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STATEMENT BY

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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHARGE OF GENDER AND
CULTURE AFFAIRS
GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

AT THE

**THE 57th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

Please Check Against Delivery

New York, March 5th, 2013

Madam Chairperson,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Uganda, I convey our sincere congratulations to you and the Bureau, for convening this important session that focuses on a very critical matter which touches the hearts, minds and lives of women and girls globally. My delegation is optimistic that the outcomes of the 57th session of the Commission will strengthen our collective efforts towards prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

2. Uganda has declared zero tolerance to violence against women and has implemented various interventions to prevent, respond and end impunity against this human rights violation. The government has put in place specific laws to address violence against women; these include: The Domestic Violence Act (2010), The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2010) and the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (2009), as well as employment Act 2006. Uganda also developed a comprehensive Action plan with measurable and time bound indicators to implement United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820. The National Gender Based Violence Policy once it is finalized will guide actions of different actors in prevention, response and support to survivors of Gender Based Violence as well as ending impunity.

3. In addition, Uganda has executed various prevention programmes which include: mobilizing communities to act on violence against women and girls through- working with Men Action Groups, Faith Based Organizations, traditional and cultural institutions, schools and media and girl child education movement. These initiatives continue to increase community awareness about the vice, reduce social tolerance to violence against women, and ensure that perpetrators are reported and appropriate action taken in accordance with the state laws.

4. To strengthen response, the Government of Uganda has emphasized a multi-sectoral approach particularly in provision of services to victims and survivors. For example,

- ✦ The health sector facilities provide emergency contraceptives, post exposure prophylaxis to prevent HIV/AIDS and general treatment to survivors
- ✦ The Uganda police force has established child and family protection units in all police stations to respond to Sexual and Gender Based Violence cases and also carry out community policing.
- ✦ To increase access to justice for women and girls, the protocols to gather medico-legal evidence have been revised to enable health workers at community level support victims and survivors.
- ✦ Uganda Bureau of Statistics has since 2006, integrated a module on domestic violence in order to generate sufficient data for programming.
- ✦ Education sector has undertaken a series of interventions including training of senior teachers, who reach out to boys and girls who are vulnerable to violence in the school environment.
- ✦ The 9th Parliament has prioritized mainstreaming gender in legislation and budget processes.
- ✦ The National Machinery for Gender Equality has put in place coordination mechanisms to leverage resources and respond to Gender Based Violence in a coordinated manner.

5. However, we note that there are challenges which hinder accelerated action to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls. Such as

- ✦ Only two in ten women and girls in Uganda report violence or seek help.
- ✦ Low levels of perpetrator conviction rates of 6.6% in 2011 according to the annual police crime report.
- ✦ Entrenched cultural practices and attitudes which promote violence against women across the life-cycle.

Tackling these challenges calls for deeper and sustained action by all relevant actors at all levels. We therefore look forward to the outcomes of the 57th session of CSW.

6. Madam Chair, Uganda believes that HIV and AIDS is both a cause and a consequence of Sexual and Gender Based Violence. It is for this reason that in Uganda the Gender Based Violence Response continues to be an integral part of HIV and AIDS Programmes.

7. As I conclude, I wish to re-emphasize the following issues for consideration in the agreed conclusions of the 57th Session of CSW:

- i) Strengthening implementation of laws and policies on violence against women and girls
- ii) Establishing and strengthening multi-sectoral response services to address violence against women and girls
- iii) Engaging traditional and cultural institutions, faith based organizations, family units, the media and working with men and boys to prevent violence against women and girls.
- iv) Scaling up initiatives to empower girls
- v) Determining the social and economic cost of violence to economies of our countries to inform programming.
- vi) Take actions to influence change in social norms, beliefs and attitudes that perpetrate violence against women and girls.

I THANK YOU.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY.