



## **JOINT PRESS STATEMENT ON THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED GENERAL ELECTIONS 2021 AND ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 8<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2021.**

**PROPOSED DATE 17<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2021**

### ***Introduction***

The population of Uganda as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 was estimated at **45,741,007 people** according to Uganda Demographics 2020 with approximately **23.3 million female** and **22.4 million male**. Uganda's population is equivalent to **0.59% of the total world population**. The total number of registered voters for 2021 general elections according to the independent electoral commission of Uganda was 17,658,527 and of which 8,439,564 are **male registered voters (47.79%)** and 9,218,963 **Female registered voters (52.21%)**.

### ***Comment on the 2021 election environment***

Uganda Women Parliamentary Association wishes to congratulate the Independent Electoral Commission for carrying out a free, fair and peaceful elections of 2021. During the campaign period, the government of Uganda, Independent Electoral Commission, Parliament of Uganda, Religious leaders and members of civil society called for peace during elections and asked Ugandans to observe the Safety Operations Procedures during elections so as to keep everyone safe during this COVID-19 pandemic and this was followed by most members of the public and contestants.

UWOPA in a special way wishes to congratulate His Excellency YK Museveni for winning the 2021 presidential election and ask him to consider appointing women in key decision-making position as we continue to advance gender parity in policies and development.

However, in some parts of the country, we saw in the media reports of violence and security brutality on innocent and non-violent civilians and as UWOPA we condemn such acts. These acts of security brutality led to loss of lives, limbs and properties of many Ugandans.

### ***National and international instruments that support elections***

Participation in Elections in a democratic society is a principal right and responsibility of citizens. According to the 1995 Constitution of Uganda, power belongs to the people and it is every registered voter's constitutional right to vote a leader of their choice. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is an international instrument and Bill of rights for women that emphasizes the protection of women and girls and also equal inclusion of women in the political processes and in leadership.

Increasingly we have seen women nominate as presidential candidates in general elections in Uganda, Mama Miria Kalule Obote in 2006, Beti Olive Namisango Kamyamba in 2011, Maureen Kyalya in 2016 and Nancy Kalembe in 2021 general elections. Nancy Kalembe came 8<sup>th</sup> out of 11 presidential aspirants and for the first time we have seen a woman, Nabilah Kaggayi Sempala contest for Lord Mayor Kampala City hence the increase in women's participation in Politics to break the glass ceiling in male dominated political position. We are confident that one day a woman will rise to become the president of this country, because we have the number as women.

A total of **636** women were nominated to contest for the District Woman MP seat for the **146** Districts, **86** women nominated to contest for directly elected constituencies of which **14** went through **and 34** women nominated for the Special interest group seat and **13** went through. Women's participation in political processes have greatly increased over the years and this is because of the enabling laws and policies that supports mentorship and empowerment of women in Uganda.

**A total of 173 (32.89%) women were elected** to represent different constituencies in the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament of Uganda out of **529**MPs and the data is disaggregated as follows; **146** District Women Members of Parliament, out of **353** direct seats, **14 women** were elected, and **out of 30 seats** for special interest groups, **13 women** were elected. **Under special interest groups;** **3** female UPDF representatives two of whom are doctors, **2** female workers representatives, **3** female PWD representatives, **3** female Older person's representatives, **2** female youth representatives.

In this 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament we have 152 Female Members of Parliament of which 20 are on direct seat, we have noted a decrease in numbers of female MPs on direct seat despite the creation of more constituencies for the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament. We as women need to support our colleagues to build support base in politics and encourage more women to pick interest to contest in the male

dominated positions. The EC should conduct sensitization before elections to break the norms of people thinking that women should only contest on the affirmative action positions.

**International Women's Day, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 (IWD 2021) this year's theme, "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world."** The theme celebrates the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

For many decades, Violence against Women has been prevalent. Every 1 in 3 women have ever been violated hence VAW/G is a global pandemic. Physical and sexual violence are the most prevalent at 50%. According to Makerere Institute for Economic Research Policy.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, many women and girls were violated because they were locked down in homes and spaces together with violent partners, parents and relatives among others with little or no access to safe spaces or shelters and support groups.

The exacerbating factors for women and girls therefore include violence against women and a lack of access to education, economic stress, health services, social protection and information about how to cope with these inequities and injustices amidst covid-19 pandemic and to address the above challenges,

**UWOPA therefore demands that;**

- Members of the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament elects a **Female Speaker** to head the Legislative Arm of government because the executive and judiciary are being headed by men. We have seen for the last 10 years how women have performed in leadership at Parliament, where the Speaker, Leader of Opposition and Government Chief whip are all women.
- His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda appoints women in key decision-making position and that we should go beyond the a third if we are to reach gender parity. For example, Judiciary right now has men leading as Chief Justice and Deputy. This has also been evidenced in the executive arm of the government where for a long time no woman has been appointed Vice President of Uganda and none as Prime Minister. We therefore demand that women be appointed in such key positions of leadership.
- That National Unity Platform which has the majority members of opposition for the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament appoints women in key leadership positions reserved for the oppositions.

- 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament fastens the process of passing the gender Bills to law and the President should be able to ascend to the gender laws (Sexual Offences Bill 2019, Succession Amendment Bill 2018, Employment Amendment Bill 2019 and the Marriage and Divorce Bill 2009).
- His Excellency, appoints women ministers in key strategic ministries like Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of water, ministry of Lands, Ministry of Trade and Ministry of Environment so that they are able to make decisions that positively affect the lives of women in the rural and urban areas.

**Thank you for listening to us, FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY**

Pamela Kamugo Nasiyo (MP-Budaka)

Chairperson UWOPA