



NATIONAL CSO 20 CONVENTION 25

30th September & 1st October 2025:
MESTIL HOTEL, Kampala - Uganda

The Future of Civil Society in Uganda

The Law The Money The Politics

Programme



Day One: Tuesday, 30th September 2025

Legal and Political Foundations for Civil Society

Time	Session Details
7:00am	Arrival, Registration, Welcome Coffee and Networking
8:00am	<p>Welcome Remarks by the Organisers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Moses Isooba – <i>Executive Director, Uganda National NGO Forum</i> • Lt. Gen. Joseph Musanyufu – <i>Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Internal Affairs</i> • H.E. Matthias Schauer – <i>Ambassador of Germany to Uganda</i> <p>Official Opening Remarks Maj. General (Rtd) Kahinda Otafiire – <i>Minister of Internal Affairs, Government of Uganda</i></p>
9:30am	<p>Keynote address: Harnessing Civil Society's potential for inclusive development: Aligning strategies with Uganda's National Development Plan IV.</p> <p>This keynote will examine the vital role of civil society organisations in advancing Uganda's development agenda as outlined in the National Development Plan IV, highlighting their contributions to inclusive growth, governance, and social accountability. It will emphasise the importance of fostering strong government-CSO partnerships to enhance policy implementation, citizen participation, and sustainable development outcomes.</p> <p>Dr. Joseph Muvawala – Executive Director of National Planning Authority, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Uganda.</p>

Time	Session Details
10:15am	<p>Panel discussion & plenary: Strengthening partnerships for sustainable development: Enhancing collaboration between Government and Civil Society under NDP IV.</p> <p>This panel will explore practical strategies to deepen cooperation between government agencies and civil society organisations, addressing challenges and opportunities in policy alignment, resource mobilisation, and joint implementation. Panelists will reflect on how collaborative approaches can improve accountability, inclusivity, and impact in achieving Uganda’s national development priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms Sophie Kyagulanyi – <i>Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group</i>• Ms. Rosette Kuhirwa – <i>Manager, Governance and Public Sector Planning, National Planning Authority</i>• Mr. Stephen Kateregga – <i>Assistant Auditor General - Corporate Services</i>• Ms. Angella Byangwa – <i>Executive Director, Rwenzori Anti-Corruption Coalition</i>• Dr. Albert Byamugisha – <i>Senior Technical Adviser and Head of the National SDG Secretariat, Office of the Prime Minister</i> <p>Moderated by Diana K. Rutabingwa – <i>Programme Component Manager, Human Rights and Conducive Environment (Governance and Civil Society Programme)</i></p>
12:30pm	LUNCH BREAK
1:30pm	<p>Keynote Address: Designing an Enabling Regulatory Framework for Civil Society: Balancing Accountability, Autonomy, and Impact in Uganda.</p> <p>This keynote will critically assess the impact of the current NGO (Amendment) Act, 2024, and the ongoing Regulatory Impact Assessment, focusing on how regulatory reforms can create an environment that empowers civil society organisations to effectively fulfil their mandates. It will explore the necessary balance between appropriate oversight and organisational autonomy, highlighting opportunities to foster transparency, innovation, and sustainability while safeguarding civic space and enhancing collaboration between government and CSOs.</p> <p>Dr. Stephen Okello – <i>Secretary, National Bureau for NGOs, Ministry of Internal Affairs</i></p>

Time	Session Details
2:00pm	<p>Panel Discussion & Plenary: Shaping the Future of Civil Society: Insights and Opportunities from Uganda’s NGO Policy Review.</p> <p>This panel will unpack the key issues emerging from the ongoing Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA), including alignment with constitutional principles, harmonisation with the NGO Act, 2016 (as amended), and the creation of an enabling regulatory environment for civil society. Drawing on perspectives from policymakers, civil society leaders, and development partners, the discussion will explore how a balanced framework can enhance accountability, safeguard operational space, and enable CSOs to contribute effectively to Uganda’s national development goals under NDP IV.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Anthony Masake – <i>Executive Director, Chapter IV Uganda</i>• Ms. Martha Oundo – <i>Assistant Commissioner, National Bureau for NGOs, Ministry of Internal Affairs</i>• Ms. Judith Atim – <i>Head of Programs, Center for Constitutional Governance (CCG)</i>• Mr. Benson Ekwe Ocen – <i>Executive Director, Public Affairs Centre</i> <p>Moderated by Dr. James Nkuubi – <i>Executive Director, Network of Public Interest Lawyers (NETPIL)</i></p>
3:30pm	<p>PARALLEL TRACKS</p> <div><div><p>Parallel track I: Regulatory compliance and advocacy in practice</p><p>This session will explore innovative approaches CSOs can adopt to meet increasingly complex regulatory demands while preserving operational agility. Discussions will focus on enhancing compliance systems, institutionalising regular government-sector consultations, and crafting advocacy messages that resonate constructively with policymakers.</p><p>Thought Provocateurs</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peter Maghelah – <i>Executive Director, Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations</i>• Mr. Eric Namungalu – <i>Head of Programs - Human Rights Centre Uganda</i>• Dr. Moses Isooba – <i>Executive Director, Uganda National NGO Forum</i><p>Hosted by Mr. Yona Wanjala – <i>Executive Director of Civic Advisory Hub</i></p></div><div><p>Parallel track II: Electoral engagement models for Civil Society</p><p>Focusing on the delicate electoral period, this track will discuss effective models for civic education, election observation, and voter mobilization that balance impact with safety and regulatory adherence. Participants will explore partnerships with the Electoral Commission and strategies for expanding civic space during politically sensitive times, with a focus on marginalised groups.</p><p>Thought Provocateurs:</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. Ruth Ssekindi – <i>Director Monitoring and Inspections: Uganda Human Rights Commission</i>• Ms. Juliet Were – <i>Deputy Executive Director, Women's International Peace Centre</i>• Mr. David Nangosi – <i>Program Officer Human Rights at the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU)</i>• Charity Kalebbo Ahimbisibwe - <i>Executive Director · Electoral Laws Institute, Uganda</i><p>Hosted by Ms. Patricia Munabi – <i>Executive Director, Forum for Women in Democracy</i></p></div></div>
5:30pm	END OF DAY ONE

Day Two: Wednesday, 1st October 2025

Sustainability or Survival? The Future of Civic Action in Uganda

EVENT SCHEDULE

01
OCTOBER

Time	Session Details
7:00am	Arrival, Registration, Welcome Coffee and Networking
8:00am	<p>Keynote Address: Reimagining Civil Society's role in Uganda's democratic future: Between political realities and aspirational governance.</p> <p>This keynote address will invite reflection on the evolving place of civil society within Uganda's democratic trajectory, urging a reimagining of its role beyond traditional contestations toward a visionary engagement that embraces complexity and ambiguity. The Keynote Speaker will explore how civil society can act as both a critical conscience and a creative partner in governance, navigating the tensions between power, autonomy, and social justice in an environment marked by uncertainty and transformation. The session will challenge participants to think strategically about civil society's future, not only as defenders of rights but as architects of inclusive and resilient democratic institutions capable of withstanding political flux and fostering genuine citizen empowerment.</p> <p>Dr. Busingye Kabumba - <i>Professor of Law at Makerere University School of Law and Director of the Human Rights and Peace Centre</i></p>

Time	Session Details
8:45am	<p>Bridging Perspectives: Civil Society's evolving role in Uganda's development Journey</p> <p>Building on the keynote's critical reflections, this panel will examine how civil society can transcend the constraints of contemporary politics to become a generative force in Uganda's governance and development trajectory. It will explore the institutional, cultural, and strategic shifts needed for civil society to shape—not merely respond to political realities. Discussions will address how CSOs can navigate entrenched power structures, influence long-term planning frameworks like NDP IV, and position themselves as co-architects of a just, inclusive, and forward-looking Uganda.</p> <p>Panellists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Zahara Nampewo – <i>Deputy Principal, Makerere University School of Law</i> • Ms. Sarah Mukasa – <i>Pan African Feminist</i> • Mr. Richard Ssewakiryanga – <i>Executive Director, Centre for Basic Research</i> • Mr. Andrew Karamagi – <i>Ugandan lawyer and budding scholar, working with civic movements in Zimbabwe, Zambia and South Africa.</i> <p>Moderated by Mr. Malcom Mpamizo – <i>Associate Director, East Africa Centre for Civil Society Practice (CivicPractice East Africa) and Civil Society Eco-system enabler</i></p>
10:30am	<p>Keynote Address: Rethinking Sustainability: Ensuring the longevity and independence of Uganda's Civil Society</p> <p>This keynote will challenge participants to rethink traditional donor dependency, emphasising social enterprise, local philanthropy, and blended finance as viable alternatives. It will highlight the ethical and strategic considerations necessary for CSOs to build resilient funding bases that align with their missions and values.</p> <p>Mr. Leonard Okello – <i>Chief Executive Officer, The Uhuru Institute</i></p>

Time	Session Details
11:15am	<p>PARALLEL TRACKS</p> <div> <p>Digital Transformation: Tools and tactics for inclusive engagement</p> <p>Digital technologies offer both opportunity and challenge. This session will spotlight how CSOs can harness digital platforms to amplify their reach and deepen engagement, particularly among marginalised communities, while addressing barriers like low digital literacy and connectivity gaps.</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emmanuel Wabwire – <i>Executive Director, Faraja Africa Foundation</i> • Ms. Hellen Namyalo – <i>Executive Director, Defenders Protection Initiative (DPI)</i> • Dr. Jimmy Spire Ssentongo – <i>Academic, columnist, editorial cartoonist, author, and anti-corruption activist</i> <p>Hosted by Ms. Agather Atuhaire – <i>Executive Director, Agora Discourse</i></p> </div> <div> <p>Financial sustainability and resource mobilisation strategies</p> <p>Amid shrinking international funding, CSOs face urgent pressure to diversify and innovate revenue streams. This session will highlight local philanthropy, social enterprise, and multi-sector partnerships as key avenues for sustainable financing.</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Ronny Mulongo – <i>Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU)</i> • Mr. Modern Karema Musiimenta – <i>Founder & Executive Director, MENTA Leadership Academy</i> • Ms. Jacqueline Asimwe – <i>Chief Executive Officer, CivSource Africa</i> • Mr. Leonard Okello – <i>Chief Executive Officer, The Uhuru Institute</i> <p>Hosted by: Dr. Moses Onyoin – <i>Director /Head of Advisory Services; Center for Institutional and Technical Support for CSOs</i></p> </div>
12:30pm	LUNCH BREAK

Time	Session Details
1:30pm	<p>The Future Is Youth: Civil Society through young eyes</p> <p>This session will centre the voices of young Ugandans in shaping the future of civil society. With the majority of Uganda's population under 30, youth are not only key stakeholders but also vital architects of innovation, accountability, and social transformation. The discussion will highlight how young leaders are redefining civic engagement, navigating challenges of participation and representation, and creating new pathways for advocacy, digital organising, and community resilience.</p> <p>Panelists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Godwin Toko – <i>Deputy Team Leader, Agora Centre for Research</i> • Ms. Lizza Kawooya – <i>Founder, Dwona Initiative</i> • Ms. Nakato Rehema Sessimba – <i>Program Officer, Open Space Centre</i> • Ms. Sarah Anzoa – <i>Founder and Executive Director, Dare For the Future Initiative and Board Member, FIDA Uganda</i> <p>Moderated by Ms. Georgia Tumwesigye – <i>Programme Manager & Certified Feminist Moderator Women and Leadership Programme [WLP] Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE)</i></p>
3:00pm	<p>Information Session: Unlocking Opportunities for Civil Society in the Global Gateway Framework</p> <p>This session will explore the opportunities and implications of the European Union's Global Gateway strategy for Uganda's civil society sector. As the EU's flagship investment framework, the Global Gateway seeks to mobilise resources for digital transformation, green transition, infrastructure development, health, education, and governance. For Ugandan CSOs, it presents both possibilities and challenges—ranging from new avenues for financing and partnerships to a stronger role in accountability, inclusion, and community engagement. Through a presentation and discussion, participants will deepen their understanding of the framework, identify strategic entry points for civil society, and generate practical recommendations on how CSOs can position themselves to benefit from and contribute to the Global Gateway agenda.</p> <p>Hosted by Ms. Karolina Hedström, <i>European Union Delegation – Head of Cooperation</i></p> <p>Discussant: Dr. Moses Isooba – <i>Executive Director, Uganda National NGO Forum</i></p>

Time	Session Details
3:45pm	<p>Concluding Plenary and Action Session: Charting the Future Together</p> <p>To consolidate insights from the two-day Convention, distil key commitments from discussions, and agree on concrete actions to strengthen the role, resilience, and sustainability of civil society in Uganda. The session will serve as both a reflective space and a call to action, ensuring that the Convention outcomes translate into practical next steps for the sector, government, and development partners.</p> <p>Setting the Stage – Reflections from Rapporteurs (20 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief highlights from each parallel track and plenary session, capturing key insights, challenges, and emerging recommendations (One from each track: Regulatory & Advocacy, Electoral Engagement, Digital Transformation, Financial Sustainability). Interactive Collective Reflection: Use of digital tool (e.g., Mentimeter) to capture participants' "top three priorities" for action post-Convention. Real-time visualization of responses projected on screen. <p><i>Presentation of a Draft Convention Communiqué / Key Messages, including open floor for endorsement and final reflections.</i></p>
4:45pm	<p>Closing Statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Moses Isooba – Executive Director, Uganda National NGO Forum Mr. James Macbeth Forbes – GIZ Country Director for Uganda Amb. Jan Sadek – Head of the EU Delegation to Uganda Hon. Norbert Mao – Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs <p>Symbolic Closing</p> <p><i>Visual presentation of the "Future of Civil Society" drawings/visual thinking outputs created during the Convention.</i></p>
5:30pm	<p>RECEPTION AND COCKTAIL TILL LATE.</p>



The Future of Civil Society in Uganda

The Law The Money The Politics

**NATIONAL
CSO
CONVENTION 2025**

**30th September & 1st October 2025:
MESTIL HOTEL, Kampala – Uganda**

