

STATEMENT BY

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AT

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Mr. Chairman

I bring you greetings from the people of Uganda.

Uganda experiences a lot of migration in various forms. Internally, there are phenomena of rural-urban migration and some internally displaced persons. Internationally, there is considerable inflow of migrants from the great lakes region due to various reasons. Additionally, there are significant inflows of persons from further afield in search of business and employment opportunities; while at the same time there is some outflow of Ugandans to other countries.

Rural-urban migration

Data from the last two censuses and from various studies show that Uganda still has a largely rural population of about 85 per cent, although there is a visible sign of rural-urban migration, especially by the youth. The urban population is growing at a much higher rate of 5.1 percent than the national average rate of 3.2 percent. The challenge of increase in the urban population from 1.6 million to 3.6 million which is about 11 to 12 percent respectively,

between 1991 and 2002 has not been matched with corresponding growth and development in basic urban physical and social infrastructure.

This rural-urban migration has also affected agricultural productivity as the more elderly and less energetic people are left in the rural areas where cultivation should be taking place, yet they do not have enough energy to till the land.

Rural-rural migration

There has also been considerable rural to rural migration especially from the highly populated districts of southwestern Uganda where there is shortage of land for cultivation to the sparsely populated districts of mid-western Uganda.

This has resulted in the massive clearance of tropical forests in the receiving districts for cultivation of crops; hence affecting the rain patterns in the area and also fuelling land disputes.

Refugees and Immigration

Because of some instances of instability in the Great Lakes Region, Uganda hosts more than 230,000 refugees. This is even further compounded by the fact

that the biggest proportion of Uganda's border with neighboring countries is "porous". Uganda is still in the process of making and issuing national identity cards thus making identification of citizens from refugees and other immigrants quite a challenge. The influx of refugees increases the burden on the economy, especially on social service provision.

The Refugee Act (2006) accords refugees all the rights stipulated in the UN and African Union Conventions, including freedom of movement and the right to work. The Ministry of Refugees and Disaster Preparedness in the Office of the Prime Minister was established to address issues related to refugees and internally displaced persons.

Emigration

There is considerable emigration by skilled and semi-skilled personnel from Uganda. This imposes severe economic and social costs on the country especially where the number of skilled personnel is limited. Even the less educated and less professionally qualified have migrated to the West to secure a livelihood for themselves and their families. However, on a positive note, it

has been established that remittances from Ugandans in the Diaspora amount to about US\$ 700 million per year, accounting for 4% of GDP.

Uganda has taken initiatives, in line with ICPD objectives, to regulate migration and development through different policies and laws. All the policies and laws are implemented within the framework of the Constitution of Uganda and the National Development Plans. These include:

- i. The Amnesty Act 2000 that is intended to encourage Ugandans who left the country involuntarily to return.
- ii. The National Refugee Policy (Draft)
- iii. The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2010.
- iv. The Immigration Control and Citizenship Act 2004.

In addition to the above, the Diaspora Policy is being developed by the Government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This Policy is also designed to, among others, address labour externalization initiatives.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I wish to re-affirm government of Uganda's commitment to all the international conventions and protocols on migration. Thank you.