



# MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



On the 3rd November 2016, Uganda participated in the UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which is a mechanism of the UN Human Rights Council which reviews the human rights records of all the UN Member States. Uganda was reviewed under this mechanism for the first time in October 2011. The second review provided an opportunity to give an account of human rights developments in the country since 2011. Uganda's report at the Universal Periodic Review was presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon. Sam K. Kutesa.

In his presentation he informed the Working Group that as President of the 69th session of the UN General Assembly he interacted with many UN Bodies UN Human, it became clear that no single country has a perfect human rights record.. He said that the Universal Periodic Review mechanism was unique because it was state-driven and offered opportunity for the country under review to; declare actions taken to improve its human rights situation and to share experiences and lessons with other states; and identify challenges that require to be addressed.

Uganda participated in the review out of commitment to promotion and protection of human rights drawing from its bad experience and lessons from past history of dictatorship and not because of any undue pressure or wishes from outside. While welcoming the peer review process the Minister called on member states to continue to review ways and means to make it more participatory, transparent, consultative and accountable including in the aspects of reporting.

The Minister added that Uganda's periodic review was participatory and consultative and involved various stakeholders including Cabinet, Parliament and civil society organizations. It culminated into the national report which addressed issues related to status of implementation of voluntary pledges and agreed recommendations made under the first peer review.

Achievements included; the finalization of a draft National Action Plan (NAP). Reports prepared by Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) were annually submitted to Parliament for review and recommendations made thereof, implemented by Government and other relevant stakeholders. Institutionally it was reported that the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights plays an oversight role, the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Human Rights provides appropriate policy guidance and a Technical Committee provides technical support which include focal points in each Government Ministry/Department/Agency, to coordinate implementation.

During the review Uganda reported that various agreed recommendations from the first review, have been, or are being implemented. The Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act enacted in 2012 domesticated the UN Convention Against Torture.

Under the Justice, Law and Order Sector, the Uganda Police Force, Uganda Peoples' Defense Forces and the Uganda Prisons Service each had established a Directorate of human rights to handle human rights issues, including complaints from the public against any of their respective serving officers.

The Judiciary had introduced plea-bargaining and improved access to legal aid services as components of the criminal justice system. Mandatory alternative dispute resolution systems were being used to expedite resolution of civil disputes. Judicial staff had also been increased to reduce case backlog; performance targets set for them; and new juridical areas created throughout the country.

The independence of the key governance institutions had also been strengthened. For instance, under Article 23(6)(a) of the Constitution Courts are empowered to release on bail persons arrested for committing criminal offences. The Uganda Human Rights Commission, under Article 54 of the Constitution, can independently investigate any human rights violations and where confirmed recommend that the Director of Public Prosecution takes appropriate action.

The Constitution guarantees rights of freedom of assembly, association and expression. Government has continued to advocate for a strong, vibrant and responsible free press; for freedom of speech; and broad participation. The people were continuously being sensitized to understand and appreciate that in enjoying their rights, every person is under obligation to act in accordance with the law.

The NGO and CSO organisations have continued to play an increasingly greater role in society and the NGOs Act 2015 was enacted to enhance transparency and streamline their operations, so that they exhibit a high degree of accountability. It was noteworthy that a majority of the provisions of this Act were views submitted by NGOs. The Act would ensure that these organizations operate in full accordance with their respective mandates and the Act has adequate mechanisms for redress as necessary.

Uganda also adopted the Second National Development Plan (2015/16 - 2019/20); as a development framework for the next five years it was guided by the principle of rights based approach to development. It is a major policy tool integrating human rights and development issues. Any external development support to Uganda therefore must be aligned to the National Development Plan

On the Elections in February 2016, he report noted that view administrative challenges at the start, were expeditiously addressed, overall the elections were held in free and fair atmosphere; and their outcome reflected the free will of the majority of the people. On reforms, Government will implement recommendations which, can contribute to the advancement of democracy in Uganda and the people would decide on the reforms in line with the Constitution, that explicitly provides for their sovereignty.

Several UN Member States' delegations participating in the congratulated Uganda on the successful participation in the UPR process and commended the Government for

1. Development of the draft National Action Plan on Human Rights;
2. Progressive refugee protection policy;
3. Enactment of the Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act 2012 ;
4. Improvements made in the protection of the rights of women and children;
5. Cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Following the presentation of the report a number of recommendations were made by delegations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to coordinate the finalization of the UPR process in a consultative manner.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Kampala

9 December 2016