

# **Women's Rights and the Internet in Uganda**

## **Stakeholder Report Universal Periodic Review 26th Session – Uganda**

**Submitted by Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET),  
Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and  
Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and  
Southern Africa (CIPESA)**

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## 1. Introduction and context

This submission is a joint stakeholder contribution to the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism for Uganda. This submission focuses on women's rights and the internet in Uganda. It explores the extent of implementation of the recommendations made in the previous cycle of the UPR and also identifies emerging concerns in Uganda regarding women's rights online.

This is a joint submission by the Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), a non-governmental organisation established in 2000 that promotes the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) as tools to share information and address sustainable development issues; the Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA), a non-governmental organisation established in 2004 focusing on research and analysis of information aimed to understand ICT for development (ICT4D) and policy issues in the region; and the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), an international network and non-governmental organisation with consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), established in 1995 and, of which WOUGNET and CIPESA are members, which wants everyone to have access to a free and open internet to improve lives and create a more just world.<sup>1</sup>

Access to the internet, mobile telephony and other means of communication facilitated by technology have long been identified by researchers and policy makers alike as central to promoting the empowerment of women and marginalised communities.<sup>2</sup> From creating opportunities to operate businesses through mobile phones, to providing access to critical information on sexual and reproductive health, there is no shortage of documented cases that demonstrate ICT's potential for women's empowerment and the realisation of women's rights.

Ugandan women have the potential to be internet users who can champion different societal causes. Even though there are fewer women online compared to men, evidence has shown that given the right tools, women can easily embrace technology.<sup>3</sup> To be more specific, ICTs like mobile phones have been designed to suit different population groups. For most Ugandan women, this piece of technology has been a somewhat easy one to embrace, considering these devices are designed to allow users to SMS and access the internet.

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- 1 For more information on the organisations, see our respective websites: Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) <http://wougnet.org>; the Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) <http://www.cipesa.org>; the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) <https://www.apc.org>
  - 2 Association for Progressive Communications. (2015). *How technology issues impact women's rights : 10 points on Section J*. [http://www.genderit.org/sites/default/upload/sectionj\\_10points\\_apc.pdf](http://www.genderit.org/sites/default/upload/sectionj_10points_apc.pdf)
  - 3 Amuriat, G. Z., & Okello, D. (2005). Women on ICT Policy Making in Uganda. In F. E. Etta & L. Elder (Eds.), *At the Crossroads: ICT policy making in East Africa*. <http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Resources/Publications/Open ebooks/219-8/index.html>

It is important to also note that women's rights online and their economic empowerment can be key drivers of sustainable development. In fact, the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals include a target on enhancing the use of enabling technology, in particular ICTs, to promote the empowerment of women.<sup>4</sup> This can be achieved through gender-specific policy perspectives.

In order for the internet to be a gender-balanced democratic platform for online communication, it is imperative that women are involved in the processes that contribute to the development of the communication sector. Gaining gender equality in the realm of ICT would have positive implications for a country's economic and technological development. For instance, as a 2013 report by the Broadband Commission Working Group on Broadband and Gender notes, research from the World Bank indicates that addressing gender discrimination in employment could boost productivity by 40% and, if women's employment rates became equal to men's, GDP could rise by 14% by 2020. Great opportunities for economic development such as this demonstrate the importance of a gender-inclusive policy.<sup>5</sup>

However, there is growing evidence of a gender digital divide globally,<sup>6</sup> which limits the potential of the internet and ICTs to contribute to gender equality and women's rights. In Uganda, despite a booming ICT and telecommunications industry, women are confronted by a multi-layered set of barriers to accessing ICTs and many are excluded from the development and implementation of technology because of cultural biases. This submission focuses on areas of concern regarding women's rights and the internet – namely around issues of access, technology-related violence against women, and women's participation in ICT policy and decision-making processes.

## **2. Follow up to the previous UPR**

In Uganda's first review under the UPR, the government of Uganda did not receive any recommendations specifically addressing women's rights and the internet, but it did accept a number of recommendations relating to the fundamental rights of women, including those with the internet facilitates, such as freedom of expression, assembly, and association. Below is a selection of relevant recommendations.

### **2.1 Accepted recommendations from Uganda's previous UPR:**

- Discrimination against women: The government of Uganda accepted a number of recommendations relating to accelerating efforts to eliminate discrimination

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4 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, Target 5.b. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5>

5 The Broadband and Commission Working Group on Broadband and Gender. (2013). *Doubling Digital Opportunities: Enhancing the Inclusion of Women & Girls In the Information Society*. New York: ITU. <http://www.broadbandcommission.org/documents/working-groups/bb-doubling-digital-2013.pdf>.

6 Antonio, A., & Tuffley, D. (2014). The Gender Digital Divide in Developing Countries. *Future Internet 2014*, 6, 673-687. <http://www.mdpi.com/1999-5903/6/4/673/pdf>; World Bank. (2016). *World Development Report 2016*. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2016>

against women in law and practice (Poland and Spain), and fulfilling its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Australia), including by full implementation of the Domestic Violence Act (Australia, Burkina Faso and Canada).<sup>7</sup>

- Violence against women: The government of Uganda accepted a number of recommendations relating to implementing laws protecting women from violence, including sexual violence and sexual harassment (Czech Republic), strengthening efforts aimed at preventing, sanctioning and eradicating all forms of violence against women (Argentina), and preventing, investigating and prosecuting sexual and gender violence against all women (Brazil, Chile and France).<sup>8</sup>
- Participation: The government of Uganda accepted recommendations relating to taking further necessary measures to ensure equal rights and equal political participation of women (Slovenia), and participation of women in designing and implementing local development plans, with special attention to the needs of rural women (Azerbaijan).<sup>9</sup>

In addition, the government of Uganda accepted recommendations relating to the implementation of the National Action Plan on Women and of gender-sensitive poverty reduction and development programmes,<sup>10</sup> and the allocation of adequate training and resources to ensure that the improved rights of women become a reality on the ground (Norway).<sup>11</sup>

As noted above, the government of Uganda did not receive any recommendations relating specifically to the internet or ICTs. However, the government accepted a number of recommendations relating to fundamental rights which the internet facilitates, such as freedom of expression, assembly and association.<sup>12</sup>

## **2.2 Progress made since previous UPR**

Although several recommendations that were specific to women's rights in Uganda were accepted by the government, there is little evidence in the second cycle of the UPR review to indicate that major gains were registered with regards to practices that discriminate against women, implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, or obligations under CEDAW and the Domestic Violence Act, among many other recommendations.<sup>13</sup> Although there is evidence which demonstrates the positive impact of women's representation in decision making, women are absent from key decision-

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<sup>7</sup> A/HRC/19/16, Recommendations, 111.4, 111.31, 111.49, 111.51, 111.54.

<sup>8</sup> A/HRC/19/16, Recommendations 111.45, 111.48, 111.49, 111.52, 111.53, 111.54, and 111.55.

<sup>9</sup> A/HRC/19/16, Recommendations 111.32 and 111.47.

<sup>10</sup> A/HRC/19/16, Recommendation 111.19.

<sup>11</sup> A/HRC/19/16, Recommendation 111.30.

<sup>12</sup> A/HRC/19/16, Recommendations 111.3, 111.77, 111.78, 111.79, 111.80, 111.81, 111.82, and 111.84.

making bodies influencing the distribution of resources in both the public and private spheres. Women are also largely underrepresented in managerial positions. Thus, women's control over economic resources has remained low.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, through the adoptions of several affirmative action related policies and frameworks such as the Uganda Gender Policy<sup>15</sup>, the Uganda Vision 2040<sup>16</sup> and the National Development Plan<sup>17</sup> women have seen major gains in local and national representation in Uganda's political landscape.

Furthermore, despite the legal reforms that have taken place, women's control over economic resources has remained low.<sup>18</sup> Women's land ownership is still lower than men's, but their chances to own or rent a house are equal to or, in some towns and regions, even higher than those of men, especially in urban areas.<sup>19</sup> Women's access to formal credit sources such as bank loans remains extremely low compared to men's, due to lack of regular income, inability to guarantee the loans because of a lack of collateral, and limited access to information. As is noted below, most women are not connected to the internet because they cannot afford to be. Limiting women's access to the internet denies them the tools, resources and opportunities available through the internet, which in turn slows economic growth and social development opportunities.

The progress made by Uganda in promoting gender equality and the small extent to which existing policies and laws have been implemented have resulted in gains towards greater social, political and economic empowerment of women in Uganda. However, corruption has affected the extent of these achievements. Uganda scored 25 according to the Corruption Perceptions Index 2015, which measures corruption on a scale from 0, meaning highly corrupt, to 100, corrupt free.<sup>20</sup> The misappropriated resources could have contributed to poverty reduction, narrowing of gender gaps, improvement of health, education and other social services, access to safe drinking water, and addressing environmental sustainability. Women – especially at the grassroots level – are disproportionately and harder hit by corruption than men. There is a need for good governance practices and appropriate actions in curbing corruption and mismanagement of national resources to enable the realisation of gender equality in Uganda.

### **3. Uganda's obligations in relation to women's rights and gender equality**

#### **3.1 Domestic legislation**

Article 33 (1) (2) of the Constitution of Uganda provides for the rights of women:

13 WOUNET. (2015). *Final Report of the GEKS Uganda National Assessment*.

<http://wougnnet.org/resources/annual-reports/>

14 JICA, Uganda: Country Gender profile

[http://www.jica.go.jp/english/our\\_work/thematic\\_issues/gender/background/pdf/e08uga.pdf](http://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/thematic_issues/gender/background/pdf/e08uga.pdf)

15 Uganda Gender Policy. <http://www.mglsd.go.ug/uploads/2013/07/policies/Uganda-Gender-Policy.pdf>

16 Uganda Vision 2040. <http://npa.ug/wp-content/themes/npatheme/documents/vision2040.pdf>

17 Uganda National Development Plan. <http://npa.ug/wp-content/uploads/NDPII-Final.pdf>

18 JICA, Uganda: Country Gender profile

[http://www.jica.go.jp/english/our\\_work/thematic\\_issues/gender/background/pdf/eo8uga.pdf](http://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/thematic_issues/gender/background/pdf/eo8uga.pdf)

19 African Development Bank. (2013). *Financial Inclusion in Africa*.

[http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/Financial\\_Inclusion\\_in\\_Africa.pdf](http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/Financial_Inclusion_in_Africa.pdf)

20 Transparency International. (2015). *Corruption Perception Index 2015: Uganda*.

<http://www.transparency.org/country/#UGA>

(1) Women shall be given full and equal dignity of the person, and equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities with men.

(2) The State shall provide for the facilities and opportunities necessary to improve or realise women's full potential and advancement.

There are also specific laws such as the National Action Plan on Women, the Gender Policy Act, the Domestic Violence Act, and the Female Genital Mutilation Act that aim to advance women's rights in Uganda. However, as noted above, they need to be critically enforced and implemented for the full realisation of gender equality and empowerment of women. There are no specific laws focusing on fighting violence against women online. In 2014, the government enacted the Anti-Pornography Act<sup>21</sup> as a measure to curb pornography both online and offline; however, the law has been used to harass violated women victims of so-called "revenge" pornography.<sup>22</sup>

### **3.2 International obligations**

Uganda is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. As such, the government of Uganda has obligations and duties under international law to respect, to protect and to fulfil all civil and political, and economic, social and cultural rights, without discrimination between men and women. In addition, the government has the obligation to eliminate discrimination in both the public and private sphere by both state and non-state actors.

## **4. Background on internet access and online freedoms in Uganda**

The ICT and telecommunications industry in Uganda is booming – from 2008 to 2015, the sector's contribution to the gross domestic product more than doubled. Uganda's telecommunications regulator reported 22 million telephone subscribers and 13 million accessing the internet as of September 2015.<sup>23</sup> According to the International Telecommunication Union, Uganda has an ICT Development Index (IDI) value of 2.14, which is below the world's average of 5.03.<sup>24</sup> IDI is a reflection of three ICT development drivers, namely, infrastructure and access to ICTs, level of ICT use in the society, and impact resulting from the efficient and effective use of ICT.

While freedom to access the internet is generally unfettered, access is mainly restricted by infrastructural and economic reasons. Only 18% of Ugandans live in urban areas,<sup>25</sup> and just over 650,000 people, out of a total estimated population of 37.5 million, were re-

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21 Anti-Homosexuality Act, 2014. <http://bit.ly/PeaDyk>.

22 APC. (2014, 19 May). New laws in Uganda make internet providers more vulnerable to liability and state intervention. *APCNews*. <http://bit.ly/1LzrH8c>;

23 Uganda Communications Commission. (2015). *Postal, Broadcasting and Telecommunications Annual Market & Industry Report 2014/15*. <http://bit.ly/1TGYQXE.X>

24 International Telecommunication Union. (2015). ICT Development Index 2015: Uganda. <http://www.itu.int/net4/ITU-D/idi/2015/#idi2015countrycard-tab&UGA>

25 Uganda Bureau of Statistics. (2015). *2015 Statistical Abstract*. <http://bit.ly/1ZHSG8g>.

ported to have access to electricity by the national distributor in 2014.<sup>26</sup> Despite the enthusiasm for connectivity in the capital, the rural regions of Uganda remain grossly underserved. The majority of Ugandan women live in rural areas, constituting more than 90% of citizens, particularly the northern region, and therefore do not have consistent access to electricity or telecommunication services, including limited internet access. At present, mobile cellular signals cover almost 100% of the population, but in rural areas these signals are weak and huge improvements are needed, including reduction of broadband costs as well as tax burdens, which are three times as high as the average in Africa.

For those Ugandans who are online, the internet is only “partly free”. According to the 2015 Freedom House rankings, the Ugandan government is increasing its surveillance of Ugandan citizens, thus rendering the internet less conducive to freedom of expression and discussion.<sup>27</sup>

There are several laws in Uganda that severely infringe on internet rights and have been used to either prosecute or intimidate internet users. These laws include the Regulation of Interception of Communication Act, the Computer Misuse Act, the Anti-Pornography Act, and the Uganda Communications Act, 2013. These laws have been widely criticised for violating individuals' right to privacy on the internet.<sup>28</sup> Recently, the Ugandan government through the Attorney General presented a bill to parliament which human rights activists believe is largely intended to gag media freedom and critical opinion in Uganda, including free speech on social media.<sup>29</sup> The Uganda Communications (Amendment) Bill, 2016, seeks to give the executive arm of government outright powers to control communications in any way the sector minister deems fit.

## **5. Areas of concern**

### **5.1 Women's access to the internet**

Although the internet can present significant opportunities for advancing gender equality, women's empowerment and equitable development, there is an ever-widening digital gender gap. Ugandan women on average have a limited ability to afford, adopt and benefit from broadband access. One of the most pressing barriers affecting women is illiteracy.<sup>30</sup> While 73% of the Ugandan population over the age of 15 can read or write at a basic level, literate men far outnumber literate women: 82% of men are literate compared with only 64% of women. Furthermore, only 23% of adult women in Uganda have any secondary education, defined as education beyond the age of 12.

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26 UMEME. (2014). *Annual Report 2014*. <http://bit.ly/1kkxIP7>.

27 Kelly, S. et al. (2015). *Freedom on the Net 2015: Uganda*. Freedom House.

28 CIPESA. (2015). *Privacy in Uganda: An Overview of How ICT Policies Infringe on Online Privacy and Data Protection*. [http://www.cipesa.org/?wpfb\\_dl=201](http://www.cipesa.org/?wpfb_dl=201)

29 Mugerwa, Y. (2016, 11 March). Government drafts new law to gag media. *Daily Monitor*. <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Govt--drafts-new-law--to-gag-media/-/688334/3111626/-/bv2d6z/-/index.html>

30 WOUNET. (2014). *Cyber Infrastructure: A woman's issue too! Advancing a gender sensitive approach to ICT policy in Uganda*. <http://bit.ly/1MkxW5K>

The reality of the existing gender inequalities in internet access and use are best presented in an August 2015 report, “Women’s Rights Online: A Research and Policy Advocacy Initiative on Women’s Empowerment Through the Web”, commissioned by the World Wide Web Foundation.<sup>31</sup> The findings in this report were drawn from research, interviews and a face-to-face survey carried out in selected parts of Kampala. It showed that out of 1,013 women and 332 men surveyed in selected poor residential areas, only 21% of respondents had accessed the internet in the six months prior to the survey. Significantly, 44% of the male participants had access to a computer, as compared to only 18% of female counterparts.

Rural women still face unique barriers to access. In contrast to urban centres, rural areas are often serviced by internet telecentres, a central hub where a given population has access to internet-connected computers. Travel time to telecentres can be long, and a limited number of computers further limits access. Connections are often slow, and pay-per-minute access can make them costly. Aside from distance and cost, women may also face resistance from family members.

Analysis of the social context in Uganda reveals a number of disparities that have a bearing on women's equal access to and use of the internet. For example, women are far less likely to be able to access the internet affordably than men. As the 2014 Alliance for Affordable Internet's Affordability report notes, entry-level mobile broadband costs 18.2% of GNI per capita in Uganda overall, but 26% of GNI per capita for women when adjusted for the gender gap at 30% lower incomes.<sup>32</sup>

There is still little representation of women in ICT policy and decision-making bodies. Only by integrating representatives of women who understand gender-sensitive ICT issues into the policy-making process will it be possible to address crucial development opportunities and infrastructural gaps. Broadening the conception of who has a stake in ICT policy will inevitably produce a more robust and prosperous future for Uganda.

## **5.2 Technology-related VAW**

ICT use can be considered a gendered issue, as technology-related violence against women (tech-related VAW) has become prevalent. Such forms of female-targeted violence “include cyber stalking, sexual harassment, surveillance, and unauthorized use and manipulation of personal information, including image and video format.”<sup>33</sup> Technology-related violence acts as a significant barrier to women’s meaningful engagement with the internet.<sup>34</sup> Cyber stalking, online sexual harassment, blackmail through the use of private and often sexualised information, photographs and videos, and the forwarding of content that depicts, promotes and normalises violence against women are becoming increasingly documented and faced by women and girls who use the internet in Uganda.<sup>35</sup> They

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31 WOUGNET. (2015). Op. cit.

32 Alliance for Affordable Internet. (2014). *Affordability Report 2014*. <http://a4ai.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/a4ai-affordability-report-2014.pdf>

33 WOUGNET. (2014). Op. cit.

34 WOUGNET. (2015). Op. cit.

35 CIPESA. (2015). *State of Internet Freedom in Uganda 2015*. [http://www.cipesa.org/?wpfb\\_dl=209](http://www.cipesa.org/?wpfb_dl=209)



create a hostile online environment and can cause women and girls to disengage from the internet due to fear for their safety.

Sexualised violence against women in Uganda, with their nude pictures circulated on social media platforms without their consent, is another issue that the Ugandan government must address to prevent violence against women online. In 2015, there were several cases of the non-consensual transmission of intimate videos and photos. However, instead of the authorities punishing the perpetrators, it was the victims were harassed<sup>36</sup> and the government even threatened the shutdown of social media platforms involved.<sup>37</sup> Gender experts note that many cases go unreported due to a culture of silence and limited legal recourse or resources to seek justice.<sup>38</sup>

Technology-related forms of violence that are committed, aggravated and abetted by ICT must be recognised as a form of violence against women and be integrated in monitoring, prevention and response mechanisms, including in public policy and in expanding the implementation of anti-VAW laws. This includes the articulation of the duties and responsibilities of actors involved in preventing and responding to reported violations, including actions to minimise continued harm. States, intergovernmental institutions and other actors must recognise and include technology related forms of violence against women in their response and prevention efforts.

## 5. Network disruptions

While the focus of this submission is women's rights and the internet, when considering the internet and human rights context in Uganda, it is critical to mention that during the 2016 general elections, the government blocked access to social media platforms – Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and mobile money services.<sup>39</sup> The blockade was confirmed by one of the service providers, MTN Uganda, which stated that it had been instructed by the regulatory authority to block access to the platforms due to “security concerns”.<sup>40</sup> Further confirming the blockade, President Museveni said that it was a temporary measure to stop people from using the platforms for “telling lies”.<sup>41</sup> The Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) officials stated that the decision to block

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36 Tamale, S. (2015, 10 February). Sex tapes are part of pervasive levels of violence against women. *The Daily Monitor*. <http://bit.ly/17e3Ldj> For example, Uganda social media was awash with naked pictures of Ugandan musician Desire Luzinda which were allegedly leaked to the public by her estranged husband. Shortly thereafter, another woman working with CBS radio in Uganda faced similar problems, involving a “sex tape” that was circulated on social media. As of today, no concrete actions are known to have been taken to punish the offenders in either case.

37 Ndhaye, M. (2015, 10 February). UCC threatens to shut down social media platforms over abuse. *The Daily Monitor*. <http://bit.ly/1CemC2i>.

38 CIPESA. (2015). *The Challenge of Tackling Online Violence Against Women in Africa*.

<http://www.cipesa.org/2015/10/the-challenge-of-tackling-online-violence-against-women-in-africa/>  
39 BBC. (2016, 18 February). Uganda election: Facebook and WhatsApp blocked. *BBC*. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35601220>.

40 <https://twitter.com/mtnug/status/700286134262353920>

41 Butagira, T. (2016, 18 February). Museveni explains social media, mobile money shutdown. *Daily Monitor*. <http://bit.ly/1PTKux9>.

access to the platforms was in line with Section 5(1) (b) and (x) of the Uganda Communications Act, 2013.<sup>42</sup> It should be recalled that in 2013, the national regulator issued a directive to internet service providers (ISPs) instructing them to temporarily block access to Facebook and Twitter in response to the “walk to work” protests over rising food and fuel prices.<sup>43</sup>

These actions by the government to block access to the internet are a violation of human rights such as access to information, freedom of expression and the right to participate in public life, including by voting. A 2015 joint statement by the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Organization of American States (OAS) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information, condemns “kill switches” (i.e. shutting down entire parts of communications systems) and the physical takeover of broadcasting stations, and asserts that they are measures which can never be justified under human rights law.<sup>44</sup> In situations such as election processes where citizens get the opportunity to exercise their democratic right to freely elect leaders, they need access to platforms that can enhance this right. Today the internet provides such a platform, and when access to it is blocked, citizens may not be able to access the information that they need to inform their decision to exercise their right to vote. The declaration condemns “systematic or targeted attacks on freedom of expression aimed at silencing certain perspectives or voices, whether internationally, nationally or locally, and State responses to such attacks.”

## 6. Recommendations

The Government of Uganda should:

- i. Take measures to ensure that women are able to fully exercise their human rights online as well as offline.
- ii. Implement measures that bridge the gender divide as well as the rural-urban divide by making the internet accessible to all, including women and the rural populace.

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42 Uganda Communications Act, 2013 Section 5 (1) (b) and (x) - (b) to monitor, inspect, licence, supervise, control and regulate communications services; and (x) to set standards, monitor and enforce compliance relating to content.

43 Heacock, R. (2011, 18 April). Ugandan Government Asks ISPs to Block Facebook, Twitter. *OpenNet Initiative*. <https://opennet.net/blog/2011/04/ugandan-government-asks-isps-block-facebook-twitter>

44 Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression and Responses to Conflict Situation, 4 May 2015. <https://www.article19.org/resources.php/resource/37951/en/joint-declaration-on-freedom-of-expression-and-responses-to-conflict-situation>

- iii. Provide spaces for greater involvement of women in decision-making organs and bodies of the state, especially in ICT policy-making processes.
- iv. Facilitate women's acquisition of skills and abilities, including with regard to ICTs, that meet their specific development needs. In this regard, the Government of Uganda should work towards eliminating gender disparities with targeted measures, such as creating scholarships for girls, setting up special times in internet access centres to allow women to become familiar with the internet, increasing the number of female teachers, promoting continuing training opportunities for women, and taking steps to encourage their entry into the fields of scientific research, technology and engineering.
- v. Implement the National Action Plan on Women and gender-sensitive poverty reduction and development programmes.
- vi. Call for the immediate enactment of the Privacy and Data Protection Bill 2014, as the Bill seeks to protect the enjoyment of the right to privacy, including online privacy, and to curb targeted surveillance.
- vii. Revise existing legislation, such as the Regulations on the Interception of Communications Act, so that they are consistent with Uganda's domestic and international human rights commitments, in particular the right to privacy. The term "national security", should not be used to trigger violation of internet rights.
- viii. Ensure that measures limiting freedom of expression, assembly, and association online are based on clearly defined criteria in accordance with international human rights standards
- ix. Promote measures to advance women's and girl's participation in the knowledge society, including by promoting public education and awareness against negative cultural norms that hinder their participation; and encouraging all students, girls as well as boys, to take on science and technology- related subjects so as to compete in ICT related fields.
- x. Reinforce the national ICT policy framework in pursuit of the goal of "lifelong education for all", promoting traditional literacy with ICT components in schools and educational/learning centres.
- xi. Take measures to reduce the cost of data bundles by Internet Service Providers, so that women and girls are encouraged to participate online.
- xii. Investigate how technology-related violence against women is affecting women's participation online and develop holistic approaches to address this issue, which may include reviewing existing legislation, training of law enforcement/police to be able to deal with cases of tech-related VAW, and enhancing digital literacy training in schools.