



# MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP).

### Key Highlights on the Occasion to Mark the International Women's Day, 2017 Theme: "Women's Empowerment in the changing world of work".



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#### Background:

The International Women's Day (IWD) is commemorated on the 8th of March every year in recognition of the contribution and the different roles women play in the development process of our Country.

The global theme for 2017 is "Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50:50 by 2030". The theme recognizes that the world of work is changing rapidly. There are significant gender gaps between men's and women's participation in paid employment and gender wage gaps still prevail worldwide. The theme therefore calls for support of equal participation of men and women in the changing world of work to accelerate achievement of gender equality and women empowerment as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The national theme for this year's celebrations is "Women's Empowerment in the changing world of work". This theme underscores the importance of women participation in the changing world of work for greater opportunities and consequently their empowerment.

#### Women in the Changing World of Work in Uganda:

Over the years, there has been a steady increase in women's participation in the labour market from 60.9% to 75.4% during the period of 1997 to 2009. This is attributed to the Free trade movement, increased number of educated women, women empowerment, and rapid expansion of market that have created unprecedented opportunities for women to access paid work.

Research suggests that Ugandan women are highly entrepreneurial, contributing significant amounts of labor to the Ugandan economy (much of it unpaid), and are extremely creditworthy.

However despite this fact, as women struggle to meet the demands of the changing world of work, they are faced with numerous challenges as evidenced by different studies. According to UDHS 2011, 69% of women are employed, of these 26% are not paid for their work. They are employed in formal, informal, seasonal and part-time work establishments. Today's world of work is characterized by sophisticated technology, use of electronic media (ICT) and high casualisation of labour which often increases women's level of vulnerability in having to accomplish all their productive and reproductive roles. It has been documented that 42% of women in the labour force are unpaid family workers; compared to 16% of men. For example, 78% of primary care takers within the family are female versus 10% male. The burden of care contributes to "double work day" with women working more hours than men on an average day. In most instances time spent in reproductive work is not quantified as productive work irrespective of energy invested. Nationally it's evident that work-hour - productive work is 36 hours on the average per week of which is 33 hours for females and 40 hours for males. (Labour market Information system, MGLSD, 2006). This is irrespective of hours utilized in reproductive roles that often women take lead in.

This in turn affects the family sphere particularly the developing children under her care as she is forced to abandon her motherly role in a bid to provide for her family economic needs. Studies have shown that maternal employment continues to be an obstacle to breastfeeding which progressively continues to impact on Uganda's infant nutritional status and child mortality rates.

Additionally, the cultural norms have continued to deny women decent employment, economic privileges, ability to decide on utilization of money earned and thus fueled domestic violence.



A beneficiary group in Western Uganda with their cows

This has also deprived them of the opportunity to access quality health care services such as safe motherhood, safe pregnancy, family planning, sexual and reproductive health services among others. These norms are further depicted in schools, workplaces or travel to their workplaces, where women continue to be undermined through sexual harassment, sexual assault and gender discrimination. These vices result in reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, and high turnover and thus increasing on women's vulnerability to compete favorably in the labour market. Furthermore, in this evolving world of work, marginalized groups such as indigenous women (Batwa in Kisoro, Iki in Karamoja), migrant workers and those with disabilities continue to be excluded from participating fully in the economy.

Segregation in the labor market, as well as the weak regulation of those markets have served to confine women to jobs unsafe, poorly remunerated and unhealthy jobs with no access to social protection. These not only put the women in jeopardy at the workplace but reinforce the status of women as secondary workers within their households.

The lack of access to quality education, training, recruitment, and equal remuneration have continued to limit women's bargaining power in decision-making.

#### Agriculture:

According to UDHS 2011, 57% of the women are in the Agricultural sector of which 36% are more likely not to be paid than 4% working in non-agricultural work. Payment is often in kind as contribution to the family and community wealth. However, many women still have limited access and control to land, a key resource for agriculture production yet the Land Amendment Act of 2004 includes sections that cater for the protection of the rights of women to own, use and inherit land. Only 27% of women own registered land. (Ministry of Lands Records). This weakens their ability to decide on the utilization of resources gained from agricultural products.

#### Informal Sector:

In the last two decades, women are increasingly taking up employment in the informal sector especially in commercial activities with 72.4 % in commerce, 63% in services, 60.5% in animal husbandry and 47.7% in manufacturing. Medium and Small Enterprises which contribute 90% of the private sector production are a source of new jobs and an income generation for the poor, majority of whom are women. It is estimated that at

least 43.7% of Medium and Small Enterprises (MSEs) are owned and operated by women.

#### Formal work/employment:

The number of women in the high ranking professional and paying jobs remains low despite the reasonable number of educated and capable women as a result of the affirmative action policy to reduce gender imbalances and disapprove gender stereotypes in higher education, governance, politics and management.

#### Government's contribution towards Women's Empowerment in the Changing World of Work:

Government continues to provide a conducive policy and legal environment to promote women's participation and empowerment in the changing world of work. These include; the Constitution which upholds the principle of equality and protection of the rights of men and women with regards to employment opportunities, rights to safety and health and freedom from discrimination; the Employment Act (2006), the Occupation Safety and Health Act, Labour Union Act, 2006, Workers' Compensation Act and the attendant Regulations, and Sexual Harassment Regulations (2012). In addition the Uganda Public Services upholds the principle of equal remuneration for both men and women for work of equal value. The Uganda Vision 2040 prescribes gender equality and women's empowerment and the NDP 11 (2010/11-2014/15) has a specific intervention on "promotion of women's economic empowerment through entrepreneurship skills, provision of incentives and enhancing their participation in decision making at all levels". The Uganda Gender Policy 2007 prescribes interventions that improve the earning potential of women and respond to the diverse livelihood needs of women and men.

#### Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP):

The Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) also known as the Women Fund was launched last year to extend interest-free credit to women while equipping them with skills for growth, value addition and marketing of their products and services. The Programme is in consonance with the national and regional legal and policy frameworks enumerated above.

#### Progress in implementation:

Within the one year of implementation, up to Shs.2, 952, 961, 938

has been disbursed out to 577 women groups within in Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) and the districts of Wakiso, Koboko, Kitgum, Kisoro, Bundibugyo, Kiruhura, Kaliro, Kamuli, Moroto, Katakwi, Mayuge, Nakasongola, Kalangala, Ntungamo, Otuke, Kole, Kibaale, Kayunga and Nebbi.

A total of 7,379 women have been reached through the funded groups.

Some beneficiaries have used the funds to break barriers and venture into male-dominated work fields. Epikosi Ikilok Welding and Metal Fabrication women group in Katakwi District is a classic example of how the Programme is helping women break the work barriers. The group is now the only source for metal fabricated products in an area about 40km away from Soroti town. In the same district is a women group retailing motorcycle spare parts and another that has set up a bakery.

Overall, majority of the groups that have been funded are engaged in agriculture in particular 42.1% followed by wholesale and retail trade 39.3%.

Most of the women in manufacturing have been funded for tailoring that is 23.8%. Most of the women in whole sale and retail category are engaged in produce buying and selling that is 69.4%.

It has been noted that women identified enterprises where they have comparative advantage. For example in Kisoro district most of the groups are funded for Irish growing, in Kiruhura district majority are in bull fattening. In Busoga region most of the groups are in produce buying and selling just like in the North and West Nile. In Bundibugyo district most of the women groups are in Cocoa buying and selling.

#### Training:

Before each beneficiary group is allowed to utilize their funds, they are taken through training in basic financial management skills, group dynamics, recordkeeping, procurement and the revolving fund mechanism.

#### Key lessons learnt:

- Almost all groups applied for the Women Enterprise Fund and not for the Capacity Building Fund component. Women can apply for this funding to specifically acquire desired skills critical to their enterprise. Programme implementation teams have been tipped to provide the women with more information on this component to generate interest.
- With many women engaged in traditional enterprises such as poultry, piggy and produce buying and selling, the Programme has started engaging local leaders to create awareness and encourage women to move into enterprises which utilize appropriate technology and have value addition such as fruit processing.
- All districts have to involve Women Councils in identification of beneficiaries as stipulated in the guidelines for transparency reasons. The ministry has written specific guidance on this to all districts.



A member of Epikosi Ikilok Welding And Metal Fabrication Women Group in Katakwi district stands by some of their products