



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR DAY 2024

CLARION CALL

BY UGANDA WOMEN'S NETWORK (UWONET)

As we commemorate International Labour Day 2024 under the theme *"Improving Access to Labour Justice: A Prerequisite for Increased Productivity"* UWONET recognizes and appreciates the role of employers and employees particularly those who have protected and offered safe spaces for workers with specific emphasis on female workers.

In the same vein, we would like to call upon all employers and employees to uphold and safeguard the rights and dignity of female workers in all work spaces.

Article 21 of the Ugandan Constitution 1995, establishes equality before the law for all Ugandans, in all aspects of political, economic, and cultural spheres. It guarantees equal protection under the law without discrimination.

Despite the existing laws and policies in Uganda, female workers continue to experience a rise in abuse across various workspaces (public and private sector). According to research conducted by *Frank Kiwalabye on the Effects of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (a Ugandan Case Study)*, out of 1,437 respondents, of which two-thirds of the women were below the age of 35 years, approximately half of them held low-ranking positions¹. Overall, about three in five women (58%) had experienced some form of sexual harassment by their employers².

In light of the above, as a nation working towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 on decent work and economic growth, it is imperative to foster inclusiveness and employee productivity through guaranteeing decent work for all and sustainable economic growth.

Unsafe working environments for female workers have various repercussions including mental and physical health, decreased efficiency and productivity and loss of employment.

As a nation, community and individuals we all have a responsibility.

- 1) The Government of Uganda should lay emphasis on implementing the existing laws and policies to protect and improve access to labour justice as a prerequisite for increased productivity.
- 2) Following Uganda's ratification of the Violence and Harassment Convention No. 190 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Government should take measures to domesticate the instrument by leading reforms of the current labour policy

¹ <https://parliamentwatch.ug/blogs/the-ugly-face-of-sexual-harassment-in-the-work-place/>

² <https://parliamentwatch.ug/blogs/the-ugly-face-of-sexual-harassment-in-the-work-place/>

framework to promote safe and respectful working environments, and uphold human rights and dignity in the world of work.

- 3) The Government should also prioritise the ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention No. 189 to give visibility and value to paid and unpaid care work and to strengthen protection of rights in the informal labour sector.
- 4) As community, it is important to speak up, report, and put in place safe guarding policies, awareness creation and training on sexual harassment.
- 5) Individually, change societal mindset, attitudes and practices that perpetuate sexual harassment and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in general towards women and girls.

“Report a case, create safe working spaces.”

Contact UWONET Secretariat on;

Phone: +256-414-286-539 / +256759330000

Email: info@uwonet.or.ug

Website: www.uwonet.or.ug

Twitter: @uwonet