



UGANDA COMMITS TO ACCELERATE INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY IN DECENT WORK, REFUGEE RESPONSES AND DIGITAL SPACE.

New York - June 11, 2024



The commitment has been made by Hon. Asamo Hellen Grace state Minister for gender and disability affairs on behalf of the Uganda delegation, at the 17 th session of the conference of state parties to the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disability (CRPD) The Conference taking place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York is focusing on 3 thematic areas;

1. Thematic area on cooperation for technology and inclusive future,
2. thematic area on inclusive humanitarian emergencies
3. Thematic area of decent work and inclusive livelihoods

Speaking on the thematic area cooperation for technology and inclusive future at the conference in New York Asamo said its critical for the Government of Uganda and steps are being made towards realisation. "For instance according to Uganda Communication Commission report of 2018, access to laptops by Persons with Disabilities was estimated at 3.9%", Asamo stated.

She said Uganda commits to accelerate inclusion of Persons with Disability in the digital landscape, in terms of enhancing both mobility and functionality of assistive technologies. Honorable Asamo stated that the 3 focus areas of the conference are critical in the lives of Persons with Disabilities across the Globe.

On the second thematic area, Inclusive Humanitarian Emergencies she said this is equally fundamental in disability programming for Uganda. According to UN Humanitarian Commission for Refugees report of 2022, Uganda hosts over 1.6 million Refugees and asylum seekers. The data from the agency (UNHCR) indicated that 132,100 (8%) of Refugees are living with a disability. The minister has told the conference that Government of Uganda, will strengthen partnerships for disability inclusion in emergency and disaster programming, to facilitate safety and reasonable accommodation standards for Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian responses.



In response to the third thematic area of decent work and inclusive livelihoods honorable Asamo asserted that it aligns well with Uganda's realities because according to Uganda Bureau of Statistics report of 2019, only 1.3% of Persons with Disabilities were decently employed.

The Minister has highlighted the milestones made by the Government of Uganda in line with United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disability (CRPD)

These include

- Strategic legal reforms on disability inclusion such as; the enactment of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2020 which domesticated most of the of CRPD provisions, among other legal reforms such as the Mental Health Act 2013, Building Control accessibility code of 2019, children's amendment Act, Revised Persons with Disabilities Act 2023, brailed legal and policy frameworks, among others.
- In terms of access to education, apart from promotion of inclusive education; a total of 113 special schools of learners with special needs are now fully supported by Government to offer special needs education to learners with disabilities. Government of Uganda is also finalising approval process for special needs and inclusive education policy.

- In terms of inclusive Health, Government of Uganda in 2023, was among the first countries in Africa, to approve Ministry of Health staff structure that include sign language interpreters in health facilities. MOH is also finalising the Rehabilitation strategic plan to reinvigorate countrywide efforts for habilitation and rehabilitation per disability category.

On a more positive note the minister has told the conference that besides the soft loan based wealth creation programs such as PDM, UWEP/YLP, Emyooga, among others. Uganda will scale up its social protection agenda for Persons with Disabilities in line with article 28 of the UN CRPD. Uganda is among the few countries without a regular social protection scheme for Persons with Disabilities beyond the one off group disability grants. Feasibility study on a monthly child disability benefit, will be prioritized to address the stressful life cycle experiences that parents of children with severe disabilities go through.

Honorable Asamo Helen Grace has in conclusion reiterated Uganda's commitment to address existing gaps; as part of the UN CRPD, and other international, regional and national level frameworks for meaningful disability inclusion.

PICTORIALS

