and mainstreaming as well as the advancement of women.⁹⁴ By virtue of the same policy, violations against women and children were now addressed under the Penal Code Act, Cap 120.⁹⁵ In this regard, the NRM committed:

- i. To continue enhancing gender equity and equality⁹⁶
- ii. To expand the programmes for elimination of gender-based violence throughout the country ⁹⁷
- iii. To enact laws that empower women in the social sector, especially the laws on the family as well as laws on property and education⁹⁸

90 Ibid 11 page 38

91 Ibid 11 page 39

92 Ibid 15 page 39

93 NRM Manifesto, P.35.

94 NRM Manifesto, P.36.

95 NRM Manifesto, P.36.

96 NRM Manifesto, P.36.

97 NRM Manifesto, P.36.

98 NRM Manifesto, P.37.

- iv. To provide, under the Peace Rehabilitation and Development Programme (PRDP) for Northern Uganda, psychosocial support and other related services to women and girls in post-conflict situations, paying special attention to child-headed households⁹⁹

The FDC pledged:

- i. Initiate special national recognition for sportsmen and sportswomen¹⁰⁰

The UPC Committed to:

- i. Formulate a community development policy to educate, train and empower women; re-establish Community Development Centres to benefit women.¹⁰¹
- ii. Rehabilitate and expand all the girls' schools built by UPC government, within 4 years¹⁰²
- iii. Vigorously pursue a policy of zero tolerance to violence against women; strengthen the law and sensitize the population about this problem¹⁰³
- iv. Guarantee working women guaranteed three (3) months paid maternity leave¹⁰⁴
- v. Develop special programmes for young women targeting life skills¹⁰⁵

DP promised to:

- i. institute and enforce policies that promote gender equality¹⁰⁶
- ii. institute heavy punishments for perpetrators of Gender Based Violence and prosecute any acts that promote early marriage¹⁰⁷
- iii. aim for a girl child transition rate of 80–90% from primary to secondary¹⁰⁸
- iv. to review the then Domestic Relations Bill (later to be known as the Marriage and Divorce Bill) with a view to discarding gender biased cultural practices and strengthening property rights¹⁰⁹

99 NRM Manifesto, p.37.

100 FDC Manifesto, p.24.

101 UPC Manifesto, p.27.

102 UPC Manifesto, p.27.

103 UPC Manifesto, p.28.

104 UPC Manifesto, p.28.

105 UPC Manifesto, p.28.

106 DP Manifesto, Section 2.1.

107 DP Manifesto, Section 2.1.

108 DP Manifesto, Section 2.1.

109 DP Manifesto, Section 2.1.



On land and propriety rights, women demand as follow:

1. Institute mechanisms through policy regulations and programmes to enhance observance of joint spousal co-ownership of family land and property as provided for the in the new land policy, 2013.
2. In addition, the Marriage and Divorce Bill, 2009 which proposes married persons and cohabitants to make arrangements as to how property will be owned at, during and after dissolution of marriage must be considered and passed.
3. Establish a land fund for women to enable them own and control land.
4. Engage cultural institutions to popularize the Land (Amendment) Act (2010) and to promote ownership and inheritance of land by women/girls.

Design specific policy and programme measures to protect widows from property and land grabbing predominately by in-laws and relatives.

3.1.3 Economic Empowerment

The NRM noted that MSMEs play a significant role in the provision of employment opportunities for Ugandans providing jobs to over 2.5 million people. It observed, that there were currently about 800,000 MSMEs in Uganda and the sector is growing at a rate of about 20% per annum, making it a strategic entry point for massive job creation especially for the youth and women.¹¹⁰

The NRM pledged the following:

- i. To '*continue enhancing gender equity and equality*.'¹¹¹
- ii. To enact laws that empower women in the economic sectors, especially the laws on property and education¹¹²
- iii. To address the constraints faced by MSMEs through training in business skills, access to financial services and improving the business environment like giving a time frame through which contract committees in government should evaluate and award contracts¹¹³

¹¹⁰ NRM Manifesto, P.73.

¹¹¹ NRM Manifesto, P.36.

¹¹² NRM Manifesto, P.37.

¹¹³ NRM Manifesto, P.74.



- iv. To make special arrangements for active participation of women during the implementation of the NAADS programmes, specifically the transformation from subsistence to commercial farming¹¹⁴
- v. To construct over 44 warehouses and over 190 grain satellite collection centers in grain producing areas; targeting to reach over 52,000 households, 50 percent of which would be women headed households¹¹⁵
- vi. To establish cottage industries around cotton in cotton growing areas to create rural employment, especially for women and youths.¹¹⁶

For its part, FDC committed to doing the following:

- i. To increase the Land Fund reserves to compensate absent land lords or squatters, and to settle landless men, women, and children;¹¹⁷
- ii. To increase investment in the use of ICT in education, both formal and informal, and in the establishment of rural ICT centres, to promote accessibility and usage by women and the youth¹¹⁸
- iii. To increase resource allocation to the Uganda Communications Commissions Development Fund, so as to equip more rural populations, especially the youth and women, with computers¹¹⁹
- iv. To allocate 10% of resources from oil and other natural resources to sectors that directly benefit women¹²⁰
- v. To ensure greater participation of women at all levels in the planning, management, and preservation of the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources¹²¹.

The UPC committed to:

- i. Lower taxation for the SMEs to create favourable conditions for entrepreneurs to grow business and create employment, on the understanding that this would particularly benefit women who constitute 80% of operators and workers in SMEs¹²²
- ii. Review and reduce market dues which, in their opinion, had become an unfair burden on the market women.¹²³

114 NRM Manifesto, P.92.

115 NRM Manifesto, pp 96–97.

116 NRM Manifesto, P.103.

117 FDC Manifesto, P.8.

118 FDC Manifesto, P.12.

119 FDC Manifesto, P.12.

120 FDC Manifesto, P.13.

121 FDC Manifesto, p.37.

122 UPC Manifesto, p.14.

123 UPC Manifesto, p.15.



- iii. The major programmes of support to rural farmers and small-and-medium enterprises are designed to particularly empower women and significantly improve their standard of living; women constitute 80% of the workforce in these two sectors.¹²⁴
- iv. Ensure equal rights; promote policy and measures to increase women access to land ownership and inheritance.¹²⁵
- v. Guarantee working women guaranteed three (3) months paid maternity leave¹²⁶
- vi. Develop special programmes for young women targeting employability and business start-ups¹²⁷
- vii. Through fair taxation, investments, soft loan schemes and other targeted programmes, to place particular priority on promoting and supporting, small-scale farmers, small-to-medium size business operators and entrepreneurs, on the understanding that this would particularly benefit women who constitute 80% of the workers in these two sectors.¹²⁸
- viii. Increase budgetary allocation to agriculture from the then 4% to 10% of the national budget, on the understanding that this would especially benefit women and uplift them from poverty, since women constitute 80% of the workforce in agriculture¹²⁹

DP committed to:

- i. Institute and enforce policies that promote gender equality¹³⁰
- ii. Promote women in Math and Science to increase professional women in employment¹³¹
- iii. Address gender inequalities in land access and control¹³²
- iv. Review the then Domestic Relations Bill (later to be known as the Marriage and Divorce Bill) with a view to discarding gender biased cultural practices and strengthening property rights¹³³

¹²⁴ UPC Manifesto, p.27.

¹²⁵ UPC Manifesto, p.27–28.

¹²⁶ UPC Manifesto, p.28.

¹²⁷ UPC Manifesto, p.28.

¹²⁸ UPC Manifesto, p.28.

¹²⁹ UPC Manifesto, p.11.

¹³⁰ DP Manifesto, Section 2.1.

¹³¹ DP Manifesto, Section 2.1.

¹³² DP Manifesto, Section 3.1.

¹³³ DP Manifesto, Section 2.1.



On Economic Empowerment, Women therefore demand as follow:

Under Banking, Access to Credit and entrepreneurship:

1. Restructure the banking system to ensure that women benefit equally with men from mainstream loans and other financial and business assistance. Micro-credit schemes should become additional and not the main source for financing women's businesses. It is proven that when women get loans, they are more likely than men to pay back the loans¹³⁴.
2. Support nationals especially women into enterprise development for alternative livelihood and to take advantage of the emerging business industries.
3. Provide low cost credit to support the existing women artisans and small scale miners to add value to their products.

Under Agriculture:

1. Revamp cooperatives, bearing in mind the current socio-economic context to regulate prices and provide advice to farmers on different aspects of the activity in order to prevent exploitation of farmers and to reduce poverty in rural areas where agriculture is the main economic activity¹³⁵; clear strategies to ensure women participate and benefits from activities of cooperatives should be incorporated.
2. Enhance investment in agricultural processing-agricultural value chain for higher levels of the chain to absorb and reduce on the number of people from the agricultural sector to agricultural industry, especially women.
3. Provide women and women headed households with subsidized farm inputs to empower them move from small scale to large scale agricultural production, this should be matched with increase in access to markets and appropriate technologies.
4. Ensure plans, budgets and programmes for modernizing agriculture integrate and prioritize strategies for reducing women's heavy and unequal labour provision in the sector in line with the African Union proposal on agriculture as a key issue for women's empowerment and gender equality.

¹³⁴ Ibid 11 page 31

¹³⁵ Ibid 11 page 31



Under Social Protection and Socio–Economic Sector Reforms:

1. Expand Social security schemes to benefit those in the informal sector particularly women.
2. Enact and implement policies that provide for child care in all work places both formal and informal. This will give women who want to work an opportunity to do so without worrying about the welfare of their children. Government will benefit from such a scheme because when productivity of citizens increases, government's revenue increases.
3. Address corruption in all socio–economic and political sectors to improve accessibility to services by women. Women are the major beneficiaries of public services partly due to their gender roles as care takers of the sick, bringing up children and their biological function of giving birth. However, majority of them are poor to afford private services during delivery thus are most affected by corruption.
4. Design and resource implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies that are customized to differing needs of female male farmers in the spheres of productivity, investment, training and market access.
5. Define targets to gradually pursue gender balance in training and employment by government and investors.
6. Take steps to reverse economic policies which discriminate against women and ensure their active involvement in economic decision-making at all levels
7. Undertake fundamental review of economic policies to promote the wellbeing and security of women and men and ensure a reversal of past economic policy failures

3.1.4 Health Rights

According to the NRM, it had over time pursued a gender policy which, among other things, had led to greater attention being paid, in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, to the prevention of mother-to-child transmission.¹³⁶ It further observed that it had created a protected budget line for vaccines and related supplies in the Ministry of Health budget so as to ensure that all children and women of reproductive age are protected from vaccine preventable diseases.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ NRM Manifesto, P.36.

¹³⁷ NRM Manifesto, P.198.



The NRM pledged in this respect:

- i. To continue enhancing gender equity and equality¹³⁸
- ii. To enhancing the programmes available for the elimination of gender-based violence throughout the country¹³⁹
- iii. To enact laws that empower women, including laws on the family, education and health¹⁴⁰
- iv. To continue to emphasize programmes aimed at reducing maternal and child mortality¹⁴¹
- v. To increase the scope of protection of women of child bearing age by scaling up vaccination of young girls with Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine to offer them protection against cervical cancer, and, in the same respect, to sensitize women to undertake routine screening for cervical cancer¹⁴²
- vi. To scale up and strengthen vaccination of women of child bearing age, including school girls against tetanus in order to offer protection at birth from tetanus for all new born infants in the country;¹⁴³
- vii. To make the use of ergometrine medicine for delivering mothers a standard requirement so as to reduce the danger of women bleeding to death after delivery¹⁴⁴

FDC promised the following:

- i. To reduce maternal mortality from the prevailing 435 per 100,000 live births or 16 deaths of women per day—with the ultimate goal of 'letting no woman die in childbirth', through: free and easily accessible antenatal and maternity services, effective referral, and a motivated health work force¹⁴⁵
- ii. To avail family planning services that are easily accessible, easy to understand and use especially in rural areas, taking into account the special needs of the large teenage population in Uganda¹⁴⁶

138 NRM Manifesto, P.36.

139 NRM Manifesto, P.36.

140 NRM Manifesto, P.37.

141 NRM Manifesto, P.37.

142 NRM Manifesto, pp.205–206.

143 NRM Manifesto, P.206.

144 NRM Manifesto, pp.239–240.

145 FDC Manifesto, p.20.

146 FDC Manifesto, p.20.



The UPC committed to:

- i. Construct 4 regional hospitals for women's specialized medical care, within 5 years.¹⁴⁷
- ii. Vigorously pursue a policy of zero tolerance to violence against women; strengthen the law and sensitize the population about this problem¹⁴⁸
- iii. Guarantee working women guaranteed three (3) months paid maternity leave¹⁴⁹
- iv. Develop special programmes for young women targeting employability, business start-ups, life skills, and social diseases such as HIV/AIDS¹⁵⁰

DP promised to:

- i. Institute and enforce policies that promote gender equality¹⁵¹
- ii. Institute heavy punishments for perpetrators of Gender Based Violence and prosecute any acts that promote early marriage¹⁵²
- iii. Review the then Domestic Relations Bill (later to be known as the Marriage and Divorce Bill) with a view to discarding gender biased cultural practices and strengthening property rights¹⁵³

It is noteworthy that there were no direct provisions in the DP manifesto for improving the health rights of women. The above cited pledges, while important, are more general commitments regarding the welfare of women.

Given that Health is a key concern for women, we therefore demand as follow:

1. Enhance investment in the health sector by increasing budget allocations and monitoring of health performance in accordance with the Abuja declaration of 15% total budget allocation to health and ensure at least 5% allocation of the total health budget to maternal health services including emergency obstetric care services at all Health Centre HC III and VI in the country.
2. Ensure at least 6% of the health budget is allocated to primary health care to reduce disease prevalence and subsequently the overwhelming demand on health services.

¹⁴⁷ UPC Manifesto, p.20.

¹⁴⁸ UPC Manifesto, p.28.

¹⁴⁹ UPC Manifesto, p.28.

¹⁵⁰ UPC Manifesto, p.28.

¹⁵¹ DP Manifesto, Section 2.1.

¹⁵² DP Manifesto, Section 2.1.

¹⁵³ DP Manifesto, Section 2.1.



3. Prioritize availability of a variety of family planning services to improve on women's health and child spacing.¹⁵⁴ Parties should among others have clear plans on how to work with stakeholders with strong influence on women's access to health services like religious and cultural leaders.
4. Increase payment of health workers to attract more female and male health workers particularly in hard to reach areas and to control brain drain; Women call for a clear policy position on how to address payment of health workers bearing in mind the current revenue sources of the country¹⁵⁵.
5. Strengthen access to reproductive health services for young people to reduce incidences of teenage pregnancies and unsafe abortions.
6. Ensure the Ministry of Health develops clear plans and strategies to address attitudes and practices that play a big role in undermining the power of women to make decisions on their health rights.
7. Institute and enforce laws, policies and regulations that eliminate gender based violence and empower women including laws related to family welfare and health care such as the Marriage and Divorce Bill; Sexual Offences Bill and Domestic Violence Act.
8. Design programmes and strategies to empower women with appropriate information and improve their access to economic means and opportunities to improve on women's health seeking behavior.
9. Ensure the Ministry of Health has clear plans to intensify country wide massive awareness campaigns on maternal health issues geared towards involvement of men.

3.2 An analysis of the extent of implementation of Political Party Manifestos

The analysis under this Subsection follows the broad categories identified and developed in the preceding Subsection. Evidently, while the NRM government won the 2011 elections and therefore has had the opportunity to implement its manifesto, the other parties have not been similarly situated. An examination of the extent of implementation of the parties' commitments therefore has to be based on what the various parties could have done, and did in fact do, using the range of political and other opportunities they have had since 2011.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid 11 page 26

¹⁵⁵ Ibid 11 page 27



3.2.1 Political Participation

In terms of implementation by the NRM of its commitments to gender equality in the area of political participation, an analysis of the Cabinet reveals continuing gender disparities. For instance, as of February 2015, of 31 members of the Cabinet, only 9 were women, representing a figure of 29%.¹⁵⁶ Similarly, out of 38 Ministers of State, only 8 or 21% are women.¹⁵⁷

With respect to the enactment of laws that empower women, a major piece of legislation that would have promoted the rights and welfare of women—the Marriage and Divorce Bill, was presented to Parliament, then withdrawn, largely on the basis of popular opposition to its terms.¹⁵⁸

The FDC also demonstrates challenges in terms of achieving its vision for the inclusion and participation of women. For instance, out of 188 FDC candidates nominated to vie for directly elected Parliamentary seats in the 2011 election, only 4 or 2.1% were women.¹⁵⁹ Similarly out of 673 FDC candidates nominated for the directly elected positions of councillors in the 2011 elections, only 8 or 1.2% were women.¹⁶⁰

The same trend is apparent with regard to the UPC. Out of 102 UPC candidates nominated for directly elected parliamentary seats in 2011, only 3 or 2.9% were women.¹⁶¹ In addition, of 221 UPC candidates for directly elected positions of councillors, only 2 or 0.9% were women.¹⁶²

The situation is not very different in the DP. Out of the 86 DP candidates nominated for directly elected Parliamentary seats in 2011, only 6 or 7% were women.¹⁶³ Similarly, out of 151 DP candidates for directly elected positions for councillors, only 3 or 2% were women.¹⁶⁴

156 See <http://www.statehouse.go.ug/government/cabinet>

157 See <http://www.statehouse.go.ug/government/cabinet>

158 <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/641467-nrm-caucus-votes-against-marriage-bill.html>

159 Source: WDN–U, 'Gender analysis of Forum for Democratic Change commitments to gender in its 2011–2016 party manifesto and proposals to address gender inequality in the 2016–2021 manifesto', p.2 (on file).

160 Source: WDN–U, 'Gender analysis of Forum for Democratic Change commitments to gender in its 2011–2016 party manifesto and proposals to address gender inequality in the 2016–2021 manifesto', p.2 (on file).

161 Source: WDN–U, 'Gender analysis of Uganda Peoples' Congress commitments to gender in its 2011–2016 party manifesto and proposals to address gender inequality in the 2016–2021 manifesto', p.3 (on file).

162 Source: WDN–U, 'Gender analysis of Uganda Peoples' Congress commitments to gender in its 2011–2016 party manifesto and proposals to address gender inequality in the 2016–2021 manifesto', p.3 (on file).

163 Source: WDN–U, 'Gender analysis of Democratic Party commitments to gender in its 2011–2016 party manifesto and proposals to address gender inequality in the 2016–2021 manifesto', p.1 (on file).

164 Source: WDN–U, 'Gender analysis of Democratic Party commitments to gender in its 2011–2016 party manifesto and proposals to address gender inequality in the 2016–2021 manifesto', p.2 (on file).

It was noteworthy that the majority of respondents interviewed for this study were not aware of the commitments that their own parties had made with respect to political participation. In some cases, there was an actual misconception in this regard. Notably, in both Bushenyi and Lira, senior officials of the FDC believed that the party had committed to having 40% representation of women in national level governance.¹⁶⁵ As noted in Section 3.1.1 (above), however, no such commitment was apparent in the 2011 FDC Manifesto. This commitment was made by the DP, which wanted to increase the quota for women seats to 40% in public elective positions, with the UPC committing to an even greater increase, to 50%.

3.2.2 Socio–Cultural Inclusion and Empowerment

A number of respondents noted that gains had been made in this respect, notably through the continued application of the affirmative action policy in education as well as through increased voice and empowerment of women in society.¹⁶⁶

However, it was pointed out that this empowerment tended to favour already emancipated women, particularly in urban centers. A respondent in Bushenyi, for instance, noted that ‘

... it is only the educated women who have benefited from this term but the grass root women still remain where they were in 2011.’¹⁶⁷

Another respondent in Bushenyi observed that women could be divided into 3 ‘grades’: i) office bearers and politicians; ii) teachers and nurses; and iii) village/household wives. She observed that the children of first grade women had been able to take full advantage of social services, particularly university education, while those of second and third grade women were left with accessing technical schools at subcounty levels and ‘local schools.’¹⁶⁸

Similar concerns were raised in Arua, with an NRM party official acknowledging that the affirmative action given to the girl child at university did not benefit the girls in the rural areas who faced challenges of high drop–out rates as a result of poverty, early marriages and other factors.¹⁶⁹ An FDC party official in Arua also felt that the high drop–out rate for girls in the area meant that only very few girls from the district could

165 Personal interviews in Bushenyi and Lira, December 2014.

166 Personal interviews in Bushenyi, Kampala, Wakiso, Mayuge, Arua and Lira, December 2014.

167 Personal interview in Bushenyi, December 2014.

168 Personal interview in Bushenyi, December 2014.

169 Personal interview in Arua, December 2014.



make it to university even with the benefit of the 1.5 points affirmative action.¹⁷⁰ She felt that this drop-out rate could also be explained by the preponderance of male head teachers in the district, with only about five female head teachers confirmed in their positions.¹⁷¹ In her view, strong women in such positions would be more likely to look out for the special needs of girls in schools and to encourage them to stay the course and excel on an equal basis with boys.¹⁷²

Respondents in Arua also noted that while the NRM had committed to providing psycho-social support services for women in post-conflict areas, this had been done selectively. It was not, for instance, that Ombachi in Arua had experienced the liberation wars but greater attention had been focused on Gulu district because of the LRA war.¹⁷³

3.2.3 Economic Empowerment

It is noteworthy that most respondents (including party members and officials) were not aware of the specific commitments made by the NRM, DP, UPC or FDC in their various manifestos.¹⁷⁴

That said, the majority of respondents interviewed for this study felt that, overall, there had not been an appreciable improvement with regard to the economic empowerment of women since 2011.¹⁷⁵ A NRM official in Bushenyi acknowledged, for instance, that the program of '*entandikwa y'abakazi*' (or entrepreneurial support for women through seed grants) which had been promised by the Members of Parliament from Bushenyi and the LCV Chairperson had never been fully realized.¹⁷⁶ It is noteworthy that this program was not in the NRM manifesto, but appears to have been a local commitment by local NRM party leaders to the people of this district. At the same time, it demonstrates the point, made above, that the NRM manifesto, like other party manifestos, does not appear to have been the basis of political party campaigning at the local level, where instead, local politicians made alternative, specific and contextual commitments to their constituents. Indeed, another respondent in Bushenyi observed that it was only through individual efforts, but not party efforts, that some promises were being realized, noting for instance, that Hon. Mary Karooro Okurut and an LCV Councilor Peace Tibakuna had tried to support women empowerment projects.¹⁷⁷

170 Personal interview in Arua, December 2014.

171 As above.

172 As above.

173 Personal interviews in Arua, December 2014.

174 Personal interviews in Bushenyi, Kampala, Wakiso, Mayuge, Arua and Lira, December 2014.

175 As above.

176 Personal interview in Bushenyi, December 2014.

177 Personal interview in Bushenyi, December 2014.

As with the question of socio-cultural inclusion in Section 3.2.2 above, respondents observed a divergence between the fortunes of urban educated women and those of rural women. A UPC official in Bushenyi observed as follows:

[The NRM] also promised freedom of women but it is not the freedom that we wanted. They talk about leadership and participation but the common woman has no freedom. Government brought freedom in politics but a house wife has nothing to benefit because not every woman is a politician.¹⁷⁸

Similar concerns were expressed in Arua, with respondents noting that, for instance, the NUSAF projects that had been established were not helping the grassroots people but only those in the urban areas who were already in a better position to provide for themselves.¹⁷⁹ It was also felt that the NAADS programme which was aimed at poverty alleviation, like NUSAF, had not assisted rural women but tended instead to empower those people who were already in a better position.¹⁸⁰ An allusion was made in this regard, to the Biblical allegory to the effect that those who had would have more added to them, while for the poor, even the little they have would be taken away.¹⁸¹

Observations were also made with regard to the weak implementation of already existing laws for the protection of women's right to property.¹⁸² It was noted in Arua, for instance, that there was a challenge of communal ownership of land, which combined with the view of women as property themselves, meant that they could neither own land nor other property, especially in rural areas.¹⁸³ In addition, there had been cases where women had been chased away from land and houses that they bought and built with their husbands because they could not culturally own property.¹⁸⁴ The laws in place could not protect them because majority of those who enforced the laws were men who had a patriarchal mindset.¹⁸⁵ It was thus felt that the NRM government had not adequately protected the uneducated rural woman in rural areas but had focused on the urban educated woman who knew her rights and could go to court.¹⁸⁶

178 Personal interview in Bushenyi, December 2014.

179 Personal interviews in Arua, December 2014.

180 Personal interviews in Arua, December 2014.

181 Personal interviews in Arua, December 2014.

182 Personal interviews in Arua, December 2014.

183 Personal interviews in Arua, December 2014.

184 Personal interviews in Arua, December 2014.

185 Personal interviews in Arua, December 2014.

186 Personal interviews in Arua, December 2014.



3.2.4 Health Rights

Respondents noted that maternal mortality remained a major challenge in the country, especially as linked to the continuing failure to combat early marriages, the problem of poor health facilities and the issue of negligent and poorly motivated health workers.¹⁸⁷

Respondents in Arua noted, for instance, that sexual and gender based violence in the district was a very real problem although many leaders were silent about it.¹⁸⁸ As with the case of economic empowerment in **Section 3.2.3** above, it was acknowledged that even the existing laws that could provide a measure of protection were not effective in so far as women feared to report to police, owing to the negative cultural repercussions such recourse might have.¹⁸⁹ Interestingly, it was noted that the law had failed to address the peculiarities of the culture in rural areas and instead merely transplanted systems from other regions which did not quite reflect local realities.¹⁹⁰

It was noted that the shortfalls the government in this respect had, to some extent, been mitigated by the actions of non-State agencies, particularly international and local NGOs.¹⁹¹ It was observed, for instance, that UNICEF and Baylor had been instrumental in reducing maternal mortality in Arua.¹⁹² For instance, in 2013 UNICEF had disbursed funds to purchase and distribute comprehensive 'Mama Kits' which were given free of charge to women who went to hospitals.¹⁹³ This encouraged many women to go to hospitals and the numbers of women delivering from hospitals increased, with a corresponding decrease in maternal mortality occasioned by recourse to Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs).¹⁹⁴

187 Personal interviews in Bushenyi, Kampala, Wakiso, Mayuge, Arua and Lira, December 2014.

188 Personal interviews in Arua, December 2014.

189 Personal interviews in Arua, December 2014.

190 Personal interviews in Arua, December 2014.

191 Personal interviews in Arua, December 2014.

192 Personal interviews in Arua, December 2014.

193 Personal interviews in Arua, December 2014.

194 Personal interviews in Arua, December 2014.



3.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, we reecho the fact that the women's manifesto is a tool geared towards enhancing women's participation and incorporation of women's perspectives in political and policy decisions. Democracy cannot truly deliver for all of its citizens if half of the population remains underrepresented in the political and development arena. For democratic governments to deliver to their constituents, they must be truly representative, gender responsive and recognize that women must be equal partners in the process of democratic development.

“Women’s participation in decision making is not a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition to women’s interest to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women’s perspectives at all levels of decision making, the goal of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved, Beijing Platform for Action, 1995.

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