



**Remarks at the Launch of the Joint Programme on Gender Based
Violence**

**By Ms. Rosa Malango
UN Resident Coordinator
Hotel Africana, Kampala
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The Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Hon. Janat B. Mukwaya,
The Permanent Secretary Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development,
Mr. Pius Bigirimana,

The Ambassador of Sweden to Uganda, Your Excellency Per Lindgärde,

The UNFPA Representative Mr. Alain Sibenaler,

The UN Women Representative Dr. Maxime Houinato,
Development Partners,

Officials from Central Government and district local governments,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Gender-based violence is one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in the world today. It is a major obstacle to the fulfillment of women's and girls' human rights and development and a threat to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as realization of the NDP II and Vision 2040.

One in five women in Uganda have experienced sexual violence and more than half of women who have been married have experienced spousal violence. Rampant levels of violence against children persist, as does child marriage and female genital mutilation in many communities. The devastating immediate and long-term consequences to the victims, their families, and their communities are well known and impact all aspects of their lives – including physical and mental health, family relationships, education, safety, and livelihoods. What's more, gender-based violence costs Uganda an estimated 77.5 billion UGX *annually* in expenses and lost profits. We must overcome the challenge if Uganda is to achieve inclusive sustainable development and prosperity.

Thus, it gives me immense pleasure to join you all today at the launch of the *Joint Programme on Gender-Based Violence in Uganda*. This five-year programme, spreading across 14 districts and nationally has the potential to reach millions of Ugandans, including survivors of GBV, young people, women and men, with essential survivor services, sexual and reproductive health services, and mobilization and messaging to address the root causes of GBV, including harmful attitudes and social norms that reinforce gender inequality and violence.

Through this programme and the related *EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Children*, the highest levels of government, through the leadership of the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development and

partners including the United Nations in Uganda, the Embassy of Sweden, the European Union, and have committed to curbing rampant abuses against women and children. No woman or girl deserves to live in constant fear of physical, sexual, economic, or psychological violence, female genital mutilation, or child marriage.

As we launch this important initiative, we stand in solidarity with survivors and all those who are working to prevent, respond, and end gender-based violence. I pledge on behalf of the UN that we will continue to work with the Government and people of Uganda as well as other partners to eliminate gender-based violence, achieve the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals and to showcase Uganda's successes throughout the region and globally.

Before I conclude, I would like to express my appreciation to the Swedish government, through the Embassy of Sweden in Uganda, for their support to the people of Uganda. In January 2018 we held a roundtable meeting of ambassadors and UN agencies on how to address gender-based violence and violence against children. This launch is part of the commitments we made to enhance coordination and collaboration on GBV prevention and response in Uganda. I am grateful for the Swedish government's commitment.

I would like also to commend the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development for their leadership to continuously improve services for survivors of gender-based violence, including timely access to justice, case management support, shelter and medical services. Your leadership is key to ensuring that every parish, sub-county, district and region in Uganda joins in this noble transformative initiative.

“Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation, and it is perhaps the most pervasive.”

I am grateful for this outstanding partnership and wish us all a successful implementation of the Joint Programme.