



Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

For the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Compilation Report

Universal Periodic Review:

2nd Cycle, 26th Session

UGANDA

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Uganda acceded to the 1951 *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* and its 1967 *Protocol* (henceforth jointly referred to as the 1951 *Convention*) on 27 September 1976. Furthermore, Uganda acceded to the 1954 *Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons* (the 1954 *Convention*) on 15 April 1965 with no reservations, but it is not a State Party to the 1961 *Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness* (the 1961 *Convention*). The country also ratified the broader, regional 1969 *OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa* in 1987. In February 2010, Uganda ratified the *African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of the Internally Displaced Persons* (also known as the “*Kampala Declaration*”) that was adopted by the Special AU Summit convened on 23 October 2009 in Kampala, Uganda.

The domestic asylum policy and practice of Uganda are governed by the *Refugee Act 2006*. The administrative framework for Uganda’s asylum policy and practice falls under the mandate of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Department of Refugees.

For over five decades, Uganda has been generously hosting refugees and asylum-seekers. Since 1961, Uganda has hosted an average 161,000 refugees per year. As of December 2015, Uganda is host to 512,966 refugees and asylum-seekers. The refugee population in Uganda has resulted from civil strife in neighboring countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Burundi, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Somalia. Currently, the main country of origin of refugees in Uganda is the Democratic Republic of Congo, with 214,279 Congolese refugees who are hosted in South-Western and Mid-Western parts of Uganda, closely followed by 200,278 South Sudanese refugees mainly hosted in the West Nile and Mid-Western districts of Adjumani, Arua and Kiryandongo.

The bulk of the refugee population resides in 14 refugee settlements in the West Nile, Mid-Western and South Western parts of the country. Of this population, 55.5 per cent are children under the age of 18, while 50 per cent of the population is female.

The urban refugee population continued to increase as the situation in the region remained very unstable. As of December 2015, the urban refugee population was 74,044.

In terms of partnership, UNHCR enjoys good cooperation from the Government through the OPM, which is primarily responsible for issues relating to access to territory and asylum procedures and protection, and acts as the office's link with other Government institutions. UNHCR also enjoys good cooperation with national and international NGOs most of whom provide a range of services to refugees in the field and in urban centres as operational and implementing partners. The general public has a positive attitude towards hosting refugees. OPM has generally intervened in cases that were threatened with *refoulement*. Refugees residing in refugee settlements are provided with plots of land by the Ugandan Government. On basic needs and essential services, the Government has maintained their uninterrupted access to services such as primary health care, education, and water in the settlements. In the urban area, targeted assistance to refugee friendly schools and health facilities greatly enhanced the accessibility of primary education and health to the refugees.

Uganda will hold its presidential and general elections in 2016. It remains generally peaceful and relatively stable in terms of the political and socio-economic environment. In 2013, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) hailed the Government's efforts in creating institutional framework as witnessed in the creation of human rights structures and Desks in respective ministries and in the creation of the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee. The *Anti-homosexuality Law* was nullified by the Constitutional Court in 2014 for failing to obtain the requisite quorum in Parliament. Gaps notwithstanding, such as those in the provisions of the *Public Order Management Act 2013*, there is peace, freedom of movement and heightened awareness of human rights.

II. ACHIEVEMENTS AND POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

Positive developments linked to 1st cycle UPR recommendations

Linked to 1st cycle UPR recommendation no. 111.101: “Improve the life conditions of migrants and refugees in Uganda (Holy See)”.

The prospect for refugees in Uganda are better than in most African contexts. Refugees are permitted freedom of movement, the right to work, to own property, and to access education and health services. In addition, the fact that most refugees have access to agricultural land is a huge benefit and provides the foundation for sustainable livelihoods for over half the refugee population, even though the amount and quality of land currently available are unlikely to allow refugees to move much beyond subsistence farming. Refugees are allowed freedom of residence, either in rural settlements or in urban centres. The good asylum system allows refugees to stay in urban centres if they do not wish to stay in settlements. These rights are enshrined in the *Refugee Act of 2006*. The OPM in Uganda, has remained committed to providing sanctuary to all refugees who flee to Uganda individually or arriving *en masse* from neighbouring countries, mainly from DRC, Somalia and Southern Sudan.

Additional achievements and positive developments

Socio-economic integration for refugees

In a bid to further enhance the socio-economic integration of refugees in Uganda, the Government of Uganda has for the first time in the history of the Republic integrated refugee protection and management into the broader national development context by incorporating it into the *National Development Plan II*. The recently launched *National Development Plan II* (NDP II, 2015/2016-2019/2020) includes a refugee-specific strategy known as the *Settlement Transformative Agenda* (STA). The STA is an initiative led by the OPM Refugee Department that aims to foster sustainable livelihoods for refugees and host communities and to create an enabling environment for refugees to live in safety, dignity and in harmony with the host communities. The STA complements the Joint United Nations-World Bank Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (UN-WB ReHoPE) strategic framework that also is integrated into the UNDAF 2016-2020 in support of the NDP II.

The UN- WB ReHoPE is a self-reliance and resilience strategic framework for refugee and host communities in Uganda's nine refugee-hosting districts. Through a multi-sectorial partnership, the Government, UN Agencies, and World Bank, supported by the development partners, aim to enhance coordination of transitional programming from emergency towards development for refugee-hosting districts through socio-economic empowerment and reinforced integrated essential service delivery. This five year strategy will enhance the resilience of the refugee hosting Districts and create space for enhance socio-economic integration of refugees, including the bridging of the gap between humanitarian and development intervention phases.

Convention Travel Documents

The Government through the Ministry of Internal Affairs commenced issuance of machine readable Convention Travel Documents (CTDs) in 2015. This process has sought to replace previously limited CTD booklets and passports which were not machine readable. The procedure starts with a written application by the refugee explaining the purpose for which the CTD is required, e.g. travel for medical treatment/study/family reunification/business, etc. and OPM reviews the application. As these new document procedures have been mainstreamed within the Passports Office in the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration, more refugees are able to obtain them and expand their livelihood opportunities within the region.

Birth registration

The *Births and Deaths Registration Act Cap 309* regulates the issuance of various types of civil documentation by the office of the Registrar General. Refugee children were only issued with birth attestations in the past, since birth certificates were not affordable due to cost attached to them. In late 2012, the Government waived the birth and death registration fee for refugees and this has seen an increase in registration rates of children of refugees born in Uganda. Although the fees have been waived, the office anticipates nominal administrative costs which cannot be avoided.

On durable solutions, in May 2015 Uganda successfully repatriated 1,231 Kenyan refugees of 522 households from Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement in Mid-Western part of Uganda to

Kenya. They were received at Malaba Border by UNHCR Kenya and Kenyan government authorities. Unfortunately, for the major refugee producing Countries, voluntary repatriation is still not feasible.

Registration of refugees and asylum-seekers

With regard to the obligation to register and document all refugees and asylum seekers within its borders, the Government launched the Refugee Information Management System (RIMS). This was mainly in compliance to the requirements of the *Registration of Persons Act*, which was passed by Parliament in February 2015. This Act makes it mandatory for all persons in Uganda to be registered and that such registration must be compatible with the National Registration Database. In 2015, the Government of Uganda commenced the registration and documentation (ID Cards) of all its Citizens for the first time in the history of the Republic. Although refugees and asylum seekers were always registered in the ProGres database, the Government through the Office of the Prime Minister launched RIMS to comply with the requirements of the Act. The Act recognizes the Office of the Prime Minister as the sole custodian of refugee registration in Uganda. The outstanding issue in this regard is the synchronization of RIMS to ProGres to enable proactive mapping of solutions, programming, follow-up and protection of persons with specific needs. The synchronization will commence this year.

III. KEY PROTECTION ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Challenges linked to outstanding 1st cycle UPR recommendations

Issue 1: Ratification of the *1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*

Linked to 1st cycle UPR recommendation no. 112.12: “Ratify the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (Slovakia)”.

UNHCR is not aware of stateless persons in Uganda, but the potential for statelessness is, however, real. Ugandan nationality legislation lacks safeguards to prevent statelessness among children born in Uganda¹. Accordingly, children born in Uganda to non-citizens will be stateless if their parents are stateless or, if they possess a nationality, but are unable to confer nationality under the laws of their State.

Therefore, there is a risk of some refugee children becoming stateless, especially those in mixed marriages of diverse countries of origin.

Recommendations:

UNHCR recommends that the Government of Uganda:

- a. Implement obligations under the *1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons* and initiate the process of acceding to the *1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*, in line with its pledge in this respect during the 60th Commemoration of the *1951 Convention*; and

¹ See Article 10 of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda, as amended in 2005.

- b. Align the provisions of the *Constitution of Uganda*, the *Refugee Act* and the *Citizenship and Immigration Act* and put in place procedures for the naturalization of refugees with strong links to Uganda by virtue of birth or period or residence.

Additional protection challenges

Issue 2: Access to nationality and to naturalisation by refugees

Although Uganda has a generous asylum policy and supports the socio-economic integration of refugees, the legal integration opportunity remains restrictive. This means that, although refugees in Uganda may have acquired *de facto* integration, *de jure* integration through applications for citizenship and naturalization are next to nil. This is because of provisions of the *Citizenship and Immigration Act*, as well as the *Constitution of Uganda*, which expressly exempt children whose parents or grandparents were refugees from accessing citizenship by birth. Additional provisions restrict the ability of refugees to register for citizenship on the basis of their period of residency, and provisions on citizenship by naturalization have not been fully elaborated and are thus inaccessible.

The current legal and administrative bottlenecks impair its full realisation. The *Ugandan Constitution* explicitly denies Ugandan citizenship by birth to children born to refugees in Uganda. A Petition was filed in the Constitutional Court in 2010 seeking to have the Court pronounce itself on refugee access to naturalization and citizenship. The judgement was delivered on 6th October 2015. The Justices determined that there was no question for constitutional interpretation of Article 13 of the Constitution but rather the *Citizenship and Immigration Control Act* which is outside of their jurisdiction. Nevertheless, the Court explained that naturalisation provides an opportunity for those who may not qualify for citizenship by birth or registration to be eligible for consideration for citizenship, including refugees. In essence, this ruling has only further reinforced the *status quo*, but there is room for further advocacy through the court process in light of this Supreme Court ruling.

With the exception of those who have inter-married with Ugandan nationals - who are allowed by law to apply after 3 years of a “legal and subsisting marriage and the payment of the requisite fees” - all other refugees have no legal access to naturalization.

During the 60th Commemoration of the *1951 Convention*, the Government of Uganda pledged to explore opportunities for the local integration of protracted refugee groups such as the Congolese, Rwandans and South Sudanese. On several occasions since then, the Government of Uganda has reiterated its commitment to this pledge which includes the identification of alternative legal status for refugees who would qualify. In a bid to implement this pledge and in light of the legal obstacles aforementioned in this regard, the Government in collaboration with UNHCR have identified a group of 15, 000 refugees who have been in Uganda for over two decades and that have developed strong social and family links in Uganda with little if any links with their Country of origin. These refugees include: Rwandans who fled the genocide and who now would fall within the scope of the Cessation Clause, (1959-1998); Congolese who fled after the assassination of Prime Minister Lumumba in 1961; and the South Sudanese who fled the previous civil strife and who never returned in 2005 after the attainment of self-determination in South Sudan. It has been endorsed by the Government that an alternative legal status such as long-stay resident permits would be explored for the group as a pathway towards eventual naturalization. This will be further pursued this year

soon after the elections and the Core Group for the Great Lakes chaired by the US Ambassador is spearheading the advocacy and support.

Recommendations:

UNHCR recommends that the Government of Uganda:

- a. Align the provisions of the *Constitution*, the *Refugee Act 2006* and those of the *Citizenship and Immigration Control Act* and put in place procedures for naturalisation of refugees with strong links to Uganda such as by virtue of births, marriages and long stay; and
- b. Continue to explore alternative/creative solutions for protracted refugee situations in Uganda, within available legal migration channels, such as issuing long-stay residence permits.

Issue 3: Appellate powers by Refugee Appeals Board

Refugee Status Determination (RSD) is carried out by a Government inter-ministerial committee, the Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC). UNHCR fully participates in the adjudication process in its observer capacity. The asylum process is fair, with the Government having a benign attitude toward asylum-seekers and refugees.

Although the acceptance rate in the RSD process is substantially reasonable at an average of 80 per cent, rejected cases have a right of appeal with the Refugee Appeals Board (RAB). However, the Appeals Board notably lacks the authority of an appeal body. Much as is within its powers to set aside the decision of the first instance body, Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC), the RAB cannot overrule the decision of the REC; it has to remit the matter back to the REC for reconsideration. The *Refugee Act 2006* makes it explicitly clear and in categorical terms that the Appeals Board does not have power to grant refugee status to an applicant on appeal thus rendering the Appeals Board impotent.

Recommendations:

UNHCR recommends that the Government of Uganda:

- a. Address this gap through the ongoing drafting of national refugee policy and ongoing review process of the *Refugee Act 2006* and *Refugee Regulations 2010* to bestow it with the power to reverse and substitute its own decision or that of the REC.

Issue 4: Security

The legal framework for ensuring the safety of refugees is in place and is largely covered by the provisions of the *Refugee Act of 2006* that provides, *inter alia*, for freedom of movement and access to legal redress, and includes provisions on non-discrimination. The rule of law applies to all persons within the Ugandan territory and refugees have access to courts. However, the quality of law enforcement is linked to gaps in human and financial resources in order to equip the police with the necessary tools such as appropriate accommodation in the rural settlements, mobility to enable proper patrols and incentives to attract female police officers in such remote locations. Deployment of women police officers, even at the minimum level, has been inadequate due to harsh field conditions and lack of incentives. Due to this, many cases of sexual gender-based violence are either not reported or are under-reported.

Recommendations

UNHCR recommends that the Government of Uganda:

- a. Ensure that the deployment of female and male police officers in the refugee settlements in terms of numbers is adequate to enhance general security; and
- b. Institute mobile courts and mobile legal clinics in all locations in order to improve access to the judicial system, especially for SGBV cases.

Human Rights Liaison Unit
Division of International Protection
UNHCR
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ANNEX

Excerpts of Recommendations from the 1st cycle Universal Periodic Review, Concluding Observations from UN Treaty Bodies and Recommendations of Special Procedures mandate holders

UGANDA

We would like to bring your attention to the following excerpts from the 1st cycle UPR recommendations, UN Treaty Monitoring Bodies' Concluding Observations, and recommendations from UN Special Procedures mandate holders' reports relating to issues of interest and persons of concern to UNHCR with regards to Uganda.

I. Universal Periodic Review

Recommendation ²	Recommending State	Position ³
Refugees		
111.101. Improve the life conditions of migrants and refugees in Uganda;	Holy See	Supported
Ratification of the OP-CAT and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness		
112.4. Accede to the OP-CAT, and incorporate its provisions into domestic law;	Australia	Partially supported ⁴
112.3. Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OP-CAT);	Switzerland, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Belgium	Partially supported ⁵
112.7. Adopt legislation against torture, accede to the OP-CAT, and take all necessary measures to put an end to such acts, notably by bringing to justice State officials guilty of torture or ill -treatment;	France	Partially supported ⁶
112.12. Ratify the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness;	Slovakia	Noted ⁷

² All recommendations made to Uganda during its 1st cycle UPR can be found in: "Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Uganda" (22 December 2011) [A/HRC/19/16](#).

³ Uganda's views and replies can be found in: *Addendum* (16 March 2012) [A/HRC/16/Add.1](#).

⁴ *Addendum*: "Recommendations 112.3, 112.4, 112.5 and 112.7 with respect to ratification of OPCAT do not currently enjoy support, and are not accepted. However, we accept that its provisions are to be adopted into proposed national legislation. We are glad to report that we have in place the Prohibition and Prevention of Torture Bill, 2012, which incorporates important provisions of the Convention."

⁵ *Addendum*: "Recommendations 112.3, 112.4, 112.5 and 112.7 with respect to ratification of OPCAT do not currently enjoy support, and are not accepted. However, we accept that its provisions are to be adopted into proposed national legislation. We are glad to report that we have in place the Prohibition and Prevention of Torture Bill, 2012, which incorporates important provisions of the Convention."

⁶ *Addendum*: "Recommendations 112.3, 112.4, 112.5 and 112.7 with respect to ratification of OPCAT do not currently enjoy support, and are not accepted. However, we accept that its provisions are to be adopted into proposed national legislation. We are glad to report that we have in place the Prohibition and Prevention of Torture Bill, 2012, which incorporates important provisions of the Convention."

⁷ *Addendum*: "Recommendations 112.10, 112.11 and 112.12 are not accepted."

112.15. Enact a law prohibiting torture and ratify the OP-CAT as the Uganda Human Rights Commission has recommended; demonstrate real commitment by holding those accountable who have committed acts of torture and ensuring timely and adequate compensation to victims;	Denmark	Noted ⁸
112.35. Abolish the death penalty and ratify OP-CAT;	Holy See	Noted ⁹
Trafficking		
111.102. Enforce more effectively the child labour and trafficking laws;	United States of America	Supported
LGBTI Community		
111.69. Investigate and prosecute intimidation and attacks on LGBT-community members and activists;	Netherlands	Supported
111.70. Investigate thoroughly and sanction accordingly violence against LGBTs, including gay rights activists;	Belgium	Supported
111.71. Take immediate concrete steps to stop discrimination and assaults against LGBT persons;	Czech Republic	Supported
113.1. Publicly announce the shelving of the proposed bill on homosexuality and decriminalize homosexual behaviour;	Canada	Noted
113.3. Reject the Anti-Homosexuality Bill and decriminalize homosexual relationships between consenting adults;	Slovenia	Noted
113.4. Fulfil its obligations under international human rights law to decriminalize same-sex relationships between consenting adults and repeal any laws or reforms that explicitly or implicitly discriminate on any grounds, including sexual orientation and gender identity;	Norway	Noted
113.5. Repeal laws that discriminate against LGBTs;	Belgium	Noted
113.6. Revise its national legislation to decriminalise homosexuality and prohibit all forms of discrimination;	Switzerland	Noted
113.7. Remove criminal penalties for offences on the basis of sexual Orientation;	Australia	Noted
113.8. Study the possibility to decriminalize relationships between consenting adults of the same sex;	Argentina	Noted
113.9. Abstain from applying legislation that criminalizes homosexuality;	Brazil	Noted
113.10. Immediately and unconditionally release all persons currently detained for the reason of homosexuality alone;	Switzerland	Noted
113.11. Decriminalize same-sex relations between consenting adults and ensure that no person is subject to arbitrary arrest or detention because	Austria	Noted

⁸ **Addendum:** see para. 11.

⁹ **Addendum:** “Recommendations 112.1, 112.2, 112.32, 112.33, 112.34, 112.35, 112.36, 112.37, 112.38 on the abolition of the death penalty are not accepted.”

of their sexual orientation or gender identity;		
113.14. Repeal all provisions criminalizing sexual activity between consenting adults and ensuring the same rights for same sex couples as heterosexual couples;	Netherlands	Noted
113.15. Ensure equal rights for all individuals, regardless of sexual orientation;	United States of America	Noted
113.16. Fulfil its obligations under international human rights law and ensure the protection of all minorities and repeal any laws or reforms that explicitly or implicitly discriminate on any grounds, including sexual orientation; gender identity and gender expression;	Denmark	Noted
Internally Displaced Persons		
111.105. Continue tirelessly to address the issue of resettlement of IDPs including by putting in place resources in provisions of basic services and infrastructure development;	Zimbabwe	Supported
Discrimination and violence against women		
111.4. Put in place a comprehensive strategy, including review and formulation of legislation, to modify or eliminate traditional practises and stereotypes that discriminate against women;	Poland	Supported
111.49. Implement the recently approved legislation on discrimination and violence against women and on prohibition of Genital Female Mutilation;	Spain	Supported
111.52. Prevent, investigate and prosecute sexual and gender violence against all women, including women with disabilities;	Chile	Supported
111.53. Prevent and investigate the incidents of sexual violence against women and bring perpetrators to justice;	France	Supported
111.54. Put in place appropriate regulatory and enforcement measures to increase compliance with the Domestic Violence Act and the Female Genital Mutilation act, and take steps to ensure that acts of violence against women, including women with disabilities, are investigated and prosecuted;	Canada	Supported
111.55. Investigate cases of gender violence and bring perpetrators to justice and provide legal and medical support to victims;	Brazil	Supported

II. Treaty Bodies

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Concluding Observations, 55th Session (24 June 2015) [E/C.12/UGA/CO/1](#)

Indigenous peoples

13. The Committee is concerned that many indigenous peoples, including the Benet, Batwa and Pastoralist communities, are denied access to their ancestral lands and are prevented from preserving their traditional way of living. The Committee is also concerned about the inadequate definition of indigenous peoples in the State party's Constitution coupled with complete absence of information on the actual enjoyment of Covenant rights by indigenous peoples (art. 1).

The Committee recommends that the State party recognise indigenous peoples' rights to their ancestral lands and natural resources. The Committee urges the State party to engage in consultations with indigenous peoples that enable them to give their free, prior and informed consent regarding development activities that have an impact on access to their lands. It also recommends that the State party consider accession to ILO Convention No. 169. Furthermore, the Committee recommends the State party include recognition of indigenous peoples in the Constitution in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and strengthen efforts to consult indigenous peoples and ensure the effective enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights.

Non-discrimination

15. The Committee is concerned about the lack of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that encompass all prohibited grounds of discrimination, and about the prevalence of societal stigma and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, ethnicity, and disability. It also regrets the lack of information on the mandate and the actual functioning of the Equal Opportunities Commission (art. 2, para.2).

Recalling its general comment no. 20 (2009) on non-discrimination and economic, social and cultural rights, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination law that includes all the grounds for discrimination set out in article 2 of the Covenant;**
- (b) Take steps to combat and prevent discrimination and societal stigma, in particular against persons with disabilities, persons with albinism, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and inter-sex (LGBTI) individuals, and ensure their enjoyment of the rights enshrined in the Covenant, in particular access to housing, employment, social security, health care and education; and**
- (c) Allocate the necessary resources for the Equal Opportunities Commission to discharge its role effectively and independently.**

Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity

16. The Committee is highly concerned about the draft law on 'Prohibition of Promotion of Unnatural Sexual Practices' that discriminates against persons on grounds of their sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as about the criminalization of consensual same-sex sexual conduct in the State party's Penal Code. The Committee is further concerned about information that there has been an increase in arbitrary detention and police abuse of LGBTI persons after the passage of the Anti-Homosexuality Act in 2014 (art. 2.2).

The Committee urges the State party to withdraw the draft law on Prohibition of Promotion of Unnatural Sexual Practices and to take urgent steps to amend the Penal Code to decriminalize consensual same-sex sexual conduct. The Committee also urges

the State party to investigate, deter and prevent acts of discrimination against LGBTI, bring perpetrators to justice, and provide compensation to victims.

Violence against women

25. The Committee is concerned about the prevalence of violence against women, in particular domestic and sexual violence. It is also concerned about the inadequate implementation of the Domestic Violence Act, the delays in adopting the Sexual Offences Bill, the underreporting to the police by victims of violence, and the resorting to traditional ways of mediation that often override women's rights. The Committee is further concerned about the limited number of protection and recovery services and facilities provided to victims (art.10).

The Committee urges that the State party take measures to strengthen the enforcement of the Domestic Violence Act, including by sensitizing the judiciary, prosecutors and the police on the provisions of the Act. It should adopt and effectively implement the Sexual Offences Bill. The Committee also recommends that national awareness-raising campaigns be conducted to combat all forms of violence against women and girls and to encourage victims of violence to report such cases to the police. The Committee further recommends that the State party strengthen measures aimed at protecting and rehabilitating victims of violence.

Harmful practices against women and girls

26. The Committee is concerned that polygamy is still legal in the State party and widely practiced. It is also concerned about the persistence of early marriage and forced marriage especially in rural areas. It is further concerned that despite the legal prohibition, female genital mutilation (FGM) is still practiced in the Karamoja and Eastern regions (arts. 3 and 10).

The Committee recommends that the State party, as a matter of priority, take comprehensive measures aimed at eliminating all harmful practices against women and girls. To this end the State party should:

- (a) Adopt effective measures aimed at abolishing the practice of polygamy, including by conducting a nation-wide sensitization campaign targeting all components of society and in collaboration with civil society with the aim of fostering a culture of equality between women and men that creates the necessary conditions for the adoption of a legal provision criminalizing polygamy;**
- (b) Raise the awareness on the legal age to enter marriage, ensure the strict adherence to the constitutional provision on minimum age for marriage and that all laws including customary laws are in compliance, and adopt and implement the action plan on early marriage, as indicated during the dialogue;**
- (c) Ensure effective implementation of the prohibition of female genital mutilation, prevent and investigate such incidents, bring perpetrators to justice and rehabilitate victims; and**
- (d) Conduct widespread educational campaigns on the adverse effects of early and forced marriages as well as FGM.**

Protection of children

27. The Committee is concerned about the large number of children aged 6-13 years engaged in labour activity in the State party. The Committee also expresses its concern at the increasing number of street children and about the widespread violence against children, including corporal punishment at schools, home and care institutions. The Committee is further concerned that about 5 million children under the age of 5 are not registered (art. 10).

The State party recommends that the State party effectively implement the plan of action against the Worst Forms of Child Labour, and monitor instances of child labour in order to ensure its gradual eradication, in accordance with ILO Convention no. 182 (1999) concerning the worst forms of child labour. The State party should also consider adopting a comprehensive plan on protection of children, provide measures to assist street children and children in care institutions, and prohibit corporal punishment. The Committee also requests that the State party increase its efforts in ensuring universal birth registration, inter alia by revising the Birth and Death Registration Act, as necessary. It should also raise awareness among parents about the importance of birth registration, including as a means to prevent early marriage and child labour, particularly in rural areas