



THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT URGING GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP AND ENFORCE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES TO PROTECT GIRLS AGAINST ESCALATING CASES OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY AND CHILD MARRIAGE DURING AND AFTER THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC.

(Moved under Rule 55 of the Rules of Procedure)

WHEREAS Articles 31(1) and 34 (4) of the Constitution prohibit child marriage and obligate parents to care for and bring up their children respectively;

AND WHEREAS the Children Act, Cap. 59 and the Penal Code Act Cap. 120, all contain specific provisions aimed at protecting the girl child against sexual offences including rape, defilement, and child marriage, both within the community and the family setting;

AWARE THAT Uganda has also ratified a number of International Conventions aimed at the protection against human rights abuse and child marriage of the girl child; including;

- a. the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

- b. the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- c. the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women;
- d. the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of women in Africa;
- e. the Maputo Plan of Action; and
- f. The International Convention on Economic Social and Cultural Rights;

NOTING THAT that the COVID 19 pandemic lead to the closure of most sectors of the economy including academic and tertiary institutions in 2020, which hitherto productively engaged and acted as protective structures for the girl child against teenage pregnancy and child marriage;

CONCERNED THAT the COVID 19 pandemic, and resultant closure of schools has resulted into the girl child especially in rural areas engaging in uninformed sexual conduct with 296,314 girls aged between 10 and 19 years being reported to have had their first Anti Natal Care clinic visit in one of the several health care facilities in Uganda between March and December 2020 alone, with districts like Maracha, Mayuge and Yumbe reporting an increase of 22% , 33% and 10.5% in teenage pregnancy respectively in the said period COVID 19 period;

AWARE THAT Uganda has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Sub-Saharan Africa with over 25% pregnancies among teenagers registered every year, with statics showing that before the Covid 19 pandemic, 36.5% of women aged between 18 and 22 years were reported to have been married off before the age of 18 years and one in every ten girls is married off before the age of fifteen years, with districts including Rakai, Bukomasambi, Gomba, Luwero, Mityana, Mubende among others reporting 128, 167, 196, 12944, 3200 and 1072 child marriages respectively;

FURTHER CONCERNED THAT as a result of the lockdown and redundancy in homes, many sexual violations emanated from within the family setting itself, with reports indicating that sexual abuse was the third most reported form of child abuse contributing 20.1% of which 98% of the victims were girls and 17% of the perpetrators were family members;

ACKNOWLEDGING the fact that the COVID 19 pandemic and its resultant effects and challenges may be part of Uganda and the world's new mode of operation for a period unknown, yet the existing laws and structures are weak and not enforced to address the challenges of teenage pregnancy and child marriage during the period of a pandemic like COVID 19;

RECALLING THAT this House has on numerous occasions raised concern over the surging number of teenage pregnancies in Uganda;

NOW THEREFORE be it resolved by Parliament that:

1. The Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development renews the 2015 National Strategy to End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy in Uganda to curb the escalating cases of child marriage and teenage pregnancy, and ensure it is funded.
2. The Ministry of Education and Sports introduces policies and programmes allowing and supporting teenage mothers to return and stay in school as well as sensitizing the communities against stigma.
3. Government strengthens the enforcement of laws against defilement, child marriage and other forms of child sexual abuse and exploitation as well as engaging in sensitization of parents on their roles on the upbringing of children.
4. Government fast tracks the passing and adoption of the National Schools Health Policy to enable every learner have access to health services, information, knowledge and skills.
5. Government provides adequate resources to the institutions of the Police, Local councils and probation officers to enable them

perform their roles in protecting girls against teenage pregnancy and early marriage.

- 6. Government increases funding to the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) under the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development and provides credit to women Organisations at low interest rates so that the women can better fend for the girl child.**

Rt.Hon. Speaker, I beg to move

MOVER : HON. JOVAH KAMATEEKA KARAMAGI
DWR, MITOOMA DISTRICT

SECONDDERS: