

**ORAL STATEMENT MADE BY THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR ECONOMIC,
SOCIAL & CULTURAL RIGHTS TO THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN
AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS**

**56TH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES'
RIGHTS (21 APRIL 2014 – 07 MAY 2014)**

Our Statement addresses the state of Social and Economic Rights in Uganda, specifically the rights to Education and Health as guaranteed under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights:

Under the right to education,

Although Uganda has generally achieved increased access to education, specific vulnerable groups continue to be left behind, including children with disabilities and indigenous groups like the Batwa and the basongora. In 2013, only 8 Batwa children sat for Uganda National Examination Board exams at different levels. Access to education for children with special needs also remains low in Uganda. For example while the national enrolment level for Universal Primary Education is 94% (UNICEF 2012) and 91% for boys, only 10% of the hearing impaired children are enrolled for UPE.

The quality of education in Uganda is affected by several factors including very high Teacher to Pupil Ratios, poor infrastructure in schools, lack of meals in many schools, and low motivation for teachers. According to the Ministry of Education and Sports Ministerial Policy Statement for FY2014/15, the national classroom deficit stood at 39,788. There are many classes that take place in non-classroom environments, and many pupils study and write exams on the school compound under trees. There is also acute shortage of furniture with many pupils sitting on the floor. For example at Alwala Primary School with a population of 735 pupils only has 35 desks; Awir Primary school with a student population of 1584 pupils only had 70 desks; Abalokweri Primary School with a student population of 1196 only has 150 desks each sitting 3 pupils. Ariet primary school in Kapujan sub-country in Teso was found with a total of 777 pupils but with only 10 desks. Many public schools in Uganda still have very high Pupil to Teacher ratios for example 1:122 in Alwala Primary School and 1:120 at Amocal Primary School.

Although the State has the obligation to provide quality free education for all and that private education should only supplement that of the State, there are serious concerns about adverse impact privatization on the right to education, as the number of private schools and enrolments is increasing at a very rapid rate. Today approximately 27% of schools at primary level and 66% of schools at secondary level are private. This rapid increase is being encouraged by the government's policy settings, including tax breaks on the profits of private, for-profit schools. At the same time Uganda is seeing a decline in state investment in public education. While spending on education has increased in absolute figures it has decreased as a share of GDP to only 3.3%.

The concerns about privatization in education in Uganda are that;

Privatisation is increasing inequalities: There is a widening gap between the quality of education available to rich and poor and increasing segregation. Parents are forced to make a choice as to

which of their children to send to fee-paying schools and unfortunately girls usually miss out. Private schools are concentrated in the urban areas, while rural areas rely on very poor quality public schools – thus private schools are not necessarily increasing access or quality for the most disadvantaged.

There is lack of proper regulation, supervision and monitoring of private schools. In many low fee private schools the teachers are unqualified or poorly trained. Yet, the Private Schools and Institutions Department responsible for oversight of private schools is ill-equipped to carry out its mandate, which means private schools are effectively unregulated and quality is highly variable.

Particularly there are concerns about low fee private schools. Low fees are still unaffordable for very poor families, leading to families having to make significant sacrifices to send all of their children to such schools. Often non-tuition fees such as school development fees and school uniforms, add to this strain. The Quality of education and value for money in these schools is frequently lacking.

Under the Rights to Health,

Uganda still suffers very high maternal mortality rates, with a ratio of 438/100,000 births. This translates to 16 women dying of pregnancy related complications. The reason they die is because of lack of Emergency Obstetric care in many places and basic maternal health commodities, stock outs etc.

Despite having a shortage of health workers in many parts of the Country, Uganda recently entered into an arrangement with Trinidad and Tobago under which the country will be exporting 286 health workers to Trinidad and Tobago. This will have a huge burden onto the health system and realization of the right to health.

The Ministry of Health in Uganda has proposed a National Health insurance Scheme, which is commendable, however the proposal proposed Bill is not all inclusive as it proposes to first have coverage for people under formal employment, with no clear timeline on when the unemployed and vulnerable groups like the elderly and orphaned children will be enrolled on to the scheme.

Uganda has also experiencing declining investment in health in the health sector over the years. For the FY 2015/2016, the total sector budget is set to reduce from Ushs 1,282.473 bn in 2014/2015, to Ushs. 999.45 bn. The other concern is that there is a reduction in the money allocated to Local Governments by 4.5 Bn, yet local governments are the forefront of delivering Primary Health Care in the Country.

Thank you.