



Thank You Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Allow me to use this opportunity to congratulate you upon your election as President of 19 MSP and thank you for your efforts you have invested in working towards a mine free world.

Uganda is committed to supporting 19 MSP presidency priorities of localization, capacity building, innovation and inclusivity. Together and through these themes the Oslo Action plan will be successfully implemented.

Uganda implements an inclusive service provision approach which ensures that all Persons with Disabilities including the landmine victims and their caregivers, access the same range of services as all other Ugandans, with specific attention to their peculiar needs and rights. This inclusive approach is supported by our strong legal and policy framework derived from both national and international instruments. In this regard, Uganda ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol in 2008 and ratified the Convention on the Anti-Personnel (AP) Mine Ban Treaty in 1999.

The protection of all persons with disabilities has been at the center of the continuous national efforts to improve the social economic conditions of all Ugandans. In order to strengthen our comprehensive response in this regard the Government developed the National Policy on Disability in 2006. This policy guides all interventions made towards upholding the rights of all persons with disabilities including the land mine survivors. The policy has since been revised to adopt to the changing social and economic circumstances and is currently pending cabinet approval.

In 2018 the Government of Uganda restated its commitment to disability inclusion, specifically, Inclusion in Education, Routes to Economic Empowerment, Harnessing Technology and Innovation as well as Tackling Stigma and Discrimination at the first High Level World Disability Commitment, United Kingdom, July 2018.

In order to understand and guide our policy formulation and implementation the Government, with support from DFID through the Expanding Social Protection Program and the Development Pathways Company of UK conducted a situation analysis of Persons with Disabilities in Uganda. The findings of the study were disseminated during the National Disability Symposium which took place on 27th November 2019 in Kampala. The study established the causes of the different disabilities in Uganda and their effects on men and women as well as boys and girls and has thus supported our planning in this important area.

Mr. President, over the past two years, Government through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development developed and launched the Persons with Disabilities 2020 Regulations. These regulations, upon entry into force will guide the implementation of the Act. Additionally, the Government developed the National Inclusive Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2020/2024. The National Action Plan with support from the Implementation Support Unit was launched in August 2020 in Kampala by the Minister in charge of Disability and Elderly Affairs.

Arising out of the above-mentioned commitments, in the Financial Year 2019/2020, the government put in place the National Special Grant for Persons with Disabilities. The Fund is managed by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. This is in addition to the Special Grant for Persons with Disabilities which government put in place in 2009/2020, which is managed by Local Governments. The two funds are running concurrently and are meant to provide to Persons with Disabilities and/or their caregivers startup capital for income generating activities

in their groups so as to improve their livelihoods. The groups of beneficiaries also include the landmine survivors and victims.

In order to direct the implementation of the programme, guidelines were developed through a consultative process that brought together government ministries, departments and agencies as well as representatives of the beneficiaries. Landmine survivors from Gulu and Kitgum districts, which are some of the areas most affected by landmines in Uganda, were also consulted.

The Persons with Disabilities including the Landmine Survivors are also beneficiaries of other Government General Development Programs which have specific guidelines on how they are to benefit from them. These include the Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE), the Youth Livelihood Program (YLP), the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) and Operation Wealth Creation, among others.

The Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) has majority of its beneficiaries being Older Persons with Disabilities, at about 123,000, with 41% having severe disabilities, benefited from the program, (Expanding Social Protection Report 2018 (ESP 2018).

The Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP), aims at empowering youth in Uganda to harness their socio-economic potential and increase self-employment opportunities and income levels. To date, a total number of 7,500 about (2.9%) Youth with Disabilities (YLP social second review report, 2019).

In the same way, the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) is a government of Uganda initiative aimed at improving access to financial services for women and equipping them with skills for enterprise growth, value addition and marketing of their products and services. Over 1,800 women with disabilities have benefited so far (UWEP quarterly report, 2019). All the programs mentioned above including the SAGE, YLP and the UWEP have in their guidelines clauses that emphasize the inclusion of Older Persons, Women and Youth with Disabilities respectively and these include the landmine survivors.

Mr. President, Uganda still faces a number of challenges in the protection and promotion of the rights of landmine survivors and their access to all social and economic services. In this respect we call for international cooperation and assistance in these areas:

- Identifying and targeting the peculiar needs of landmine survivors while addressing challenges facing all Persons with Disabilities.
- Raising awareness on the needs of unit disability challenges since disability is not homogeneous
- Creating a national database on mine casualties, disaggregated by gender, age and type of impairment;
- Creating more job opportunities for land mine survivors.

I thank You.