



UGANDA ANNUAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2022
“Building Effective Models to accelerate the SDGs in the Post COVID-19 Era”.

National Conference Report

Held on:
16th – 17th June 2022
Serena Hotel
Kampala, Uganda

June 2022

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

1. Background	3
2. Opening Remarks – Permanent Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister, Mr. Keith Muhakanizi ..	4
3. Session 1: Presentation of the Uganda SDG Progress Report 2021	4
4. Session 2 High-Level Panel Discussion: Sub Theme 1: Priorities and financing the SDGs to Accelerate the 2030 Agenda	8
5. Conference Opening Ceremony Speeches.....	9
5.1 Partners’ and Stakeholders’ Statement: UN Resident Coordinator: Ms. Susan Ngongi Namondo	9
5.2 Opening Remarks – Minister for General Duties / Focal Point Minister for SDGs	10
5.3 Statement by the Rt. Hon Prime Minister on behalf of H.E. the President	10
6. Parallel Session 1: Accelerating SDG through agro-industrialization.....	11
7. Speech of the Right Honorable Anita Among, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda.....	12
8. Speech of His Lordship the Chief Justice, Alfonse Owiny Dollo	14
9. High-Level Panel Discussion: “Leaving No One Behind”: Technology, Data & Evidence for Social Protection?.....	14
10. Parallel Session: Protecting the gains and strengthening investments towards achieving SDGs for Children and Young People	15
11. Parallel Session: Civil Society in SDG implementation, monitoring and reporting.....	16
12. Keynote Presentation: Models for SDGs Acceleration across Africa Dr. Fredrick Mugisha, SDG Integration Advisor for African Region, UNDP	17
13. Session Panel Discussion: Local Authorities delivering on the SDG promise	19
14. Closing Ceremony	20
Annex 1: Conference Outcome Document	21

1. Background

The United Nations Members States adopted the [2030 Agenda framework for Sustainable Development](#) on 25th of September 2015. This universal plan includes 17 Goals that all countries around the world are committed to achieving through a global commitment to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. The 2030 Agenda provides a focus for the international community's development efforts until 2030. The 17 goals and 169 targets provide a yardstick by which progress is measured.

The Government of Uganda as a UN Member State has been at the forefront of implementing the SDGs. Uganda held the Presidency of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly that adopted the SDGs. Uganda was therefore a major actor in this process and the country has put in place a national coordination and institutional framework to ensure full ownership of the SDGs. The institutional delivery of the SDGs is guided by a multi-stakeholder National SDG Coordination Framework and a roadmap that was established in 2016 under the leadership of the Office of the Prime Minister with a Focal Point Minister in charge of SDGs.

As part of the process of implementing the SDGs at country level, Uganda produces global and national progress reports that are presented at various levels. At the global level Uganda has produced two Voluntary National Review (VNR) Reports. The VNR is a process through which countries assess and present national progress made in implementing the 2030 Agenda, including achieving its 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the pledge to leave no one behind. Uganda also produces annual SDG progress reports that are part of the national monitoring framework consistent with the National Development Planning Monitoring Framework.

With the SDGs left with only eight years to the 2030 end date, countries across the world are exploring ways in which they can fast-track the attainment of the SDGs target. Further, the Covid 19 pandemic has also created a bigger challenge with economies across the world closed down for significant amounts of time. This disrupted life significantly, with people losing their sources of livelihood, productivity plummeting across the world, and witnessing several deaths and other economic and social ramifications.

Uganda like all other countries acknowledges that solutions towards building back better will not come from outside our communities only. Solutions to build the Uganda economy better will be informed by local models and approaches that will accelerate the pace of development, innovate new ways of working and unlock the resilience of women and men across the country.

Against this background, Government of Uganda has initiated a nationwide forum that brings together all partners with an interest in the SDGs implementation process. This Platform has been - codenamed the - *Uganda Annual Sustainable Development Goals Conference*. This is the first of its kind in Uganda. Like the international and regional platforms on sustainable development, this forum facilitates sharing of ideas and good practices at local and national level and catalyze actions to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. It is a multi-stakeholder platform and is organized jointly by the Government of Uganda under the Office of the Prime Minister in collaboration with the United Nations in Uganda and other development partners, civil society, academia, the private sector and local governments. The Rt. Honorable Prime Minister of Uganda and the Leader of Government Business in Parliament is the chief convener of this conference.

2. Opening Remarks – Permanent Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister, Mr. Keith Muhakanizi

The PS welcomed delegates to the two-day conference. He noted that the conference was preceded by regional conference that brought together local government leaders and other stakeholders from across the country. The SDG conference he emphasized was the collective action of the various actors with government and outside in the private sector, academia, civil society and religious and cultural leaders to monitor the implementation of the SDGs. He thanked the Focal Point Minister for SDGs and all the staff that supported this process and wished all participants good deliberations

3. Session 1: Presentation of the Uganda SDG Progress Report 2021

Presenter: Dr. Albert K Byamugisha, Head of National SDG Secretariat

Session on Key Highlights - SDG Status Report 2021

Key Highlights of the SDG Status Report 2021 ([click here](#)) were represented by Dr. Albert Byamugisha. He presented progress of Uganda in achieving the SDG targets focusing on selected targets under each goal. The presentation was based on a detailed analysis of the SDGs implementation as well as a review of progress made in the implementation of the six recommended actions in 2020 Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report using the latest data. The highlights of the report were as follows:

- a. The level of poverty in Uganda reduced slightly (1.1%) from 21.4 percent in 2016/17 to 20.3 percent in 2020/21. Currently, there are about 3.5 million persons living below the food poverty line. As the poverty rates declined, there was a noted improvement in housing conditions, a critical factor in poverty reduction. For example, in 2019/20, 76 percent of the households lived in dwellings with iron sheet roofs as compared to 75 percent in 2016/17, while 23 percent had thatched roofs in 2019/20 as compared to 24 percent in 2016/17.
- b. Overall, 69 percent of the households lived in dwellings that had brick walls in 2019/2020, an improvement from 67 percent in 2016/17. In addition, the proportion of households that used canister wick lamps (tadooba) for lighting declined from 66 percent in 2012/13 to 28 percent in 2016/17 compared to 14 percent in 2020/21, which is largely attributed to increased access to and use of grid electricity (22%) and solar energy (18%) from 11 percent in 2016.
- c. Alongside this, access to safe water improved from 68 percent in 2013 to 79 percent in 2020 with the highest coverage in the Eastern region (89.9%), compared with 82.7 percent in Northern, 76.6 percent in Central, and 64.7 percent in Western regions. Whereas there was a reduction in the overall poverty rates, the COVID pandemic to a great extent disrupted Uganda's poverty reduction path.
- d. In order to reduce further the poverty levels, GoU is scaling up efforts through among other interventions expanding social protection programmes such as Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE), providing start-up capital for vulnerable persons such as "emyooga", boosting investments in agriculture sector such as through the Agriculture Credit Facility (ACF) and low interest financing through the Uganda Development Corporation (UDC) and deepening decentralisation of service delivery through the overarching Parish Development Model.

- e. While SDG 2 targets to end hunger, the proportion of food poor persons in Uganda increased by 2 percent (from 37 to 39 percent) between 2016 and 2020. This means that nearly 3 in every 10 households in Uganda didn't consume sufficient quantity of food with the proper nutrient content. Rural households were twice as more likely to be food poor than the urban households (47% and 22% respectively) as at 2019/20. The Eastern and Northern regions consistently had the highest number of food poor households with 5 in every 10 households considered food poor between 2016 and 2020. Sub-regions of Bukedi, Karamoja and Acholi had the highest proportion of food poor households with Acholi having the sharpest increase in food poverty by 29 percent.
- f. Government recognises that investment in agriculture sector is paramount in reducing food poverty. However, the agriculture and production sectors are still affected by lack of standardization, counterfeit products and high costs of production that hinder investments. Alongside this, food insecurity is worsened by poor storage facilities at household levels and there is no clear publicised public strategy of having in place national food reserves. MAAIF should accelerate efforts to expand food storage activities across the country.
- g. On Goal 3 one of the key targets is to significantly reduce maternal mortality incidences of which the maternal mortality rate has gradually reduced from 336 maternal deaths per 100,000 births in 2016 to 99 maternal mortality rate in 2020. The majority of the maternal deaths are due to hemorrhage, hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, indirect causes including malaria, HIV/AIDS, severe anemia, pregnancy-related sepsis and abortion complications. The HIV burden in the country at the end of 2019 was estimated at approximately 1.46 million – adults and children living with HIV. However, the AIDS-related mortality declined from approximately 23,000 in 2018 to 21,000 in 2019.
- h. The Malaria Incidence per 1000 population rose to 340 in 2019 from 242 in 2018. In FY 2020/21, malaria was the commonest condition among admissions for all ages accounting for 39.5 percent (635,586 cases compared to 722,679 cases in 2019/20) of all admissions.
- i. There was a notable increase in total immunizations from 1,864,074 in 2019/20 to 2,394,195 (28.4%) in 2020/21. Major surgeries increased from 141,564 in 2019/20 to 167,891 in 2020/21 (18.6%). In addition, the proportion of the population with access to affordable medicines and vaccines (essential medicines and health supplies – basket of 40 commodities – such as anti-malarial, antibiotics, neonatal care medicines etc) on a sustainable basis increased from 11.5 percent in 2016 to 35.8 percent in 2020, slightly higher than the 35 percent NDP III target by 2020/21. Specifically, for Covid vaccination, as of 29 June 2021, 99.1 percent (955,158/964,000) doses of AstraZeneca vaccine received in the country had been utilized, with a 1.7 percent wastage rate.
- j. Overall, with the limited resources, and with support of development partners, GoU is strengthening efforts to increase access to health services through construction and upgrading of more health facilities, equipping of health centers, and provision of medicines and continuous recruitment of health personnel.
- k. On Goal 4 on quality education as measured from proficiency levels in reading and in mathematics, the average proficiency in literacy for P3 reduced from 50 percent in 2018/19 to 49.9 percent in 2019/20, while that of P6 increased from 53 percent in 2018/19 to 53.1 percent in 2019/20. In 2016, 63.4 percent females completed Primary Seven (P.7) compared to 59.7 percent males. In lower secondary, 39.6 percent males completed Senior Four (S.4) compared to 36 percent female. In 2020, while there was an increase in percentages of both

male and female completing P.7 (62 and 72 respectively), there was a reduction in S.4 in 2020 at 32 percent for both males and females, which could have been attributed to the Covid 19 pandemic.

- l. On SDG 5 as at 2021 statistics reveal that women with disability experienced more physical and sexual violence at 42.3 compared to 33.9 percent of those without disability. The 15-19 age group experienced the highest of both physical and sexual violence at 41.3 percent. The Covid 19 pandemic is reported to have exacerbated the incidence of sexual violence. Domestic violence is of great concern, and thus, GoU has made an effort to address the issue through enactment of various legislative and policy measures.
- m. In governance measures, women representation in parliament has been increasing over the years. For example, in 2016 general elections 157 seats were won by women compared to 174 in 2021 general elections. Relatedly, the number of women in cabinet increased from 28 in 2016 to 35 in 2021 general elections. At the local government level, the country is yet to attain gender parity in political representation. The executive committees at the district level, which are in charge of decision-making, are still dominated by men.
- n. To increase women's incomes, the Government has made effort to support women entrepreneurs by way of boosting their start-up capital and provide on-job skilling through interventions such as Youth Livelihoods Program, Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program, and "Emyooga" among others. However, many women rely on agriculture or informal trade for their livelihood, both of which have been adversely affected by the lockdowns, as a result of the Covid pandemic.
- o. On Goal 6 as at 2020, 79 percent households had access to improved sources of drinking water, although this was below the NDP III target of 83 percent for 2020/21. Ninety-one (91) percent of the households in urban areas had access to improved water sources compared to three quarters of the households in rural areas (75%). There has been increased access to hand washing with soap, in part, mainly as a result of advocacy protection campaigns against Covid 19. For example, access to hand washing with soap at household level increased by 2 percentage points from 36 percent in FY 2018/19 to 38 percent in rural areas compared to 61.1 percent from 40 percent in urban areas which was above the NDP III target of 36 percent in 2020.
- p. Goal 7 on affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, statistics indicate that the percentage of households with access to electricity (grid, solar home system and solar kit) was 56.7 percent which was higher than the NDP III target of 30 percent by 2021. Uganda's installed generation capacity was 1,252.4 MW, still below 1,884 MW NDP III target 2020/21. While there is increased generation of power, the challenge remains with transmission, distribution and cost to further increase access and utilization.
- q. The proportion of the population that relied primarily on clean fuels and technology stood at only 0.6 percent (0.2 % females and 2.1 % males) in 2020, way below the 11 percent NDP III target for 2020/2021. There was low access to modern and efficient energy sources and services, e.g., solar home systems, Liquefied Petroleum Gas, biogas and improved cook stoves, for lighting, heating and clean cooking Government is enhancing efforts to expand the Rural Electrification programme and encourage electricity consumption with a target of bringing down the cost of electricity to US 5 cents per unit once all major generation, transmission, and distribution projects are completed.

- r. Goal 8 on sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, Gross Domestic Product for the FY2020/21 indicates that the economy grew by 3.4 percent in 2021 from 3 percent in 2020. Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector activities grew by 3.8 percent in FY2020/21 which is one percentage point lower than the previous year's growth (4.8 %). The industry sector activities grew by 3.4 percent in FY2020/21 which was a 0.1 percentage point higher than the previous year's growth.
- s. In terms of employment, the majority are employed in the informal sector, mainly in the agriculture sector. The overall unemployment rate was 8.8 percent in 2019/20 higher than the 8.5 percent NDP III target by 2020/21. The unemployment rate was higher in the rural (9.1%) compared to urban areas (8.2%) in 2019/20. While there is impressive economic growth, the slow pace of structural transformation, high unemployment (especially among young people), and high informality of the economy constrain efforts to accelerate progress. The slow progress of high-impact sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing and tourism, coupled with weak value chains, hindered the economy from optimizing gains in productivity, job creation, poverty reduction and structural change.
- t. High levels of informal employment increase vulnerability to shocks such as the COVID-19 virus, as earnings are less secure, and occupational health and safety and working conditions are unregulated. Government has put in place some initiatives to address some of these challenges of vulnerability and Covid – 19 shocks. Such initiatives include: capitalization Uganda Development Bank to offer low interest credit facilities; Youth Livelihood program to increase access to credit for youths to venture in income generating activities; “Emyooga Fund” targeting offering cheap credit to specialized groups like fishermen, carpenters, saloon operators, boda boda riders etc , Small Business Recovery Fund (coordinated by Bank of Uganda in partnership with commercial banks offering credit to SMEs, Parish Development Model and Operation wealth Creation.
- u. Goal 9 on building a resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation, data indicates that the proportion of rural population living within 2 km of an all-weather road was 53 percent by 2020. To increase access to all-weather roads, Government is implementing several projects to rehabilitate, upgrade and maintain roads across the country. Under the UNRA, Government committed to maintaining over 2,500km of paved and 10,000km of unpaved roads annually. Air, railway and water transport was gaining currency but was heavily disrupted by Covid 19 pandemic. The proportion of the urban population living in slums and informal settlements was 60 percent in 2018 which was above the NDP II target of 58 percent by 2020. The population living in slums fell gradually from 75 percent in 1995 to 48.3 percent in 2018.
- v. As a result of extreme weather conditions, the country has faced disastrous moments leading to deaths. For example, the number of deaths and missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population stood at 103 in 2018 compared to 130 NDP III target in 2020/21. This was due to increased disasters caused by natural calamities such as floods in Rwenzori Region and land-slides in Eastern slopes of Mount. Elgon.
- w. Deforestation and desertification - caused by human activities and climate change - pose major challenges to sustainable development and have affected the lives and livelihoods of millions of people in the fight against poverty. The total forest area coverage reduced from 9.5 percent in 2017 from 9 percent in 2018/19. It then, however, increased to 12.4 percent in 2019/20 as a result of growing and protecting of forests by the National Forest Authority.

Uganda has an average annual loss of natural forest of 2 percent per annum, one the highest in the world, and yet the forests provide 88 percent of the country's energy, 61 percent of tourism income, and jobs for about 1 million people.

- x. Revenue to GDP ratio stood at 13.36 percent in 2020 which was an increase from 12.6 percent in 2019 and was almost near 13.73 NDP III target of 2020/21. The country registered gains in domestic revenue mobilization, manifested by the increase in the Tax-to-GDP ratio from 11.1 percent in 2016 to 12.6 percent in 2018/19), and projected to increase to 16.5 percent in 2024/25. The Domestic Revenue Mobilization Strategy (2019/20–2023/24) is guiding Government on how to leverage different sources of financing to expand on its resource mobilization.
- y. The Internet penetration rate (internet users per 100 people in Uganda stood at 25 percent in 2019 which was still below 30 percent NDP III target 2020/21. Fifty-two (52) percent of adults (9.7 million) had mobile phones and 10 percent (1.9 million) had access to the internet. Male adults were significantly more likely to have mobile phones (58%; 5 million) than female adults (46%; 4.6 million). Male adults were also more likely to have access to the internet (13%; 1.1 million) than female adults (8%; 0.8 million).

Colleagues, Uganda has progressed a lot in attaining the SDG targets as presented indicated by these highlights from the 2022 SDG Progress Report. Virtually on each of the 17 SDGs, the country has made strides in achieving some of the respective targets as measured from the applicable indicators. Alongside this, Uganda has made commendable progress in SDG coordination, implementation, monitoring and reporting. Uganda continues to demonstrate transformative political will coupled with ambitious actions by all stakeholders that have contributed to progress on most of the SDGs.

4. Session 2 High-Level Panel Discussion: Sub Theme 1: Priorities and financing the SDGs to Accelerate the 2030 Agenda

Moderator: Ms. Elsie Attafuah, Resident Representative, UNDP

Keynote Address: Dr. P.K Kimbowa

Panelists:

Dr. Marios Obwona representing - Dr. Pamela Mbabazi, Chairperson, NPA: The reality of development planning in a COVID-19 era

Mr. Stephen Asimwe, CEO, PSFU: Leveraging on the private sector to accelerate SDGs implementation

Mr. Julius Kapwepwe representing: Hon. Jovrine Kaliisa Deputy National Coordinator, PDM Secretariat: The Parish Development Model & the SDGs, where is the linkage

Key Highlights of the High Level Panel

- The first panel focused on priorities and financing of SDGs. The discussants pointed out the changes in global economies and the process of recovery from Covid.

- Financing of global challenges will now have to come from various sources including aid, private business financing, philanthropy, diaspora bonds and other types of innovative financing.
- The session discussed some of the practice solutions to bridge Uganda's financing challenges and these included improving technical capability for companies so that they are agile and nimble enough to meet the challenges of today.
- An example presented was the National Social Security Fund and how it is embracing new technological capability to expand access to social security savings was shared by the keynote speaker.
- The session observed the need for expanding efficiency gains within government as a way of expanding the fiscal space and finding resources for financing the SDGs.
- The session noted that the mid-term review of the National Development Plan should be used to help refocus financing towards the NDP and SDGs.
- The session underscored that for the private sector in Uganda to play its role, it will require the creation of an enabling environment for businesses to thrive.
- The session heard about several initiatives that are working to support the private sector including programs for skilling young people, the need to build more export processing zones and expanding the use of private equity in investing in the SDGs.
- The session made discussed the links between the SDGs and the Parish Development Model, highlighting it as a potential best practice in implementing the principle of *Leave No One Behind*.

5. Conference Opening Ceremony Speeches

5.1 Partners' and Stakeholders' Statement: UN Resident Coordinator: Ms. Susan Ngongi Namondo

The UN RC extended her utmost appreciation to the Office of the Prime Minister and the partnership with the UN System that has led to this stock-taking dialogue. Added that there is no doubt about Uganda's high-level policy commitment to the 2030 Agenda, which has been demonstrated on many fronts. The Country has embedded the SDGs in its national development policies and strategies. The third National Development Plan (NDPIII) is clearly aligned to SDGs and so are many of its indicators, and thus, the implementation of NDPIII helps us directly quantify the implementation and achievement of the Global Goals. The UN also commended the Government for regularly conducting and sharing reviews of progress at the global, national and sub-national levels. Despite these successes on the process and implementation front, the UN RC observed that there are mixed results as regards the concrete results for the achievement of SDGs. She added that the magnified threats to sustainable development demand that we must do things differently. She invited participants to reflect on several areas that included; Coordination, Development Financing, Population Growth, Jobs and Tracking Progress. She ended by noting that she looks forward to the new insights that will be gained from the dialogue and that the insights will also enrich others through the upcoming High-Level Political Forum in New York in July 2022, and Uganda's Voluntary National Review in 2023.

5.2 Opening Remarks – Minister for General Duties / Focal Point Minister for SDGs

She welcomed delegates to the First Annual Sustainable Development Conference under the theme; “Building Effective Models to Accelerate SDGs in the Covid-19 Era”. She added that as the Focal Point Minister for Sustainable Development Goals and on behalf of the Office of the Prime Minister, and teams that work on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, led by the SDG Secretariat, we are greatly honored that you have taken the time off your busy schedules to join us for this important conference. She added that the national conference is being held within the context of Uganda’s efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals that were adopted in 2015 by the Member States of the United Nations. She reported that at the global level Uganda has produced two SDG Voluntary National Review Reports and will be producing the third Voluntary National Review Reports in 2023. At the national level, Uganda continues to track the progress in the implementation of the SDGs through the Annual SDG Status Reports, the National Development Plan Progress Reports as well as reports by the Ministries, Department and Agencies and through the Local Government Assessment Reports. She mentioned that the Uganda Annual Sustainable Development Goals Conference is an annual forum that brings together all development stakeholders. The SDG annual event will also facilitate reviews of strategies on COVID-19 recovery and reflect on policy pathways that will allow stakeholders a recommit to a shared vision and policy consensus on the best practices for achieving the SDGs and Uganda’s national development targets. She updated delegates that this conference is being held in the first year. To ensure that the Government espouses the principle of *Leave No One Behind*, pre-events in form of Regional Forums were organized from 8th– 13th June 2022. She then shared highlights of the events as contained in the report of the regional forums. She added that her team will be working to document comprehensively the models shared at the regional forums through a research process. She ended by reporting that overall, they had a very rewarding experience of learning and knowledge sharing as well as galvanizing support for the implementation of the SDGs through the regional forums. She underscored that successful implementation of Agenda 2030 requires an integrated approach, partnerships and participation through inclusive political processes and responsive, effective, accountable institutions. She thanked all partners, the United Nations family through UN Resident Coordinator’s Office, UNDP, UNWomen, UNFPA, UNCDF, UNICEF that gave significant support. Civil Society Organizations through the Uganda National NGO Forum, World Vision, Plan International also supported several parts of this process.

5.3 Statement by the Rt. Hon Prime Minister on behalf of H.E. the President

The Right Honorable Prime Minister opened the conference and noted that when His Excellency the President of Uganda, General Yoweri Kaguta Museveni opened the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly, he asked the world to adopt the Agenda 2030 with a sense of urgency, hope and greater cooperation. He pointed out that for all Member States to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) together as a world community, the world was sending out a powerful message to people in every village, every city and every nation worldwide – that we, as a world community, are committed to taking bold steps to change people’s lives for the better.

She added that Uganda’s leadership of the SDGs as a country is therefore unshaken. Uganda is committed to ensuring that it delivers sustainable development to the people and contribute to global

solutions towards building a better world. As the National Resistance Movement, this position is consistent with the commitments we made to the people of Uganda in our NRM Manifesto. The NRM Manifesto through the NRM principled approach to economic development and growth, selected five priority areas of focus that include: Creating Wealth and Jobs; Delivering Education and Health; Ensuring Justice and Equity; Protecting Life and Property and Achieving Economic and Political Integration. These five priority areas are linked to all the SDGs.

Within government has gone ahead and fully integrated the SDGs in Uganda's National Development Plan – the NDP3 is now 90% aligned to the SDGs. She added that as a country, Uganda has put in place the necessary institutional and policy framework to support the SDG implementation. The Office of the Prime Minister oversees Government business including SDG implementation. She pointed out that, Uganda has put in place a national roadmap for implementation of the SDGs, His Excellency the President appointed a focal point Minister for SDGs (Rt. Hon. Justine Kasule Lumumba) and Government, continues to produce several progress reports on SDGs. The conference is, therefore, a step in the right direction. As an effort to bring together a diversity of stakeholders in the SDG implementation process, it clearly supports the fast-tracking of SDGs and creates an important policy dialogue opportunity for reviewing the progress towards the attainment of SDGs in Uganda. she added that as mentioned in the recent State of the National Address by His Excellency the President and in the Budget Speech, the Ugandan economy, stands at US\$ 45.7 billion by the exchange rate method. Uganda's GDP per capita is now \$1046 slightly higher than the entrance points for the lower middle-income status of USD 1036. She cautioned that while we can celebrate this achievement, it also requires us to work harder and sustain the current level of GDP per capita and ensure that we impact people livelihoods across the country. The Prime Minister indicated that one of the areas where Government is putting significant effort and investment is the Parish Development Model. The Parish Development Model is clearly aligned to the SDGs principle of 'Leave No One Behind'. She ended by noted that the SDG conference is welcome idea and Government is committed to working with communities and other development partners to continue finding new ways in which we can accelerate the attainment of our national development targets. She concluded by wishing the delegates productive two days and looked forward to receiving the outcomes of the conference.

6. Parallel Session 1: Accelerating SDG through agro-industrialization

Moderator: Agnes Kirabo - Executive Director Food Rights Alliance

Dr. Julian Adyeri Omalla, Managing Director Delight Uganda Limited

Julius Kapwepwe - PDM Secretariat

Jean Marie Byakweli - Policy Officer, FAO

Mr. Gerald Katabazi - Volcano Coffee

Key Highlights

- Agro-industrialisation is about wealth creation and inclusive growth, through increased economic integration and productivity in the agriculture sector and Uganda should exploit the synergies.

- Discussion pointed out that agro-industrialisation would require changes in growth of agro-processing and agribusiness; building strong market structures and innovations at various levels.
- Private sector actors indicated that agro-industrialisation can promote inclusive development by providing sustainable jobs and livelihoods for the vulnerable people.
- The panel underscored the centrality of financing agriculture and that solving problems of hunger in Uganda will have a clear multiplier effect on all the SDGs.
- The session listened to a number of entrepreneurs in the agro-industry who shared stories of change that they have enjoyed over the years.
- They underscored the role of food security as a mechanism for stabilizing food supply chains.

Parallel Session: Doing good while doing well: How can Private Sector do more within the COVID era

Moderator: Peter Kimbowa, Chairman Board NSSF

John Walugembe, Executive Director, Federation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises-Uganda

Jackie Arinda; CEO, Jada Coffee

Mr. Orria Goni, SDG Finance & South to South Cooperation Advisor

Key Highlights

- Focus was on the critical drivers to business and entrepreneurship and the session underscored the role of digital technologies in the development businesses for young people.
- The session listened to perspectives from a young coffee investor and highlighted important aspects like the need for policy incentives to encourage value addition. Noting sometimes Ugandan demand better quality packing and this is expensive to get into the country because of taxation hence creating challenges to be competitive on the market with other products with better presentation
- E-commerce is a revolutionary idea. Young people who are embracing it do not need huge overheads to run a business and just have to depend on a reliable internet connection and ability to trade through digital tools.
- The need to expand the digital infrastructure in the country was highlighted and how this could be a game-changer for so many young people across the country.
- The use of digital data is supreme and an important part of private sector growth – to have data about customers, sellers, volumes of trade, products on the market and other trade metrics makes a huge difference in how economies are able to sustain themselves.
- Small-scale traders need a lot of protection and support in terms of financing, capacity development, and reduction of red-tape so that they can stay in business.
- The formalization of small scale industries is also hampered by the fact that tax burden and associated costs of that they have to carry do not allow these industries to grow.

7. Speech of the Right Honorable Anita Among, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda

Highlights of Keynote Speech: Reflections on the Role of Parliament in the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: By Right Honorable Anita Among, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda

The Speaker opened her presentation by bringing greetings from the Parliament of Uganda and congratulated the Office of the Prime Minister and the Government of Uganda at large for organizing this historic event, the first Uganda Annual Sustainable Development Goals Conference. She noted that the 2030 Agenda Declaration acknowledges the “essential role of national parliaments through their enactment of legislation and adoption of budgets and their role in ensuring accountability for effective implementation of our commitments”. Therefore, members of parliament are uniquely positioned to act as an interface between the people and state institutions and to promote and adopt people-centered policies and legislation to ensure that no one is left behind. She continued that to say that the implementation of the SDGs requires the use of a wide range of policy and program approaches. While legislation is rarely the complete policy response necessary to tackle a problem, it is a critical first step in ensuring an enabling environment conducive to policy action. The parliament of Uganda has been keen on this and many laws have been enacted in line with the 5 P’s of the 2030 Agenda.

The Speaker added that given that the annual national budget is also enacted as a law of Parliament, the lawmaking function of Parliament takes on additional critical importance in terms of ensuring that funds are effectively directed towards addressing the most important national SDG priorities to ensure that everybody and every community benefit from the national budget.

Therefore, for the SDGs to be implemented effectively, it is critical that their implementation is properly funded and that financing is targeted to ensure efforts reach the most marginalized and vulnerable. Parliamentarians should be aware of these forms of funding and form a view as to whether the various sources are well-coordinated to avoid duplication and overlap.

On oversight, one of the most important duties of Parliament is overseeing the executive branch to ensure accountability for the efficient and effective delivery of expenditures, laws and programs which have a direct effect on the people, planet and society. Parliament has a critical role as a powerful domestic accountability mechanism. Parliamentarians establish accountability-enabling environment through enactment of laws, but also have direct responsibilities for ensuring accountability through their own oversight efforts. In doing this, parliament ensures that government programs and the SDGs aspirations reach and make sense to the common person.

Parliamentarians are better equipped to perform their role when they hear from a broad cross-section of the public. It is critical that the legal frameworks established and the funding allocated to achieve the various SDGs should be based on the insights and the perspectives of people who will be affected by, and who will benefit from such changes. However, for all this to happen, Parliamentarians and parliament at large must be well apprised on the development frameworks including SDGs so we can better deliver on our mandate. These efforts have already started through the parliamentary forum for SDGs in partnership with the Office of the Prime Minister. She noted that there should also be credible and timely information to the people and communities left behind so they can be better targeted by Government development programs, laws and policies and appropriate attention. She ended by pledging continued support and participation of Parliament in the SDG localization and discussion towards the journey to 2030.

8. Speech of His Lordship the Chief Justice, Alfonse Owiny Dollo

Highlights of Keynote Speech: Reflections on the Role of Judiciary in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by His Lordship the Chief Justice, Alfonse Owiny Dollo

The Chief Justice started his keynote by joining the Speaker to congratulate the Office of the Prime Minister for convening this conference and welcoming inviting him to speak. He noted that there is a very important connection between the rule of law and SDGs. He noted that justice institutions are vital to the achievement of SDGs goals that include ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity and specifically contributes to SDG 16. Goal 16 focuses on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels and significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere. He noted that the judiciary is a key place in the attainment of this goal. He added that empirical studies have demonstrated the critical role of justice institutions in fostering a healthy business environment, enhancing growth, improving access to public services, curbing corruption and restraining the abuse of power. He quoted a World Bank study that shows a reduction in the case backlog would unlock significant amounts of investment for Uganda. For example, a case backlog reduction of 10 percent in 2020 would free up 2,737 UGX million that could be reinvested in the economy, while a reduction of 20 percent would unlock nearly 5,475 UGX million. He continued to add that justice also underpins the political process by protecting individuals' rights and facilitating collective action.

He, therefore, called for more investment in justice institutions. Under his leadership, he noted that the judiciary has recruited more officers and enhanced their pay. He called on Ugandans to continue supporting the judiciary and not entice them with bribes and draw them into corrupt practices.

He emphasized that the attainment of SDGs will depend on a strong and effective judicial infrastructure. The appointment of judges and magistrates, the expansion of judicial zones across the country, the elimination of corruption across the country were all efforts that are important in the attainment of SDGs and thereby meeting the NDP and SDG targets for Uganda. He wished the delegates good deliberations and looked forward to engaging more with all stakeholders in the country's efforts toward attaining the SDG targets.

9. High-Level Panel Discussion: “Leaving No One Behind”: Technology, Data & Evidence for Social Protection?

Moderator: Ambassador Adonia Ayebare, Uganda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Dr. Chris Mukiza, Executive Director, UBOS

Dr. Mohamed El Munir A. Safiaddin UNICEF Country Representative

Ms. Adekemi Ndieli, Country Representative a.i., UN Women

Dr. Robert Limlim; Director DRDIP/NUSAF. Office of the Prime Minister

Key Highlights

- Underscored the role of data in the implementation of the SDGs with UBOS giving the example that expanding the number of indicators that have data points in Uganda from 92 – 119 indicators was instrumental in improving reporting on SDGs.
- The development of statistical plans by different entities is being encouraged at the national level as well as among stakeholders like cultural institutions.
- On social protection and data, experts shared that data on a number of metrics like income poverty which stands at 20.3%, food poverty at 39%, stunting at 30% and health insurance at 4% indicate that more needs to be done to ensure that social protection is expanded from the current figure of 0.3% to 1% of GDP.
- The panel heard that data from NUSAF shows impressive impact which includes reaching over 11,700 households with grants for Livelihood Investment Support (LIS) and 285,500 people through targeted employment under the Labour-Intensive Public Works component. These were all possible because of the existence of data.
- On the refugee situation it was noted that Uganda has a long history of hosting refugees. This started in the early 1940s and continued into the mid-1950s almost 80,000 Sudanese refugees, fleeing the first civil war, sought refuge in the country. Today, almost 1.5 million refugees live in Uganda, making it the top refugee-hosting country in Africa and one of the top five hosting countries in the world.
- On gender data, the session highlighted that quality gender data strengthens development planning process and when governments have better data about women's work and employment, both paid and unpaid, leaders can make targeted investments to increase women's labor force participation and contribute to poverty reduction and economic growth.
- The session also noted that complete data leads to resource efficiency as comprehensive data about both women and men ensures policymakers have the right information to effectively deploy limited resources and maximize efficiency to advance progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
- Data-informed policies help us achieve gender equality and understanding the challenges women and girls face allows decision-makers to make interventions where they are needed most. An example was given in one African country where working with persons affected to present evidence and data in Parliament was a very effective way of influencing decision-making.

10. Parallel Session: Protecting the gains and strengthening investments towards achieving SDGs for Children and Young People

Moderator: Greg Lavender, Head of Programme Strategy Plan International Uganda

Lead Presenter: Protecting the gains and strengthening the gains in education and health - Dr Mary Otieno- UNFPA representative

Mr. Carthbert Mulyalya, Principal Planner, Education Planning and Policy Analysis Dept/SDG4 Focal Point, MoES

Dr. Daniel Kyabayinze, Director Public Health, MOH

Ms. Angela Nakafeero, Commissioner Women and Gender, MGLSD

Edwin Muhumuza, President, Youth Coalition for SDGs

Key Highlights

- The session emphasized the need to enable the young to exploit their potential and to protect young children while in school and out of school.
- Young people in attendance shared moving testimonies. One young girl narrated a story of a friend who became pregnant, was rejected at home and went into a bush, pierced herself with a sharp stick and drank coke mixed with detergent soap – hoping this will aid the abortion. She unfortunately passed away.
- Children narrated how corporal punishment is still used in schools. This session underscored the need for closer monitoring in schools and working with communities to ensure that young people are supported in all areas of life.
- The session also discussed challenges that hinder acceleration in the implementation of child-friendly policies and programs including issues like inadequate data, resource constraints and poor monitoring of compliance.
- The session noted that keeping girls in school is an investment and reduces the high cost of teenage pregnancies.
- It was further noted that emphasis needs to be put on sex education for young people to ensure that basic knowledge is available to all and the religious leaders should support responsible sex education.
- The need to have youth representatives included in the conversations whenever policymakers convene was underscored and young people's mental health was discussed as an issue that requires urgent attention especially in the light of rapid changes and disruptions that young people have gone through during the Covid period.

11. Parallel Session: Civil Society in SDG implementation, monitoring and reporting

Moderator: Patricia Munaabi, Executive Director, FOWODE

Dr. Moses Isooba, Executive Director, Uganda National NGO Forum

Rita Aciro, Executive Director Uganda Women's Network

Julius Mukunda, Executive Director, Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group

Richard Rumsey, World Vision

Key highlights

- The session on Civil Society in SDGs implementation, monitoring, and reporting discussion applauded the citizen data initiatives by the government and noted that there is a need to ensure that citizens have data and can hold leaders accountable.

- Collaboration and partnerships between Civil Society, Private Sector, and the Government were stressed as very important ingredients in accelerating the attainment of SDGs.
- Civil society and other stakeholders must be structurally involved in monitoring and reporting process for the SDGs. Learning from the strengths and weaknesses of the current processes requires that a better representation of the diversity of civil society including vulnerable groups should be considered in monitoring processes.
- While the SDG conference could play a key role in enabling continuous stakeholder engagement, wider civil society, there must also be regular opportunities to contribute to the assessment of progress made. A critical task now will be for CSOs to also identify and select the most relevant indicators to monitor the relate to their work.
- National budgets are powerful instruments to ensure that policies, plans, and priorities of governments are implemented. The better the public budgeting is, the closer the policy implementation and outcomes are to the plans.
- There should be explicit and measurable presentation of SDG targets in budget allocations and reports and use of those in budget decision-making. This can be achieved by adapting systems and practices through which the executive, Parliament, audit institutions, and the public are informed about the government's SDG-related budget policies and implementation and are closely engaged in accountability processes throughout the budget cycle.
- Session noted that there is a need to produce more and better gender data because without data, the ability of women's organizations to monitor the SDGs and track progress on commitments to gender equality will be compromised.
- The session also underscored that achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is integral to each of the 17 goals. When the rights of women and girls are attained across all the goals then the strategic outcomes of SDGs like justice and inclusion, economies that work for all, and sustaining our shared environment now and for future generations will be achieved.

12. Keynote Presentation: Models for SDGs Acceleration across Africa Dr. Fredrick Mugisha, SDG Integration Advisor for African Region, UNDP

The presenter noted that Africa is making significant progress, but the development deficit is much deeper than many of us want to believe or want to appreciate. It is therefore important that we push in the same direction every time and all the time. In the last two decades, African countries have been among the fastest growing economies in the world. This progress is also reflected here in Uganda. he shared observed that for those who are his age or older, it used to take us 3 days to travel from Kampala to Kisoro. And in many communities, there was only one pickup to provide transport, if it left you, you would walk sometimes for thirty kilometers. That is a time long gone. However, this progress is just not enough. He shared a graphic with dots across 10 leagues that showed that no African country is represented in the top 3 leagues and in the bottom leagues are almost exclusively occupied by African countries. The situation, he further noted was compounded by the fact that Africa's means are still limited. For instance, the combined expenditure of all African Governments is only 2.3% of all world Governments. And it is 11% of the United States Government.

But he also noted that there is good news though, which is reflected in his second thought. The consensus to accelerate the delivery of the future is already in place and models to accelerate this progress are taking shape. The consensus that the entire world stands to benefit when the African countries play in the top leagues is contained in the 2030 Agenda, in which global leaders committed themselves to transform the world, and in the Africa Union Agenda 2063. In addition, the process of evaluating the First Ten Year Implementation Plan and articulating the Second Ten Year Implementation Plan is underway. He added that, regarding the required actions, they are learning that models to accelerate the SDGs, have to recognize 3 issues.

The first issue is to focus. Countries need to identify at most 3 actions that will help fasten the transformation process. The second is the multiplier effects of the identified actions. We have to ensure that the actions identified have the ability to bring about significant progress across development outcomes, across generations as well as across geography. And the third issue is that we have to be obsessed with scale.

He observed that some of the actions that have caught his eye while in Uganda resonate with the efforts Uganda is trying to advance. He emphasized the role and centrality of Development Planning in efforts to accelerate the SDGs. If these actions do not find themselves into sector plans or/and district plans, no resources can be legally allocated to them. We have to continue to remind ourselves of what is at stake here. In most countries, public expenditure outside the Development Planning process is a crime punishable by law, which makes it a must that these actions have to be part of Development Planning.

His third and last thought was that some of Uganda's actions could be game-changers in accelerating the SDGs and Agenda 2063. These are the ones he shared. The first was digitization and he underscored that in Uganda's current National Development Plan, 80% of government services will be online in 2025. It will be a huge transformation on how everyone does business. While the plan also includes a range of associated investments, it is critical that all sectors and local authorities negotiate and find ways in which to digitize and use digitization as a lever for their own transformation. The second action is the Parish Development Model as an accelerator of development and therefore the SDGs. The Parish Development Model can be a game-changer. It is an experiment that we must give time. The American democratic experiment dates back to 1835, that means they have been at it for close to 200 years. Yet it remains work in progress. They try to perfect it each day. If we have chosen to see the Parish Model as an experiment to accelerate our own development, we cannot just give up on it before it even starts. I would rather say, let every single institution think through how it can support the Parish Model to succeed, and let every institution be open to leverage the Parish Development Model.

He added that lighting a candle and putting it under the table cannot give us sufficient light. Let us make those parishes that achieve process to be a light for all of us. He ended by noting that finally, the action to establish the SDG Secretariat in the Office of the Prime Minister can only be a good thing. He had the opportunity to attend two SDG Regional Platforms. The ask was to integrate the SDGs in the development plans and budgets of local authorities as part of the localization of the SDGs. The reward of good work is more work. I am asking the Secretariat to help amplify the contribution of the Private Sector, the Civil Society Organizations, and Local Authorities to accelerate the SDGs and Agenda 2063. He continued that to observe that, I see a great opportunity for us to establish SDG-related value is created by the Private Sector, Civil Society, and Local Authorities. So that this informs

dialogue and negotiations for further investments. He requested that the SDG Secretariat and the focal Minister for SDGs take on the responsibility for Africa Union Agenda 2063.

He ended by saying he is very grateful to the SDG Secretariat and to the United Nations family for the opportunity to share his thoughts and hoped that together we can take actions to make faster progress in accelerating our own development and deliver agenda 2030 as well as 2063.

13. Session Panel Discussion: Local Authorities delivering on the SDG promise

Moderator: Richard Ssewakiryanga

Ms. Edlam Abera Yemeru, Director a.i. Gender Poverty and Social Development Division UNECA

Hon. Silas Aogon, Vice Chairperson, Uganda Parliamentary Forum on the SDGs

Ms. Gertrude Rose Gamwera, Secretary General, EALGA: Regional perspective on SDGs, Experiences of SDG localisation in the East Africa Region

Josephine Kalege General Secretary ULGA: The role of Local Governments in strengthening local governance for SDGs

Key Highlights

- The session emphasized that Uganda was a country that had a long history of decentralization. With all the challenges that could be there, the participants agreed that local action is required in order to build back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).
- The participants also discussed the estimate that at least 100 of the 169 SDG targets will not be reached without proper engagement and coordination with local and regional governments.
- This will require that the critical role of local governments is emphasized in the SDG implementation and the government has to continue in its strides to empower and support cities, local government, and communities in pursuing the 2030 Agenda and the national development efforts.
- The session heard that Uganda has so far implemented 10 Voluntary Local Review (VLRs) on SDGs having done the first one in Ngora. These VLRs are part of efforts to localize the 2030 Agenda and they are a powerful accelerator of SDG implementation.
- They have the potential to contribute to the collection and analysis of timely, accurate and disaggregated data at the local level; to bring all stakeholders, including those in vulnerable situations, closer to decision-making processes that impact their lives and livelihoods, including access to quality public goods and services.
- The panel underscored the need to strengthen multilevel governance, support local planning, increase financing for Local Governments and ensure that needs of local communities are responded to at the local level.
- The panel noted that the practice of carrying out VLRs should be expanded across the country and models and approaches of where decentralization of working can then be well captured in the process.

- The panel heard that there could be lessons to learn from other countries like Kenya in terms of the positive aspects of devolution.

14. Closing Ceremony

Reading out of the key messages and conference outcome document by the Right Honorable Minister for General Duties, Justine Kasule Lumumba

The Minister read out the key highlights that formed the Outcome Document in which she summarized the process, deliberations and outcomes of each session. A **Conference Outcome Document** is attached in Annex 1 of this report.

Conference Closing Statement by Her Excellency, Vice president of the Republic of Uganda, Rtd. Maj Jessica Rose Epel Alupo

The Vice President of Uganda commended the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister whose office is responsible for the 2030 Agenda coordination in Uganda for hosting this conference. She noted that the method of using a bottom-up approach, that culminated into this first SDG conference is a very good one. This is because it assures that the discussions held are rooted in the perspectives of citizens both at the local and national levels. She added that this approach is consistent with the NRM's efforts, under the wise and able leadership of His Excellency the President of Uganda – Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. She shared with participants that the NRM Manifesto commits to deliver meaningful growth and development in Uganda through the elimination of obstacles of poor infrastructure, political instability, backwardness, corruption and sectarianism through the National Development Plan and its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Vice President referenced the impressive strides that are starting to bear fruit as evidenced by the ascension of Uganda to Middle Income Status and called on all Ugandans to double efforts and ensure that they protect all the gains that have been made and also explore new innovations to respond to the challenges that have emerged from the global Covid 19 pandemic and associated global instability. She told the gathering that Government is committed to the pledge to leave no one behind, as it steers the course to achieve the 17 SDGs in Uganda.

She ended by observing that promoting multistakeholder dialogue is a sign of maturity in Uganda's democratization process which allows openly and transparently sharing successes and failures, and through positive criticism work together to look for solutions that can contribute to triggering action towards the nation's transition from a peasant society to the full and sustainable middle-income status.

In a special way, she recognized the immense contribution of the Right Honorable Prime Minister and her team for the continued effort in producing the SDG progress reports and SDG Voluntary National Review Reports and consequently organizing them reviews every year. She implored all conference delegates to ensure that the agreed actions reached at during the two-day deliberations should be followed up and implemented to attain our overall development results as a country.

Annex 1: Conference Outcome Document

Key Messages Outcome Document
Uganda Annual SDG Conference 2022
Held at Serena Hotel on the
16th and 17th June 2022

1. The Office of the Prime Minister, through its SDG secretariat, convened the First Annual SDG Conference and regional pre-events in three regions of Uganda – Mbale, Hoima and Gulu - from the 8th to the 17th June 2022.
2. The Regional Forums brought together over 600 participants that included Local Government Leaders, Civil Society, Private Sector, Traditional Leaders and Children. The regional forums focused on understanding what models are currently being implemented at the community level and how these can be scaled up.
3. The discussions at each regional forum were preceded by a presentation from the SDG secretariat – sharing the 2021 Progress Report. A panel discussion led by children was conducted and presentations by selected MDAs on models that government is implementing were presented that included the Parish Development Model, the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund and the Development Response to Displacement Impact Project (DRDIP). Highlights of the key messages from the regional forums included the following:
 - a. The local leaders expressed the desire to see more work done to localize the SDGs so that they can be integrated in their district development plans and parish level through the Parish Development Model.
 - b. Local Leaders called on central government to continuously engage with Local Governments through consultative forums and interactions where progress reports are shared in the implementation of development projects as well as share innovations from various regions across the country.
 - c. Local leaders called for capacity building in integrating the SDGs into their District Development Plans and developing competencies to effectively target the most vulnerable in line with the principle of *Leave No One Behind*.
 - d. Local leaders decried the financial resource challenges they are faced with and how these hamper their ability to attain their development objectives of local government and they recommended continuous engagement to improve their ability to provide better services to the people and ultimately reach the SDG targets.
 - e. The representative of the new cities decried the low local revenue available in the cities and noted that with the current resource envelope they may not be able to reach the targets set out in Goal 11 - make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

- f. The impact of Covid is still a challenge for most local government as they grapple to find resources to mitigate the impact of the lockdown on business, social service provision and revenue collection at the local level.
 - g. Local leaders underscore the need to continuously engage with all actors at the local level and noted that there are many innovative models which if well implemented at scale can complement government initiatives.
 - h. The local leader committed to further work closely with the schools and parents in communities to ensure that young people are safe, young girls get unwanted pregnancies and that children continue to study and achieve all their life goals and dreams.
4. The children who attended all the regional forums from the Children's Parliament Initiative of World Vision shared several messages through a variety of methods that included a panel discussion, drama skits and poems and they discussed pertinent SDG issues affecting children. Some of the key issues they raised included:
- a. The scourge of child marriages and teenage pregnancies and its impact on children's livelihood and the attainment of all SDG targets.
 - b. The children decried the effects of school closures on children including the fact that they stayed at home for too long and have lost time that they will never recover in their lifetime.
 - c. The children shared that the effects of hunger on children in communities and schools is a critical concern. Many of them attend school with no food provided by their parents and this impacts their learning outcomes.
 - d. The children noted that the gender imbalances still affect girls and boys at the community level – where in some communities the girls are still taken as commodities and exchanged in illegal marriage and other forms of child abuse.
 - e. Children from the gold mining regions noted that the use of toxic chemicals in the mines is introducing toxins in drinking water which is affecting their health. Further, many children have abandoned school and are experiencing child labor because of the challenges of need to supplement the incomes of their families.
 - f. The children called for more investments in education, better working conditions for their teachers. When teachers are not happy the children noted that this affected their learning.
 - g. Child called for child-friendly health services, including those for adolescents. They noted that across the country condoms are distributed freely and yet sanitary pads for girls are not free.
 - h. The children condemned the practice of corruption by all people especially children. They noted that children suffer most when there is corruption at a community level. The money

lost means that the schools, clinics and other social services cannot provide adequate resources for them.

5. In the group discussions by the participants at the regional forums, were limited to the SDGs under review in the year 2022 and these included SDG 4 on education, SDG 5 on gender, SDG 14 on life under water and SDG 15 on life on land. Several critical issues relating to the impact of Covid 19 on the attainment of several SDGs were raised. These are summarized in the regional synthesis matrix attached to this report in Annex 4.
6. Participants noted that on SDG 4 some of the major changes that emerged during the lockdown period included the introduction of home learning materials and different teaching and learning approaches that allowed limited education continuity in some areas during the Covid 19 lockdown.
7. Participants also pointed out that while in some places e-learning materials were introduced the lack of internet, low income to purchase data, the timing of radio and TV education programs created challenges.
8. On SDG 4, like the children, issues of teenage pregnancy were a prominent topic in all the discussions. The participants noted that there were several opportunities that emerged including the opportunities to improve the delivery of learning in the education sector by incorporating e-learning into the new curriculum.
9. Some of the models that can help accelerate education attainment that were mentioned, including the use of para-socio teacher models at community level that are based on citizen groups that support education.
10. On SDG 5 on gender equality, participants noted that while in some strong families the lockdown strengthened family ties in others the lockdown led to high levels of gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy, high level of care work for women and girls and loss of incomes especially for women in small businesses.
11. On SDG 14 some of the key issues rotated around increased cultivation in swamps during the lockdown and in some places where there is mining and fishing – poisoning of water resources with toxic substances, child labor and related child abuse.
12. On SDG 15, the agricultural land expansion that destroyed wetlands was a major issue especially as people migrated to villages during the pandemic. The increase in the use of agriculture chemicals and the depletion of forest reserves came out prominently.
13. Several models were presented by the participants that could be used in accelerating SDGs. The para-social model in education, the Korean model of development, the Village Savings and Loans Association model, The Commercial Village model, The Bonga Youth model, Sustainable and Smart Agriculture models in fishing farming, maggot farming and other types of were natural resource-based models were shared.

14. The Government also presented its own models that included, NUSAF, Parish Development Model, DRDIP (Development Response to Displacement Impact Project) to mention but a few.
15. The First National Conference was graced with the attendance of the Right Honorable Prime Minister of Uganda, representing the President of Uganda, the Right Honorable Speaker of Parliament, The Vice President, His Worship the Chief Justice and several ministers and representatives of UN agencies and members of the diplomatic corps.
16. The Right Honorable Prime Minister called for the forums like the SDG conference to be taken further down into the communities so that there is direct interaction between the local communities and leaders. She welcomed the fact that the SDG conference will be an annual event.
17. The session on priorities and financing of SDGs focused on the changes in global economies. It was noted that financing of SDGs will come from various sources – aid, alignment, private businesses, philanthropy, bonds and other types of financing. The session noted that we need to move towards generating practical solutions in relation of resource mobilization.
18. Some of the practical solutions shared included, examples in improving technical capability for companies. The example of the National Social Security Fund and its new technology capability was shared with participants. The financing session also observed the need for expanding efficiency gains within government as a way to expand the fiscal space and find resources for financing the SDGs. The session noted that the mid-term review of the National Development Plan will help to refocus financing towards the NDP and the SDGs.
19. The session of financing also heard that for the private sector in Uganda to play its role, it will require the creation of an enabling environment for businesses. The session heard about several initiatives that are working to support the private sector including programs for skilling young people, the need to build more export processing zones and expanding the use of private equity in investing in the SDGs.
20. The PDM secretariat made a presentation and indicated that there is a strong connection between the PDM and the SDGs and the current roll out of the PDM will go a long way in contributing to the attainment of SDGs 1,2, 8, 10, 15, 17.
21. The Parallel Session on *Accelerating SDGs through Agro-industrialization* underscored the centrality of financing agriculture and key message that solving problems of hunger in Uganda will have a clear multiplier effect on all the SDGs. The session listened to a number of entrepreneurs in the agro-industry who shared stories of change that they have enjoyed over the years. They underscored that role of food security as a mechanism for stabilizing food supply chains.
22. The Parallel Session of *Doing Good While Doing Well: How Can The Private Sector Do More Within The Covid Era* focused on a number of critical drivers to business and entrepreneurship. The session underscored the role of digital technologies in the development business for young people. The session listened to perspectives from a young coffee investor and highlighted important

aspects like the need for policy incentives to encourage value addition, the role of e-commerce in the country, and the need to expand the information infrastructure in the country. The session also touched on the fact that data is supreme and an important part of private sector growth. The need for data synchronization across government institutions was also mentioned as a key issue.

23. The second day commenced with a speech from the Right Honorable Speaker of Parliament who called on the organizers to take the session outside of Kampala in the villages and communities where the SDG challenges are. This will help to ensure stronger connection between the local and national level actors in the delivery of SDGs. She also called for the documentation of models that work and can support the implementation of SDGs.
24. His Worship the Chief Justice made an important connection between justice and the attainment of SDGs. He underscored the cross cutting role of SDG 16 and its impact on the attainment of all the other SDGs. He noted that the attainment of SDGs will depend on a strong judicial infrastructure. The appointment of judges and magistrates, the expansion of judicial zones across the country, the elimination of corruption across the country will go a long way in supporting the attainment of SDGs and thereby meeting the NDP and SDG targets for Uganda.
25. The Session on *Leaving No One Behind: Technology, Data and Evidence for Social Protection* focused on the role of data. The session underscored the role of data in the implementation of the SDG with UBOS expanding the number of indicators that have data points in Uganda from 92 – 119 indicators. The development of statistical plans by different entities is being encouraged at the national level as well as among stakeholder like cultural institutions. Data on a number of metrics; like income poverty that stands at 20.3%, food poverty at 39%, stunting at 30% while health insurance at 4%, indicate that more needs to be done to ensure that social protection is expanded.
26. The Session on *Leaving No One Behind: Technology, Data and Evidence for Social Protection* underscored the role of data in the implementation of the SDGs with UBOS expanding the number of indicators that have data points in Uganda from 92 – 119 indicators. The development of statistical plans by different entities is being encouraged at the national level as well as among stakeholders like cultural institutions. On social protection and data, experts shared that data on a number of metrics like income poverty which stands at 20.3%, food poverty at 39%, stunting at 30% and health insurance at 4% indicate that more needs to be done to ensure that social protection is expanded from the current figure of 0.3% to 1% of GDP.
27. The Session on *Protecting the Gains and Strengthening Investments towards achieving SDGs for Children and the Young*, emphasized the need to enable the young to exploit their potential and to protect young children while in school and out of school. Young people in attendance shared moving testimonies. One young girls narrated a story of a friend who became pregnant, was rejected and home and went into a bush pierced herself with sharp stick and drank coke mixed with detergent soap – hoping this will aid the abortion. She unfortunately passed away. Children narrated how corporal punishment is still used in schools.

28. This session underscored the need for closer monitoring in schools and working with communities to ensure that young people are supported in all areas of life. The session also discussed challenges that hinder acceleration in the implementation of child friendly policy and programs including issues like inadequate data, resource constraints and poor monitoring of compliance. It was noted that keeping girls in school is an investment and reduces the high cost of teenage pregnancies. It was further noted that emphasis needs to be put on sex education for young people to ensure that basic knowledge is available to all and the religious leaders should support responsible sex education. The need to have youth representatives included in the conversations whenever policymakers convene was underscored and young people's mental health was discussed as an issue that require urgent attention especially in the light of rapid changes and disruptions that young people have gone through during the Covid period.
29. The session on Civil Society in SDGs implementation, monitoring, and reporting discussion applauded the citizen data initiatives by the government and noted that there is a need to ensure that citizens have data and can hold leaders accountable. Collaboration and partnerships between Civil Society, Private Sector, and the Government were stressed as very important ingredients in accelerating the attainment of SDGs. It was also noted that since there are only eight years left to the year 2030 when the SDGs goals must have been realized, there is a need to mobilize citizens to do whatever it takes achieve the SDG goals. Identify what works at local level, increase collaborative work with citizen formations and groups and continue to find ways of making sure that citizens are at the center of the development processes.
30. The last expert session focused on *local authorities delivering on the SDG promise*. In the session it has emphasized that Uganda was a country that had a long history of decentralization. With all the challenges that could be there, the participants agreed that local action is required in order to build back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The participants also discussed the estimate that at least 100 of the 169 SDG targets will not be reached without proper engagement and coordination with local and regional governments. This will require that the critical role of local governments is emphasized in the SDG implementation and the government has to continue in its strides to empower and support cities, local government, and communities in pursuing the 2030 Agenda and the national development efforts. The session heard that Uganda has so far implemented 10 Voluntary Local Review (VLRs) on SDGs having done the first one in Ngora. These VLRs are part of efforts to localize the 2030 Agenda and they are a powerful accelerator of SDG implementation. They have the potential to contribute to the collection and analysis of timely, accurate and disaggregated data at the local level; to bring all stakeholders, including those in vulnerable situations, closer to decision-making processes that impact their lives and livelihoods, including access to quality public goods and services. The panel underscored the need to strengthen multilevel governance, support local planning, increase financing for Local Governments and ensure that needs of local communities are responded to at the local level. The panel noted that the practice of carrying out VLRs should be expanded across the country and models and approaches of where decentralization of working can then be well captured in the process. The panel heard that there could be lessons to learn from other countries like Kenya in terms of the positive aspects of devolution.

31. The closing ceremony was graced by the attendance of the Vice President of Uganda who commended the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister whose office is responsible for the 2030 Agenda coordination in Uganda for hosting this conference. She noted that the method of using a bottom-up approach, that culminated into this first SDG conference is a very good one. This is because it assures that the discussions held are rooted in perspectives of citizens both at the local and national levels. She added that this approach is consistent with the NRM's efforts, under the wise and able leadership of His Excellency the President of Uganda – Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. She shared with participants that the NRM Manifesto commits to deliver meaningful growth and development in Uganda through the elimination of obstacles of poor infrastructure, political instability, backwardness, corruption and sectarianism through the National Development Plan and its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals.
32. The Vice President referenced the impressive strides that are starting to bear fruit as evidenced by the ascension of Uganda to Middle Income Status and called on all Ugandans to double efforts and ensure that we protect all the gains that have been made and also explore new innovations to respond to the challenges that have emerged from the global Covid 19 pandemic and associated global instability. She ended by informing the gathering the Government is committed to the pledge to leave no one behind, as it steers the course to achieve the 17 SDGs in Uganda.
33. She added that promoting multistakeholder dialogue is a sign of maturity in Uganda's democratization process which allows openly and transparently sharing successes and failures, and through positive criticism work together to look for solutions that can contribute to triggering action towards the nation's transition from a peasant society to the full and sustainable middle-income status.