



Gender Transformation &
Empowerment

WOMEN'S DEMOCRACY NETWORK
Empowering Women to Lead
Uganda Chapter



Acfode
Breaking Through, Building Up and Binding

TOWARDS GENDER-RESPONSIVE POLITICAL PARTIES: A BLUE PRINT FOR THE 2016 MANIFESTOS OF SELECTED PARTIES

May 2015

About WDG

The Women in Democracy Group (WDG) is comprised of five National Women's Organizations i.e, Action for Development (ACFODE), Centre for Women in Governance (CEWIGO), Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) and Women Democracy Network-Uganda Chapter (WDN Uganda Chapter). WDG brings together women's organizations that are at the fore front in advancing good governance and democracy through the effective women's participation. The group believes in the synergies brought together, coordination, reaching out wide with a common message and avoiding duplication and in effect, effectively utilizing the minimum resources.

1.0 Introduction

The year 2015 is particularly significant 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 not only marks 20 years after the promulgation of the 1995 Constitution, but will also see the start of yet another round of political process that will culminate in general elections in 2016.

It is thus an opportune time to reflect on women's inclusion in critical electoral processes as a basis for devising means to achieve even more significant progress in this regard.

This policy brief assesses;

- The extent to which selected opposition political parties—the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), the Uganda Peoples' Congress (UPC) and the Democratic Party (DP)—have realized/ provided alternative policy option to government in reference to there own manifestos 2011–2016 with regard to women's participation and inclusion. On the basis of this assessment, the brief makes recommendations for the 2016 electoral process and beyond.

2.0 International, Regional and Domestic Standards for Women Participation in Electoral Processes

In the first place, all persons, including women, are entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth under international, regional and domestic law, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status¹. In addition, all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law². Furthermore, all persons have the right to take part in the governance of their country, whether directly or through freely chosen representatives. In the same vein, it is now recognized that the will of the people must be the authority of government, and

¹ See Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948; Article 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966; Article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1981; Article 2 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa ('Maputo Protocol'); and Article 8 of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG).

² Article 7 UDHR; Article 26 ICCPR; and Article 8 Maputo Protocol.

this will must be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which must be by universal and equal suffrage and must be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures³.

In addition to the above broad stipulations, Uganda has undertaken to take special action to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and to ensure women are on equal terms with men i.e, the right to vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies; 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; as well as to participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country⁴.

These standards have been partly reflected under Uganda's 1995 Constitution and statutory laws.

Under the Constitution, 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 them⁵. The State is also obligated to provide the facilities and opportunities necessary to enhance the welfare of women to enable them to realize their full potential and advancement and must guarantee them the right to equal treatment with men, which must include equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities⁶. At the national level, political parties must not discriminate on the basis of sex either in terms of their membership or the composition of their national organs⁷. At the local level, women must constitute at least one-third of the membership of each local government⁸ or regional government⁹.

3 Article 21 UDHR; and Article 25 ICCPR.

4 Article 7 CEDAW; Paragraphs 13, 181-195 of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995); Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals of 2000 ('to promote gender equality and empower women') read together with Indicator 12 (the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments); Articles 9 and 10 of the Maputo Protocol; Article 29 of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance; Article 121 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community.

5 Article 32.

6 Article 33.

7 Article 71.

8 Article 180 (2) (b).

9 Clause 2 (1) (b) of the Fifth Schedule to the Constitution, read together with Article 178.

3.0 Commitments made in the 2011–2016 Opposition Party (Selected) Manifestos and the extent of realisation/provision of alternative policy option to government in reference to there own manifestos

In general, the commitments made by the major opposition 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.

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 realisation/provision of alternative policy option to government in reference to there own manifestos of the opposition political parties' commitments therefore has to be based on what the various parties could have done, and did, using the range of political and other opportunities they have had since 2011.

3.1 Political Participation

The commitments

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:

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

The UPC committed to:

- 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.

DP committed to:

- Institute and enforce policies that promote gender equality.
- Increase the quota for women seats from 30%—40% in public elective positions.

Extent of realisation/provision of Alternative policy option to Government

In contrast to the progressive commitments made in the manifestos, opposition political parties do not appear to have lived up to this position especially from an analysis of their own practices.

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. 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.

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. In addition, of 221 UPC candidates for directly elected positions of councillors, only 2 or 0.9% were women.

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

The table below presents the narrative above

Party	Position	Number of Women	Percentage of women	Total Number of Leaders
FDC	Directly Elected Parliamentary Seats	188	2.1	4
FDC	Directly Elected Positions of Councillors	673	1.2	8

<i>Party</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Number of Women</i>	<i>Percentage of women</i>	<i>Total Number of Leaders</i>
UPC	Directly Elected Parliamentary Seats	102	2.9	3
UPC	Directly Elected Positions of Councillors	221	0.9	2
DP	Directly Elected Parliamentary Seats	86	7	6
DP	Directly Elected Positions of Councillors	151	2	3

On decision making, politics and public life, women 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 Governance¹⁰. 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.
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 politics¹¹.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ Ibid 11 page 38

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 groups¹²
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 spheres¹³.

3.2 Socio-cultural inclusion and empowerment

The Commitments

The FDC pledged to:

- ▣ Initiate special national recognition for sportsmen and sportswomen.

The UPC Committed to:

- ▣ Formulate a community development policy to educate, train and empower women; re-establish Community Development Centres to benefit women.
- ▣ Rehabilitate and expand all the girls' schools built by UPC government, within 4 years.
- ▣ Vigorously pursue a policy of zero tolerance to violence against women; strengthen the law and sensitize the population about this problem.
- ▣ Guarantee working women three (3) months paid maternity leave.
- ▣ Develop special programmes for young women targeting life skills.

¹² Ibid 11 page 39

¹³ Ibid 15 page 39

DP committed to:

- Institute and enforce policies that promote gender equality.
- Institute heavy punishments for perpetrators of Gender Based Violence and prosecute any acts that promote early marriage.
- Aim for a girl child transition rate of 80–90% from primary to secondary.
- 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 rights.

Extent of realisation/provision of alternative policy option to government

Some gains have been made in this respect, notably through the continued application of the affirmative action policy through increased voice and empowerment of women in society.

It is noteworthy, however, that when it came to one of the main legislative issues on the rights of women—the Marriage and Divorce Bill, opposition political parties did not take a firm position in favour of its passage or provision of alternative view. This does not bode well for the commitment to gender equality expressed in the 2011 manifestos.

On education, the women of Uganda demand as follow:

1. Promote sexuality education and life skill development in school to reduce vulnerability to teenage pregnancies and un—safe abortions and institute stringent measures to address violence against children in schools including sexual and gender based violence.
2. Ensure the Ministry of Education designs policy and programme measures to mobilize and sensitize parents, communities for positive and progressive change in attitude and perception towards education especially for the girl child.

3. Enhance investment in School infrastructure development including classrooms, desks and chairs and conform to the required ratio of 1:3 pupils per desk. Changing rooms for girls who have reached the age of menstruation should be part of construction plans for toilets.
4. Ensure provision of meals for pupils in school to reduce absenteeism, dropout rates and to enhance performance and develop clear policies and plans for retention of girls in school and ensure that they are enforced at all levels and in all parts of the country.
5. Increase on scholarship for women and girls especially in science based fields.
6. Engage Ministry of Public Service and Educational Service Commission on Affirmative Action for female teachers.
7. Develop clear and systematic strategies to increase teachers' salaries with special consideration for those in hard to reach areas.
8. Develop and enforce policies guaranteeing the return to school by teenage girls who get pregnant and become young mothers.

3.3 Economic Empowerment

The commitments

For its part, FDC committed to doing the following:

- To increase the Land Fund reserves to compensate absent land lords or squatters, and to settle landless men, women, and children;
- 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 youth.
- To increase resource allocation to the Uganda Communications Commissions Development Fund, so as to equip more rural populations, especially the youth and women, with computers.
- To allocate 10% of resources from oil and other natural resources to sectors that directly benefit women.
- To ensure greater participation of women at all levels in the planning, management, and preservation of the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources.

The UPC committed to:

- 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 SMEs.
- Review and reduce market dues which, in their opinion, had become an unfair burden on the market women.
- 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.
- Ensure equal rights; promote policy and measures to increase women access to land ownership and inheritance.
- Guarantee three (3) months paid maternity leave for working mothers.
- Develop special programmes for young women targeting employability and business start-ups.
- 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.
- 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 agriculture.

DP committed to:

- Institute and enforce policies that promote gender equality.
- Promote women in Math and Science to increase professional women in employment.
- Address gender inequalities in land access and control.
- 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 rights.

Extent of realisation/provision of alternative policy option to government

There does not appear to have been an appreciable improvement with regard to the economic empowerment of women since 2011.

A major challenge in this respect relates to the weak implementation of already existing laws for the protection of women's right to property. Cultural attitudes persist in the majority parts of the country which still deem women to be property themselves and thus unable to hold land or other property, especially in rural areas. In addition, cases continue to abound where women are chased away from land and houses that they bought and built with their husbands because they could not culturally own property. The laws in place do not protect them because majority of those who enforced the laws are men who have a patriarchal mindset. There is thus a substantial protection gap between the uneducated rural women and the urban educated women who know their rights and can enforce the same in the courts of law.

On Economic Empowerment, Women 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.
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 activity¹⁴; 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.

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 the formal and informal sector. 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.

¹⁴ Ibid 11 page 31

4. Design and resource implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies that are customized to differing needs of female and 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. 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.

3.4 Health Rights

The Commitments

FDC committed to the following:

- 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 force.
- 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 Uganda.

The UPC committed to:

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

DP committed to:

- Institute and enforce policies that promote gender equality
- Institute heavy punishments for perpetrators of Gender Based Violence and prosecute any acts that promote early marriage
- 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 rights

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.

Extent of realisation/provision of alternative policy option to government

Maternal mortality remains a major challenge in the country (16 mothers die daily giving birth and birth related cases), 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.

It is noteworthy that the shortfall the government in this respect had, to some extent, has been mitigated by the actions of non-State agencies, particularly international and local NGOs. However this is neither ideal nor sustainable.

In addition, as noted above, the opposition political parties did not distinguish themselves clearly and forcefully, from the government position with regard to the fate of a key legislative of the Marriage and Divorce Bill.

Given that health is a key concern for women, we 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.
3. Prioritize availability of a variety of family planning services to improve on women's health and child spacing.¹⁵ 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 country¹⁶.
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 on laws including those related to family welfare and health care such as the Marriage and Divorce Bill; Sexual Offences Bill and Domestic Violence Act.
8. Institute heavy punishments for perpetrators of Gender Based Violence and prosecute any acts that promote early marriage.
9. 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.
10. Ensure the Ministry of Health has clear plans to intensify country wide massive awareness campaigns on maternal health issues geared towards involvement of men.

¹⁵ Ibid 11 page 26

¹⁶ Ibid 11 page 27

CONCLUSION

All political parties have a responsibility and are obliged to protect and promote women's rights to ensure gender equality and equity in the social economic and political spheres of life.

It is therefore paramount for the political parties (opposition) to build on the strides by putting in place practical, achievable and measurable solutions to the challenges that still affect women and hence contributing to the wide spread poverty and slow national development.

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