



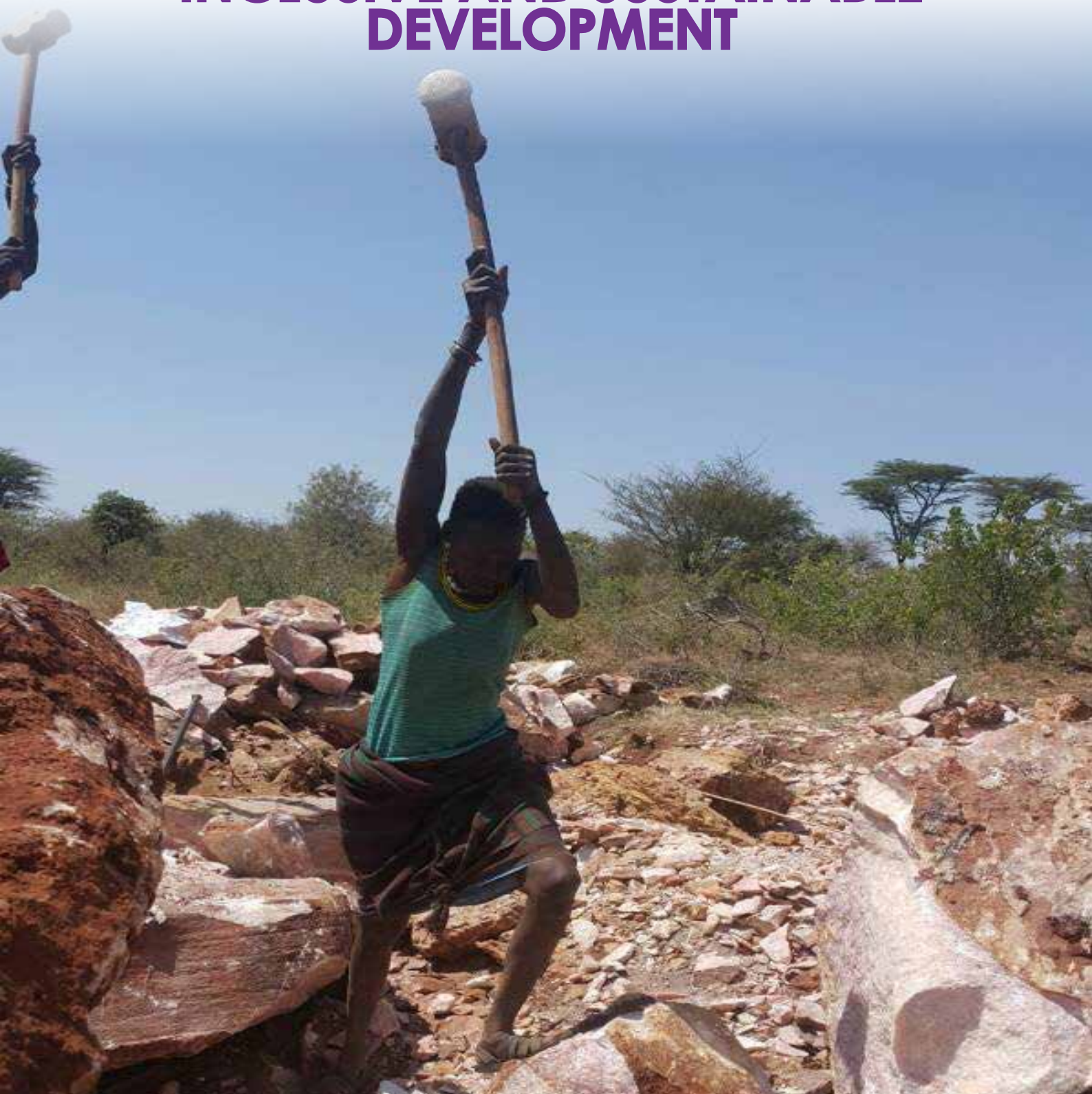
Equal Opportunities Commission

# THE EQUITY VOICE

ISSUE 2

MARCH 2018

## EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



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## Editorial



Dear Reader,

The editorial team welcomes you to this mouth-watering edition of the Equity Voice, whose thrust is “Equity and Social Justice for Sustainable Development” – a theme that is in tandem with the Equal Opportunities mandate of redressing imbalances and promoting equal opportunities for all.

In this second issue, we present to you the Commission's activities and engagements between September 2017 and February 2018.

You will find interesting reading about: the launch of the Annual Report on the State of Equal Opportunities in Uganda FY2016/17; administration of social justice for vulnerable individuals and groups; our role in the commemoration of national and International equal opportunity and human rights days; as well as capacity building and benchmarking engagements with stakeholders.

The period has been particularly remarkable because of our rigorous assessment of Budget Framework papers (BFPs) for sectors and local governments in line with the gender and equity provisions in the Public Finance Management Act, 2015. Overall, there has been distinguished improvement by Government agencies in addressing gender and equity issues within their plans and budgets.

As a people's Commission, we have had numerous engagements with different stakeholders, which have impacted positively on the constituents we serve (youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, women and ethnic minorities, among others). It has been a productive period for the Commission and we take pride in our partners' involvement with us. To this end, we share with you the work we have been engaged in; and hope that you will find this issue captivating and educative as we endeavor to mainstream the concerns of the marginalized and discriminated in all our development interventions.

Welcome aboard!

**Julius Kamya**  
**Commissioner, Education and**  
**Communications (Editor)**

## Message from the Chairperson



It is a pleasure to extend my regards to all readers of the Equity Voice. This is the second issue of the Equity Voice and I am glad to identify with this initiative which provides a platform for sharing information on pertinent equal opportunities and inclusion issues.

In this issue, I am pleased to inform you that the Commission has made remarkable progress in redressing imbalances and promoting equal opportunities for all by collectively engaging with our esteemed stakeholders in various ways. Notably, this has been through public dialogues, strategic partnerships, public awareness campaigns, research, monitoring and evaluation, sector audits for compliance to gender and equity, community outreaches and conducting tribunal and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) sessions.

The Commission remains committed to promoting equal opportunities and

taking affirmative action in favor of individuals and 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.

This publication is an important advocacy forum for equalizing opportunities for the people we serve - youth, older persons, Persons with Disabilities, women, ethnic minorities and the public at large. It is my strong conviction that the equalization of opportunities for all (inclusive development) puts us on the right track as we pursue a lower middle income status by 2020.

I extend special thanks to Government of Uganda, Members of the Commission, technical and support staff, partners and all stakeholders. I acknowledge the editorial team and all the writers for the effort made in ensuring this issue is published. Feedback through the different communication channels will be appreciated, and our staff will gladly attend to you.

Thank you, and enjoy the reading!

**Sylvia Muwebwa Ntambi (Mrs)**  
**Chairperson**



## Members of the Commission



**Mrs. Sylvia Muwebwa Ntambi**  
Chairperson



**Ms. Zaminah Malole**  
Member



**Mr. Nduhura Dennis**  
Vice Chairperson



**Mr. Patrobas Sirabo Wafula**  
Member



**Mujuni Mpitsi Pac Lawrence**  
Secretary to the Commission



**Mr. Joel Cox Ojuko**  
Member

## EOC Employs New Head of Secretariat

By Julius Kamya



In January 2018, Mr. Mujuni Mpitsi Pac Lawrence embraced the mantle of Secretary to the Commission (STC).

Mr. Mujuni is a seasoned civil servant and public administrator who served Mbarara University of Science and Technology as University Secretary/Accounting Officer; Director of East African Community Affairs in the Ministry of East African Community Affairs (MEACA) and Commissioner for Political and Legal Affairs in the same ministry. He also worked in the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda between 1994 and 2008, rising through the ranks from Clerk Assistant to Senior Clerk Assistant, Principal Clerk Assistant, Assistant Director in charge of Parliamentary Committees and Clerk at table.

Mr. Mujuni is a proud holder of a Master of Arts in Public Policy Management from

the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague, Netherlands; Masters of Arts in Peace and Security Management from the University of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Bachelor of Arts Degree (Social Sciences- Political Science and Public Administration) from Makerere University.

He brings with him a wealth of experience in Public administration, Procurement Management, Strategic human resource management, legislative drafting and financial management.

The editor of the Equity Voice had a chat with the new STC regarding his take on the new challenge at the Commission.

During the interactions, Mr. Mujuni shared that from a cultural perspective women, girls and persons with disabilities have for long been relegated to the periphery; and no one gave much attention to them. Relatedly, EOC's mandate is meant to give effect to the state's mandate to eliminate discrimination and marginalization against any individual or groups of persons through taking affirmative action to redress imbalances and promote equal opportunities for all in all spheres of life.

"I am glad that I have joined a vibrant and hardworking team. The Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Members are energetic, enthusiastic and well-grounded on the issues the Commission is handling. This is a vital cornerstone for the contribution I bring to the Commission. Now that I have joined the institution which is the voice of the voiceless, I intend to use this platform



to advocate for inclusive development", Mr. Mujuni said.

As head of the secretariat, he anticipates a challenge with some sectors and MDAs who might think that the Commission's assessments and audits of their programmes and budgets are a witch hunt. With confidence, Mr. Mujuni deems it fit for the Commission to continuously engage with all government agencies, civil society and the private sector to popularize this work that is part of the Commission's mandate anchored in the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (as amended), EOC Act 2007 and Public Finance Management Act 2015 (as amended). This is also in line with the ultimate goal of the NDP II 2015/16-2019/20, which is to attain a lower middle income status by 2020 through strengthening the country's competitiveness for sustainable wealth creation, employment and inclusive growth.

Responding to the challenges faced through his work journey, Mr. Mujuni had this to narrate:

"When I joined Parliament, we were terribly understaffed and juggled from one committee to another. I simultaneously served two committees and learnt how to be patient, multi task and remain composed.

MEACA was a new environment and very few Ugandans knew about regional integration. We were tasked to come up with a communications

strategy and policy. Among others, we profiled our audiences and defined our communication channels for effective publicity of the regional integration. The position of Director at MEACA was particularly challenging as I often spent sleepless nights in meetings, negotiating protocols. Nonetheless, I learnt the importance of consultation on pertinent issues in order to generate consensus, collective responsibility and ownership - even when I had the technical knowledge.

Mbarara University was an entirely new environment of a tertiary institution with unique administrative challenges; for instance, as Accounting Officer I oversaw, shouldered responsibility and was held liable for constitutionally mandated functions such as procurement, financial management and accountability. While it took long, this role was gradually appreciated by all university stakeholders as contributing to the ocean of knowledge".

Amidst all odds and successes, career progression has always been at the center of Mr. Mujuni's work.

Despite his busy schedule, Mr. Mujuni is a loving husband and father who takes off time to counsel and guide his children. "I regularly visit my daughter Laura (Ed: First born) in the University. We chat about her life prospects, she makes me a cup of tea and we really bond well"! he exclaims.



## Equal Opportunities Encompass Youth Affairs: Wafula Sirabo Patrobas



Member Wafula Sirabo Patrobas – Representative of the Youth at the Commission, had a one-on-one with the Principal Education Officer, Petua Babirye Isabirye, where he shares his life journey and experience working with marginalised and discriminated communities.

Member Wafula Sirabo Patrobas is the youngest of five boys born in his family. He was born in Mulago and grew up at Mawanda Road in Kampala, and proudly associates with his place of origin, Samia - Bugwe, Mukungu village, Masafu Sub County in Busia district. For his education, Mr. Wafula went to Kampala Kindergarten, Nakasero Primary School, City High School for O'Level and Kiira College Butiki, where he obtained his Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE).

His leadership journey begun in the Youth committee at Deliverance Church where he served in several positions including Chairperson of the youth. While at Uganda Christian University, Mukono, pursuing a Bachelor of Laws (LLB), he participated in several youth activities; served as Governor of VTS Hall, Member of Parliament for resident students, Guild Speaker and Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs for four years. He also served as the National Speaker and care-taker President of the Uganda National Students Association. He is passionate about Rotary and is a member of the Rotary club of Kampala Muyenga Breeze where he recently served as President; Interact clubs Chairperson and Deputy Secretary for the 93<sup>rd</sup> Rotary District Conference and Assembly (DCA) District 9211. This background is largely responsible for Mr. Wafula's strong leadership skills. Little surprising therefore, he was appointed by H.E the President of the Republic of Uganda to represent the youth at the Commission.

Serving at the Commission came as a result of a passion he gained while at University, considering his thesis that examined, "The extent of executing equal opportunities in Uganda".

On how the first Commission shaped the Member's understanding of equal opportunities, he says; "When I joined the Commission, I only thought about the youth, but later realized equal opportunities were not simply a youth affair, but for everybody – with special focus on the vulnerable and marginalized groups. So during the first tenure, I learnt

the importance of advocacy in a holistic manner and my negotiation, public speaking, analytical, interpersonal and legal skills were greatly improved".

In his recollection, Mr. Wafula narrates that the Commission has moved afar - initially with a single desk to a currently well-established secretariat; from four Members, an Interim Secretary, five technical staff in 2010 to the current full Commission with forty-two members of staff; financial growth from an annual subvention of UGX 600,000,000 to the current Vote status of over UGX 6bn.

"The current Commission has made strides in fulfilling its mandate by reaching out to our constituents through public dialogues, joint meetings and focus group discussions to listen to their issues in regard to marginalization and discrimination", he confirms.

Mr Wafula is glad to see the youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, women and ethnic minorities enjoying their rights. He proudly associates with the contribution of the Commission in the promotion of an inclusive social infrastructure and development agenda. Inroads have been made

in dispensing social justice given the increasing number of complaints handled by the Commission, which he considers a big achievement.

Member Wafula envisions the Commission in the next five years as having levelled the ground for equal opportunities for all, affirmative action and inclusion wherein built up environments are accessible to all and social services are available to the vulnerable and marginalized individuals and groups.



**When I joined the Commission, I only thought about the youth, but later realized equal opportunities were not simply a youth affair, but for everybody – with special focus on the vulnerable and marginalized groups. So during the first tenure, I learnt the importance of advocacy in a holistic manner and my negotiation, public speaking, analytical, interpersonal and legal skills were greatly improved**



Responding to the challenges, he vividly remembers work without pay during the first commission. However, he did not waiver and realised money was not everything. Being the only male and youthful Member of the Commission at inception, he appreciates the advice of the other Members of the Commission and motherly role and wise counsel of late Member Erina Baingana. "When the going got tough, she always sat me down and counseled me. This encouragement kept me going and reserved my resolve for not only representing the youth, but Ugandans as a whole", he explains.

Mr Wafula's off duty passion is spending quality time with his wife and three children. He attributes his success to God and passion for his work.



## Mr Mujuni Benard on the Spot: Reminiscing the Humble Beginnings of the Commission



Mr. Mujuni Benard is the Commissioner for Equity and Rights in the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. He was instrumental in operationalizing Article 32 of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (as amended), to establish the Equal Opportunities Commission. Sheila Ajok Lubangakene, the Commission's Information and Communications Officer, put Mr. Mujuni on the spot in a Q & A session to share with Ugandans his insights about the Commission.

### Who is Mr. Benard Mujuni?

I am a social scientist, a lawyer (LLB) with a Masters in Human Rights and a UN Fellow on leadership and sustainability from the UN University in Japan. Currently, I am a Commissioner for Equity and Rights in the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

### What other work have you done before?

I started working in 1998, first in the NGO world as a volunteer with Amnesty International. In 2002, I joined Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development as a Senior Social Development Officer in charge of Human Rights. During the process leading to the passing of the Equal Opportunities Policy in 2006, the enactment of the EOC Act 2007 and appointment and inauguration of the first Commission in 2010, I was the lead technical person. In 2010, I was appointed Acting Secretary to the Commission for one year; then returned to the ministry on promotion as Assistant Commissioner Labour Inspectorate. From 2015 to date, I am heading the Department of Equity and Rights in the same ministry.

### You made mention of your involvement in the establishment of the Equal Opportunities Commission. Tell us more about this...

When I joined the Ministry in 2002, I found this provision in the Constitution under Article 32 already in place.

Research had been done by Law Reform Commission about the policy and regulatory environment for having this Commission established. I was assigned the duty of steering the technical process leading to the establishment of the Commission. Accordingly, I wrote a concept note for funding and secured a development partner, Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), who supported the consultative process. However at about



that time, issues arose from a report of the Constitutional Review Commission chaired by Prof. Fredrick Ssempebwa, recommending merger of the proposed EOC with the Uganda Human Rights Commission.

### **How did you counteract this hiccup?**

This was resolved through consultation with civil society, special interest groups; and later with the President. The President guided that this commission was a child of the ten-point programme and deserved to be an independent body, tackling development challenges in a proactive manner.

After several consultations, we developed the Equal Opportunities Policy (2006) and the EOC Act (2007). I was then assigned the responsibility of ensuring the first Commission is appointed and inaugurated.

As the technical person, I worked with the then Permanent Secretary (MGLSD) Ms. Christine Guwatudde, and secured funding from Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to buy our own home, furniture and vehicles. This was quite rare in Government and I consider it an honour to have pushed for all this even before staff came on board.

### **When did the Commission become functional?**

In April 2010, Members were appointed by H.E President Museveni and

inaugurated in July of the same year. I was appointed Acting Secretary in the same year, coordinated recruitment of the first Commission staff and induction of the Members. In our humble beginnings, we secured an independent vote, code and attracted Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) as the first development partner of the Commission.

### **Are you happy about how the Commission has turned out?**

Yes! There is steady progress especially with enhanced public awareness about the commission, increasing staff levels, the annual assessments of gender and equity compliance, sector audits and production of the annual report on the state of equal opportunities in Uganda. I must also say that this commission is unique in its mandate- redressing societal imbalances and promoting equal opportunities for all. In other countries this is mingled up in the roles of their human rights commissions.

### **Where do you see the Commission in the next five years?**

The Commission should intensify its efforts in adding value to government programmes by undertaking equal opportunity audits to ensure these programmes are well delivered in accordance with Uganda's Vision 2040, the National Development Plan (NDP) II and NRM manifesto - all of which stress inclusive development. Through its social justice mechanisms, the Commission must start summoning, apprehending,

fining or sentencing those who have not complied with its recommendations and orders, or those in contravention of provisions of the law

### **What is your department currently doing at a legislative/policy level?**

We are bringing up a law on social impact assessment and accountability which will address social sector in infrastructure development. This will ensure that common people are integrated in social development processes by law. It will also guarantee community participatory rights, rights of minorities and vulnerable groups. Before any physical infrastructure like dams, roads, markets and pipelines are built, people should be prepared to support and benefit from it; and the value proposition should be very clear. Communities have to be empowered to monitor government programmes and hold leaders accountable. This is a milestone legislation.

### **What kind of roads are you talking about?**

All roads! When constructing roads, Engineers must provide for in-roads, market stalls for women, adequate stages and accessibility for persons with disabilities. For a dam, community mapping has to be done.

### **When do you think this law will come into force?**

We have done a regulatory impact assessment and viewed the cabinet memo. It is at a level of cabinet and

hopefully will come into force at the end of 2018. This law will ensure inclusiveness of vulnerable groups in the development process.

Lastly, we are developing national equity guidelines on natural resource dependents and surrounding communities like ethnic minorities. The EOC will be brought on board.

### **Don't you think the proposed law on social impact assessment and accountability will contradict with the EOC?**

This law addresses social safeguards in the development processes. It does not in any way come close to the EOC mandate. Rather, the EOC will benefit from the referred cases of complex tribunal nature.

### **What are your challenges as a Commissioner Equity and Rights?**

We struggle with funding issues, resources are usually limited. Some social issues are not given priority. However we receive some funding from Civil Society, since we do 70% of our work with them; but this is not sustainable. Despite creation of brilliant ideas, our innovations have not yet been given priority.

### **What makes you stand out?**

I am a poet and have written over 300 poems but not yet published. I am a social entrepreneur and patron of the Maids Academy in Kamwokya.



## Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development Visits Equal Opportunities Commission

By Julius Kamya



**Hon. Janat Mukwaya with the Chairperson and Members of the Commission**

The Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development Hon. Janat Mukwaya has implored women to plan and have children they can take care of in order to enable them get access to basic education, amenities and easily access health services like immunization.

Speaking during her maiden visit to the Commission offices in Bugolobi, she said the current resource envelope is not enough to ensure distribution of quality service delivery to all Ugandans.

She encouraged staff to work hard and applauded them for their high levels of

education being commensurate to the work of the Commission. She challenged staff to work harder since they are still youthful and ensure their families do not get affected by the vice of parents' addiction to social media.

The Minister advised all staff to get spouses and settle into marriage because families are basic units to everyone. "For those who are married, stick in there, educate your children and do not let them face the wrath of separation because they are victims of circumstances. They did not choose you, and do not deserve to suffer broken relationships". She said that



a law to apprehend careless parents who neglect their children is soon to be passed.

She called for management to introduce a reward system so that staff are motivated and thanked all staff for their tireless efforts in working towards the country's attainment of middle-income status.



**The Chairperson handing over a package to the Minister.**

The Chairperson, Mrs. Sylvia Muwebwa Ntambi expressed gratitude to the Minister for the initiative she took in coming to visit EOC. She called upon staff to heed to the advice received from the minister and requested them to introduce themselves to her.



**Hon. Janat Mukwaya with EOC Members and staff in a group photo after the meeting**

## Attaining Equity and Social Justice through the Gender and Equity Compliance Lense

**By Zaminah Malole**

Over the years Governments, International organizations and Civil Society Groups have used a broad range of approaches to analyze budgets and plans to scrutinize them for their impact on women, men, girls, boys, children, Persons with Disabilities, youth, older persons and other groups of people who are marginalized to achieve inclusive growth and development.

This is due to the fact that budgets act as an indicator of governments towards achieving various development objectives. This demonstrates government's commitment to overcome persistent development challenges such as poverty, exclusion, gender inequalities and economic injustices.

Globally there are various initiatives for financing gender equality which are diverse with varying scope, involving different stakeholders and operating in different context.

'The one size fit all' approach in budgeting and planning may not only be counterproductive for inclusive human development in Uganda as majority of the people are vulnerable and susceptible to socio-economic

shocks, but may also stagnate economic growth and development due to lack of equitable and sustainable measures in addressing economic, social, political and environmental challenges.

The government of Uganda recognizes the importance of redressing all forms of imbalances as enshrined in Article 21 and 32 of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, which also laid the foundation to the establishment of the Equal Opportunities Commission in 2010.

The Equal Opportunities Commission embarked on fulfilling its mandate as stipulated in the Equal Opportunities Commission Act 2007, and the Public Finance Management Act 2015 to ensure that Sector Budget Framework Papers and Ministerial Policy Statements comply with Gender and Equity requirements.

As mandated, the Equal Opportunities Commission conducts a thorough assessment of Sector Budget Framework Papers (BFPs), Ministerial Policy Statements (MPs), National Budgets and submits them to the Minister of Finance who later issues a Certificate of Compliance to Gender and Equity to sectors that have attained a pass mark for approval by Parliament.

By and large Gender and Equity responsive budgeting has taken a center stage in Uganda's planning and budgeting in order to ensure equitable and sustainable inclusion of

the needs and interests of those who are marginalized and vulnerable in society.

Uganda has made notable progress since the enactment of the PFMA 2015. This steady progress is attributed to among other things an early lead in localizing and aligning the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to her Second National Development Plan (NDP II) 2015/16-2019.

The NDP II has Gender and Equity Sector interventions for each of the sectors to be implemented over the planning period. The ultimate goal for NDP II is to attain lower income status by 2020, strengthening the country's competitiveness for sustainable wealth creation, employment and inclusive growth. This is in tandem with the rationale of gender and equity budgeting and planning.

The consortium of stake holders come together under the National Gender and Equity Budgeting Task Force to exchange experiences, strategize next steps for influencing sector policies and processes focused on implementing Gender and Equity Budgeting for Inclusive and Sustainable Development. Building synergies and partnerships for effective implementation of Gender and Equity Budgeting.

Raising awareness and capacity building efforts that have yielded significant results for attitude change and bringing on board marginalized and vulnerable groups to feel part of the planning and



budgeting processes due to inclusion of gender and equity interventions in sector budgets and plans that directly impact their lives.

Standardizing the National Capacity Building Plan for Gender and Equity Budgeting; Development of the National gender and equity compendium; Finalizing the specialized sector compacts and the G&E guidelines for Parliamentarians have not only strengthened implementation of G&E and addressing issues of quality control, but also deepened the understanding appreciation of gender and equity planning that targets the less privileged in society. A reasonable number of implementers can now easily discern issues of gender and equity with much ease after undergoing intensive capacity building by the Equal Opportunities Commission.

The EOC continues to lead the enforcement of compliance to G&E budgeting and planning, but in close partnership with the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development. Some of the other notable stake holders are Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, National Planning Authority, the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, Civil Society Organizations under their Umbrella of CSBAG. This consortium has greatly contributed to the enabling environment which

has enhanced the implementation of Gender and Equity budgeting.

Besides funding and support from the Government of Uganda, a number of Development Partners took interest to also support the Equal Opportunities Commission to deliver on its mandate. The support has greatly enhanced the implementation of Gender and Equity Budgeting at various levels. Most notable ones include UN Women, UN Human Rights, EU, GIZ, DGF and UNDP among others.

Despite the notable strides that have been made there have been some challenges; which among others include; limited financial resources to comprehensively implement Gender and Equity budgeting, limited technical capacity of G&E implementers and lack of gender and equity disaggregated data at sector level.

There is empirical evidence showing the enormous advantages that accrue from embracing gender and equity budgeting, it should be in our interest as Ugandans to appreciate and ensure implementation of a broadly inclusive budgeting approach that addresses the different development concerns for all, as we strive to attain equity and social justice.



## Launch of the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on the State of Equal Opportunities in Uganda - A Glance at inclusion for all

By Daniel Mabirizi



**The Deputy Rt. Hon. Jacob Oulanyah launches the Annual Report on the State of Equal Opportunities for FY2016/17. Looking on is the Chairperson, Mrs. Sylvia Muwebwa Ntambi.**

The Commission launched its fourth Annual Report on the State of Equal Opportunities in Uganda for the period 2016/2017 whose theme was: *"Enhancing National Development through Equity and Inclusion"*. This took place on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 at Imperial Royale Hotel, Kampala. The launch was graced by the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Jacob Oulanyah, as Chief Guest.

In his address, the Deputy Speaker observed that EOC had published a number of annual reports which are yet to be tabled on the floor of Parliament and he committed to follow up with the relevant committees on this matter. He also commended the Commission for

its dedicated effort towards promoting equal opportunities for the marginalized groups. "When people feel marginalized, they lose confidence and feel excluded. The future of our nation depends on how issues concerning the vulnerable and marginalized persons are handled", he emphasized. The Rt. Hon. Deputy Speaker urged everyone to embrace equal opportunities and inclusion as a plausible approach for inclusive and sustainable development.

He also used the same platform to launch the Commission's maiden newsletter, the Equity Voice and Corporate wear for the Equal Opportunities Commission.



***The Deputy Rt. Hon. Jacob Oulanyah launches the Commissions Corporate wear and Equity Voice.***



***Stakeholders from different Civil Society Organisations attended the event.***

On the occasion, the Commission Chairperson noted the significant progress made by Government in redressing societal imbalances and promoting equal opportunities for all.

This, she said, is evidenced by the increased participation of the marginalized groups in decision-making processes, the enactment and passing of inclusive legislations and policies as well as the existence of various interventions that target marginalized groups.

On behalf of all development partners, Mr. Uchenna Emelonye, the Country Representative for UN Human Rights observed that the report was timely in addressing contemporary and emerging issues in the area of equal opportunities and would go a long way in amplifying the voices of the marginalized people in Uganda. He also commended the EOC for a job well done.



***The EOC research and monitoring team holding the dummy report at the event***



***Members of the Commission, dignitaries and development partners attended the event.***



## Snap Shot of the Report

The report represented the Commission's progress and accountability to Ugandans; highlighting the extent of inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized populations in selected sectors of the country; and challenged all development actors to be conscious and take deliberate measures to make the country's entire development more inclusive, with particular emphasis on leaving no one behind as is stipulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the National Development Plan II (NDP II).

The report highlighted the performance of the Commission in FY 2016/17 as well as emerging issues on the state of equal opportunities in:

- Budget Framework Papers and Ministerial Policy Statements of Government for Financial Year 2016/2017. This was arrived at after gender and equity compliance assessments as provided for in the Public Finance Management Act, 2015.
- Health service delivery for marginalized and vulnerable groups, conducted in selected districts;
- The Social Development Sector and its performance in addressing the development concerns of selected marginalised groups. This was informed by comprehensive audits of the Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (Senior Citizens' Grant), Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) and the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP)

- The free access and independent use of the built-up environment by all. This was done through a physical accessibility audit of selected public facilities in Kampala.

The report generally reveals that the health sector is characterized by; geographical disparities in distribution of health facilities; inequitable distribution of health personnel in favour of urban settings; inaccessible information, communication and physical facilities; high maternal mortality rates in rural areas; inadequate financial allocations/releases; high HIV prevalence rates in urban settings and high drug abuse among the youth.

The Senior Citizen Grants for older persons (SAGE) was critiqued for its narrow geographical coverage; limited financial releases, over dependence on development partners; delays in remittance of funds; assembly centers that are distant and inaccessible to the older persons; exclusion of older persons not registered under National Identification Registration Authority; a selection criteria that is not cognizant of the varying levels of vulnerability among the older persons.

While the findings depict the YLP as a welcome and transparent intervention, it is generally condemned for the cumbersome selection process; low involvement of the marginalised groups; a greater focus on urban youth; limited regard for group dynamics and emerging cases of misappropriation of funds.



Similarly, UWEP is appreciated for easing access to financial services for women without collateral security. Conversely however, the Programme has been affected by partial roll out; low resource envelope; complexities in opening bank accounts; documentation and lack of disaggregated data on beneficiaries.

The physical accessibility audit of selected public facilities in Kampala registered general inaccessibility concerns to and within public buildings, parking spaces, washrooms, noticeboards and roads.

The report makes a number of recommendations aimed at promoting inclusion and equitable service provision. These ranged from building disability – friendly facilities in accordance with the Building Control Act, 2013; to: training of medical personnel in Sign Language; providing specialized services for the vulnerable patients; prioritizing vulnerable older persons under SAGE; widening the geographical coverage for SAGE, availing alternative verification and registration for older persons; reviewing YLP guidelines and timely and adequate financial releases.

The launch was closed by the Commission's Vice Chairperson, Mr. Nduhura M. Denis who appreciated Government and development partners for their support. He noted that the Commission has a strong conviction that effective participation of vulnerable and marginalized groups is about creating opportunities for all to be actively involved in influencing, designing, implementing, monitoring

and evaluating policies, laws, programs and budgets - leading to realization of sustainable wealth creation, employment and inclusive growth as articulated in NDP II. The Vice Chairperson concluded by reminding stakeholders that inclusion is a fundamental human right, critical as the country pursues a lower middle income status by 2020.

## Demystifying Equal Opportunities and affirmative action to Commission members, Staff and Stakeholders

*By Petua Babirye Isabirye*

For effective and efficient delivery on its mandate, it is imperative for the Commission to ensure that all internal and external stakeholders fully understand and appreciate the concepts of equal opportunities, affirmative action, gender and equity as well as related laws and policies. To this end, the Commission conducted a number of training sessions for its Members, staff, MDAs and local governments.

The Commission inducted new staff who undertook a three day induction from 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at Esella hotel, Najjera. The major objective of the induction was to introduce the new staff to the EOC environment, share the

mandate and listen to their expectations with the aim of integrating them into the Commission.

The Members and staff were trained on handling and investigating complaints relating to the violation of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR) and also taken through the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Resource book developed by the UN Human Rights in collaboration with Judicial Training Institute.

The training was conducted by Ms. Salima Namusobya, Executive Director, Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER) and Dr. Chris Mbazira from Makerere University and Public Interest Law Clinic (PILAC) with support from UN Human Rights in September, 2017 at Protea Hotel, Entebbe.



**Member Zaminah Malole, Prof. Nicholas Olwor-Ag Secretary and staff after the induction at Esella hotel. The staff inducted were the Principal Legal Officer, Legal Officers, Senior Accountant and the Communication Officer who joined the 9**



**Members and staff after the ESCR training at Protea Hotel, Entebbe.**

Gender and Equity planning and budgeting is very instrumental as we strive to realize a just and fair Uganda wherein all Ugandans have equal opportunity to participate, contribute and benefit from national development efforts. Due to the continuous G&E knowledge gaps, the EOC continues to build capacity of MDAs and LGs in discerning issues of gender and equity in planning, budgeting and service delivery.

At the local government level, in the month of November 2017, the Commission conducted trainings in the northern regional districts of Alebtong, Apac, Kitgum, Lamwo, Lira, Nwoya, Oyam, Otuke, Pader and Pakwach; Bududa, Bukedea, Bulambuli, Butaleja, Butebo, Kumi, Manafwa, Namasindwa, Pallisa and Sironko in the east; Bukomansimbi, Butambala, Gomba, Kalangala, Kalungu, Kayunga, Lugazi Municipality in Buikwe District, Mpigi, Mukono and Sembabule in the central region; as well as Bushenyi, Isingiro, Kabale, Kanungu, Kisoro, Mbarara, Mitooma, Ntungamo, Rukungiri and Sheema in the western region.





**Capacity building on G & E Planning in Kalangala district.**



**Capacity building on G & E Planning in Oyam district.**



**Capacity building on G & E planning in Namisindwa district**



**Capacity building on G & E planning in Kumi district**



**Capacity building on G & E Planning in Isingiro district**



**(Right) EOC attended a three day training of assessors at Civil Service College, Jinja in October.**



## Equal Opportunities staff attend planning retreat

*By James Mugisha*

Equal Opportunities Commission Members and staff attended a two day residential planning and budgeting retreat from 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> October, 2017 at Esella Country Hotel in Kira.

Speaking on behalf of the Chairperson, Member Zaminah Malole thanked the staff for having made it to the session. She expressed gratitude to the Secretary who over saw its successful organization.

She tasked staff to reflect on the Commission's strategic plan and come up with interventions geared at positively changing the lives of the marginalized people. "Let us be committed to planning what the Commission will do in the coming Financial Year. Remember, Uganda is a signatory to the 17 SDGs, whose emphasis is inclusive development. Most unreservedly, these must be part of our two-day retreat", she stressed.

Member Zaminah urged staff to be mindful that their guiding documents in this planning exercise were the SDGs, NDP II, Budget Call Circular, as well as the Commission's strategic plan, Ministerial Policy Statement (MPS) and Budget Framework Paper (BFP).



***Members and staff attending the retreat.***

The Acting Secretary, Prof. Sunday Olwor advocated for realistic budgeting and planning and encouraged staff to make an effort to avail themselves, share information as departments and remain focused and committed to the Commission mandate of redressing imbalances and promoting equal opportunities for all.

The Principal Planner, James Mugisha presented the Commission's FY2016/17 overall performance and budget execution and explained the few challenges experienced like deviation from planned activities as per MPS, inconsistent commitments for procurements, reporting outside MPS



***Staff pose for a group picture at the retreat.***



## Specifics on Government adherence to Gender and Equity Requirements

*By Twine Hope Rebecca*

In order to ensure compliance with national, regional and international provisions for the promotion of equal opportunities for all, the Commission undertook various interventions during the past half year of FY 2017/18.

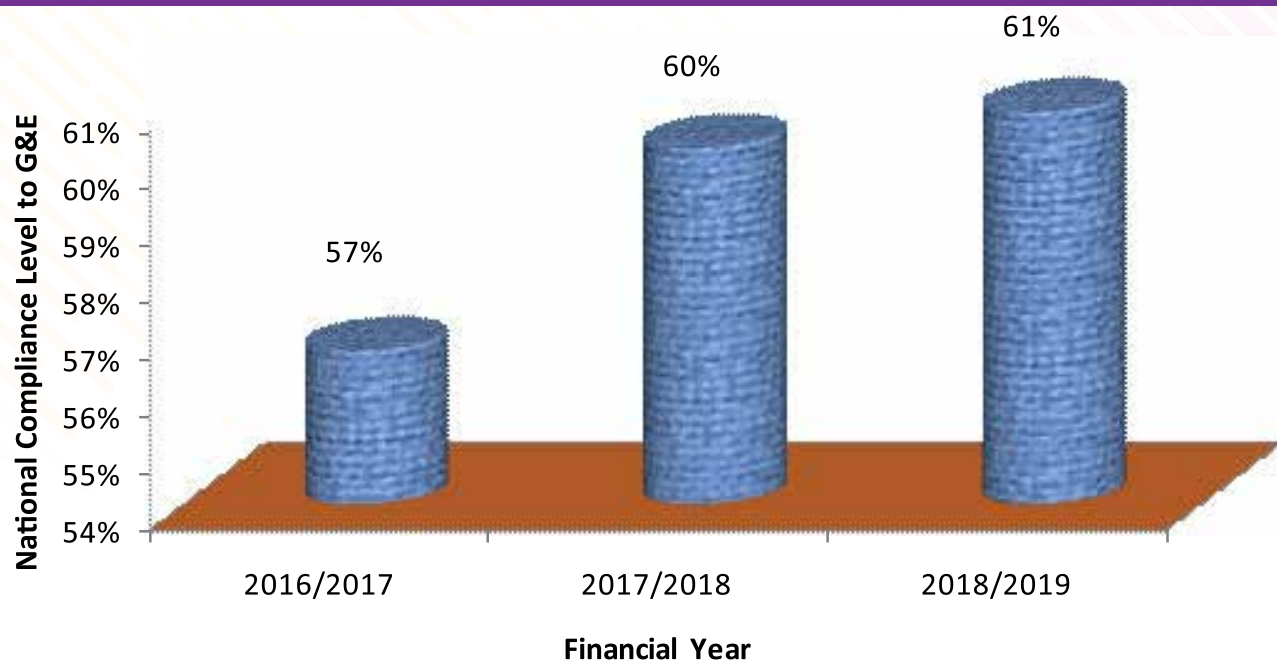
The Commission under the Public Finance Management Act, 2015 is mandated to assess and certify the inclusion and responsiveness of Sectors, MDAs and LGs to gender and equity compliance in their Budget Framework Papers (BFP) and Ministerial Policy Statements (MPS) to ensure that they are gender and equity responsive. Since 23rd February 2015, the Commission has assessed four sets of BFPs (FYs 2015/16, 2016/2017, 2017/2018 and 2018/2019). In the first three FYs, 16 sectors were assessed. In the FY 2018/2019, the Commission assessed 17 sectors following the establishment of the Science, Technology and Innovation Sector. The 17 sectors are: Agriculture; Lands, Housing and Urban Development; Energy and Mineral Development; Works and Transport; Information and Communications Technology; Tourism, Trade and Industry; Education; Health; Water and Environment; Social Development; Security; Accountability; Public Administration; Justice, Law and Order; Public Sector Management; Legislature; and Science, Technology

and Innovation Sector. The table below presents a summary of sector BFP assessment findings for the recent assessments.

S/N	Sector	2016/2017 2017/2018
1	Agriculture	70%
2	Accountability	60%
3	Legislature,	68%
4	Public Administration Sector	51%
5	Justice, Law and Order	60%
6	Security	55%
7	Lands, Housing & Urban Development	53%
8	Energy and Mineral Development	63%
9	Works and Transport	59%
10	ICT	56%
11	Tourism, Trade and Industry	53%
12	Education	71%
13	Health	73%
14	Water and Environment	76%
15	Social Development	90%
16	Public Sector Management	59%
17	Science, Technology and Innovation	27%
18	National Compliance Average	<b>61%</b>

The national compliance level for the FY 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 was 57% and 60% respectively translating into 3%age point increase. In the recent assessments (FY 2018/2019), the national compliance level improved by 1%age points from 60% to 61%.

## Figure showing the National Compliance with Gender and Equity for the FYs 2016/2017 - 2018/2019



**The Chairperson EOC, submits the fourth assessment findings report on compliance of sector Budget Framework Papers (BFPs) with Gender and Equity requirements for FY2018/19 to the Deputy Speaker of Parliament Rt. Hon. Jacob Oulanyah. Looking on is Member Joel Cox Ojuko.**



The Commission developed sector compacts and a National Compendium of priority gender and equity issues at Vote level; initiated sectors and MDAs to the assessment of BFPs and MPSs for compliance with gender and equity FY 2018/19, reviewed the BFP and MPS Assessment Tools and developed a LG assessment tool for the FY 2018/19; oriented local Governments on gender and equity planning & budgeting; built capacity of Civil Society to advocate for gender and equity planning and budgeting at both national and LG Level and finally, assessed Sector BFPs for gender and equity compliance for the FY 2018/2019.

The Commission observed low performance of sectors in the first assessments conducted, thereby leading to the development of sector specific Gender and Equity Compacts.

Overall, a total of 8 compacts out of the 17 sectors have been finalized and these include: Education; Health; ICT; Works and Transport; Trade, Industry and Cooperatives; Justice, Law and Order; Agriculture; as well as Energy and Mineral Development.

The EOC with support from UN-Women developed a national compendium on gender and equity. This was initiated to address the challenge of the high costs required to develop sector specific compacts amidst the urgent need for each vote to be guided on their respective gender and equity specific issues. On the basis of the above, the compendium was developed with vote specific gender and equity issues in line with the NDP II commitments. It constitutes issues for all the 16 sectors and the specific votes therein.





**The Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Hon. Janat Mukwya launching the reference tools (with support from UN-Women) at Hotel Africana. Looking on are officials from EOC, UN Women and Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.**



## **GENDER AND EQUITY COMPLIANCE GUIDE FOR PARLIAMENT**



*Theme: "Promoting Equal Opportunities for Inclusive Growth"*

**By  
The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC),  
Kampala, Uganda**

*April 2017*

Since Parliament plays an oversight role as provided for in Section 78 and 79 of the PFMA, 2015, by scrutinizing and vetting all the budgets and plans submitted by respective Sectors and MDAs, the Commission developed a Guide to enable it hold various sectors and MDAs accountable. The Guide is instructive in relation to the approved sections of the BFPs, MPSs and in accordance to the new Performance Budgeting System (PBS).

The first set of assessment tools were developed in FY 2015/2016, reviewed in FY 2016/2017 and FY 2017/2018. The Commission has also brought on board the CSOs to support this cause by amplifying the voices of vulnerable segments of the population, especially in amplifying their voices in addressing service gaps



## Stakeholders Joining hands with EOC to Ensure Equal Opportunities for Marginalized and Vulnerable Populations in Uganda

**By Juma Waira**

The Commission continues to engage with partners and stakeholders of various organizations in order to strengthen its working relationship, reach out to the marginalized groups and promote equal opportunities for the vulnerable in society.

During the second and third quarter of this financial year, the Commission engaged with a number of stakeholders and these included; Initiative for Social, Cultural and Economic Rights (ISER), Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC), National Council for Disability (NCD), Uganda Youth Network (UYN), Indigenous Minority Groups (IMGs), Center for Economic Empowerment for Women in Africa (CEEWA), National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) and Albinism Umbrella among others. In some of these engagements, the commission signed MoUs, held consultative meetings and joint advocacy activities.



**Officials of EOC and the National Council for Disability after a partnership dialogue at the EOC premises.**



**Officials of EOC and the Uganda AIDS Commission during a joint consultative meeting.**



**The Director CEEWA-U handing over a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to the then Ag. Secretary to the Commission, Prof. Nicholas Olwor. In the background is the Chairperson EOC.**



**A meeting jointly organized by EOC and ISER to develop the implementation matrix on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCRs) recommendations received during the Universal Periodic Review at the home of the EOC.**





**Mr. Bernard Mujuni (Commissioner Equity and Rights, MGLSD) and the Chairperson of the EOC jointly moderating at a stakeholder dialogue to discuss implementation of ESCRs recommendations from Uganda's 2<sup>nd</sup> Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at Protea Hotel Entebbe.**



**Ms. Zaminah Malole, a Member of the Commission attends a public dialogue on "Extending Social Protection to workers in the Informal Sector" organized by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Golf Course Hotel Kampala.**



**EOC participated in a forum and learning fair for Members of Partner Disabled Peoples' Organizations' (DPO's) at the Lugogo sports complex.**



**EOC joined other stakeholders in a fundraiser for rehabilitation of the Kwagala center for Albinos in Luweero held at St. Jude Primary School, Kasana in November, 2017.**



## EOC Alternative Justice mechanisms: A Struggle towards ending marginalization and discrimination

*By Irene Nassaka & David Lewis*

For effective dispensation of justice, the Commission continues to receive, assess and investigate complaints that relate to marginalization and discrimination. In the exercise of its powers, the Commission handles all admissible complaints through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms and tribunal hearings.

Over the period, the Commission has received 48 complaints, many of these complaints relate to land and property ownership, discrimination in employment, Gender Based Violence and marginalization on the basis of disability, age, religion and ethnicity. The complaints are received from all over the country and the commission conducts circuit tribunals in order to reach out to far off complainants.



**Member Joel Cox Ojuko, during a tribunal hearing in Nebbi District in a case filed by Samuel Ongiera and 92 other war claimants for compensation.**

Another key complaint received over the period was in relation to the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE). The complaint filed under reference number EOC/CR/038/2017, had the complainants testify that they are discriminated against in relation to SAGE funds. "We have orphaned grandchildren, our children died of HIV/AIDS. Our grandchildren are failing to go to school due to lack of tuition and the government is arresting us for not taking them to school," Basalirwa Alice, a widow from Kaliro District explained. Margaret Janet Waiswa from Namutumba said she last received the money on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2016. She hopes that EOC could help her access these funds more frequently. Charles, a 70 year old complainant from Kayunga said, "They come and announce that SAGE funds are being distributed, however only three people are given the funds while the rest are left to queue despite our frail condition." The money is given to those who are not needy, yet widows and widowers are ignored.

Sylvia Muwebwa Ntambi, the Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities thanked older persons for making their case known to the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER) which mobilized them to come and present it. She pledged to have her team investigate allegations of discrimination within the SAGE programme and make recommendations to the relevant Government departments.



**Members of the Commission presiding over a tribunal hearing at the EOC.**



**Member Joel Cox Ojuko, during a tribunal hearing at EOC in a matter touching marginalization in property inheritance, Lugemwa Stephen vs Busulwa Lawrence (Case Ref: EOC/CR/076/2014.)**



**Ms. Zaminah Malole visiting the locus with the Legal and Investigations team at Kulambiro (Nakawa Division) in a matter of trespass on land of vulnerable complainants. (Case Ref: EOC/CR/027/2017)**

The Commission is currently investigating many other complaints including those received from ethnic minorities of the Batwa, Banyabindi and the Maragoli

communities. These are indigenous minorities who have cross cutting issues some of which include eviction from their ancestral land, recognition of their cultural leaders by government, involvement in decision making process and generally access to social services. The Maragoli case is an exceptional one, where they are claiming recognition as Ugandans. During national mobilization for acquisition of National Identity cards, the Maragoli claim that the National Identification Registration Authority (NIRA) denied them the opportunity to register as Ugandans.

The Commission can also investigate cases of discrimination and marginalization on its own initiative, for example, on 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2018, the Commission moved to investigate a case where a hotel in Kampala issued a discriminatory employment advert, and issued an order compelling the hotel to stop any recruitment until investigations are complete.



**Member Joel Cox making a presentation at the Indigenous Minority Groups dialogue at Mackinnon Suites, Kampala**



## Promotion of Equal Opportunities and affirmative action during national and Internationally Gazetted Days

*By Juma Waira*

In an effort to increase visibility on its mandate, the Commission participated in national and internationally gazetted days that relate to the EOC mandate in selected host districts. The days included; International Youth day on 12<sup>th</sup> August in Bundibugyo, International day of World's Indigenous People on 9<sup>th</sup> August, International Older Person's day on 1<sup>st</sup> October in Kiboga, International Disability day on 3<sup>rd</sup> December in Kamwenge. The EOC also participated in the 16 days of activism against Gender Based Violence from 25<sup>th</sup> November to 10<sup>th</sup> December, which was climaxed with the International Human Rights day in Moroto district. These days provided an avenue for advocacy and continuous awareness raising to the public on the mandate of the Commission and concepts of Equal Opportunities, Gender and Equity responsiveness, Affirmative Action, discrimination, inclusion; as well as dissemination of various Information, Education and Communication materials.

The Commission joined other stakeholders to reflect on progress thus far and collectively raise voices on the challenges that continue to impede national development at large. To

this end, EOC engaged in exhibitions, radio and television talk shows, public dialogues and released press statements on equal opportunities and affirmative action in commemoration of the different international days.



**Member Wafula Patrobas Sirabo, giving his key note address during the dialogue and launch of the "Young, Healthy and Employed (2017-2022)" campaign in August, 2017 at Makerere University, Kampala.**



**The Principal Education Officer, EOC making remarks at the opening of the national dialogue for the Indigenous Minority Groups-Coalition at Mackinnon Suites in Kampala.**

The Commission converged in Kamwenge district together with other stakeholders to commemorate the International disability day on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2017. The event organized by Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development was presided over by H.E President Yoweri Museveni as Chief Guest.

The days theme was, *"Employment of persons with disabilities: A key to a sustainable and resilient society for all"*; which was tagged to Government and stakeholders creating an enabling environment and programmes that benefit Persons With Disabilities.

The President observed that Persons With Disabilities had been represented since the Constituent Assembly in 1992, first by Hon. Lubega and Hon. Margaret Babadiri the current woman Member of Parliament of Koboko district. He noted that prevention of accidents should be high up on the agenda script to curb cases of disabilities. He quickly added that polio was now a disease of the past and had been eliminated in the country.

President Museveni appreciated the improved infrastructure and social amenities in the country like roads, electricity and water which had been brought closer to the people of Kamwenge. He said all this had been achieved by prioritizing and planning progressively.

Additionally, the President noted that Persons With Disabilities are better placed in self-employment and programmes like Operation Wealth Creation which would suit them well. He encouraged them to join vocational schools to improve on their hands on skills and saving groups (SACCO's) in order to save and invest in income generating activities.



**H.E President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni inspecting the EOC exhibition stall during the International Disability day in Kamwenge district.**

The Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament of Uganda Hon. Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga was the Chief Guest during the older person's day in Kiboga. This day's theme was, *"Stepping into the future: Tapping the talents, contributions and participation of older persons in society."* This was identified for aiding and expanding the contributions of older people in their families, communities and societies at large. It focused on the pathways that support full and effective participation in old age, in accordance with old persons' basic rights, needs and preferences.

The Rt. Hon. Speaker was astonished to meet the oldest man in Kiboga who was 107 years old but expressed her disappointment about the delay in payments of the Social Assistants Grant for Empowerment (SAGE) where she requested the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to look into it.

Hon. Kadaga observed that there was need for a strategy for tapping into talent and requested the Irish Ambassador to help locals export their products to



foreign markets. "I saw older persons with honey, okra, crafts and other items in the exhibition stalls, and I would be delighted to see their products across borders."



**The Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga inspecting the EOC exhibition stall during the Older Persons day in Kiboga.**



**The EOC Chairperson, Member Zaminah Malole and the former Woman MP of Moroto with women artisanal miners at a limestone mining site in Tapac sub county, Karamoja during a field work visit in commemoration of the 16 days of activism under the theme; "Rights of mining communities".**

## Benchmark visit paid to the Commission by Zambia and Kenya

**By Stephen Semigabo**

Members of the Equal Opportunities Commission hosted the Zambia Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) to a meeting at the Head Office in Bugolobi. The visit was made to bench mark and understand EOC's involvement in the Universal Peer Review (UPC) that took place in Geneva.

The Vice Chairperson EOC, Mr. Dennis Nduhura shared with the team the EOC mandate, functions and powers; as well as the Commissions involvement in the UPR processes.



**Members of the Commission with members from National Cohesion and Integration Committee of Kenya.**



**Officials of the EOC and ZHRC in a meeting in the Commission boardroom**



The National Cohesion and Integration Committee of Kenya visited the commission in November to learn how peace building and conflict management systems in Uganda are handled. The Chairperson explained how EOC receives and resolves complaints through ADR mechanisms and tribunal hearings. "Conventional judicial processes may be rigorous and expensive. Our alternative justice mechanisms are free of cost and build clients confidence", Mrs. Muwebwa explained.

## Commission members and staff participate in learning visits to Mauritius and South Africa

*By Bernadette Nalule Mudde*

The EOC together with other stakeholders in the Rule of Law and Constitutional Democracy (RLCD) will live to remember Mauritius for its effective ways of promoting rule of law, democracy, protecting human rights – with emphasis on mechanisms for enhancing access to justice, organizing and conducting free and credible elections as well as nurturing civic engagement in enabling accountability.



*The Ugandan entourage with other stakeholders in Mauritius*

Equal Opportunities' Commission (EOC) in partnership with the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) Uganda visited selected Human Rights Institutions in South Africa in November. The purpose was to benchmark on the wealth of experiences the South African Human Rights Institutions has got on protection of the economic, social and cultural rights.



## EOC in the media

*By Sheila Ajok Lubangakene*

The Commission undertook a number of visibility campaigns through conducting radio and television talk shows, publishing press statements and articles in mainstream media.



*The Chairperson, Mrs Sylvia Muwebwa Ntambi giving her remarks during International Human Rights Day in Moroto district in December*





Member Zaminah Malole featuring on a talk show on NTV



## THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION LAUNCHES FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STATE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN UGANDA



The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) is a Government body established by an Act of Parliament (Equal Opportunities Commission Act, 2007), pursuant to Article 32(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995), to give effect to the State's Constitutional mandate to eliminate discrimination and inequalities against any individual or group of persons on grounds of sex, disability, age, race, colour, ethnic origin, tribe, birth, creed or religion, or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom and take affirmative action in favor of such groups for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them.

In accordance with section 24(2) and (3) of the Equal Opportunities Commission Act, 2007, the Commission hereby shares with Ugandans highlights of its fourth Annual Report on the State of Equal Opportunities in Uganda, which was launched with the theme: "Enhancing National Development through Equity and Inclusion" on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 at Imperial Royale Hotel, Kampala. The report partly represents the Commission's accountability to Ugandans; highlights the extent of inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized populations in selected sectors of the country; and also challenges all development actors to be

conscious and take deliberate measures to make the country's entire development more inclusive with particular emphasis on leaving no one behind as stipulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The report highlights the performance of the Commission in FY 2016/17 as well as emerging issues on the state of equal opportunities in: Compliance to Gender & Equity requirements in Planning & Budgeting; equitable access to health service delivery for marginalized and vulnerable groups; implementation of social development programmes targeting the older persons, youth and women; and the status of physical accessibility to the built-up environment. It also presents key recommendations to address the gaps towards equitable service delivery for all persons.

The struggle to eliminate discrimination and inequalities in Uganda emphasizes the need to address the different development concerns of categories of the population that constitute over 80 percent of the Country's total population: women (51%), Youth (22.5%), Children (55%), Older Persons (1.4%), Ethnic Minorities (1.4%), Persons with Disabilities (12.5%), the rural and urban poor (19.5%) among other marginalized persons.

With funding from Government and development partners, the Commission came up with this report through a protracted process of information generation, using a number of approaches. On the whole, research studies and audits were conducted on the dynamics of inequalities, discrimination and marginalization among the population and made policy recommendations on action areas to redress imbalances and promote equal opportunities for all. These included: study on salary disparities in the public service in Uganda; study on the level of access and delivery of health services in selected district local governments in Uganda; audits on selected public and private institutions and facilities for compliance to physical accessibility guidelines and standards; audits on Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP), Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE) of older persons, and Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP).

During the period, the Commission's mechanisms for administering social justice were highly engaged, 291 complaints arising from discrimination and marginalization were

received, of which 206 complaints (70.7%) were successfully concluded through tribunal hearings. Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms and referrals: whereas 85 complaints (29.2%) are still under investigation.

Progressively, the Commission produced Gender and Equity Compacts for various sectors of the Government: say, Education and Health sectors compacts to facilitate Ministries, Departments and Agencies in Gender and Equity planning and budgeting. In an effort to create awareness on equal opportunities and affirmative action for promotion of inclusiveness, the Commission developed and disseminated various information, Education and Communication (EC) materials – including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), brochures and conducted sensitization and training workshops, and held public dialogues to create awareness.

As far as implementation of recommendations from the previous annual report is concerned, majority of the target institutions had either partially or fully implemented them to enhance equitable service delivery for all persons. EOC pledged to continuously engage various stakeholders through dialogue meetings to ensure that progress is made with regard to their specific recommendations as captured in the previous Annual Reports on the State of equal opportunities in Uganda.

In regard to the state of Compliance to Gender & Equity in Planning and Budgeting, the overall national compliance of Sector Budget Frameworks (SbFR) Papers to Gender and Equity requirements for the FY 2017/2018 was 50%. Out of the 16 sectors assessed, 15 scored at least 50% which was the pass mark for the FY 2017/2018. Consequently, the 15 sectors were recommended to be issued a certificate of compliance with Gender and Equity for the Financial Year 2017/2018.

The Commission also conducted research on the state of equal opportunities in the health sector. It was noted that Government allocation for health as a percentage of the total Government budget has been averaged at about 8% from 2010/11 to 2016/17, which is 1.8 percentage points below the Health Sector Development Plan (HSDP) target of 9.8%. These are also still far below the 15% threshold of the Abuja Declaration (2001); hence, constraining equitable health service delivery. A comparison

of the maternal mortality rates (MMR) among both the rural and urban shows that the rates are worse in the rural areas and among the poor.

Similarly, attention was given to the State of Equal Opportunities in the Social Development Sector. The focused on analysis of equity in resource utilization and implementation of affirmative action programmes of SAGE (Senior Citizens' Grant), UWEP for Women and the Youth Livelihood Programme. In regard to the Senior Citizens' Grant, it was discovered that Out of the UGX 44.09 bn budget that GOU had committed to release for the programme over the last three financial years (2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18), only 46.1% of the funds have been released. The limited commitment by GOU and over-dependence on donor funds affect sustainability of the programme and disenfranchises many older persons from benefiting from the grant.

The EOC audit found out that 52.3% of older persons did not have care-takers and access to psychosocial support - hence facing further risk to vulnerability through solitude and limited access to social services.

The audit on the Youth Livelihood Program found that there is transparency in its implementation. 70% of the beneficiaries confirmed that the project was transparent. SAGE however, did not find the selection process of accessing YLP funds easy for them. This was attributed to the fact that the process involved a lot of documentation and yet most of the targeted beneficiaries included school drop-outs as well as uneducated orphans. Persons With Disabilities and unemployed youth who found the documents rigorous and could not easily fill them hence being left out.

The audit on the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) found that the programme has eased access to financial services for women without collateral security, which has helped improve their livelihoods. It was observed that all municipalities and districts access institutional support with only 72 districts and 22 municipalities accessing the fund to directly support women's projects. To date 44 districts and 19 municipalities are not receiving funds to directly support women's projects. The demand is very high and the resource envelope that was availed in the financial year was low.

One other audit gave prominence to the state of physical accessibility to the built-up environment. The audit discovered that main entrances to majority of the public buildings in Kampala lack ramps to ease access by older persons, persons with disabilities, children and expectant mothers. In addition, buildings have high pavements towards their entrances, which hinder access to the walkways by wheel-chair users. Further still, many stairs within and outside the buildings lack handrails, tactile markings and ramps to facilitate easy and independent mobility for all – including people with visual impairment. Some premises lack designated parking spaces for persons with disabilities; while others have no designated washrooms that address the concerns of all persons – including persons with disabilities, expectant mothers, the sick and weak older persons.

The Commission has a strong conviction that effective participation of vulnerable and marginalized groups is about creating opportunities for all to be actively involved in influencing, designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies, laws, programs, projects, plans and budgets; leading to realization of sustainable wealth creation, employment and inclusive growth as articulated in NDP II. This fundamental human right is critical for Uganda in the achievement of lower middle income status by 2020, vision 2040, SDGs and AU's 2063 Agenda (The Africa We Want).

In essence, EOC is committed to working with all stake holders to enhance social justice and transform Uganda, with no one left behind. The Commission acknowledges and appreciates Parliament with its various Standing Committees; as well as Ministries, Departments, agencies, Local Governments and Development Partners for the continued support that has been instrumental in the implementation of the Commission's mandate. In this financial year, the Commission has stepped up efforts to audit and monitor compliance with inclusive development among all MDAs/UGs, civil society and the private sector. It is therefore incumbent on all actors to consult with, and include vulnerable and marginalized populations in plans and budgets; and better still, to ensure that all related commitments are implemented and documented.

MANAGEMENT



## On A Lighter note speak for me my beloved; A Tale for the Indigenous Minority Groups in Uganda

**By Numbi Connie Samantha**

Speak for me my beloved.....

I am native though minority, but a true Ugandan,

With a unique lifestyle as a hunter, gatherer, forest dweller, and pastoralist,

In different parts of the Country,

Using traditional methods in all that I do

Yes I am unique but not recognized by many...

Discriminated against and stereotyped as "savage wild and uncivilized",

Owing to my physical appearance and heritage....,

Hence my fear to join the mainstream society,

Speak for me my beloved.

My rights violated, and homes destroyed,

I am vulnerable and marginalized. My relocation is just a dream,

The reality being dispossession of preserving what I treasure most...

My CULTURAL HERITAGE and DIGNITY,

Speak for me my beloved.

I am a treasure that needs to be preserved,

Delicate as a pot, if not safeguarded I will diminish....

What will you tell the generations to come if my plight is not fixed now?

Do not sideline me, do not judge me...be my ambassador and

Speak for me my beloved.

As a true Ugandan, the pearl of Africa,

Let me have the feeling of belonging,

Knowing that I am accepted...

For God and my Country,

Speak for me my beloved.

## EOC Flex time activities

**By Sheila Ajok Lubangakene**

EOC staff engage in a number of fun activities like celebration of birthdays, the health run and end of year party. The welfare committee recently launched birthday celebrations and what better way to begin than by celebrating the Chairpersons birthday in September. This was followed by other birthday celebrations of staff within the Commission. The Senior human resource officer, Mr. Dennis Nyangweso launched the birthday celebrations and committed to recognize every staff's birthday on a quarterly basis.



**Chairperson, Mrs. Sylvia Muwebwa Ntambi during her birthday celebrations in the tribunal hall.**



**Prof. Olwor Sunday Nicholas, Member Zaminah Malole and Savio Kakooza having a meal during the celebrations.**





**Elizabeth Ogwal and Musema Miragi cut their birthday cake as colleagues cheer on.**



**Staff at an aerobics session.**



**The Chairperson and Members of the Commission cut the cake at the end of year party.**



**Staff dance at the party.**



**Plot 7 Luthuli Close,  
Bugolobi, Kampala**

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