

A JOINT STATEMENT ON WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT



The Uhuru Institute for Social Development (TUI), The Uganda Association of Women's Lawyers (FIDA – Uganda), and the National Association of Women's Organisations in Uganda (NAWOU) congratulate the International Cooperative Movement on the recent commemoration of the 100th#CoopsDay on 2nd Saturday, July 2022.

This 2022 #CoopDay global theme was “Cooperatives Build a Better World” focusing on increasing awareness of cooperatives ideology of mutualism anchored on the traditional cooperative values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, solidarity alongside the 7 international principles which are indeed crucial for the realization of sustainable development and a better world.

In Uganda, Cooperatives are recognized as an enterprise model that addresses the economic, social and cultural needs of its members, through fostering economic participation, protecting the environment and mitigating climate change, creating employment, enabling food security, stimulating community capital, shaping ethical value chains, and contributing to prosperity, peace, and happiness.

Cooperatives, offer women opportunities through value-based participation and influence in economic activities, gaining self-reliance through financing and investment options they would not have individually.

Due to unfair gender segregated socio-cultural, socio-economic, and socio-political dynamics women and girls are often under-represented in leadership and decision-making spaces of the cooperative movement undermining the “cooperative advantage” for women and girls.

Consequently, women are often employed as workers and less as negotiators for prices in markets or in

engagements with key decision makers. Women are also extremely few in cooperatives like Boda-Boda transport, carpentry, metal works which are largely considered the Men's arena.

As such, a deliberate strategy for gender integration in the operation of cooperatives is imperative for resilience cooperative and sustainable development that benefits both women and men. To harness the cooperative potential for women's empowerment and inclusive development, The Uhuru Institute, FIDA Uganda and NAWOU recommend the following:

- GoU, NGOs, other CSOs and cooperatives convene, dialogue, agree and launch a joint mass cooperative sensitization and mobilisation across the country on the value of the equal role of women and men in delivering true cooperative values, principles, for inclusive household prosperity and community development.
- Utilise the cooperative values and principles to facilitate and increase women's access, to, control over, and management of entire value chains of production and productivity that will enable women's full socio-economic empowerment and community prosperity, peace and happiness.
- All government supported programmes seriously consider diversifying business, investment, and employment opportunities for women and girls through adopting the integrated cooperative business model commonly known as Multipurpose Cooperatives in Uganda. This is an opportunity for the Parish Development Model programme.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY