



National Union of Persons with Disabilities of Uganda



East Africa Center for Disability Law and Policy

Joint Press Statement on Participation of Youth with Disabilities (YWDs) in Civic Spaces in Uganda

Today, 12th August 2018, National Union of Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) youth wing, and East Africa Centre for Disability Law and Policy (EA-CDLP) join the rest of the World to celebrate the International Youth day under the theme “Safe Spaces for Youth”

We recognize and appreciate all government and Civil Society’s efforts to include youth with disabilities (YWDs) in several development agendas. While there is National Youth Council Act (NYCA) that was intended to protect youth from all forms of manipulation, YWDs participation in civic space is still a big concern. This is contrary to the over-arching principle of not leaving any one behind in line with agenda 2030. Herein below, we highlight the deficiencies that have hampered progressive and sustainable participation of YWDs in electoral democracy.

Election of representatives of youth in Parliament (Section 15 of the National Youth Council Act). Effective and inclusive participation of all youth in their diversities in electoral processes connotes to the election of a Member of Parliament for YWDs by YWDs themselves. While the section is gender sensitive in terms of representation, it does not take into consideration the equitable representation and participation of YWDs and this has hampered effective and representative voice of youth with disabilities in decision making processes.

Lack of and non-participation of youth with disabilities in the National Youth Council structures. There are no structures to facilitate the participation of YWDs in electoral processes due to lack of legislative provision in the National Youth Council Act (NYCA). Utmost, the National Youth Council Act instead provides for the nomination of a youth with disability by the organization of persons with disabilities in certain circumstances. This is not the case for YWDs because their colleges are well legislated for in the National Youth Council Act.

Composition of the National Youth Executive Committee (Section 9 of the NYCA). The National Youth Council Act is explicit about the participation of other categories on the National Youth Executive Committee but directly omits the participation of YWDs yet this is necessary to enhance their participation and inclusion in the day today running of the affairs of the Council. YWDs should think for themselves and decide for themselves because they have the brains too.

Whereas the youth in Uganda is pushing for scrapping affirmative action, YWDs contradict this position because despite affirmative action existing for more than 10 years, YWDs have continuously been discriminated in political in spaces, economic spaces, public spaces among others yet there are deliberate efforts by government to target YWDs in these spaces.

We recommend for effective involvement of YWDs in democratic governance and decision making processes through the amendment of the National Youth Council Act to include the election of a Member of Parliament for YWDs. This is one way to ensuring that they are not left behind per the SDGs slogan.

We demand that consideration should be made to introduce electoral colleges where YWDs would participate in electing their leaders from the local to the national level. This is a necessity to promoting the inclusion of youth with disabilities.

We demand that the NYCA should be amended to enable the representation of YWDs on the National Youth Executive Committee. We propose for the position of Secretary for Disability Affairs on the National Youth Executive Committee.

We seek for affirmative action to continue but be reviewed to take into consideration the specific needs and rights of youth with disabilities in order to inclusive and effective inclusion of YWDs in all civic spaces.

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