

UCRNN and Partners Commemorate 25 Years of the Child Rights Convention

On 25th November 2014, Uganda Child Rights NGO Network in partnership with UNICEF Uganda, the Government of Uganda and the AfriChild Centre organized a Public Symposium as part of events to commemorate 25 years of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The Symposium was organized under the theme: *“CRC@25; counting the gains for children”*. The Symposium that was telecasted live on NTV for three hours crowned the month long events that included;

1. Two weeks of profiling influential individuals who walked the CRC journey in the last 25 years in the New Vision newspaper and NTV-Uganda.
2. Country wide Radio Talk shows to create awareness on the Convention on the Rights of the Child highlighting the gains Uganda has made in the last 25 years.
3. A CSO Directors Forum, that brought together the different heads of Child focused organizations to work together for children.
4. A Breakfast meeting with Members of Parliament and CSOs to strategize on expediting the Children’s Amendment Act and;
5. The Special Session with MPs on Children in Parliament on 20th November 2014.

The main objective of the Symposium was to bring the whole nation to rethink and refocus their discussions and set priorities for children.

This symposium was graced by the First lady of Uganda Hon. Mrs. Janet Museveni and drew over 400 participants males and females from child focused Civil society organizations, Government, Ugandan Parliament, Diplomats from the different United Nations Agencies, Academia, the Africa Wide Movement for Children (AMC), Media, Private sector and Children.

Apt yet informative and passionate presentations were made by; Jaya Murphy of UNICEF, Stella Ayo-Odongo of UCRNN and panel discussions were made by experienced rights activists that included; George Nyakora of Africa Wide Movement for Children, Hon. Kasiano Wadri Member of parliament, Deogratious Yiga of DLC, Dr. Sheila Ndyabangi

Recommendations

- ✓ **Need for clarity on the roles and responsibility of all actors and work together with government to promote and protect children’s rights**
- ✓ **The need to strengthen the child protection systems in African for example the East African Child Policy to galvanize efforts by countries to invest in children.**
- ✓ **Strengthen and encourage coordination amongst child actors to benefit**

children.

- ✓ **Need for Standards for delivery of interventions to children in the region.**

Recommendations:

- ✓ **CSOs to monitor where resources are allocated for children by government and how it is being utilized**
- ✓ **In the remaining one and half years for the 9th Parliament, Hon. Karoro Okurut was tasked to give `children a gift by passing the Children Act Amendments.**
- ✓ **Awareness raising on key child rights issues.**

1. Mr. Deogratias Yiga

- **Deo Yiga made a presentation on child protection in Uganda**

Recommendations

- **There is need for sustainable and proven innovations in child protection sector**
- **Appreciate parents who have done well in protecting children**
- **Behavioral change communication needs to be emphasized in child protection communication.**
- **Inculcate democratic values in children when still young. We see so many children slipping between the boundaries of state obligations and the capabilities of the parents through service delivery and feeding in schools.**
- **Create an environment where issues of children become politically sensitive especially where there is a disjoint between the passion we have for children who are close to us and the children society entrusts to us.**
- **For all the investments done, there is need to nurture the culture of accountability.**

the Children Act to strengthen legal protection of children.

- ❖ Transform all Remand homes to work as Rehabilitation Centres so as to ease pressure on Kampiringisa Rehabilitation Centre
- ❖ Support Parents with positive parenting skills in this information era so that they are able to effectively raise and protect their children.
- ❖ Widely disseminate Information on child protection to all stakeholders including children themselves.
- ❖ Utilize leadership positions and guide communities to deliver their responsibilities of looking after their children
- ❖ Need to roll out psychosocial programmes countrywide and increase funding to this sector
- ❖ Advocacy for African countries to sign the African Union Cyberspace Convention as a mechanism to curb on-line exploitation of children.
- ❖ Scale up birth registration countrywide as a protective measure to reduce abuse and exploitation of children.

Remark by the UNICEF Country Representative; Aidah Girma

- ❑ Noted that the ratification of UNCRC set a foundation for guaranteeing promotion and protection of all the rights of children.

Remarks by Hon. Mary Karoro Okurut, Minister of Gender, labour and Social Development

- In her brief remarks, Hon. Karoro Okurut informed participants that efforts were being undertaken to renovate Kobulin Rehabilitation Center in Napak to put an end to the street children phenomena in Karamoja.
- In respect of the Children Act amendments, work on the amendment bill has been finalized and awaits clearance from the First Parliamentary Counsel.

Remarks by the Chief Guest; the First Lady of Uganda, Mrs. Janet Museveni

- ❖ The First Lady was pleased to join commemoration for the CRC@25 as the country takes stock of the achievements in child rights promotion and protection. She called upon all stakeholders to revisit their strategies for children.

Recommendations by the First Lady

- **There is need to strengthen laws that protect children in the country.**
- **Child friendly spaces at the places of work for working mothers should be put in place.**
- **Step up advocacy and educate young families on their primary responsibilities in protecting their children.**
- **All those in leadership positions at all levels to mobilize communities and work towards realizing child rights.**

1. Lt Col Ssonko of Uganda Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF)
2. Hon. Kasiano Wandri (Committed Civil Servant and Legislator)
3. Dr. Margie Mugerera (Health expert)
4. Mr. Ronnie Muhumuza (Media personality)
5. Hon. David Pulko (1st Secretary General of National Council for Children NCC)
6. Dr. Nyonyintono
7. Mr. James Kabogozza from MoGLSD
8. Hon. Janat Mukwaya (1st Minister of Gender Labour and Social Development)
9. Hon. Felix Okot Ogong for his efforts in initiating the Children Act amendment process in 2005 as Minister of State for Children's Affairs
10. Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana
11. Grace Ekudu
12. Hon. Bwanika Bbale
13. Hon First Lady Janet Museveni– Founder of Uwes0
14. Gideon Badagawa of Private Sector Foundation of Uganda

- Acknowledged Winifred Otieno aged 11 from Kamuli for her efforts as a Child Speaker in the Children Parliament in 2009 and for mobilizing actors and fellow children in Uganda to uphold child rights and for being the 2011 1st finalist for the International Peace Award by Bishop Desmond Tutu.

The loses in the child rights sector were also pointed out and these included; Rennie Nakintu (UPFC), Eunice Kisebo Immigration dept, Haruna Mawa (Save the Children International), Dorothy Nangwale Oulanya (Child Rights expert), Yvonne Namaganda of Budo Junior School and Sam Acou (MoGLSD) were remembered.