



PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

**PARLIAMENTARY ACTION FOR SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE**

**150TH INTER PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU) ASSEMBLY AND
RELATED MEETINGS**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The relevance of social development and justice is underlined in several areas of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For instance, SDG 1 aims at reducing poverty, SDG 4 is concerned with quality education, SDG 5 addresses gender issues, SDG 10 focusses on reduced inequality while SDG 16 is anchored on issues of peace, justice and strong institutions¹. The 79th session of the UN General Assembly (2024-2025) underscored the vitality of social development and social justice as an indispensable combination for achieving peace and security and necessary conditions for promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

2.0 Social Development in Africa, East Africa and Uganda

Despite the registered economic growth in African countries, there are persistent striking inequalities and the economic growth has not been sufficiently inclusive and equitable for all population segments. In 2011, African leaders formed the African Social Development Index (ASDI), a tool that estimates human exclusion at different stages of the individual's life². The Index was developed to monitor exclusion and social outcomes in Africa as strategy for inclusive and transformative development anchored on Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030 for sustainable development³.

In 2024, the East African Regional Experts met in Kigali to review and provide inputs to a Draft Social Protection Policy as a comprehensive regional framework to address social protection challenges. The major aim was to devise means of achieving equity and inclusivity of marginalised groups such as children, the

¹ United Nations (2015). Transforming Our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

² The African Social Development Index. 2025. Measuring Human Exclusion for Structural Development. <https://knowledge.uneca.org/asdi/asdi>

³ United Nations. 2016. African Social Development Index (ASDI): Measuring Human Exclusion for Structural Transformation: North Africa Report. https://archive.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/asdi_report_-_north_africa_eng_jun.pdf

youth, the elderly, migrants and persons with disabilities⁴. This is in addition to the East African Community (EAC) Social Development Policy Framework (SDPF), whose rationale is to provide a policy structure for assisting Partner States in the development of national social policies to promote human empowerment and development⁵.

In Uganda, the social development sector is housed in the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development. The emphasis for social development includes “promotion of social protection, equality, equity, human rights, culture, suitable working conditions, employment, and the vulnerable groups such as the women, children, the unemployed youth, Internally Displaced Persons, the Elderly, Older Persons, Persons With Disability, which are often marginalized and excluded from the benefits of economic growth”⁶ Further, Social development is embedded in the governance and security programmes, human development, community mobilization and mind-set change programme in the third National Development Plan⁷.

3.0 Parliament of Uganda: Fostering Social Development and Justice

The IPU underscores the aspect of human rights, as a precursor for development and democracy. In this 150th Assembly, the IPU’s overall theme is the “**Parliamentary action for social development and justice**” – by providing us a platform to deliberate, exchange views and galvanize parliamentary action in this area.

⁴ International Labour Organisation. 2024. East African Community strengthens regional response to social vulnerabilities

⁵ The East African Community. 2025. The EAC Social Development Policy Framework. <https://www.eac.int/gender/social-protection/social-development>

⁶ Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. 2017. Social Development Sector Implementation Guidelines for Social Development Transfers to Local Government FY 2018/19.

⁷ The National Budget Framework FY 2021/22. Investing in Social Development. FY 2021/2022 Budget Brief No.2021/5.

The role of Parliament in social justice and development is enshrined in the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (as amended). Specifically, Objective xxiv (a) of the 1995 Constitution, the republic of Uganda commits to ensuring that the social and cultural well-being of the people is respected, and stipulates that 'the State shall promote and preserve the cultural values and practices that enhance the dignity of Ugandans . . .'⁸ As such, the Parliament of Uganda's role towards social justice and development is evidenced through different legislations, namely;

1. The Uganda Parliamentary Forum on SDGs (UPFSDGs) exemplifies Parliament's dedication to aligning national policies with global development objectives. This forum ensures that legislation and national development plans are in harmony with the Sustainable Development Goals, advocating for adequate resources and integrated approaches to achieve these targets.
2. The Parliament of Uganda has been instrumental in passing laws that enhance the social safety nets. Examples include the Children Act (2016) which relates to children's rights and the Domestic Violence Act (2010) whose objective is to address gender-based violence and the protection of vulnerable groups.
3. Through forums such as the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection (UPFSP), the Members of Parliament have championed the rights and empowerment of vulnerable groups⁹. This forum facilitates stakeholder engagement and legislative advocacy, aiming for social

⁸ The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (as amended)

⁹ Parliament of Uganda (2025). The Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection (UPFSP). <https://www.parliament.go.ug/page/uganda-parliamentary-forum-social-protection-upfsp>

and economic transformation for marginalized communities in Uganda

4. Furthermore, the Parliament of Uganda has enacted laws relating of Education, such as the Education Act (2008) catering for Pre-Primary, Primary and Post-Primary), the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (2001) and the Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy 1997, the TVET policy (2019) which have all expanded access to education. In addition to the legal frameworks, the Parliament Uganda also appropriates resources to fund the different education programs.
5. In the Health Sector, the Parliament of Uganda has passed useful laws such as the Public Health Act 2023 which ensures public safety through disease control and sanitation policies. In addition, Parliament has deliberated on the National Health Insurance. As a country, Uganda lacks a public health insurance coverage. We have private insurance which covers only 0.5% of the country's GDP¹⁰. To curb this crisis, the MPs passed the National Health Insurance Bill in 2021 aimed at equity, accessibility, and affordability of health care for all Ugandans.
6. Labour and Employment Laws such as the Employment Act (2006), The Equal Opportunities Act (2007), the Workers' Compensation Act (2000), the Occupational Safety and Health Act (2006) which are all concerned with regulating fair pay, working conditions, and employee rights.

For Social Justice, the Parliament of Uganda has instituted measures to improve the justice delivery system, reforms to enhance

¹⁰ US Department of Commerce (2023). Uganda Country Commercial Guide: Health Overview. <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/uganda-healthcare>

the efficiency and transparency of the courts. These include but not limited to;

- i. The Human Rights (Enforcement) Act, 2019 which Enhances enforcement of human rights, providing mechanisms for redress in cases of violations. The Succession (Amendment) Act 2022, which exemplifies Parliament's commitment to safeguarding women's rights in property distribution and addressing longstanding gender disparities.
- ii. The Administration of Judiciary Act (2020), which grants financial and administrative independence to the Judiciary, allowing for improved efficiency and service delivery.
- iii. The Anti-Corruption Act (2009), which Strengthens legal mechanisms to combat corruption within the justice sector and public service.

3.0 Conclusion

The Parliament of Uganda is committed to promoting the IPU's social development and social justice agenda for addressing vulnerability, ensuring peace, security and promoting justice and human freedoms. This is mainly through proactive legislation, diligent oversight, and dedicated representation and a combination of efforts to create an inclusive society where equity and human dignity are paramount.