

FOWODE launches strategy to ensure no woman is left behind in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

On 4th August 2017, Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) organised a launch of a publication titled *“Voice to Action: Advancing Gender Equality in the SDGs”*. The launch held at Hotel Africana was attended by about 80 participants including Government officials, Members of Parliament, Civil Society and Private Sector actors, Development Partners, male change agents/gender champions and community level actors. It aimed at creating awareness on the importance of mainstreaming gender equality in all SDGs and generate more commitment from all stakeholders.

Through a series of multi-stakeholder consultations the *“Voice to Action: Advancing Gender Equality in the SDGs”* was developed to lay a foundation for engagement on the SDGs. It provides a domesticated, localised set of women’s critical issues and indicators for Ugandan Women to attain sustainable development in the next 15 years. The document is aligned to the SDGs and targets and Uganda’s national planning framework NDP II, - It also identifies and collates priority issues within the 17 SDGs that are crucial in the achievement of gender equality and women’s empowerment.

In her remarks, Ms. Joyce Tamale the Board Chairperson FOWODE appreciated the efforts of the women and organisations such as FIDA Uganda, Uganda National NGO Forum, Centre for Basic Research, East African Sub-regional Support Initiative for the advancement of women (EASSI), Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiation Institution (SEATINI) and many others who worked tirelessly to compile the publication. She called upon government and CSOs to ensure that no Ugandan is left behind as we implement Agenda 2030. The Deputy Country Representative UN Women Uganda, Ms. Anna Mutavati quoted the UN Women motto *“United Women can”* citing that we can only make a difference through holding hands together. She echoed the importance of all Ugandans contributing to the attainment of the SDGs through the use of our spaces, resources and voices to attain SDG 5 while considering the other goals.

The UN Resident Coordinator Mr. Alhaji Jallow emphasised the need to increase the budget for gender and also eliminate gender inequality at the National level through reviewing policies that hinder gender equality. He called upon government to strengthen the national statistical systems to ensure that right data is collected for the implementation and budget planning.

Hon Ruth Nankabirwa the Government Chief Whip hailed Uganda for the registered progress in gender parity in the MDGs. She noted that SDGs include a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment and gender is mainstreamed throughout the other 16 goals. Therefore it is imperative that Civil Society takes up the mantle and holds government accountable for the commitments that the Uganda Government has made on the SDGs.

The Voice to Action and the Uganda Gender Consortium on SDGs was then launched by the Government Chief Whip who pledged to support FOWODE in the campaign for gender equality so as to transform the lives of women, men, girls and boys in Uganda.