

Movement for Community Led Development Uganda Chapter Statement on COVID 19

Uganda Chapter

Introduction

The coronavirus, Covid-19, was first confirmed in the Chinese city of Wuhan in late December 2019 and has since been declared a global pandemic and the World Health Organisation, WHO. As of May 20, 2020, world over there have been 4,761,559 confirmed cases of COVID-19 of which 65956 are in Africa, including 317,529 deaths (WHO Dashboard <https://covid19.who.int/>). Uganda accounts for 260 confirmed cases with 0 death. The risk of continued spread between and within countries remains high. Globally infection confirmed cases are declining, in Africa they are rising albeit slowly.

The Ministry of Health in Uganda developed a National COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan to guide interventions aimed at minimizing the negative impacts of COVID-19. This involves reducing importation, disabling community transmission, clinical management of confirmed cases- morbidity, mortality, modelling data and new evidence aimed at reducing socio-economic disruptions. Since the March 18, the President of Uganda, H.E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, has addressed the nation fourteen times with the recent being on May 18, 2020-during which he provided guidance on how the partial lock down should gradually be eased to facilitate the return to the a new normal, being no new confirmed community transmission cases in Uganda.

At the May 15, 2020 virtual meeting of the Movement of Community Led Development Uganda Chapter convened by the Hunger Project Uganda that focused on how to build and support COVID-19 resilient communities in Uganda. Attended by the Hunger Project Uganda, Private Education Development Network World Vision Uganda, Twaweza East Africa, Uganda Youth Network, Uganda National NGO Forum,



Promoting and Supporting COVID 19 Resilient Communities in Uganda

The Civil Society Alliance for Nutrition Uganda, Mengo Youth Development Link, Spark Micro grants Uganda, Disability Rights Fund Uganda and Heifer International Uganda. The following issues emerged.

Key observations;

Participants applauded the tremendous efforts the government of Uganda under the leadership of the President of Uganda has put in place to stem the spread of COVID-19 executed through national task force and District task forces across the country.

- 1) Participants appreciated the consistent and regular updates and information disseminations conducted by the Ministry of Health, that has been critical in keeping Ugandans across the country informed of the progress since the emergence of the COVID-19 crisis.
- 2) Members at the meetings noted government efforts to cushion the most vulnerable communities in urban centres and towns, through the provision of food items –which is a gesture of ensuring that every Ugandan survives the hard times.
- 3) The meeting appreciated governments' co-option of the NGOs with skills and expertise in Psycho-social support on the National Task Force under the Leadership of the office of the Prime Minister.

On the other hand participants noted;

- 4) The current composition of the task forces at various levels were not inclusive, the active participation of civil society organisations had been affected, despite the critical role non-government organisation play is advancing social accountability and promoting transparency a citizenry role articulated in the 1995 Uganda Constitution article 17 and article 38 that lists the duties of citizens and the provision for participation and influencing government processes respectively.
- 5) Participants were concerned about the rising cases of Domestic Gender Based Violence (GBV) against the women and children during the lock down. This was partly attributed to the socio-economic pressure at the household as well as the limited access to social protection mechanisms for communities during crisis like this.
- 6) MCLD members also noted that if Government is to deliver on the SDGs and the 2030 Development Agenda, It should embrace the spirit and principle of *leave no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first*. It should provide and allow CSO actors a chance to serve their communities and provide local leadership since they are closer to the communities and would ably contribute to meeting their needs.
- 7) MCLD Uganda Chapter members further recognized Government for involving other Non-State Actors like Inter Religious Council of Uganda in food distribution. However for equitable food distribution, Government should consider involving capable CSO actors in supporting Government food distribution efforts.
- 8) Participants observed that there are many CSOs with capacity to facilitate and support communities to adopt and embrace new practices and norms (mind-set change) critical for building resilient communities using Vision Commitment and Action(VCA) and Household Engagement Accountability Approaches, conducting

social research to inform strategic decision making processes, therefore such skills should be leveraged.

Call to Action to Government



- ✓ Government should invite CSO actors to participate and contribute in Government COVID 19 prevention and response efforts.
- ✓ Government should put in place measures to ensure food security especially for vulnerable and grassroots populations. Government should plan for post COVID 19 crisis so that households are food insecure and crops with short gestation period should be supported and promoted
- ✓ Government should consider providing additional resources to the department of Community Based Services at the District level specifically in Gender, Youth and Children, Disability and Community Development units to enable them to adequately respond to issues of GBV and other vulnerability challenges caused by this epidemic.

Call to Action to Civil Society Fraternity

- ✓ CSO actors should invest in building their capabilities in documenting, collecting and collating accurate and credible data to engage and provide alternative views both at the national and district level on COVID 19 response.
- ✓ MCLD-U members recognise the government effort to fight social stigma against Persons with HIV/AIDs in the last 30 decades and so. Therefore call upon for a continued fight against social stigma for people in quarantine and those recovering from COVID 19.
- ✓ CSOs partnership is key demanding Government works with Faith Based Organisations, Artists, Community Based Organisation (FBOs), and traditional cultural leaders that stay with the communities. The partnership is vital to leverage support from local groups to reach the most vulnerable in relaying timely information and resources from District Task Forces on COVID 19.
- ✓ Civil Society actors should strive to work together share resources, ideas and tools to be able to reach the most vulnerable grassroots communities in the current lockdown environment.
- ✓ CSO actors and other development stakeholders should prioritize and target most vulnerable communities such as slum dwellers, sex workers, street children and drug addicts who are in dire need of food relief as hunger is the main threat to their livelihoods.

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