



# UN Women Uganda Special 16 Days of Activism Campaign Newsletter

25th November -10th December 2024





# National Launch of 16 Days of Activism Against GBV in Uganda

Towards  
Beijing +30

16 Days of Activism  
Campaign launch  
2024



A staff member of our Women Led Organisation, Overcomers (left) conducts a community dialogue meeting on teenage pregnancy in Adjumani district during the 16 Days of Activism Campaign Against GBV Photo: UN Women

The national launch for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based violence in Uganda was officially kicked off on the Monday 25, November 2024 at Hotel Africana in Kampala. This year's theme, which resonates strongly with the global call for enhanced collaboration across sectors to create a safer and more equitable society is anchored in the UNiTE theme: **"Towards 30 Years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls."**

The vibrant launch event united government officials, civil society organizations, development partners, activists, and community leaders. It set the stage for 16 days of intensified advocacy, community engagement, and policy dialogues focused on tackling the root causes of GBV and promoting sustainable solutions. Launches also took place at the field level.

Stakeholders donned themselves in orange scarfs and outfits to symbolize their dedication to hope, unity

and a bright future without gender-based violence. As part of that resolve, there was a launch and symbolic signing of a dummy report on Uganda's National Progress of 30 years of the implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing +30) in Uganda (2020-2025).

**Speaking at the event, UN Uganda Resident Coordinator, Leonard Zulu, quoting the UN Secretary Generals message emphasized that "The epidemic of violence against women and girls shames humanity." – In Uganda, 58% of partnered women face intimate partner violence. The time to act is NOW. Let's dismantle systemic barriers and uphold dignity for all." Zulu said.**



The event featured other key activities, including a presentation of awards, and an engaging panel discussion on topics aimed at educating and inspiring the public.

In her address, Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, UN Women Uganda Country Representative, delivered a powerful call to action, urging for bold and intensified efforts to end violence against women and girls once and for all.

*“As we approach the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform, I call on decision-makers and cultural custodians to ensure greater accountability and action, turning commitments into tangible progress for gender equality and women's empowerment.”*

Maria Håkansson, the Swedish Ambassador to Uganda, highlighted alarming statistics, revealing that 36% of women experience intimate partner sexual violence, 45% face physical violence, and 55% endure economic or emotional abuse. She emphasized, *“These figures are unacceptable and call for urgent, collective action to bring about change”*.

She stronger laws, support systems and safe spaces for survivors are vital.

Jan Sadek, the European Union Ambassador to Uganda, emphasized that violence against women and girls is a critical human rights issue and called on men and boys to take a stronger stand against gender-based violence.

He underscored the need to promote positive masculinity and challenge societal norms that perpetuate violence, stating, *“We must foster a culture of respect and equality.”*

The event concluded with Hon. Peace Mutuuzo, State Minister for Gender and Culture, reaffirming the government’s unwavering commitment to combating gender-based violence in Uganda.

*“On behalf of the Government of Uganda and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, we reaffirm our commitment to supporting partnerships that advance gender equality, empower women, and eliminate gender-based violence in Uganda,”* Mutuuzo said.

Mutuuzo noted that although alot of work has been done to combat GBV, more needs to be done to ensure women are free from violence in all its forms.



Left - Right: EU Ambassador, H.E Jan Sadek, Swedish Ambassador, Amb. Maria Håkansson, Mr. Leonard Zulu, UN Uganda Resident Coordinator, Hon. Peace Mutuuzo, State Minister for Gender and Culture together with Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, UN Women Uganda Country Representative honor the national athems at the official launch of the 16 days-activism campaign. Photo:UN Women/Samuel Wamuttu



Female Heads of Missions and UN agency representatives, alongside male changemakers and government officials, pose for a group photo following a breakfast meeting on gender equality hosted by the Netherlands Embassy in Kampala. Photo: UN Women

## Netherlands Embassy and UN Women Kick start plans for Groundbreaking Beijing +30 Campaign on Gender Equality

On Friday, 22nd November 2024, the Embassy of the Netherlands and UN Women co-hosted a breakfast meeting at the Residence of the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Uganda to mark the start of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign. The event brought together Female Heads of Missions, representatives from UN Agencies, and Male Changemakers to discuss strategies for advancing women's rights and gender equality in Uganda.

Attendees also explored the idea of a joint campaign in 2025 to commemorate the Beijing +30 anniversary.

The campaign will involve a series of events and discussions throughout 2025 to be organized by 'couples' of Female Heads of Missions and UN Agencies paired with selected Male Changemakers from the Government of Uganda, civil society and the diplomatic corps to highlight a positive narrative around gender equality and ending violence against women.

The participants shared their enthusiasm for the campaign, which will work alongside existing structures and the Government of Uganda, and showcase grassroots voices including from outside of Kampala. It will be a good opportunity to showcase Uganda's progress on gender equality, demonstrating how gender equality benefits everyone, and painting the picture of where we could be heading together, once we achieve greater gender equality.

Encouraged by these commitments, UN Women Uganda is eager to build on this momentum by actively contributing to these efforts in 2025. This collaboration will complement ongoing government and societal actions aimed at achieving gender equality and empowering women across all spheres of life. By working together, stakeholders can amplify their impact and drive transformative change for women and girls in Uganda.

During the national launch of the 16 Days of Activism 2024, there was a symbolic signing of a dummy report on Uganda's National Progress of 30 years of the implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing +30) in Uganda (2020-2025).



# UN Women and Partners Spotlight SAUTI-116 Helpline’s Role in Supporting GBV and VAC Survivors During 16 Days of Activism



Convener UNFPA Country Representative, Ms. Gift Malunga (2nd left), Hon. Peace Mutuuzo, State Minister of Gender and Culture, Maria Håkansson, the Swedish Ambassador to Uganda and Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, UN Women Uganda Country Representative and other stakeholders in a group photo with some of the survivors of GBV. Photo: UNFPA



The Swedish Envoy, Ambassador Maria Håkansson, UNFPA Uganda Country Rep. Gift Malunga interact with a beneficiary of the Sauti initiative while far left, Hon. Peace Mutuuzo, Dr. Paulina Chiwangu admire products by women. Photo: UNFPA

On Tuesday, November 26, UN Women joined other stakeholders in visiting the SAUTI-116 Helpline in Kireka as part of activities for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign. The visit highlighted the essential services provided by the SAUTI system, which supports survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Violence Against Children (VAC), emphasizing its critical role in the fight against these issues.

The SAUTI-116 Helpline, established in 2014, is a toll-free, 24/7 hotline that provides a safe and confidential space for survivors of GBV and VAC to report incidents and access support services. The helpline has received over 1 million calls since its inception, with a significant increase in calls during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Uganda continues to grapple with the challenges of GBV, the SAUTI-116 Helpline remains a beacon of hope for survivors, providing a safe and confidential space for them to report incidents and access support services.



# UN Women and Justice Centres Uganda Host Legal Aid Baraza in Makindye to Address Domestic Violence and Justice Barriers

On 4th December, UN Women joined the partner Justice Centres Uganda (JCU) for a G4DU Mobile Legal Aid Clinic/Baraza at Lukuli Community Playgrounds in Makindye. The event under the theme: Access to Justice for Women and Girls: Myths to Reality attracted a number of area local leaders and community members who shared their challenges with justice access that were ably answered by the JCU legal experts.

Many women expressed frustration over the arrests of their husbands and the persistent demands for bribes by some police officers, allegedly to secure their husbands' release from jail. The community dialogue at the baraza is also part of efforts to tackle domestic violence and child neglect cases that are said to be rising in Makindye. This is in order to create a safer future for women and girls in the area.

A local drama group performed a skit on domestic violence, highlighting its devastating impact on families. The skit emphasized how the vice has shattered many homes, leaving mothers and children in abject poverty.

Additionally, a mobile clinic was set up at the event, offering free testing and treatment for minor ailments



Grace Buleenzi Gulere, the UN Women Programme Specialist on Gender Statistics giving a speech on behalf of the Deputy Country Representative, Adekemi Ndieli in Makindye division. Photo: Samuel Wamuttu



A local drama group performs a skit on GBV during the event Photo: Samuel Wamuttu



Participants and staff members of JCU at the event in Makindye Photo: Samuel Wamuttu

# Amudat District Launches 16 Days of Activism with Local Leaders Driving Action Against GBV.



Members of the CDFU Community Activists Group engaged with duty bearers during the launch of the 16 Days of Activism campaign at Kalas Primary School Grounds in Amudat district . Photo: UN Women

On 6th December 2024, Amudat District in the Karamoja sub-region of Uganda launched its 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence at Kalas Primary School. The event was attended by several local leaders and community members.

Similar events were held in Moroto, with community dialogues also taking place in Tororo and Napak. These dialogues aim to sensitize communities on GBV prevention and response and raise awareness about referral pathways for those experiencing GBV.

The dialogue meetings involve the police, cultural leaders, and staff from community based departments, such as community development officers from the district.



Community members who have benefitted from UNIPGBV support through CDFU rehearse for 16 DoA launch (2024) in Amudat district, Karamoja sub-region. Photo: UN Women



# UN Women and Partners Launch 16 Days of Activism in Uganda's West Nile Region: Addressing Teenage Pregnancy in Adjumani District



*Carol Exile Apio giving a speech on behalf of UN Women during the launch of 16 Days of Activism in Adjumani district Photo: UN Women*

The launch of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence in Uganda's West Nile region took place in the Oligi settlement in Adjumani District. The event was attended by key partners, including UNHCR, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Medical Teams International, World Vision, Plan International, Mercy Beyond Borders, Window International, UGANET, and local organizations.

UN Women, in collaboration with partners, is conducting dialogues with parents and girls to address teenage pregnancy, a significant issue identified in Adjumani District through a GBV safety audit report conducted earlier this year. These dialogues are being led by Overcomers, a women-led organization.



*Guests react to speeches during the launch of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign 2024 in Adjumain district Photo: UN Women*



# Conclusion

The 2024 16 Days of Activism campaign in Uganda concluded with a strong call to action under the theme “Recommitment, Accountability, and Resources: Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.” The campaign emphasized recommitting to global goals such as the Beijing Platform for Action while addressing persistent challenges like limited resources, slow justice systems, and harmful cultural norms that perpetuate gender-based violence.

Key outcomes of the campaign included highlighting progress, such as the establishment of gender-based violence (GBV) shelters, legal aid services, and community sensitization programs. Initiatives like the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative also provided practical support to survivors and aimed to shift harmful social norms. However, participants noted the urgent need for increased funding, stronger enforcement of laws, and broader awareness efforts to ensure sustainable change.

Stakeholders from government, civil society, and grassroots organizations were urged to strengthen their efforts in holding perpetrators accountable, expanding survivor support services, and fostering community-level advocacy to transform harmful attitudes and behaviors

The 16 Days of activism against gender-based violence was commemorated by a number of partners who together echoed a call to unite and tackle the problem

## **Below are some highlights of the media reports during the campaign**

<https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/government-concerned-about-90-percent-of-children-involved-in-gbv-cases-4837804>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=974BvNF5op0>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUdYCzcw\\_yc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUdYCzcw_yc)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L949xSJ5Mc8>

# UN Women's Involvement in Digital Spaces



## Social Media Engagement During the 16 Days of Activism Campaign

**UN Women Uganda** @unwomenuganda · Nov 25

Despite progress, gaps in gender data remain. Our #NDP3 assessment with @EPRC\_official reveals:

- ◆ Inadequate gender disaggregation
- ◆ Limited trend analysis
- ◆ Capacity gaps

These hinder effective programming & monitoring. #GenderData #SDGs #16Days -@1ZuluLeonard @UNinUganda

7 retweets, 15 likes, 756 views

**UN Women Uganda** @unwomenuganda

This #16Days2024, let's renew & scale up our commitments to end violence against women & girls everywhere.

As we approach the 30th anniversary of the #BeijingPlatform, I call on decision-makers & cultural custodians to ensure greater accountability & action. - @PaulinaUNWomen

**UN Women Uganda** @unwomenuganda · Nov 25

In 🇸🇪, 36% of women face intimate partner sexual violence, 45% physical violence, & 55% economic or emotional violence.

These numbers are alarming & call for urgent, collective action. Violence is preventable—let's act now! -@SwedEnvoyUganda Maria Hakansson @SwedeninUG #16Days

1 retweet, 12 replies, 23 likes, 925 views

**UN Women Uganda** @unwomenuganda · Nov 25

"Violence against women & girls is a fundamental human rights issue. This #16Days2024, let's unite to challenge the norms & power structures that condone GBV. Together, we can create a safer, more equal society. #EndVAWG\* - @JanSadek Amb. of the EU to 🇸🇪 @EUinUG #EndGBV #UNITE

3 retweets, 23 replies, 58 likes, 1.5K views





Saddler Way, Naguru  
Kampala, Uganda