



MAIN STORY

Humanity begins with safe motherhood

On October 25, UNFPA Uganda joined the Ministry of Health and partners at the 2nd National Safe Motherhood Conference at the Golf Course Hotel in Kampala. Under the theme: “Strengthening Health Systems, A Responsive Workforce for Safe Motherhood” the three-day conference was attended by representatives from development

partners, Government ministries, non-governmental organizations, civil society, academia, religious and cultural leaders as well as persons with disabilities and young people. During the conference, with support from UNFPA, three family planning advocacy reports were launched: The Second National Family Costed Implementation Plan (2020/21 – 2024/25);

UNFPA Representative Dr. Mary Otieno launches the 2nd National Family Planning and Costed Implementation Plan (2020/21 – 2024/25); The National Family Planning Advocacy Strategy and CIP (2020/21-2024/25) and National Total Market Approach (TMA) Strategy (2020-2025).

The National Family Planning Advocacy Strategy and CIP (2020/21-2024/25) and National Total Market Approach (TMA) Strategy (2020-2025), all of which are meant to create an enabling environment to improve access to quality family planning services to the population including women, adolescents, young people and the marginalized.



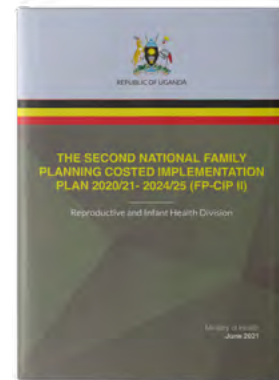
The Day of 8 billion draws humanity's attention to the continued importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the ability of men and women to be able to plan their families. Humanity truly begins with safe motherhood, Dr. Otieno said.

In her remarks, UNFPA Representative Dr. Mary Otieno noted that the conference was particularly important because it came just a couple of weeks before the day the global population was projected to reach the 8 billion mark on 15 November; a day which presented a vital opportunity to draw the world's attention to the infinite possibilities of humanity to build the world we want, with sexual and reproductive health and rights for all at its core.

"The Day of 8 billion draws humanity's attention to the continued importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the ability of men and women to be able to plan their families. Humanity truly begins with safe motherhood," Dr. Otieno said. However, the Representative said, maternal mortality remains a development challenge that must be tackled by 2030. According to the recent Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR) data, four mothers are dying daily in health facilities during childbirth. About half of these maternal deaths (48%) are due to postpartum hemorrhage and pregnancy-related hypertensive disorders. "It is sad to note that of these maternal deaths, 33 percent are young women aged 24 years and below.... A single death of a mother is one too many!" Dr. Otieno said. The Representative appreciated the Government's efforts to commit more domestic resources towards family planning, commodity security, warehousing and facilitating their last mile distribution across the country.

"This is a critical step in the right direction towards fulfilling Uganda's FP2030 Commitments...It will take all our efforts, every day, in every household, every village and every community, to ensure that every childbirth is safe. Uganda can only be as healthy as its mothers and children," Otieno said.

The Family Planning advocacy documents can be accessed here:



The Second National Family Planning Costed Implementation Plan (2020/21 - 2024/25)

<https://uganda.unfpa.org/en/publications/second-national-family-planning-costed-implementation-plan-202021-%E2%80%93-202425>

The National Family Planning Advocacy Strategy and CIP (2020/21-2024/25)

<https://uganda.unfpa.org/en/publications/national-family-planning-advocacy-strategy-and-cip-202021-202425>



The National Total Market Approach (TMA) Strategy (2020-2025).

<https://uganda.unfpa.org/en/publications/national-total-market-approach-tma-strategy-2020-2025>

MESSAGE FROM THE UNFPA UGANDA REPRESENTATIVE, **DR. MARY OTIENO**

The last quarter of 2022 was very significant with two key campaigns winding up the year; marking the ‘Day of 8 billion’ and ‘16 days of activism against gender based violence’.

These campaigns provided UNFPA with an opportunity to advance the mission of the organization, - ensuring rights and choices for all - and towards achieving the three transformative results of zero unmet need for family planning, zero preventable maternal deaths and zero unmet need for family planning. As the world commemorated the ‘Day of 8 Billion’ when the global population was projected to reach 8 billion on 15 November, at UNFPA Uganda, this presented a vital opportunity to draw attention to the infinite possibilities of humanity to build the world we want, with sexual and reproductive health and rights for all at its core.

This also provided an opportunity to spotlight UNFPA’s leadership and programming on population and sexual and reproductive health issues through a series of activities including an event recognizing the 8th billionth baby in Uganda (which illustrated advancements in sexual and reproductive health), an inter university quiz to popularize the SDGs in Uganda and a series of televised talk shows that created conversations with various stakeholders around accelerating actions to achieve the global goals amid a world of 8 billion.

Marking the 16 days of activism against gender based violence also provided UNFPA an opportunity for strengthened collaborations with



donors, partners, policy makers and civil society as a means of advancing the ICPD agenda, global goals and UNFPA’s transformative goal of zero gender based violence and harmful practices and influencing the discourse on addressing teenage pregnancy, child marriage and other harmful practices.

UNFPA is proud to have supported the Safe Motherhood Conference and launched three key family planning advocacy reports; The Second National Family Costed Implementation Plan (2020/21 – 2024/25); The National Family Planning Advocacy Strategy and CIP (2020/21-2024/25) and the National Total Market Approach (TMA) Strategy (2020-2025), all of which are meant to create an enabling environment to improve access to

quality family planning services to the population including women, adolescents, young people and the marginalized.

More importantly, in the 4th quarter of 2022, UNFPA mobilized resources from key donors to advance sexual and reproductive health to deliver an integrated package of rights to under-served communities in the Karamoja and Busoga regions. Our gratitude to the governments of Norway and Austria-because of these investments, more and more women and girls in these marginalized communities will realise their sexual reproductive health and rights!

Enjoy the reading!

COURTESY CALLS



UNFPA Representative meets the new Head of Mission of the EU Delegation H.E Ambassador Jan Sadek

On 28 October,

UNFPA Representative Dr. Mary Otieno (R) made a courtesy call on the Head of Mission of the EU Delegation H.E Ambassador Jan Sadek. The brief meeting took place at the office of the European Union in Kampala. The Ambassador expressed commitment to continue supporting UNFPA and the entire UN family to advance sexual and Reproductive health and rights as well as end violence against women and girls in Uganda. The EU is one of UNFPA's biggest funders through the Spotlight Initiative.



UNFPA Representative Meets Ambassador of Korea to Uganda H. E Sung Soo Park

On 15 December,

UNFPA Representative Dr. Mary Otieno made a courtesy call on the Ambassador of Korea to Uganda H. E Sung Soo Park. The brief meeting took place at the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Kampala. The two discussed strengthening partnerships and collaboration to advance rights and choices for young people as a pathway to advancing the demographic dividend in Uganda. The Republic of Korea is one of the top 20 funders of UNFPA's core funders.



Ms Harriet Nakyejjwe carries Baby Elijah in her arms. The symbolic 8th billionth baby was delivered safely at the China-Uganda Friendship Hospital on November 15. Standing next to her is UNFPA Deputy Representative Mr Daniel Alemu.

symbolic 8th billionth baby born at the China-Uganda Friendship hospital, Naguru in Uganda.

Born at 5: 15 am and weighing three kilograms, the mother Harriet Nakyejjwe said she had experienced a safe birth surrounded by midwives providing respectful maternity care.

UNFPA's Deputy Representative Mr. Daniel Alemu said the 'Day of 8 billion' presented a vital opportunity to draw the world's attention to the infinite possibilities of humanity to build the world we want, with sexual and reproductive health and rights for all at its core.

"In Uganda and the world over today, maternal and infant mortality has declined and more people of reproductive health can access a family planning method of their choice to space and time their children. As we unveil this child, today, representing the 8 Billionth Child for Uganda, the baby was delivered under skilled care, and recognized by UNFPA to symbolically represent the global population milestone," Mr Alemu said.

Marking the 'Day of 8 Billion'

As the world commemorated the 'Day of 8 Billion' on November 15, the UN's thought- and action-leader on population issues, United Nations Population Fund in Uganda, marked this milestone by celebrating the advancements in sexual and reproductive health.

Among them the recognition of the symbolic 8th billionth baby born in Uganda on November 15, an inter-university quiz challenge and a series of TV talk shows featuring the Sustainable Development Goals in a world of 8 billion.

Recognizing the symbolic 8th billionth baby

On November 15, UNFPA partnered with the Ministry of Health, National Population Council, Stanbic Bank and Members of Parliament to recognize the

“This is a symbol of hard-won progress in health and development, which should be recognized and celebrated. Improvements in maternal and child health mean that a baby born today in Uganda, is expected to live on average to at least 63 years, an increase of a decade in the last 40 years alone,” Mr. Alemu added.



The world has reached 8 billion people; but we would like to say, it's not about the numbers, but about the possibilities that exist with these great numbers in terms of quality, and what kind of world we want.

Day of 8 Billion' Inter University Quiz challenge

Students of Bishop Stuart University in Mbarara emerged winners of the 'Day of 8 Billion' inter-University quiz challenge during a live televised broadcast on NBS television November 28, 2022. The quiz challenge aimed at popularizing and localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Uganda as the world marked the 'Day of 8 Billion' on November 15.

Organized by UNFPA Uganda in partnership with UN Communications Group (UNCG), United Nations Association of



GRAND FINALE: Students of Bishop Stewart University celebrate after emerging winners of the “Day of 8 Billion” Inter University Quiz Challenge organized by UNFPA on November 28, 2022. UNFPA Representative Dr Mary Otieno (centre) presided over the award giving ceremony at NBS Television.

Uganda (UNAU) and NBS Television, eight universities from four regions in Uganda participated in the competitions that ran for four weeks from the western region (Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) Vs Bishop Stuart University; Eastern Region (Islamic University of Uganda (IUIU) Vs Soroti University); Northern Region (Gulu University Vs Lira University) and Central Region (Kyambogo University Vs Makerere University).

While officiating at the Grand Finale between Bishop Stuart University and Kyambogo University that was broadcast live on NBS television in Kampala, UNFPA Uganda Representative Dr. Mary Otieno stated how young people are the greatest resource a nation can have and are the key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

“The world has reached 8 billion people; but we would like to say, it's not about the numbers, but about the possibilities that exist with these great numbers in terms of quality, and what kind of world we want. And the only people who can make this happen are you, the young people,” she said.

The “Day of 8 billion” presented a vital opportunity to draw the world's attention to the infinite possibilities of humanity to build a better world, with sexual and reproductive health and rights for all at its core. It was also an opportunity to spotlight UNFPA's leadership and programming on population and sexual and reproductive health issues. To this end, UNFPA planned a range of content and activities to commemorate this day and an opportunity to underscore the need to move the conversation from numbers to rights and choices. The inter-University Quiz challenge was one of the activities organized to mark the day.

The '8 billion' serialized TV talk shows

UNFPA partnered with NBS TV to run a series of morning talk shows featuring the Sustainable Development Goals in a world of 8 billion. Among those featured were UNFPA Representative Dr. Mary Otieno, UNFPA Deputy Representative Mr. Daniel Alemu, Representative UN Women Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, Resident Representative (UNDP) in Uganda Elsie Attafua, Minister of (State Planning) Hon. Amos Lugolobi, Minister for ICT and National Guidance Dr Chris Baryomunsi among others.

The TV talk shows can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/@unfpauganda/community>



(L-R): Director, Monitoring and Evaluation (NPC) Mr Omwa Samuel, Director General (NPC) Dr. Jotham Musinguzi, Minister of State (Planning Hon. Amos Lugoloobi, Minister (General Duties) Office of the Prime Minister Hon. Justine Kasule Lumumba, Deputy Representative UNFPA Mr. Daniel Alemu and Population and Development Consultant Dr John Ssekamatte at the launch of the SUPRE 2022.

Launched: The State of Uganda's Population Report 2022

UNFPA Uganda joined the National Population Council and other partners to launch the State of Uganda's Population Report (SUPRE) 2022 on November 24. With the support from UNFPA and funding from the Netherlands Embassy in Uganda, the launch took place at the Sheraton Kampala Hotel Rwenzori Ballroom. The State of Uganda's Population Report (SUPRE) is an annual publication by the National Population Council on behalf of the government of Uganda. Supported by UNFPA, each edition analyses developments and trends in a country's population and demographics and helps to evaluate progress made in improving the quality of life of the people of Uganda and the challenges that remain to be addressed.

In his presentation anchored on Uganda's Vision 2040, Population and Development Consultant Dr. John Ssekamatte said Uganda can only achieve its vision of turning the country from a peasant to a modern transformed country within

30 years by acquiring a population age structure favorable for development. However, he said, this goal of achieving socio-economic development is being threatened by a rapid population growth rate, young age structure and high dependency burden, with teenage pregnancy the greatest impediment to achieving Uganda's demographic dividend.

UNFPA Deputy Representative Mr. Daniel Alemu said teenage pregnancy today is a pandemic within a pandemic.

"We cannot talk about achieving the demographic dividend in Uganda if we are not able to address teenage pregnancy. In Uganda, we have 1,000 adolescent girls getting pregnant every day. We have to ensure that all the policies we have are youth centric and youth responsive," Mr. Alemu said.

Director General National Population Council Dr. Jotham Musinguzi called upon the government to prioritize family planning as key to achieving

Uganda's socio-economic transformation especially for women and girls.

Minister of State, Finance and Planning and Economic Development Hon. Amos Lugoloobi said there is a need for more awareness creation among communities on the benefits of family planning.

"Family planning to many is mostly assumed to be merely contraception. When you are talking about family planning, you are talking about the entire national development plan," Hon. Lugoloobi said.

Guest of Honour Rt. Hon. Justine Kasule Lumumba, Minister in Charge of General Duties in the Office of the Prime Minister who represented the Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja encouraged couples to plan for manageable family sizes in order to avoid the aforementioned challenges.

Resource mobilization and partnerships

UNFPA mobilises resources to advance integrated sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and young people



(L-R): UNFPA Uganda Representative Dr Mary Otieno and Norway's Ambassador to Uganda H. E Elin Østebo Johansen after the signing agreement at the Embassy of Norway in Kampala on December 6.

UNFPA On December 6, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, through the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Uganda and United Nations Population Fund in Uganda signed an agreement to the tune of NOK 45,000,000 (USD 4,491, 012 / UGX 17 billion) to advance integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services for adolescents and youth in Uganda.

The three-year project is called “My Body, My Life, My World- Empowering Young girls and women to decide over their own bodies and to ensure universal access to comprehensive adolescent and

youth friendly SRHR information and services”. Termed ‘EYE universal SRHR’, the project will be implemented by UNFPA together with Marie Stopes Uganda and CARE International in two high-SRHR burdened districts of Kamuli and Mayuge in Eastern Uganda.

“The project’s goal is to ensure that every adolescent and youth in the selected districts, especially those left furthest behind, have access to integrated sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services and exercise reproductive rights, free of coercion, discrimination, and violence. This will positively impact on reducing unintended pregnancies, teenage

pregnancies, HIV infections and maternal deaths. This will also empower adolescents and young people to make informed sexual and reproductive health choices,” said UNFPA Representative Dr. Otieno. The EYE universal SRHR will collaborate with strategic government partners such as the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

“Many young people in Uganda lack the knowledge they need to make responsible decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. It makes them vulnerable to violence, child marriage and unplanned teenage pregnancy. Norway is committed to supporting Uganda to achieve its goals of reducing child marriage and teenage pregnancies through access to SRHR services,” said Elin Østebo Johansen, the Norwegian Ambassador to Uganda during the signing ceremony.

Meanwhile on December 8, The Head of Office of the Austrian Development Cooperation in Uganda (ADC) Dr. Roswitha Kremser and the UNFPA Country Representative, Dr. Mary Otieno signed yet another agreement totaling EUR 3,030,000 (UGX 11.7 billion) towards increasing access to health services and justice for survivors of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) in nine districts in Karamoja in North Eastern and Acholi region in northern Uganda.

The funding from the two-year project will target women and girls, empowering them to exercise their rights and choices and increase their access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services, free from



(L-R): The Head of Office of the Austrian Development Cooperation in Uganda (ADC) Dr. Roswitha Kremser and the UNFPA Country Representative, Dr. Mary Otieno at the signing ceremony that took place at the UNFPA offices in Kampala on December 8.



The two regions are also marginalized, and have high teenage pregnancies, a contributing factor to maternal mortality. Records show that teenage pregnancy among girls aged 15 to 19, stands at 29.7 per cent in the Karamoja region in comparison to the national average which is still high at 25 per cent.

gender based violence. The districts include Abim, Amudat, Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Kaabong and Napak (in Karamoja region), and Omoro, Kitgum, and Otuke districts in Acholi region.

UNFPA Country Representative Dr. Mary Otieno said the beneficiary districts were selected due to their sustained high fertility rate with low contraceptive use and high rates of teenage pregnancies. For instance, she said, in the Karamoja region, the maternal mortality ratio stands at 700 deaths per 100,000 live births, in comparison to the national average of 336 deaths per 100,000 live births (UDHS 2016).

According to Dr. Otieno, the two regions are also marginalized, and have high teenage pregnancies, a contributing factor to maternal mortality. Records show that teenage pregnancy among girls aged 15 to 19, stands at 29.7 per cent in the Karamoja region in comparison to the national average which is still high at 25 per cent. The Representative of the Austrian Development Agency to Uganda, Dr. Roswitha Kremser Karamoja and Acholi regions remain under served with gender based violence on the rise according to reports. She added that teenage pregnancies are also high in these regions and have to be addressed.

“We have to focus on this area to bring these indicators down. We are being told not to leave anyone behind and there is a need to focus on those left behind the farthest,” Dr. Kremser said. Dr. Kremser added the project will also see perpetrators of gender based violence brought to book. “That is why we focus on access to justice because ending the cycle of justice and impunity is by bringing the perpetrators of the crimes to book,” Dr. Kremser added. In 2019, The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) provided Euros 1.8 million (UGX 7 billion) part of which was channeled to the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) and the judiciary for special courts for survivors of gender-based violence. As a result, the conviction rate for perpetrators increased from 20 percent to 70 percent.

Marking 16 Days of Activism against Gender based Violence



Minister of State (Gender and Culture) Hon. Peace Regis Mutuuzo (Centre carrying baby), UNFPA Programme Specialist Ms Rachel Ogolla (in red) together with other delegates and participants pose for a group photo after the symposium at Kampala Sheraton Hotel on December 22.

National symposium on the Welfare and Wellbeing of a Girl Child

As a pre event to kick start the 16 Days of activism against gender based violence, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development in partnership with Action Aid Uganda and with support from UNFPA organized a one-day national symposium on the Welfare and Wellbeing of a Girl Child at Kampala Sheraton Hotel on November 22.

Themed 'Protect the Girl, Protect the Nation' the main objective of the symposium was to provide a platform for accelerating actions on prevention of Gender based violence and other harmful practices such as teenage pregnancy, child marriage and FGM prevention.

In her remarks, UNFPA representative Dr. Mary Otieno

On November 25 - December 10, 2022, UNFPA joined the government of Uganda through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, as well as UN sister agencies and civil society to mark the 16 Days of Activism against gender based violence. This year's theme: "Unite! Activism to End Violence against Women & Girls" sought to mobilize everyone in their different capacities to show solidarity and support to end violence against women and girls. UNFPA used the 16 days of

activism to engage with donors, parliamentarians, religious and cultural leaders and civil society organizations by supporting and participating in a series of high level engagements which included a national symposium on the welfare of the girl child, a high level breakfast dialogue on gender based violence, a high level meeting on gender based violence with Parliamentarians and a high level symposium on sexual and gender based violence organized to mark the Human Rights Day. Here are the highlights:



We must take action when nearly one quarter of adolescent girls in Uganda have been victims of physical violence since the age of 15.

called for accelerated action to ensure the rights and choices of adolescent girls are protected and respected.

“We must take action when nearly one quarter of adolescent girls in Uganda have been victims of physical violence since the age of 15; we must take action when HIV prevalence is almost four times higher among females than males aged 15 to 24 in Uganda; we must take action when some 34 per cent of young women aged 20-24 in Uganda were married before the age of 18,” said Dr. Otieno in a statement read on her behalf by Rachel Ogolla, programme Specialist (Gender and Human Rights), UNFPA.

Guest of Honour Minister of State (Gender and culture) Hon. Peace Regis Mutuuzo reiterated the government’s commitment to protect the girl and appealed to communities to play their part in condemning and reporting cases of gender based violence against adolescent girls.

“We also have to address the issues of negative masculinity. Underage girls should not be married off,” she said.

High level GBV policy dialogue breakfast meeting



Uganda Representative Dr. Mary Otieno (Centre in black shirt), together with Minister of State (Gender and Culture) Hon Peace Mutuuzo (in pink jacket), representatives from the Embassies of Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Denmark, Austria, the European Union, Ministry of Gender and members of civil society organizations after the breakfast dialogue on GBV at Kampala Serena Hotel.

As a follow up to the national symposium on the Welfare and Wellbeing of a Girl Child that took place on November 22, in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, UNFPA organized a high- level GBV Policy Dialogue at the Kampala Serena Hotel. The objective of the breakfast dialogue on November 29 was to discuss the outcomes of the National Symposium on the welfare and wellbeing of the girl child that took place on November 22 and identify strategies to accelerate implementation of the critical recommendations made at the end of the symposium. It also focused on enhancing resource mobilization for GBV programming specifically to eliminate harmful practices including FGM, child marriage and teenage pregnancies. In her statement, Minister of State (Gender and Culture) Hon. Peace Mutuuzo said negative cultural practices that affect the dignity of women and girls, including FGM, domestic violence, bride price, child marriages, teenage pregnancy all

have serious implications to the rights of girls to education, life, sexual reproductive health and should be addressed.

The Minister called for strengthened collaboration and coordination as Government, Development Partners, Civil Society Organizations and media in order to adequately deal with issues that are affecting the girl child in the country. UNFPA Representative Dr. Mary Otieno emphasized the urgency in ensuring young people can access information and services on sexual and reproductive health and the importance of prioritizing sexuality education in schools.

The dialogue attracted participation of development partners including the embassies of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, Austria and the European Union who expressed continued commitment to continue supporting women, girls and young people to realize their potential, promoting girl education, empowerment, equality, access to SRHR information and services and agency to increase their decision-making.

High level dialogue meeting on Sexual and Gender Based Violence



UNFPA Representative Dr Mary Otieno makes closing remarks at the one-day high-level dialogue on gender based violence organized by UWOPA on December 7.



Deputy Speaker of Parliament Hon. Thomas Tayebwa (c), Ambassador of Sweden to Uganda H. E Maria Hakansson (4th right), State Minister, Mineral Development and Chairperson UWOPA Hon. Sarah Opendi (6th from right) and other members of parliament during the high level dialogue at Parliament on December 7.

On December 7, 2022, hosted by the Uganda Women's Parliamentarians Association (UWOPA), UNFPA joined UN Women in partnership with the Embassy of Netherlands, the Embassy of Sweden at a one-day high-level stakeholder dialogue meeting on sexual and gender based violence in Uganda. The meeting

took stock of the progress and limitations in the implementation of the policy and legal frameworks for addressing Sexual and gender based violence in Uganda including harmful practices like teenage pregnancies, FGM and child marriage and how to work with parliamentarians to further advance implementation of these laws.

Chief Guest Deputy Speaker of Parliament Hon. Thomas Tayebwa pledged Parliament's support to Uganda Women Parliamentary Association in the fight against violence against women and girls. The Deputy Speaker made commitments to ensure that issues of gender based violence, maternal health and sexual reproductive health and rights services are incorporated in the 2023/2024 national budget.

In her closing remarks, UNFPA Representative Dr. Mary Otieno said the adverse effects of violence against women and gender inequality on girls' wellbeing and societal progress at large is undeniable.

"Violence against women hampers Uganda's ability to realize a Demographic and Gender Dividend and derails overall social and economic development in the country," she said.

Dr. Otieno called upon Parliamentarians to champion and break the barriers that promote gender based violence through their Policy and Legislative, Representation, Oversight, Monitoring and Accountability and Budget appropriation roles.

"As Parliamentarians you are key opinion leaders and can play a role as champions of change. You need to use this platform to end child marriage, teenage pregnancies and violence against women and girls. You have a crucial role in breaking down these barriers and providing solutions to ensure the effective enforcement of laws.

"You are uniquely positioned to demand accountability to existing national, regional and international commitments made by the government towards addressing violations against women and girls," Dr. Otieno added.

Conclusively, the Representative reiterated UNFPA's commitment to continue working jointly within the UN system and with development partners in Uganda to support the Government and Civil Society Organizations to implement the recommendations from the meeting. Participants included Parliamentarians, representatives from relevant line ministries

(including the Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs), Religious and Cultural Leaders, Women Movement Leaders, District Local Governments, representatives from CSOs, district local governments and beneficiaries and development partners.

High level dialogue meeting on Sexual and Gender Based Violence

On December 9, organized by the Uganda Human Rights Commission, UNFPA joined the UN Family (UN Women and OHCHR) for a high-level Symposium on SGBV. Themed "SGBV is a human rights concern" the symposium was a key event in the commemoration of the International Human Rights Day which marks the end of the 16 days of activism against violence against women and girls and takes stock of SGBV commitments in line with international obligations including UPR recommendations, secure commitment of relevant stakeholders to adopt and implement concrete strategies to address SGBV in Uganda.

Representing the UN Country Team, the Resident coordinator Ms. Susan Namondo said Gender-based violence is one of the most pervasive human rights violations globally, with immediate and long-term consequences for its victims, communities, and society as a whole, overstressing systems including healthcare providers, police, judiciary, and frontline responders. She said for instance in 2021 alone, the Uganda Police Force received over 16,000 reports of sex-related offenses, the majority of which were perpetrated against young women and girls.

"Violence is denying women and girls their basic rights and freedoms, it is limiting their participation in all areas of life, and beyond individuals – it is affecting us all by hindering economic growth and development," Ms. Namondo said.



Some of the participants of the high level symposium on SGBV that took place at Kampala Sheraton December 9.



UN Resident Coordinator Ms Susan Ngongi Namondo giving a statement on behalf of the United Nations during the High level Symposium on SGBV at Sheraton Hotel December 9.



Violence is denying women and girls their basic rights and freedoms, it is limiting their participation in all areas of life, and beyond individuals – it is affecting us all by hindering economic growth and development,”

Ms. Namondo said.

She added that the United Nations in Uganda has prioritized a holistic approach to eliminating violence against women and girls as articulated in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2021 – 2025) and has made progress through joint programmes such as the Spotlight Initiative and the Joint Programme on GBV and SRHR, among others.

Represented by Programme Specialist (Gender and Human Rights) Rachel Ogolla, UNFPA participated in the high level panel and discussed the effects of climate change on GBV.

Advancing access to justice for survivors of sexual and Gender Based Violence



Front row: (L- R) UNFPA Representative Dr Mary Otieno, Ambassador of Sweden to Uganda H. E Maria Håkansson, Programme Specialist (EVAU) UN Women Evelyn Letiyo and The Acting Director of Forensics Services Mr. Andrew Mubiru together with (back row); Staff from the Embassy of Sweden, UNFPA, UN women and the Forensics unit after the tour at the Police Headquarters in Naguru.

On December 6, a delegations from the Embassy of Sweden, UNFPA, UN WOMEN made a tour visit to the Naguru Forensics service center. Present were UNFPA Representative Dr. Mary Otieno, Ambassador of Sweden to Uganda H. E Maria Håkansson, Programme Specialist (EVAU) UNWOMEN Evelyn Letiyo, Programme Specialist (Gender and Human Rights) UNFPA Racheal Ogolla, and Ms Lucy Ladira, Technical Advisor Justice, law and Order Sector (JLOS). The Acting Director of Forensics Services Mr. Andrew Mubiru gave the delegation a guided tour of the facility.

Through the joint Programme on GBV, the JLOS is supported to advance access to justice for survivors of sexual and Gender Based Violence through forensics science. This includes ensuring trauma informed and victim-centered investigation of sexual and gender based violence crimes.

Ten years of service awards

Two UNFPA Uganda national staff have been recognized for marking ten years of dedicated service to UNFPA. Ms. Florence Mpabulungi Tagoola (Programme Specialist Population Dynamics) and Ms. Evelyn Matsamura Kiapi (Programme Analyst Communications and Media) were recognized at a brief ceremony at the UNFPA Uganda offices on December 15. Both staff members joined the UNFPA Uganda country office in January 2012.

While presenting their award certificates on behalf of the UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem, UNFPA Uganda Representative Dr. Mary Otieno congratulated Ms. Tagoola and Ms. Kiapi for their commitment and dedication to working towards achieving UNFPA's three transformative goals.

"On behalf of the Executive Director, the UNFPA Uganda country office and myself, I congratulate you and hope and pray that you will continue to serve in your capacities or any other capacity entrusted upon you," Dr. Otieno said.

Ms. Tagoola narrated that she was a beneficiary of a UNFPA scholarship for her master's degree in Population Studies and expressed her undivided commitment to UNFPA because of that support from the organization. As a result, she has played a key role in the organization's population and development (P & D) for the last ten years.

"I thank the leadership of UNFPA for grooming me and entrusting me with the responsibility I have carried out for the last ten years," she said.

Ms. Kiapi said she was honored and humbled for being recognized for her ten years of service delivering for women, girls and young people through communications and media engagement to advance the ICPD agenda.

"I promise to continue to serve women, girls and young people in Uganda," she said.

The two staff also received personalized congratulations video messages from the UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem.



(L-R) UNFPA Uganda Representative Dr. Mary Otieno presents the Ten Years of Service certificates to Florence Mpabulungi Tagoola (Programme Specialist Population Dynamics) and Evelyn Matsamura Kiapi (Programme Analyst Communications and Media)