OXFAM IN UGANDA
NEWSLETTER
NOVEMBER 2022
The National Land Forum- Uganda organised the 2nd National Land Forum (NLF) and National Land Awards 2022 from 16th- 18th November 2022 under the theme, “Taking Stock of the National Land Policy in addressing land inequality in Uganda.”

In his welcome remarks, Mr. Jimmy Ochom, the chairperson of the National Land Forum said that Uganda has seen progressive legislation on the governance of land. He however added that following global trends, land inequality widens, and the poor are even more vulnerable.

Mr. Francis Shanty Odokorach, the Country Director at Oxfam in Uganda said, “Inequality in land use, management, and governance affects the majority and vulnerable groups such as women, pastoralists, youth and smallholder farmers. These feed the country, but more often locked out by unjust land systems.”

He also said that Oxfam’s research reveals that the legal provision for recognition and registration of customary lands was a relief and a sure bet to secure people’s land rights.

In his key note address, Mr. Eddy Nsamba-Gayiiya, a land economist and researcher said that land plays a vital role in the health and vitality of other sectors like agriculture, energy, human settlement and others, which depend on it for productivity.

Hon. Persis Namuganza, State Minister for Lands, Housing and Urban Development said that the National Land Policy provides an opportunity to respond to challenges like land inequalities. She also said there is a need to ensure a corrupt free land administration system.

Land actors who included government, individuals, civil society organisations, media, and development partners among others were recognized and awarded for their contribution to the fight against land inequality in Uganda.
The Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (UPF-WASH) organized the 4th Annual WASH Symposium under the theme, “Exploring the nexus and urgency to combat climatic disaster” on 11th November 2022.

Speaking at the symposium, Hon. Aogon Silas, Member of Parliament for Kumi Municipality and the Chairperson of the UPF-WASH noted that the event was organized to provide a platform for key stakeholders to discuss and share experiences on the nexus between WASH and climate change.

Oxfam participated in a panel discussion to highlight the milestones it has achieved on climate adoptive technologies in respect to provision of water amidst climate change challenges in Uganda.

Such technologies include installation of solar powered water systems and hand pumps aimed at increasing access to safe water in refugee and host communities.

On the application of CTD divers to prevent climate risk and shocks, Mr. Stanley Okettayot, an Engineer with Water for People- Uganda, said that the technology is aimed at monitoring groundwater performance in the midwestern region of Uganda.

Climate change has a tremendous negative impact on WASH services. But at the same time, the WASH sector presents a huge opportunity to contribute to global adaptation and mitigation goals, through the building of a climate-resilient, low-carbon WASH sector.

Participants at the UPF-WASH symposium reviewed the measures in place for climate change preparedness and readiness in Uganda, shared knowledge and experience on the nexus between climate change and WASH, and reviewed actions geared towards climate change mitigation for improved WASH and development.

The 4th Annual UPF-WASH symposium was attended by Members of Parliament, Development Partners, Civil Society Organizations, and the private sector.
Responding to the final communiqué of the COP27 climate talks in Sharm El-Sheikh, Gabriela Bucher, Oxfam International’s Executive Director, said:

“The establishment of a loss and damage fund is a monumental achievement for vulnerable developing countries and communities at the frontlines of the climate crisis. They have been calling for funding to cope with the devastating impacts of climate change for over 30 years.”

Gabriela Bucher
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OXFAM INTERNATIONAL

“Given the urgency on the ground, the fund must be operationalized as soon as possible. Rich countries largely responsible for warming our planet should immediately mobilize substantial new and additional resources to pay for climate-related damage in vulnerable countries.

“In East Africa, nearly 40 million people are experiencing climate-induced hunger. Recent catastrophic floods in Pakistan have inflicted more than $30 billion in damages and economic losses and left 10 to 12 percent of the country’s land area under water, affecting more than 33 million people. The list of extreme weather events and disasters is growing, as are the devastating impacts on communities.

“While we applaud the establishment of the loss and damage fund, we remain deeply concerned about countries’ failure to agree on an equitable and urgent phase-out of all fossil fuels. The world is on track for a catastrophic 2.8°C of warming.

“Rich countries, especially the US and those in the EU, have failed to use their power and resources to meet their fair share of responsibility and their moral and legal obligations. Rich countries and many middle-income countries that have the ability to do so are not transitioning away from fossil fuels fast enough to keep warming below 1.5°C, leading to more losses, damages and suffering. Rich countries are not providing the necessary finance to support developing countries to leapfrog to renewable energy.

“Rich countries have broken their $100 billion climate finance promise and successfully blocked language at COP27 that would have required them to compensate for earlier shortfalls through increased climate finance in subsequent years. Climate finance is needed in the trillions for adaptation and mitigation. Given their responsibility for the climate crisis, rich countries at least could have provided a clear roadmap on how to deliver the $600 billion they had promised between 2020 and 2025.

“We are also dismayed by the discussions to enhance the Gender Action Plan, which was at the heart of the UNFCCC processes for gender-responsive climate action. Gender was only marginally mentioned, if at all, in the climate talks’ decisions.

“The climate crisis is about inequality and injustice. Communities at the frontlines of the climate crisis are bearing the heaviest brunt of climate-induced disasters, in addition to multiple crises including conflict, loss of livelihoods, and economic shocks. World leaders must push political differences aside and put the needs of these communities first.”
International Foundation for Recovery and Development (IFRAD) in partnership with Oxfam in Uganda and African Youth Development Link (AYDL) facilitated a 2-day hackathon at Makerere Innovation and Incubation center under the theme, “Improve youth livelihoods with technology.”

The hackathon specifically contributed to Objective 1 and 3 of the Youth Engagement and Empowerment Project (YEEP) of improving youth employability and incomes, and reduction of vulnerability to gender-based violence respectively.

The main objective of the hackathon was to identify developers who could develop/adapt a web-based application which will be used by youth as a job clinic and SRHR information platform. This was informed by the high youth unemployment levels and limited access to information.

The hackathon brought together 98 Youth innovators and app developers who had the opportunity to explore their potential in developing an idea of different proposed applications. These ideas were pitched and evaluated by a three-judge bench using set criteria of value addition, originality, feasibility, user experience, and completion. At the end of the 2 days hackathon based on this criteria, the best idea was awarded a cash prize of $2000.

As a follow-up on the event, the winning team has now been contracted to develop an application which will enable youth to access information on employment opportunities as well as access Sexual Reproductive Health Rights information. This process is expected to be complete by the end of December 2022, and once the app is piloted and tested, it will be uploaded to the google play store to be accessed by youth and other interested parties.
I-CAN South Sudan launched the Tuko Pamoja (We are One) album featuring 6 songs aimed at creating awareness on climate justice, the need for peace building, and ending gender-based violence.

The album features young inspirational artists like I-CAN Children, Fresh Kid, and Leyna Kagere who are calling on refugees and host communities to live in harmony. It sets a platform for refugee children’s voices to be listened to and also preaches the African spirit of Ubuntu.

Uganda has a remarkable history of hosting refugees. With almost 1.5 million refugees living in the country, Uganda is among the top refugee-hosting country in the world. Uganda offers a favorable hosting environment which empowers refugees to move beyond being aid recipients to contributors and influencers of change.

Speaking at the Tuko Pamoja launch, I-CAN Children appreciated Uganda for its hospitality, peace, and protection given to refugees, especially children. Leyna Kagere, a 10-year-old artist also added that all children including refugees have the right to feel safe and enjoy their lives.

Within Oxfam's refugee response work, Oxfam has continuously sought to recognize, respect and invest in local and national humanitarian and leadership capacities and to enable local and national actors to meet the needs of displacement-affected communities. Through projects dedicated to local humanitarian leadership, Oxfam has engaged over 60 Local and National Humanitarian Actors. These include Refugee Led Organizations.

Working with refugee-led organisations such as I-CAN South Sudan, Oxfam has seen increased participation of refugees empowered to engage on issues that affect their lives – in livelihood activities, peace-building initiatives, influencing and others. I-CAN children are an excellent example of how refugees, young and old, can creatively tell their own story and negotiate their needs if given the space.

In his remarks at the Tuko Pamoja album launch, Mr. Francis Shanty Odokorach, the Country Director at Oxfam in Uganda appreciated funding partners like DANIDA through Denmark that have made such engagements possible. “With their support, Oxfam is currently implementing a 4 years project titled; Humanitarian, Development and Peace initiative for the crisis-affected population in Uganda in partnership with 09 partners, out of whom 05 are national partners, and 04 are Refugee Led Organizations, including I-CAN South Sudan,” he said.
Governments around the world are putting women and girls in danger of unprecedented new levels of poverty, peril, overwork and premature death as a result of near-universal “slash-and-burn” efforts to recover their economies from the pandemic and tame inflation.

A new Oxfam report released on 22nd November 2022, “The Assault of Austerity,” says that four out of every five governments are now locked into austerity measures, cutting public services like health, education and social protection rather than pursuing wealth taxes and windfall taxes. More than half of these governments already fail their women and girls, by failing to provide or barely providing gendered public and social services. They are treating women and girls as expendable.

“Women carry most of the physical, emotional and psychological consequences of these cuts to crucial public services because they rely on them most. The road to post-pandemic recovery is being built upon the lives and sweated labour and security of women and girls,” said Oxfam Head of Gender Justice and Gender Rights, Amina Hersi. Austerity is a form of gender-based violence.

Austerity is not inevitable, it is a choice: governments can continue to cause harm by cutting public services, or they could raise taxes on those who can afford it. A progressive wealth tax on the world’s millionaires and billionaires can raise almost $1 trillion more than governments are planning to save through cuts in 2023.

With more than 85% of the world’s population projected to live under austerity measures in 2023, this already horrific situation will get worse, even as governments’ priorities are clearly elsewhere: 2% of what governments spend on military is enough to end interpersonal gender-based violence in 132 countries.

“Austerity policies blend patriarchy and neoliberal ideology to further exploit the most oppressed within society and deliberately dismiss their needs,” said Hersi.

The report shows that women are impacted by cuts to services, social protection and infrastructure twice: first directly, through rising prices or loss of jobs; and then indirectly, because they are made society’s ‘shock absorbers’ and expected to survive and take care of everyone when the state steps back.

Oxfam calls all governments to end austerity and instead seek alternatives such as feminist budgeting and progressive taxation, where taxes are invested into universal social protection and public services, putting the specific needs of women and girls at the heart of policy making.

It calls for decent work through the full implementation of the International Labour Organization’s labour standards, including particularly for women in the informal and care economies.
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) under the umbrella of the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) have tasked Government with funding national and district contingency plans to combat disasters. They argued that the funding for contingency plans needs to be aligned with the national planning and budgeting process.

They pointed out that the contingency planning and funding process needs to be coherent, consistent, and predictable with the overall national planning and budgeting process. “It is, therefore, imperative that the country intensifies its efforts towards mitigation, management and response to disasters which can only be through full operationalization of the contingency plans both at national and local government levels,” Mr. Julius Mukunda stated.

Mr. Mukunda observed that the multi-hazard contingency planning process needs to be informed by data across sectors, which equally informs the national planning and budgeting process. He also underscored the need to address the inter-relation gaps to enable these plans to function effectively as laid out in the National Policy for Disaster Preparedness and Management.

He told participants that the Disaster Risk Management system in the country has over the years taken several strides towards improving contingency planning, tracking, reporting and management but more needs to be done.

Presenting key findings on the effectiveness of District Contingency Plans (DCPs) in disaster risk management of a study conducted in the districts of Kyegegwa and Isingiro, Mr. Mitchell Ainebyoona, an Economist at CSBAG informed the audience that there was no specific budget for the district contingency plans in the two districts.

The Civil Society actors appealed to Government to expedite the development of a National Disaster Preparedness and Management Law. They gave a raft of recommendations among them Government should adequately and consistently fund Contingencies Fund as stipulated in the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and mainstream disaster risk management both in district plans and budgets and Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) as
well as prioritizing the development and operationalization of the District Contingency Plans.

The IOM Uganda Chief of Mission, Alhaji Sanusi Tejan Savage observed that Uganda has been experiencing the impact of climate change, which manifested in a steady increase of annual rainfalls with variabilities of duration. As a result, the country is registering an increasing number of disasters, including droughts, floods, and landslides/mudslides, among others.

Alhaji Tejan emphasized that climate change affects the livelihoods, health and safety of people; and it shapes people’s decisions to migrate. “Migration is an inevitable reality that has been with humanity as history can tell but the movement of people needs to be out of choice and not the force of adverse or life-threatening conditions including effects of climate change,” Alhaji Tejan told the audience.

“Through our programme on Migration Environment and Climate Change (MECC), we will partner with the government to integrate and reflect the significance of environmental degradation and climate change on migration/human mobility in Uganda’s legal, policy and programmatic framework,” Alhaji Tejan stated.

Ms. Jane Ocaya-Irama, the Women’s Rights Advisor at Oxfam in Uganda who represented the Country Director, Francis Shanty Odokorach, informed the audience that Oxfam is committed to reducing the negative environmental and socio-economic impact on local systems and strengthening local preparedness and resilience of refugees and host communities through improved natural resources management, and disaster risk mitigation.

The Accountant General, Mr. Lawrence Semakula agreed with CSOs on funding contingency plans saying Government should not wait for disasters to happen and start mobilizing resources. He underscored the need to put a certificate of compliance towards contingencies in all budgets for the MDAs to combat disasters.

The Minister of State for Relief, Disaster Preparedness, and Refugees, Hon. Esther Davinia Anyakun, appealed to development partners to support Government efforts in disaster risk management.

Isingiro East Member of Parliament, Hon. Alex Byarugaba pointed out that much as lawmakers’ role is to appropriate the budgets for disaster risk management, their hands are tied as the Executive overrides their efforts.

Key to note was that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should commit to fully operationalize the contingencies fund and seek support of parliament in translating this into success.

Relatedly, enforcement needs to be considered strongly within the National Disaster Preparedness and Management Bill to quell environmental mismanagement.

“Migration is an inevitable reality that has been with humanity as history can tell. However, the movement of people needs to be out of choice and not the force of adverse or life-threatening conditions including effects of climate change,” Alhaji Sanusi Tejan Savage, Chief of Mission for the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM)
ICFP REPORTS THAT 87 MILLION MORE WOMEN ARE USING FAMILY PLANNING COMPARED TO LAST DECADE

The International Conference on Family Planning (ICFP) has released new data showing that an estimated 371 million women of reproductive age globally use a modern method of family planning, which is 87 million more than just a decade ago. The revelation was made during a news conference at the ICFP 2022 held in Thailand in November 2022.

In a major step towards transforming the global financing landscape for family planning, eight countries including Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Maldives, Nigeria, and Uganda announced their commitment to increasing their countries’ domestic budget allocations for contraceptives.

In a separate meeting, Hon. Amos Lugoolobi, the Minister of State for Planning pledged Uganda’s commitment and support towards aligning the recommendations made during the first United Nations International Conference on Family Planning held in Cairo in 1994 with the ones made during the ICFP 2022.

Youth participants from around the globe shared personal experiences on their advocacy work, and presented a Global Roadmap for Action for Adolescents and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (AYSRHR). The roadmap was through collaboration of over 40 youth-led organizations. It sets out 2030 goals, priorities and recommended actions, showing unity in the expression of young people’s SRHR needs and values across the world.

The ICFP is a global platform from which countries, local governments, organizations, and individuals can make public commitments to family planning and can be recognized for their achievement. It is also a movement towards universal access to family planning services, contraception, and other SRHR resources. For nearly 12 years, the ICFP community has worked together to move family planning and reproductive health priorities to the center of development.

ICFP 2022 was aimed at exploring the relationship between family planning and universal health coverage, highlighting the solutions, contributions and innovations that will lead to the universal access to family planning services and products by 2030, and share experiences on what has so far worked towards achieving Universal health coverage.

The ICFP 2022 conference took place against a global backdrop of growing extremism and erosion of gender equality and reproductive rights. It addressed what communities should do to protect and advance reproductive rights, and drew on expertise from different regions and settings – including crises.
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