CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF CITIZEN CENTERED INVESTMENT

2017 ANNUAL REPORT
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1.0 Chairperson’s Message

Celebrating 20 Years at a Difficult Time for Civil Society

I am delighted to share with you the 2017 Annual Report of UNNGOF. It comes at a time when UNNGOF celebrates 20 years of existence. The 20 years have been a period of significant progress but also challenges. We have seen the growth of UNNGOF from a small umbrella organization to a formidable platform organization with over 600 hundred members and an extended indirect reach of over 4000 organizations and convening power that is recognized both locally and internationally. We therefore end this year with a feeling that the future ahead holds better times for us, but recognizing that we shall work it as a human journey with both merits and flaws.

In 2017, we continued to see
civil society in Uganda being impeded. We look back with some concern that even after 20 years since the founding of UNNGOF – civic space constraints continue to be a critical barrier to civil society. But we also recognize that this restricted space for civil society is not an exclusively local phenomenon. CIVICUS’s Civic Monitor initiative, in its latest report indicates that globally, over three billion people, live in countries where civic space is repressed or closed. This trend is not only confirmed in the annual civil society index that UNNGOF undertook, but more so in the events that unfolded over the course of 2017. Externally, this trend fits in a pattern of a resurgence of
authoritarianism that is rolling back democratic gains in the last several decades. It also reflects rising populism and negative nationalism that undermines global solidarity. We also witness what many have called ‘corporate capture of the state’, driving governments to serve private rather than public interests. All this, combined with declining fortunes of many economies, including Uganda’s, has seen the rise of economic crimes, sometimes aided by weak security guarantees. In 2017, over 10 NGO offices were broken into, fitting into a larger pattern of theft of NGO property that has been consistent over the last 6 years.

In 2017, we also saw an unprecedented attack on civil society by the security agencies. Offices of four civil society organizations were raided by state security - confiscating property and detaining staff for long hours. We also saw bank accounts frozen for three months leading to major disruptions to legitimate civil society work. The other driver of shrinking civic space is changing funding modalities and behavior of donors that often worsen, rather than help the sector overcome the multitude of challenges it faces.

Internally, we are witnessing incidences of poor corporate governance, weak internal controls and systems leading to transparency deficits within NGOs. In 2017, several NGOs went through special and forensic audits which in some cases revealed acute deficiencies in management and oversight.

In our quest to lead by example, and to maintain the highest levels of financial and systems compliance, the Board of the National NGO Forum, on its own accord, and with support from one of its funding partners commissioned an External Systems Audit that made several recommendations that the Board is overseeing implementation of. We continue to support the NGO Quality Assurance Certification Mechanism (QuAM) in partnership with DENIVA and ensure more member’s involvement in shaping the development trajectory of the Forum and contributing to building civil society organizations with strong systems of governance and service delivery.

Looking ahead, and within the context of our new Strategic Plan, we commit to invest more in improving the health of civil society organizations, leadership development, as well as networking and collective action in the face of a difficult operating context. And finally, we will work with other sector leaders to constructively engage with donors so that funding to the sector is better aligned to deliver greater impact and lead to more effective and publicly accountable civil society.

The events of 2017 and the dedicated ‘pushback’ by civil society was a clear example of the resilience of the sector and our unquestioning commitment to doing better as demonstrated in our undertakings. We hope this report will be of value to you just as the lessons learned here in are valuable to us.
1.1 Executive Director’s Message

2017 will be remembered with mixed feelings. It is the year when UNNGOF celebrated 20 years of existence. It is also the year when UNNGOF went through some of its toughest times. It is a year when we had to stand firm amidst several challenges. As an organizations we spent significant time examining our internal systems to ensure that we build a resilient organization. In the larger civil society sector we spent time defending the space of civil society, working at several level through ‘quiet diplomacy’ and outright protest of the actions of the state in relation to civil society.

In all these situations, we never lost hope or focus on the important mission that UNNGOF was set up to deliver – providing a sharing and reflection platform for NGOs in Uganda. We therefore look to the future recognizing the immense need for us to continue building a civil society sector that is broad, inclusive and true to the need of serving citizens in Uganda and around the world. Our minimum agenda as civil society has been the consensus that in all our work the citizen is central. We shall therefore continue to pursue an agenda that always uplifts and responds to citizen’s needs and aspirations and links these to the civil society projects and programs. In more specific terms and in light of the work that is ongoing within the UNNGOF partnership below are some highlights;

**Capacity Building – Harmonizing our Policy Advocacy Approaches**

To understand the critical co-relationship between global development and local, a deliberate effort to build competent institutions
that are able to contextualize their local development priorities with the national and global processes is called for. In 2017, a capacity needs assessment was undertaken to understand the skills gaps and inform new capacity building interventions. Over 100 CSO leaders were trained in policy analysis and advocacy and we made a deliberate effort to link this policy analysis to critical sectoral policies that organizations are working with as well as global processes like the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Regional and District NGO Networks as Critical Partners**

Despite the challenge of reductions in funding to sub national networks, and the ever shrinking operating environment, the relevance and interventions of district networks (DNs) continued to gain traction throughout the country. They remain key CSO contact points in their districts to mobilize, convene and provide linkages between citizens and the duty bearers on service delivery; budget processes; and all political engagements. As a result of the great foundation invested in DNs, a number of partnerships with government agencies have emerged - such as the social accountability project by the Inspectorate of Government in northern Uganda and child rights advocacy by Ministry of Gender. District networks also still continue to play strong roles in constitutional advocacy as well as improving accountability and governance at a sub national level. We remain committed to building resilient sub national institutions across the country.

**Reflections on the Health of Civil Society**

Civil society health and operating environment remains a growing concern by most development actors within and outside Uganda. With growing internal instability in NGOs characterized by internal governance challenges, financial management challenges and growing rates of CSO mortality, key aspects such as the relevance, credibility and sustainability of the sector remain at stake. UNNGOF together with DGF and our sub national partners convened 5 CSO conversations on the state of civil society in Uganda reaching out to 130 participants - CSO leaders, religious leaders, and ordinary citizens. The outcomes remain at the centre of the conversation by the various actors to devise pathways that will build strong, resilient and sustainable institutions that uphold the key values of integrity, accountability, transparency and trust.

**Influencing the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development;**

Overtime, we have realized heightened interest and commitment by CSOs to engage with the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development through the CSO SDG Reference Group that we host. The established CSO core reference group has resulted into better coordinated CSO efforts in domesticating the agenda, monitoring of compliance, and engaging the State to deliver its mandate as part of its global commitment.

Through collaboration with a diversity of CSOs doing work on the SDGs, we generated an analysis of selected SDGs that were reviewed at the 2017 High Level Political Forum – goals 1, 3, 5 and 17 and will continue to do so over the coming years. Key commitments by CSOs.
and key asks of government and private sector towards the achievements of these goals are detailed in the consequently printed report; ‘Uganda Civil Society Report on the Implementation of the SDGs 2017’.

**Citizen’s Manifesto and Governance Processes**

Through the project, ‘Actualizing People Power with the 2016 – 2021 Citizen Manifesto’, we realised a number of achievements: periodic audits of the 2016 – 2021 NRM Government and the 10th Parliament against the 2016 – 2021 Citizen Manifesto and regular socio-political and governance opinion polls which have contributed significantly in shaping public debate. These reports have become a major point of reference in the political discourse and informed media debates across the country.

Through countrywide citizen-leader reflection platforms and citizens’ debates, citizen engagement in political processes has been gradually restored. Media broadcasts and discussions of key issues being monitored by UGMP have been critical in widely disseminating information and engaging citizens beyond the direct reach of the project. Lastly but most importantly, peer reflection; learning and scenario building sessions have been instructive in aiding the sector and UGMP in particular to remain relevant in a constantly changing and hugely dynamic political and social context.

**CSO Operating Environment**

2017 was a singular year for UNNGOF in light of our work over the years to address the shrinking space for civil society and various other threats to the sector. Following the passing of the NGO Act 2016 and gazetting of NGO Regulations 2017, UNNGOF, together with other CSOs, took advantage of our cordial relations with the National Bureau for NGOs in the Ministry of Internal affairs, to embark on a nationwide sensitisation of NGOs, local governments and other interested parties on this regulatory framework. This engagement empowered CSOs to adequately manage what many termed the arguably malicious government attack on CSOs and even the closure of a few organisations that followed later in the year.

**National, Regional and International Sector Leadership**

UNNGOF continued to play her representational role for the sector in various policy process and multi sectoral initiatives. These include; work under the Expanded Board of National Planning Authority to discuss various policy issues including – the certificate of compliance for financial year 2016/17 and “APRM Uganda Self-Assessment Report”; participation in the Social Protection Steering Committee to assess progress of social protection interventions, especially the Senior Citizens Grant and Youth Livelihoods programmes. At the core of our work was the brokering of peace between CSOs and state agencies in case of attacks and unlawful arrests.
The dissemination of the NGO Act, its regulations and the POMA law to over 500 NGOs increased awareness of the new regulatory framework and is to result into greater compliance by all.

Through our position on the Steering Committee of the Multi Sectoral Working Group on Combating Corruption in Africa (MSWG), East Africa Chapter, we were part of successful efforts towards the declaration of 2018 as the Africa Year of Anti-Corruption by the African Union through its Advisory Board on Combating Corruption (AUABC).

We were also elected to the position of Presiding Officer of the Economic Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (AU ECOSOCC). The AU-ECOSOCC is meant to contribute towards the achievement of the AU Agenda 2063 where member states and the African Union work hand in hand with their citizens to ensure that a people-centered agenda is achieved. Coming on the heels of the launch of the Uganda Chapter of the AU ECOSOCC that we host in 2016, the opportunity for civil society organisations in Uganda to influence policy and development, not only at the national level but at the regional level as well is stronger, now more than ever.

At the international level, we also continue to offer leaders in the Task Team for Development Effectiveness and Operating Environment that is part of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. We represent the civil society network that follows this process as co-chairs and we are honoured that we have been given another two year terms (2018-2020). We also continue to serve on the UNDP CSO Advisory Committee set up by the UNDP Administrator. We see these as important initiatives where global civil society has recognized our leadership potential as a platform organization in Uganda.

**Cross Cutting Issues**

In all our interventions over the year, a conscious emphasis was put on a balanced representation of participants and efforts were undertaken to include female and male youth and other vulnerable communities especially Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and older persons. As a deliberate move, the PWDs are represented on the UNNGOF Board by the representative of the National Networks. This has helped keep a keen eye on how effectively the PWDs participate in UNNGOF activities. The Tondeka Mabega campaign provided space for the various groups like PWDs, women, men and the youth to understand and locate their issues within the SDG agenda, and in a way linking with the national and global policy processes.

We therefore look to 2018 with a dose of optimism. While we had a decrease in our funding during this period, we also recognized that this was a period of several transitions for both donors, government and civil society.

We would like to thank all our partners that continue to make our work a success. Through their participation and collective engagement we have continued to contribute to a better policy environment, better service delivery and pushback instances of democratic deficits in various spaces. We are also grateful to our donors that continue to support our work in various ways. To all we say thank you!
In 2017, and indeed over the last 20 years, we have been able to garner a number of milestones:

- Presiding Officer Position of the AU ECOSOCC
- Undertook a CSO Capacity Needs Assessment
- 6 CSO Regional Trainings on Policy Advocacy
- Held 4 Regional Consultations and a National Consultation on the Health of Civil Society
- Coordinated CSO Engagements with the NGO Act and Regulations
- Popularization of the SDGs through the Tondeka Mabega Campaign
- Publication of the 2017 CSO Report on SDGs
- Piloted the Community Participatory Monitoring Tool of the SDGs
- Produced 2016 State of Civil Society Report
- Launched the Warren Nyamugasira Memorial Lecture Series

CHAPTER 2

2.0 Milestones & The Team that Made Them Possible
UNNGOF Board Members, L to R – John Baptist Male Mukasa; Annet Nalumu Okidi; James Kidulu; Basil Tushabe; Evelyn Bukirwa; Idah Mehangye; Arthur Larok; Sarah Muzaki; Richard Ssewakiryanga; and Hellen Grace Akwii-Wangusa.

UNNGOF has benefitted immensely from the direction, support and competencies of her board members, elected from the constituencies of International NGOs; District Networks; and National NGO networks;

Our current Board profile boasts of competencies in the fields of Governance and development; Education; Child development; Demography; Business management; Development studies; Social Sector planning and management; Social work and social administration; Human Resource; Human Rights; Health Economics, Health Planning and International Health; Statistics and Economics; Community health - Epidemiology and Biostatistics; Literature and research Methodology; Gender studies; Governance and Gender council for development of social sciences; and Poverty analysis.

“It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership.
- Nelson Mandela
2.2 Staff

Over the last decade and more, UNNGOF has retained a core competent team that has supported the organisation achieve its mandate under the successive strategic plans. A team of 16 dedicated staff with an admirable skill set were responsible for the delivery of the success stories we celebrated in 2017;

- Research
- Project Planning and Management
- Strategic Leadership and Public Relations
- Economic Policy and Management
- Accounting and Financial Management
- Information and Communication Technology
- Administration and Logistics
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Social sciences and Development studies

Without this competent team, the successes of 2017 would not have been possible given the very challenging operating environment for NGOs.
Strong and affluent UNNGOF Membership

We have over the years built a strong membership base from a few hundred NGOs to now 628 members across the country, with a 2% membership growth in 2017. This slow but strong growth rate was intentional - the institution focused more on enhancing the quality of membership servicing rather than mushrooming quantity, specifically with internal governance support for those members in distress. A case in point is Masaka NGO Forum that had become dysfunctional due to internal challenges. Through our Peer Learning Model, with support from best practices shared by West Ankole Civil Society Organisations’ Forum (WACSOF) and other networks, Masaka NGO Forum was able to surmount these challenges and resume operations. This inspired internal reflection and members were able to adapt new ways of work and respect for institutional policies and best practices.

We cultivated new partnerships to expand the UNNGOF resource capacity to build our members’ own capacities. Grant Thornton Uganda organized two trainings on Strengthening Internal Controls and Compliance and 92 NGOs representatives (our members) participated (60 males and 32 females). The training covered the
areas of Business Process Solutions (accounting), Transaction Advisory (Ideal Business Process) as well as Tax laws and obligations. This facilitated a shift in understanding of participants on the operations of effective organizations.

Valuable Partnerships

The value in collectives cannot be undermined and we strive to build partnerships across all sectors within the country. Beyond just being a membership organisation that NGOs subscribe to, we are affiliated to various other institutions and sit on a number of boards and councils:

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• Member – National Planning Authority Expanded Board
• Member – NARO Governing Council
• Member – National Governing Council, African Peer Review Mechanism
• Member – Independent Development Fund Board
• Member – National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders in Uganda Board
• Member – Private Sector Working Group, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
• Member – Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework Steering Committee, Office of the Prime Minister
• Member – Decentralization Management Technical Working Group, Ministry of Local Government
• Member – National Population Council
• Member – National Commission for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
• Member – National Sustainable Development Goals Taskforce, Office of the Prime Minister
• Member – Social Development Sector Working Group, MoGLSD
• Member – Expanding Social Protection Steering Committee, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
• Member – Technical Committee of Environment Practitioners, National Environmental Management Authority
• Member – Accountability Sector Working Group, MoFPED
• Member – Executive Committee National Urban Forum, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development
• Member – Research Advisory Board, Uganda Management Institute
• Secretariat – Uganda Social Protection Platform
• Secretariat – 2030 Agenda CSO Reference Group
• Secretariat – Uganda Governance Monitoring Platform
CHAPTER 4

4.0 Programme Interventions

The Civil Society Strengthening programme aims at building the capacity of Uganda’s civil society so that the CSO sector can deliver its core mandate and influence objectives development policies and practices; In doing this work, our desire is to have a strong and well- coordinated civil society sector with information and capacity to effectively

4.1 Civil Society Strengthening

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engage in and contribute to development processes.

**Establishing a clear baseline for effective CSO Capacity Development.**

In the quest to further service and support our membership to deliver relevant programmes within their constituencies, UNNGOF undertook a review of the members skills to help support the design of transformative strategic plans that promote institutional learning and empowerment. 314 UNNGOF members were assessed online, with 25% female participation. This still perpetuates the gender gaps within the sector leadership. Further findings indicated that only 22% CSOs had programmes aligned to their strategic plans. This could be explained by the so much projectized work most NGOs engage in to fit the funding priorities. UNNGOF will in the subsequent years design relevant programmes to strengthen more its membership capacity which in a way will build institutional capacity to respond to and adapt their programmes to fit the new demands within their constituents.

**Enhanced Skills and practices for Regional Policy Advocacy Agents.**

NGOs play a vital oversight role to influence government decisions at both local and national level. The cliché is that NGOs present a black and white picture of moral certainty, while the governments try to influence and inhabit a resolutely grey-
shaded world of compromise and contingency. To effectively play the oversight role however calls for NGOs to have the relevant evidence and resources for a sustained engagement with the duty bearers since the policy-making process encompasses a vastly complex inter-related web of structural, bureaucratic and personal factors. To this end, UNNGOF ran a series of regional policy trainings in during the year. The trainings aimed at enhancing skills in policy formulation, advocacy skills, evidence usage and coalition building. A number of member organizations have shared feedback appreciating this kind of support.

**Understanding the Health of Civil Society to inform sector strategic planning.**

Civil Society Health remains a critical puzzle to be addressed with conscience, reason and strategy if the sector will remain strong to play its oversight role at both national and sub national level. UNNGOF in partnership with DGF uniquely undertook to learn, unlearn and seek for innovations to improve the health of the sector through 5 regional conversations, reaching out to 130 CSO leaders and ordinary citizens (89 males and 41 females). The conversations
provided platform for CSO leaders to reflect jointly on the relevance, growth and impact of Civil Society and explore pathways to improve its impact. The outcomes of this process have also been instrumental in informing the DGF II project focus and will continue to shape the CSO agenda to guarantee its resilience and sustainability.
From Shouting to Counting; Existence of a strong Sub National Networks with ability to articulate citizen demands and protect their rights.

For over a decade, UNNGOF has worked to establish a sub national infrastructure spread across all regions of the country. In order to have effective oversight and capacity to generate evidence that informs national policy lobby and advocacy interventions, UNNGOF with support from DANIDA- HUGGO and now DGF invested immense resources, technical expertise and support to build institutions as main interlocutors of citizens demands with duty bearers.
and green houses of local democracy and accountability. Today we pride ourselves with 35 strong district networks directly servicing over three quarters of the districts in Uganda and these have become the first contact centers for all CSOs at National, regional and global level.

The districts networks to date also serve as the first mobilization and empowerment centers for citizens to engage their leaders to account for the public goods offered. District networks also continue to work as reliable local accountability institutions that are greatly complementing government efforts for effective allocation and utilization of resources to benefit the ordinary citizen. This is evidenced by the recognition awards the IGG gave to Pader NGO Forum, Lira NGO Forum, Gulu NGO Forum, CEFORD Arua and RDP Uganda in Masindi district for their exceptional performance in monitoring the Social Accountability and Community Monitoring Program and the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund II (NUSAFFII).

In other regions, district networks continue to play a vital role in monitoring and ensuring the functionality of local government, like the case of WACSOF and Kiboga NGO Forum in western and central region that have always influenced the district budgeting process, while in Lango sub region, Lira NGO Forum and Fapad has been instrumental in shaping the regional and agenda and debate with the central government to protect citizen rights. Albeit the existing challenges like shrinking financing to networks, the shrinking operating environment and the overwhelming and diverse demands on the sector, the sub national infrastructure remains relevant in influencing local democratic practices and policies.

**Membership Innovations; Linking local to global advocacy agenda; a case of COTFONE and the SPEAK! Campaign**

UNNGOF through its global network has been able to provide linkages for its members’ participation in global advocacy processes. Key among these have been the MDG Campaign, the Agenda 2030 Campaign and lately the SPEAK Campaign run by CIVICUS World Alliance. The campaign aimed at providing a platform for the marginalized communities across the world to amplify their voices on the key issues that affected their wellbeing. Community Transformation Foundation Network (COTFONE), a member of UNNGOF utilized the opportunity in amplifying the voices of the marginalized chronically poor, orphaned and vulnerable children in Lwengo district suffering the effects of the HIV scourge through a child-led music, dance and drama festival on 4th October 2017 on the theme “Accelerating protection, empowerment and equal opportunities for all children in Lwengo” This gave an outreach to 4500 participants, 420 students drawn from 12 schools a number of local leaders and one Member of Parliament Hon. Cissy Namujju Woman MP Lwengo. Such opportunities are instrumental in exporting local experiences and expertise but also profile our membership to the whole world.
4.2 Policy Advocacy and Engagement

The Policy Advocacy and Engagement Component continues to effectively coordinate collective policy engagements by NGOs on policy issues of interest to NGOs and relevant to Uganda’s development. This is done through policy mapping and building policy knowledge; Policy Analysis and using Policy Evidence; Policy Monitoring and Influencing regional and Global Civil Society Work.

Recounting the gains made in popularizing the SDGs

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, there is continued recognition of the role of civil society as a key stakeholder in ensuring that the SDGs become a reality. This is through Monitoring and follow up, awareness building and fulfilling critical service delivery gaps. In 2016, Uganda National NGO Forum, under the auspices of the 2030 Agenda Core reference group, made significant contributions towards the SDG processes at national level;

Participatory Monitoring of SDGs

UNNGOF in partnership with Kalangala District NGO Forum undertook participatory monitoring to establish citizens’ perspectives on the implementation of SDGs 1, 2, 3 and 14. The monitoring was conducted in Buyindi village; Mugoye sub-county and Bugala cell Kalangala Town Council in Kalangala district on 29th March 2017 with 40 (25 males and 15 females) ordinary citizens that included women, PWDs, elderly persons and youth among others. The discussions revealed breakdown in the service delivery-shortage of drugs, limited access to land as some of the key issues that will deter the achievement of goals 1, 2 and 14 in Kalangala district. The report from the
monitoring exercise provided a preliminary assessment of the implementation of SDG 1, 2, 3 and 14 which informed CSO advocacy on implementation of SDGs. The development of the participatory monitoring tool was an important learning and the findings were used to feed into the government Interim Status Report on SDGs that was presented at the United Nations General Assembly in September and also informed the development of the CSO Report.

Production of the 1st CSO Shadow report on SDGs

In a bid to provide a critical and grass roots perspective on SDG implementation over the last two years, Uganda National NGO Forum under the auspices of the 2030 Agenda CSO Reference Group coordinated the production of the 1st CSO-SDG shadow report as a contribution to the national review process. The report titled “Uganda Civil Society Report on the Implementation of SDGs 2017” highlights the escalating levels of inequality, high prevalence of HIV, high debt burden, increasing gender inequality that might deter the achievement of goals 1, 3, 5, and 7. It makes policy recommendations to government, private sector that if not adequately implemented the expected development outcomes will not be realized. The report benefitted from submissions from OXFAM, Reproductive Health Uganda and the Uganda Gender Consortium on SDGs. The CSO-SDG report has been used as an advocacy tool to engage with specific goals monitored and also inform the national SDG report that is being developed by the Office of the Prime Minister. The report was launched on 22nd November 2017 with 100 participants including representatives from Office of the Prime Minister and National Planning Authority.
Amplifying citizen voices on the SDGs

Building onto the 2016 Leave No One Behind community dialogues, Uganda National NGO Forum was able to provide a platform for 60 marginalized people (31 females and 29 males) in commemoration of 2nd Anniversary of the SDGs to share their testimonies on the injustices that they continue to face and also demand action from their leaders to change the status quo in Mugusu Town Council, Burahya sub-county, Kabarole district. This was enhanced through social media engagements, radio shows and production and dissemination of popular versions of the SDGs in ten languages (Acholi, Ateso, Kiswahili, Luganda, Lugbarati, Lumasaaba, Lusoga, Nga Karimojong, Runyankore-Rukiga, Runyoro) to 2,000 citizens. UNNGOF remains the go-to CSO on SDG processes in Uganda. Owing to this we have been invited to share CSO perspectives on the implementation of SDGs at national, regional and International level. UNNGOF has also been used to roll out global campaigns such as the Global Day of Action and the Leave No One campaign dialogues.

Influencing Budget Processes at National Level

In a bid to contribute to critical thinking on the Uganda’s economy, UNNGOF developed a paper on the State of the Economy and Urban productivity in Uganda. This paper was presented at the High Level Economic Growth Forum convened by Ministry of Finance held on 14th and 15th September 2017 to discuss the state of Uganda’s economy. The paper provided policy options to drive accelerated and inclusive growth in Uganda. This paper also informed the CSO statement on the National Budget Strategy FY2018/19 that was delivered at the National budget conference. The statement focused on the need for agricultural transformation, need to reap from Uganda’s demographic dividends, linking Kampala’s growth to rural development, increasing domestic revenue mobilization as well as maximizing returns to investment in infrastructure.

Coordinating Local and National NGOs to influence the humanitarian system in Uganda

Increasingly there are concerns by local NGOs that the current humanitarian response does not recognize them as critical stakeholders and yet they are the first respondents in cases of humanitarian crisis. On 7th-8th June 2017, 50 National, Local and International Organizations in Uganda
representing various CSOs met at Bomah Hotel in Gulu District to discuss issues and concerns relating to the role of local and national CSOs in the refugee response. It emphasized that humanitarian response should strengthen local capacities and avoid negative effects among host communities and their local organizations. The participants called upon various stakeholders such as government and private sector to play their parts in meeting the humanitarian standards.

The meeting resolved to put in place the civil society humanitarian platform to coordinate efforts of local and national organizations in Humanitarian work. The platform will be rolled out in 2018.

In 2017, Uganda National NGO Forum continued to partner with EU Delegation in Uganda to convene dialogues on issues of mutual interest to both CSOs and EU partner states. In light of the refugee influx in Uganda, an EU-CSO structured dialogue was held on the Uganda Refugee Situation and Civil Society Response which was attended by 50 participants (27 males and 23 females) including the Head of EU Delegation in Uganda Ambassador Kristen Schmidt. During the dialogue, the Ambassador recognized and appreciated the role of local and national NGOs in complementing government efforts towards addressing the humanitarian crisis. He also challenged Uganda to explore facilitating a more
inclusive national dialogue in Southern Sudan and reconsider the political dimension of the conflict.

**Participation in the African Peer Review Mechanism process**

Uganda was one of the first pioneers of the African Peer Review Mechanism and was first reviewed in 2008 and an assessment report produced in 2009. In 2017, Uganda successfully concluded its second assessment and convened the National Validation and consultative forum on the APRM 2nd Country Self-Assessment Report and National Program of Action on 28th September 2017. At this event UNNGOF presented a CSO commentary on the draft report that emphasized the need for Uganda to pay attention to democracy and political Governance, Economic governance and management, Corporate Governance and broad-based socio-economic development. It is commendable that government is on track to revive APRM and recognizes the value that CSOs bring to this process. Government committed to involve CSOs in the implementation and monitoring of the APRM plan of action.

**Domesticating the Nairobi Outcome Document on Development Effectiveness**

Civil society has been at the forefront of campaigning for effective development, while still recognising that aid has the potential to help eliminate the root causes, as well as the symptoms of poverty, inequality and marginalisation. Following the 2nd High Level Ministerial Meeting on the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, UNNGOF under the auspices of the CSO Aid and Development Effectiveness Development Platform convened a High Level Breakfast Meeting on the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and the Nairobi outcome document on 19th March 2017 bringing together over 40 (males and females) representatives from diplomatic missions, multilateral organizations, and private sector, MDAs, Members of Parliament and CSOs.

The meeting provided an opportunity to kick-start a process to domesticate the Nairobi Outcome Document and also galvanize efforts at country level to ensure a multi-stakeholder process that will build on clear complementarities among all development actors in Uganda. Interesting perspectives on effective development

![CSO leaders and development partners share a light moment at the high level breakfast on the Nairobi Outcome Document.](image-url)
cooperation that informed the discussions were presented by former Co-Chair of CPDE, Representative from the German Embassy and Minister of Finance as Co-chairs of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

Uganda was nominated to take on this prestigious position of co-chairing the Global Partnership of Effective Development Cooperation. This position puts Uganda in a unique position of influencing aid and development discussion globally and in-country. UNNGOF was the first organization to organize such a meeting and important partners like USAID, World Bank were represented at the most senior level indicating clear interest in this work. This meeting deepened understanding of the Nairobi Outcome Document principles and commitment and the roles of the different actors.

**Sector Leadership at National levels**

UNNGOF continues to provide sector leadership in multi-sectoral processes such as the National Planning Authority Expanded Board meetings, National SDG Taskforce, Steering Committee on Expanding Social Protection Programme and the Comprehensive Refugee Responsive Framework Steering Committee, inter alia. (see list of affiliations)

‘There is always strength in numbers, the more individuals or organisations you can rally to your cause the better.’
- Mark Shields

UNNGOF convened a learning event on social accountability anchored on the theme ‘building a strong Social Accountability Ecosystem’. The event held March, 10, 2017 brought over 50 (28 males and 22 females) representatives of CSOs from community and national level networks as well as the Government Citizens Interaction Centre (GCIC) to share updates, lessons and jointly build actions for subsequent engagements on citizen led accountability.

As part of the event, a key note address on Social Accountability Ecosystem: Creating the new normal, was presented and discussed. The interest of the government –citizen interaction centre in working closely with CSOs on partnerships was commendable.

An informal agreement was reached to start working on a collective partnership on sharing social accountability related data. This partnership will be explored further in 2018.
4.3 Civic Space and Governance Monitoring

The Main objective under the Civic Space and Governance Monitoring Program Component is to Influence internal and external operating environment issues of CSOs and to ensure a positive environment for NGO operations and citizens engagement in governance processes. To achieve this objective, UNNGOF implemented activities under two main strands in the year 2017, i.e. Promoting an Enabling Environment for Civil Society and Monitoring Governance Processes.

‘These reflections are held in cognizance of the different spaces that CSOs operate in and therefore it’s imperative to touch base often and reflect on key issues that affect the sector’. – Richard Ssewakiryanga
Popularising the NGO Act 2016 and NGO Regulations 2017

One of the key facets of the NGO operating environment is the NGO Regulatory Framework. It is imperative to recall that the NGO legislation in Uganda has mutated through different stages. At each of the stages, UNNGOF has been resolute in the quest for an enabling NGO legislation. The recently passed NGO Act, 2016, for example adopted at least 60% of the recommendations from the NGO sector. In spite of the fact that the law still contains some regressive provisions, it is a major improvement from the past legislations and more specifically, the Government Bill (NGO Bill, 2015). To operationalize the Act and building on collaborations that were established during the advocacy on the NGO Act, UNNGOF, together with the National Bureau for NGOs, carried out nation-wide consultations to develop with the NGO Regulations, 2017. The regulations were validated by key stakeholders in January 2017 and gazetted in May 2017.

CSO Leaders’ Reflections

As a sharing and reflection platform for NGOs in Uganda, UNNGOF has in the past one year and even earlier continued to provide the much-needed leadership in organizing dialogues between the CSO sector and government. In light of the turbulent operating environment for CSOs in 2017, UNNGOF also organized CSO Leaders’ retreats which brought together civil society leaders and provided space for
peer reflection and learning. These retreats were particularly instructive following the siege and attack on some civil society organizations such as ActionAid – Uganda, Great Lakes Institute for Strategic Studies (GLISS) and Uhuru Institute for Social Transformation. One of the key inputs into these dialogues has been the State of Civil Society Reports that UNNGOF produces annually.

Security threats and the Digital Security Alliance

Civil Society Organizations and leaders in Uganda are beginning to realize that when it comes to security; information and internet security is as significant as physical security. In the year 2017, security threats came from both internal and external sources and targeted both organizations and individual CSO staff. Nonetheless, security trainings for organizations and their employees has been one of the least prioritized areas by organizations. As such, UNNGOF chose to engage with this challenge and equip its partners and other NGO leaders with the necessary skills to manage and respond to the security threats through security trainings.

UNNGOF also partnered with Defenders Protection Initiative to launch the Digital Security Alliance at the Digital Security Conference for CSOs in September of 2017. The Digital Security Alliance is a coalition of organizations and individual security experts working towards securing the digital assets of civil society, human rights defenders, journalists and other activists in the face of threats posed by powerful corporations, unscrupulous criminals, state and other non-state actors.

This launch was the starting point for work that must be done to mitigate digital insecurity among CSOs in Uganda and achieve a safer digital environment; and will certainly greatly benefit UNNGOF members and partners.

‘The launch of the Digital Security Alliance is a step closer towards building a much better digital infrastructure for the country.’ – Richard Ssewakiryanga

Cross section of CSO leaders at a leaders’ reflection meeting.
The Warren Nyamugasira Memorial Lecture Series

2017 also marked the beginning of the Warren Nyamugasira Memorial Lectures. The Inaugural Lecture, themed: “Dancing with the devil and betraying the people: NGOs in Uganda under siege” was delivered by Hon. Sheila Kawamara, a former Member of the East African Legislative Assembly and key civil society activist. These lectures will continue to provide an opportunity to honor the lives and contributions of various civil society leaders and workers, document the growth and contribution of civil society work, and create a network of thought leaders across civil society in Uganda.

Monitoring Governance Processes
Perception Surveys and Performance Audits

Public debate is at the core of every functioning democracy. Research plays a fundamental role in informing public debate. UNNGOF has over the past decade, through the Uganda Governance Monitoring Platform conducted assessments of citizens’ perceptions on key governance issues and regular assessments of parliament and the government performance. In the year 2017, UGMP conducted the Baseline assessment of the 2016 – 2021 NRM Government, Baseline assessment of the
10th parliament and carried out one social governance opinion poll. These key documents, launched through highly powered online and televised debates, attracted key actors from various sections of society and became a major point of reference in public debate and discourse.

Scenario Building and Reflection Sessions

Social and political change processes in Uganda continue to get more complex and dynamic. What this means for civil society organizations is that there needs to be constant rethinking, refocusing and redesigning of the work they do. To inform this process, UNNGOF organized four scenario building sessions which attracted key civil society actors and provided the much-needed contextual analysis, exploring the likely scenarios and agreements on key areas of focus such as land, security and political transition.

CSOs and The Togikwatako Campaign

Lastly, at the core of the citizen manifesto work is the understanding that the ‘Citizen is Central’. The year 2017 witnessed the most outstanding and magnificent display of civic activism. Through its UGMP platform and partners, UNNGOF carried out countrywide mobilization of citizens to resist the amendment of Art. 102(b) of the constitution. Focused scientific surveys were also conducted to inform the voting decisions of members of parliament. In spite the fact that the Bill was finally passed, albeit under outrageous circumstances, citizens agency was manifested throughout these processes.
Big Numbers under Civic Space and Governance monitoring

- **12 MILLION**: 12 million Ugandans reached both directly and indirectly during the implementation of Civic Space and Governance program activities.
- **100 SHOWS**: Over 100 television and radio talk shows held on major television and radio networks across the country.
- **10,000 COPIES**: Copies of research reports printed and disseminated across the country.
- **5000 PRINTED COPIES**: Printed and made available 5000 copies of each of the NGO Act, 2016 and NGO Regulations, 2017, and the Public Order Management Act, 2013.
- **50 MEETINGS**: 50 nation-wide local level and community reflection meetings on key governance issues organized across the country.
- **7 REGIONAL**: 7 Regional NGO regulations dissemination meetings.
- **3 REGIONAL**: Three socio-political and governance research reports published.
- **130 VILLAGES**: Research surveys conducted in more than 130 villages across the country.
- **4 KEY MEETINGS**: Scenario building meetings attracting key civil society leaders from across the country.
- **10000 PRINTED COPIES**: 10,000 copies of the Black Monday News Letter produced and disseminated.
- **45 DISTRICT NETWORKS**: 45 district networks trained in digital security.
5.0 International Engagements

Presiding Officer Position at the AU ECOSOCC

In March of 2017, we were elected to the position of Presiding Officer of the Economic Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (AU ECOSOCC), with our Executive Director holding the title to this civil society arm of the African Union. The AU-ECOSOCC is meant to contribute towards the achievement of the AU-Agenda where members at both the National and Assembly levels work hand in hand with their governments to ensure that a people centered agenda is achieved. Coming on the heels of the launch of the Uganda Chapter of the AU ECOSOCC that we host in 2016, the opportunity for civil society organisations in Uganda to influence policy and
development, not only at the national level but at the regional level as well is stronger, now more than ever.

Presiding Officer – Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union. ECOSOCC was established in 2004 as an advisory organ to the AU composed of civil society organisations (CSOs). The principle objective of ECOSOCC is for civil society to organise itself to work in partnership with the AU.

AUABC Declaration of 2018 Africa Year of Anti-Corruption and work with AU ECOSOCC

2017 was a singular year for Uganda National NGO Forum in light of our Anti-Corruption work over the years and work to influence regional and global processes. Through our position on the Steering Committee of the Multi Sectoral Working Group on Combatting Corruption in Africa (MSWG), East Africa Chapter, we were part of successful efforts towards the declaration of 2018 as the Africa Year of Anti-Corruption by the African Union through its Advisory Board on Combatting Corruption (AUABC).

Since its formation in December 2015 with the aim of raising the cost of corruption on the continent, the MSWG has supported the AUABC on various engagements, including improving the AUABC country reporting questionnaire and innovations to make the Board’s
work more effective.
We are proud to be part of the work towards finding lasting solutions to and taking concrete actions towards combatting graft and influencing lasting development, not only in our country, but on the African Continent too.

AU ECOSOCC Pre-Summit
ECOSOCC convened a regional Pre-summit event on corruption where Uganda CSOs represented by UNNGOF led the discussion on the Strides and Challenges in the fight against corruption. From the discussions that ensued it was agreed that AU decisions need to be invoked since they are binding commitments by the AU heads of state. A summary of the key issues that emerged at the 29th AU Summit was presented by Director Peace and Regional Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

AUABC Country Visit to Uganda
In addition ECOSOCC Uganda Chapter held a meeting with the African Union Advisory Board on corruption to explore collaborations to curb corruption in the region. It was also emphasized that the African Heads of State should pronounce themselves on the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption. The African Union Advisory Board on corruption is open to partner with ECOSOCC in 2018 that was declared the African year of anti-corruption. Currently, UNNGOF Executive Director is the Presiding Officer of ECOSOCC which provides in roads in Uganda to meaningful contribute to AU processes at both national and regional level.

Member – United Nations Development Programme Civil Society Advisory Committee
The UNDP Civil Society Advisory Committee (CSAC) is an advisory body of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Established in 2000 to systematize the consultation process between UNDP and civil society actors at the global level, the CSAC currently functions as the main institutional mechanism for dialogue between civil society leaders and UNDP senior management.

Member – Aga Khan Foundation East Africa Regional Committee.
The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) has been implementing innovative, community-driven solutions to development challenges for more than 50 years. It focuses on a small number of specific development problems by forming intellectual and financial partnerships with organisations sharing its objectives.

Through our position on the Steering Committee of the Multi Sectoral Working Group on Combatting Corruption in Africa (MSWG), East Africa Chapter, we were part of successful efforts towards the declaration of 2018 as the Africa Year of Anti-Corruption by the African Union through its Advisory Board on Combatting Corruption (AUABC).
6.0 Online Community & Communication Innovations

It’s the function of the Results Management, Learning and Communication component to creatively communicate our results and experiences. We support the programme components achieve their mandates through clear result management, brokering knowledge and learning. We also foster brand integrity with the quality of communication we put forth.

In the recent past, and indeed throughout 2017, UNNGOF has intentionally worked to build a wider constituency beyond just the conventional stakeholder. With the constant advancements in technology, we purposed to and have been able to use online platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and the website itself to reach a myriad of audiences, even across borders.

**Social Media**

We have incorporated the use of platforms like Periscope and Facebook live for press conferences and live streaming during our events. This has
allowed us have real time interaction and feedback with our stakeholders. Progressively, this continued online presence has allowed for questions and feedback off social media during our panel discussions, allowing for a larger audience, and usually an alternative view from outside the room. Hard to ensure that all interactions through messages and comments are attended to, making us available to those that may need feedback online.

Our Facebook account stands at an impressive 10,530 likes and we work hard to ensure that all interactions through messages and comments are attended to, making us available to those that may need feedback online.

With twitter, we have been able to garner the support of 11,600 followers. We have also continually employed the use of hashtags to carry our messages to concerned and even newer audiences. In 2017, we used a total of 7 hashtags, including #ACT4SDGs, #SDGreport17 #NRMaudit17, #WNyamugasira17, #MPreview17. #NRMaudit17 which raised 9,669,681 Impressions was the most actively engaged-on hashtag.
Media Relations and Innovations

Talk Shows

We have intentionally broadened our interaction with the media from just coverage and reporting on our events, to using popular existing platforms of these media houses to reach different audiences at non-conventional times when ordinarily a workshop would not be held. To launch the UGMP report on ‘Citizens’ Perceptions on Uganda’s Governance’, we partnered with NBS Television to utilize their popular talk show programme, Barometer Extra, that runs on Wednesday evenings from 10:00pm to 11:00pm for the launch of the report. The live coverage was taken from Cinemax Cinema, Acacia avenue, again a non-conventional venue not typically used by civil society. Our panelists and audience interacted with the talk Show host and the live broadcast was streamed to millions of viewers straight in their living rooms.

Live Broadcasts

We also chose to broadcast live the launch of another of our key reports, A Baseline for the 10th Parliament Watch Bulletin from Fort portal where we opted to engage a regional audience for a change and transmit the live feed to the urban dwellers to watch by television. This was beefed up by the use of social media to collect and share feedback from others not on site nor watching television. We took advantage of the experiential trucks managed by the television station to take the broadcast to citizens at the market who would not have access to television sets at the time but would benefit from the discussions.
Component Allocation

Despite the financing challenges that most NGOs were grappling with in 2017, UNNGOF was able to mobilise funds to the tune of 3,490,573,317 UGX from various donors to continue the work towards achieving our core mandate.

The contributions from our donors helped further our actions towards ensuring cost efficient and transparent support while fostering a culture of optimal resource use to better enable us accomplish our set out objectives.

Grants

- Support to the UNNGOF Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020
- Actualising People Power with the 2016 – 2021 Citizens Manifesto
- Supporting Civil Society to Counter Threats to Civic Space
- Strengthening Institutional Effectiveness
- Growing Opportunities for Constructive Civic Engagement for CSOs in Lango, Teso and Karamoja
- Transforming Social Protection Thinking in Uganda
CHAPTER 8

8.0 Annexes

UGANDA NATIONAL NGO FORUM
(An NGO & Company Limited by Guarantee)
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2017

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<th>Note</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Ushs</td>
<td>Ushs</td>
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</table>

**INCOME**
- Balances brought forward: 10 732,088,208 330,561,348
- Restricted grants: 11 2,725,997,856 3,280,043,506
- Membership: 12 20,675,000 20,625,000
- Other income: 13 3,492,253 7,561,986
- Total Income: 1,450,573,317 3,709,791,039

**EXPENDITURE**
- Civil Society Strengthening: 14 300,697,373 331,106,751
- Civic Space & Governance Monitoring: 15 1,220,716,245 1,458,459,870
- Policy Advocacy & Engagement: 16 336,061,520 277,344,900
- Results Management, Learning and Communication: 17 75,993,300 47,910,600
- Finance and Corporate Services: 18 1,312,342,208 1,353,730,460
- Other committed expenses (accrued expenses): 19 48,038,107 47,000,000
- Total expenditure: 3,344,049,273 3,523,615,631

**SURPLUS (UNSPENT BALANCE) AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2017**
146,530,044 281,170,208

These financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 12 April 2018 and were signed on its behalf by:

[Signatures]

The Executive Director/Secretary
UNNGOF

The Treasurer
UNNGOF

The Chairperson - Board of Directors
UNNGOF

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UGANDA NATIONAL NGO FORUM
(An NGO & Company Limited by Guarantee)
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2017

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ushs</td>
<td>Ushs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ASSETS**
- Non-current assets
  - Property and equipment: 2 153,339,328 202,254,452
- Current assets
  - Receivables: 3 143,679,380 165,382,431
  - Bank and cash balances: 4 628,403,479 644,693,665
  - 792,142,839 810,078,096
- TOTAL ASSETS: 935,482,167 1,012,330,568

**RESERVES AND LIABILITIES**
- Reserves
  - Capital reserve: 5 153,339,328 202,254,452
  - Restricted reserve: 6 145,701,044 206,175,208
  - 299,040,372 408,430,660
- Current liabilities
  - Creditors and accruals: 8 96,496,796 78,869,886
  - Deferred income: 9 530,865,000 525,000,000
  - 636,441,796 903,869,886
- TOTAL RESERVES AND LIABILITIES: 935,482,167 1,012,330,568

These financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 12 April 2018 and were signed on its behalf by:

[Signatures]

The Executive Director/Secretary
UNNGOF

The Treasurer
UNNGOF

The Chairperson - Board of Directors
UNNGOF