



UPR Pre-session on Uganda
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STATEMENT

Delivered by: Mastula, Young Women's Advocate

She Leads Programme, comprising of Terre des Hommes Netherlands,
Plan International, Femnet, Ecpat, Defence for Children International

Dear Excellencies, good morning.

I am Mastula, a Young Women's Advocate under the She Leads Consortium, coordinated by Terre des hommes Netherlands. I am representing over 3,000 girls and young women that currently ascribe to the She Leads consortium. Our goal as She Leads Consortium is to ensure sustained influence of Girls and Young Women in decision-making.

I'm here to discuss about the state of human rights in my country in relation to two issues:

1. Girls and Young Women discrimination from decision-making and
2. Sexual and Gender-based Violence.

During 2016 periodic review, over 148 recommendations were accepted by my country and, out of them, 9 supported girls and young women's rights.

The recommendation 115.54 made by Madagascar, which was fully accepted by Uganda, encourages Uganda "to take appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls as well as persons with albinism". However, despite the numerous efforts made by the government to ensure that Girls and Young Women have equal access to decision-making platforms, many Girls and Young Women from rural and peri-urban communities continue to be left behind when it comes to making critical decisions at family, community and at the national level. Because they are not empowered to fully utilize decision-making platforms like the National Budgeting processes, most of the girls cannot fully and ably contribute because they don't have necessarily information on how, when, and where to participate.

The limited participation of Girls and Young women leaves Girls and young women's Issues and priorities behind, which in turn makes us vulnerable and prey to people who do not understand that girls and young women's rights are human rights too.

Our Recommendation is that the government make sure that it provides free and quality education to all girls countrywide. Most in our community still can't access education. The education that is attested by the government as being free is not entirely because at the end of the day, you still have to pay some money.

Consequently, if we can have education that is quality and purely free then Girls and Young Women will be empowered, and they will also be able to access and utilize the decision-making platforms that the government has provided for us.

On the issue of Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV), during one of our universal periodic review consultative meetings, one of my colleagues shared her story that at the age of 15 years she was molested by her uncle and never got justice. This has been a common situation in my community, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, where girls have been molested, especially by their family members, relatives, and friends. **The government should strengthen SGBV referral systems to help support SGBV survivors, and especially Girls and Young women to access medical, economical, legal and psycho-social services.**

Thank you.