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The Critical Role of Gender Equality in Governance and Development; The Case Study of Uganda's Policy Framework

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October, 2019



Introduction

- ❖ Gender equality in particular and gender issues are crucial areas because they directly or indirectly affect the process and sustainability of SDGs.
- ❖ As we deliberate here today, the major constraints to African development are issues related to gender equity and consequently either by design or default some members of society are excluded from opportunities of development.
- ❖ However, the good news is that Sub-Saharan Africa is waking up to this reality; recognizing the linkages between economic development, gender equity and the achievement/realization of SDGs



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- ❖ For example in Uganda, both men and women are equal partners in development.
- ❖ Cultural imperatives that drive gender inequality are deliberately but consciously discouraged by government policies, that are intended to address the historical beliefs and circumstances that have kept them alive.
- ❖ What constitutes gender inequality is inhuman and therefore against human rights.
- ❖ *“Remember women rights are human rights.” Hillary Clinton*



Manifestations of Gender Inequality

❖ Barriers to gender equality are manifested in the following:

1. Education opportunities
2. Land ownership in particular and inheritance in general
3. Position in Marriage decision making process
4. Politics etc
5. Employment



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The Critical Role of Gender Equality as We Strive for Inclusiveness



- ❖ **The debate on this is inconclusive.**
- ❖ A growing body of evidence from microeconomics and case study materials suggest ways in which gender inequality affects growth, output, and productivity, especially in Africa.
- ❖ Available literature shows that the time women spend looking after their families, working on their husbands' gardens and producing food for their households are not given any monetary value



Water and Sanitation

- ❖ Women and children, who are the main domestic water collectors, still walk long distances to reach a safe water source.
- ❖ 35 % of the rural population lacks access to water within 1 Km distance and this impacts on women and the girl child.
- ❖ In some urban areas, the distance is shorter but due to dense populations, the water facility to population ratio is high making women and children spend a lot of time cueing up for water.



Water and Sanitation

- ❖ Statistics indicate that 30 % of people in rural areas and 19 % in urban areas lack access to improved sanitation at Household level. This compromises the sanitation needs and wellness of women and girls (*Ministry of Health Sector report, 2010/11*).
- ❖ In some schools, toilet facilities are still shared among boys, girls and teachers.
- ❖ From the word go...in this room...in the 21st century...imagine such a situation and the need to be part of the solution....when shall



Agriculture

- ❖ Most of the work in the sector is done on land and by women (83%) but majority of these women do not own or control agricultural land although they have access.
- ❖ Studies indicate that about 65 % of female farmers lack control over proceeds from their farm income. So they cannot buy inputs, can't re-invest to increase production and can't improve their welfare.
- ❖ Low participation of women farmers in profitable agricultural enterprises (such as livestock production..African heritage is that cattle belongs to a man)
- ❖ Climate change has brought about more and longer drought periods which impact must be absorbed by a woman as she tries to ensure that there is food for the family.



Education (in Uganda)

- ❖ This sector must be mandated to provide access to equitable and quality education to all
- ❖ With girl-child specific initiatives, such as the 1.5 entry points for girls seeking undergraduate education in public universities, the sector has the potential to reduce gender gaps in education which ultimately contributes to the economic empowerment of women. **HOWEVER**
- ❖ Lack of facilities such as water and sanitation has stood in the way of attendance and performance of girls in school and yet access to quality sanitation for girls has a bearing on their full participation in school activities.
- ❖ Poverty and prevalence of HIV/AIDS are major factors that contribute gender inequality in this sector.
(girls miss school because they take up the role of care givers)
- ❖ Key gender concerns(pregnancy and early marriages) in education account for high drop out of girls especially at the primary and secondary level.



Women Health and Family Planning

- ❖ Uganda's fertility rate is high with total fertility rate at 6.5%. Several factors could be contributing to this phenomenon such as: unmet needs for family planning, which stands at 41%; lack of information and awareness; and cultural and religious factors. (Source: Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2018)
- ❖ The practice of female genital mutilation is still widespread, especially in the North Eastern part of Uganda; This is an inhuman practice that we all need to focus on. ***No human being should be subjected to any form of inhuman treatment.***



Women Health and HIV

- ❖ Women account for the largest proportion of HIV infected persons in Uganda due to their **Vulnerability** to HIV infections.
- ❖ Reasons for their vulnerability are basically gender related. Illiteracy, limited access to information and low social status in the society which make them unequal partners in negotiating for safer sex .
- ❖ Any effort in the fight against HIV and AIDS must interrogate and address the critical role that gender equality plays in the prevention, care and positive living in the entire cycle of HIV and AIDS.



Politics

❖ We must all agree that most of the issues concerning gender equality and its importance as we strive to leave no person behind, politics and the politicking that goes around; play a crucial role.

❖ Politicians must be seen at the frontline fighting for issues that affect the growth and development of a woman and the girl child.



A must do

- ❖ Governments in Africa must invest in research to find ways and means of engaging cultural leaders in the fight for gender equality.
- ❖ Cultural education must be given a priority in our political, religious and educational institutions especially in countries where cultural heritage influences the political landscape



Recommendations

- ❖ In our legal and institutional frameworks, we must introduce and entrench a minimum percentage for female representation in all political decision making bodies.
- ❖ Institutionalize the position of a woman in all poverty reduction initiatives .
- ❖ In all our development plans (be it national planning and Public-Private Partnership) , gender equality must be a cross cutting issue .
- ❖ Gender equality must be an indicator or a measure in our national monitoring and evaluation tools



Recommendations

- ❖ Gender equality must be included in our education systems. Boys and girls must learn from an early age that they are equal though different.
- ❖ Gender-disaggregated data must be part of our national database.
- ❖ Support for Private Sectors Foundations and platforms working for women's entrepreneurship/emancipation (especially in research and advocacy)



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- Thank you all for Listening

