

## **Uganda Says **NO** to violence against women –**

### **Statement of Hon. Speaker of Parliament, Edward Ssekandi**

**Kampala - Uganda, 2 December 2009** — The Parliament of the Republic of Uganda today, joins millions of individuals, institutions and organizations in the global call for action to end the pandemic of violence against women and girls. It is very clear to all of us here at Parliament that violence against women and girls in all its manifestations is a grave abuse of the rights of women and girls affected and undermines the recognition in our Constitution ( Article 33) of the equal rights and dignity of women with men and the national efforts to realize women's social, economic and political empowerment. The magnitude of this vice in Uganda is shockingly very high with an estimated 60% of women and girls reported to have been affected. There is also an increasing trend of cases affecting men and boys and this needs to be also addressed by the relevant authorities. Violence against women however is a manifestation of continued gender inequality that Parliament is committed to addressing.

Women are an important pillar of our society and make an immense contribution to the social and economic development of our country. In a recently released Econometric Analysis Study and Participatory Investigation by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, it was concluded that addressing issues of gender inequality would increase the GDP growth rate by 1.2% annually in Uganda<sup>1</sup>; and today I say Violence Against Women is a manifestation of gender inequality. When women and girls are affected by violence, our families and our nation's well being is ultimately threatened and this is why the Parliament of Uganda is committed to addressing the root cause in a holistic and sustainable manner.

Ending violence against women is a top priority for the Parliament of Uganda. We will continue to employ all possible ways to ensure violence against women is eliminated in this country. As an institution with the duty to legislate on our society's problems, the Parliament of Uganda has passed into law a number of legislations related to women's security rights such as the Penal Code Amendments Act, the Trafficking in Persons Act and most recently the Domestic Violence Act which was passed by this honorable House. This is a signal from the Parliament of Uganda to all stakeholders that we are taking this issue very seriously.

The Parliament of Uganda will put in place any other necessary legislation required to end violence against women and men. We shall support other ongoing efforts geared to prevention and protection of people affected by this problem in the country and the sub region. The Parliament shall also strengthen its oversight role to ensure these laws are implemented and that there is accountability.

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<sup>1</sup> The Contributions of Reduced Gender Inequality to GDP Growth Prospects in Uganda: A synthesis of econometric analysis study and participatory investigation. June 2009, pp 75

I therefore urge all the other institutions especially the Police, the Judiciary, health and social welfare institutions to implement the existing legislations and use other appropriate measures to ensure this vice is put to an end. I also call upon community members, families and individuals to cooperate with us to end the impunity of violence by adopting an attitude of zero tolerance, supporting survivors and holding perpetrators accountable.

I call upon all other stakeholders to support our efforts towards ending violence against women and girls and other forms of gender based violence in Uganda.

To further demonstrate the commitment of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda to end violence against women and girls; I, together with Members of Parliament and my invited Guests will today sign on the Say **No** - **UNiTE** which is a global call for action on ending violence against women and girls. Presented by UNIFEM, **Say NO – UNiTE** advances the objectives of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's campaign *UNiTE to End Violence against Women* through social mobilization.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

Hon. Edward Ssekandi  
Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda  
2 December 2009