

A PUBLICATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS AND PROMOTION FORUM (HRAPF)



Chairperson of the EOC addressing HRAPF's 7th AGM



A Representative from GIZ addressing HRAPF's 7th AGM

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INTRODUCTION



Mr. Adrian Jjuuko- Executive Director

I am pleased to introduce to you our newsletter for the third quarter of 2016. It covers progress made by the organization in the months of July, August and September. This is the second last quarter of the year and it comes after the mid-year review of the organization, which is normally done in June.

Through its Access to Justice Program, HRAPF continued providing legal aid services to its target communities. A total of 209 cases were received and handled during the quarter. This is an exponential increase from the 163 cases handled in the previous quarter. The high increase could be attributed to HRAPF's extension of its land justice services to Masaka District during the quarter. Of the 209 cases, 92 cases were handled by the Sexual Minorities Unit, while 117 were handled by the Land and HIV Unit. This was after a needs assessment was conducted and it was discovered that there was dire need for these services. Of the 92 cases received under the Sexual Minorities Unit, 38 were LGBTI cases, 48 were sex workers' cases while 6 were abortion related cases. Of the 117 cases received and handled by the Land and HIV Unit, 44 were for women and girls living with HIV/AIDS, while 73 were for women and the elderly with land justice issues.

The quarter also saw the biggest attack on Uganda's LGBTI community in a long time, when Police raided an LGBTI

beauty pageant at Venom Club, during the pride week, and brutally arrested various activists and organisers, including one HRAPF lawyer. The day following the arrest, the Minister of Ethics and Integrity issued a statement of what he purported was the government position on homosexuality, banning all LGBTI related activities in the country. HRAPF filed a complaint with the Uganda Human Rights Commission challenging the actions of police. We hope justice is served.

The quarter also saw us receive judgment from the East African Court of Justice in the case filed by HRAPF under the auspices of the Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Constitutional Law (CSCRCL) against the Attorney General of Uganda, challenging certain provisions of the Anti-Homosexuality Act. The court's decision was to the effect that the matter was moot since the Act had been annulled in 2014. We however remain proud of having initiated LGBTI rights litigation at such a regional court, and hope to use the forum more in future.

As we look forward to an eventful last quarter and end of year, we continue to thank all our partners and clients for standing with us this far. We hope you enjoy reading through some of our quarter highlights in this issue. Thank you!

UPDATES ON THE ACCESS TO JUSTICE PROGRAM

The access to justice department is divided into two units. The Sexual Minorities Unit and the Land and HIV Unit. The Sexual minorities unit provides legal aid services to LGBTI persons and sex workers while the Land and HIV Unit provides legal aid services to women and girls living with HIV, poor women and the elderly seeking land justice. Below we provide you with updates on both units during the months of January, February and March 2016.

THE SEXUAL MINORITIES UNIT

Legal Aid Service Provision

The sexual Minorities Unit continued to provide quality legal aid services to LGBTI persons and Sex workers across the country. HRAPF is also implementing projects on abortion laws in Uganda and one of the activities thereunder is provision of legal aid services in cases where women, girls or health workers are found in contravention of abortion criminal laws. These cases are received and handled under the Sexual Minorities Unit and were handled in the quarter. As such, the Unit received and handled a total of 92 cases during the quarter. 38 cases were for LGBTI persons, 48 for sex workers and 6 abortion related cases.

As in the previous quarter, organizational matters rank highest among cases of LGBTI persons with 8 cases in total, while cases of child neglect still rank highest for sex workers with 20 cases in total. The constant rise in the number of cases concerning LGBTI organisations is evident of the fact that there is increased organizing and empowerment within the LGBTI community, as many persons continue to form organisations to enhance the observance of the rights of LGBTI in Uganda. Child neglect remains a pertinent issue among sex workers, caused majorly by being stigmatised because of the work they do and the poor economic status of the fathers of their children. More often than not, fathers of sex workers' children refuse to provide maintenance for their children on the grounds that the children are borne of sex workers and they want nothing to do with the women and these children. For both groups, criminal arrests rank second with 7 for LGBTI persons and 10 for sex workers.

In regards to the abortion cases, all of them involved persons being charged with offences concerned with carrying out

abortion, which is mostly illegal in Uganda. 3 of the cases involved under age girls, 1 case involved a woman and 2 involved male sex workers.

HRAPF's intervention in these cases led to securing of different remedies for the affected persons. These included 18 police bonds, 5 mediation agreements, 2 company name reservations, 3 releases without charge, 1 registered resolution to open up a bank account, and 1 case in which an assailant on a gay man was arrested. A total of 175 persons benefited from this legal aid service provision, 121 of whom were sex workers, 49 LGBTI persons and 6 persons with abortion related cases.

Enhancing access to information for sexual minorities

The Unit works to enhance access to information to LGBTI persons and Sex workers especially regarding laws that affect them and their human rights. This is mainly done through conduct of awareness sessions, outreach sessions, availing of various IEC materials and use of the resource centre. During the quarter, the Unit reached out to 62 persons through a human rights workshop and

site-mapping meetings. The human rights workshop was held in Mbarara for LGBTI persons and was attended by 30 persons. These were taught about the different avenues for accessing justice for LGBTI persons including using the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Uganda Human Rights Commission.



HRAPF Legal Assistant, Elizabeth Kemigisha facilitating at the Workshop

Two meetings were held with sex workers in Luwero and Mityana, which were attended by a total of 32 sex workers. These meetings were held as part of a mapping exercise in which HRAPF seeks to introduce its services to areas where they were not known. The meetings are used to talk about HRAPF's work and its services to the sex worker community. 24 cases were received from the meetings and handled by the Unit.

Still as a way of enhancing access to information for sexual minorities, the Unit published 1000 copies of a brochure on

access to justice for sexual minorities. The brochure provides information on where sexual minorities can access justice. 90 copies of the brochure have so far been distributed.

HRAPF also has a resource centre that has materials on the different laws that affect marginalised persons and issues of their human rights. During the quarter, 16 users were registered who mainly used the available computers and Internet for research and also read the publications available.

Engaging in strategic litigation

Strategic litigation is one of the advocacy tools employed by HRAPF to advance the promotion of rights of its target groups. In the quarter, the Unit engaged on three strategic litigation cases.

The EACJ case: The case at the East African Court of Justice was filed by HRAPF at the East African Court of Justice against the Attorney General challenging certain provisions of the Anti-Homosexuality Act. Judgment in the case was given in the quarter and the head of Unit was one of the lawyers that represented HRAPF at the East African Court of Justice to receive it.

The SMUG case: The case challenges the refusal by the Registrar of companies to register Sexual Minorities Uganda as a company limited by guarantee. The case came up for

its first hearing during the quarter and the Head of Unit was one of the lawyers that represented the applicants. The hearing however did not take place as the Uganda Registration Services Bureau was not represented.

LGBTI Pride human rights complaint: During the quarter, Police raided Ms/Mr/Mx pride beauty pageant organized during the LGBTI pride week. Police brutally arrested the event's organisers and activists and unlawfully detained attendees of the event at the venue. Various persons were brutally beaten, their hair pulled out, their pictures forcefully taken among other acts that amounted to gross human rights violations. The Unit prepared a complaint, interviewed complainants, drafted affidavits and filed the complaint with the Uganda Human Rights Commission, challenging the actions of the police in the raid.

Continued engagement with paralegals

In the quarter, HRAPF worked together with some of its trained LGBTI paralegals to conduct outreach sessions within their communities. 4 outreaches were held, and they were attended by a total of 112 persons. The outreaches were organized with paralegals from Queer Youth Uganda, Transgender Equality Uganda, Kampus Liberty Masaka and Icebreakers Uganda. In the outreaches, the trained paralegals are required to facilitate to their community members on the laws that affect them and their human rights. These are intended to not only provide information to the participants in the outreaches, but also to build the capacity of paralegals on issues of law and human rights and increase their relevance in their communities.



HRAPF
trained
paralegal, Ramathan
Babu, facilitating at one
of the outreaches



HRAPF Legal Associate, Elizabeth Kemigisha, addressing participants at one of the outreaches

HRAPF also organized one quarterly sharing session with the paralegals to discuss the work done for the third quarter of the year. The session was held at the HRAPF secretariat and was attended by a total of 24 paralegals. During the session, the new simplified quarterly reporting tool was explained to them, they were introduced to the new HRAPF stationed paralegal, and they shared the work they had been engaged in during the quarter. The paralegals together worked on 67 cases during the quarter.

THE LAND AND HIV/AIDS UNIT

Provision of legal aid services

The Land and HIV Unit provides legal aid services to women and girls living with HIV/AIDS in the districts of Kiboga, Luwero, Mityana and Mpigi; and to women and the elderly with land justice issues in the districts of Masaka and Wakiso. In the quarter, the Unit received and handled a total of 117 cases. 73 were for women, girls and the elderly with land justice issues while 44 of the cases were received from women and girls living with HIV/AIDS. For women and girls living with HIV/AIDS, 12 cases were received from Kiboga, 12 from Mpigi, 10 from Mityana, and 10 from Luwero. Most of these cases concerned land disputes, which were 19 cases. HRAPF intervened in the cases in different ways, including through mediation, court representations, and legal advice, among others. From these interventions, clients got remedies that included 5 mediation agreements, 4 wills made, compensation in 3 cases among others. These interventions benefited 123 persons of which 76 were children, 34 were women and 13 were men.

Although the legal aid services on land justice are supposed to be provided in the districts of Wakiso and Masaka, the Unit receives cases from other districts. These are normally referred to partner organisations that have the mandate to handle such cases in those districts. Therefore the 73 cases got from women and the elderly with land justice issues were not only received from Waksio and Masaka but were also received from districts like Nakasongola, Gomba, Rakai, Kalangala, Kampala, Mubende, Bukomansimbi, Luwero, Nakaseke and Mukono. With this target group, unlawful evictions from land rank highest with 21 cases received in the quarter. The remedies provided in these cases included 31 mediations, 25 cases of court representation, 7 land searches, 3 caveats among others. These interventions benefited a total of 163 persons, of which 101 were children, 36 were women and 30 were men.



HRAPF Legal Associate Betty Balisalamu conducting a mediation

Legal education and awareness



One of the HRAPF trained paralegals Jennifer Kigongo facilitating on will making

The Unit engages in the creation of awareness among its target groups on different laws that normally affect them and their human rights. In the quarter, the Unit carried out 12 awareness sessions, reaching out to a total of 911 persons. These sessions were held in cooperation with HRAPF trained paralegals stationed in different districts. 7 of the sessions were held with persons living with HIV/AIDS in the districts of Kiboga, Mityana, Luwero and Mpigi and were attended by a total of 571 persons. The sessions were specifically held at Mityana Hospital, Kambugu Health Centre, Bishop Asili Hospital, Kituntu Health Centre, Kikandwa Health Centre, St. Luke Health Centre, and Golo Health centre. In these sessions, persons living with HIV/AIDS were taught about patients' rights, laws on succession, will making among others. 41 cases were registered from the sessions and handled by the Unit.

5 of the sessions were held with women and the elderly on land justice issues in the districts of Wakiso and Mityana. While HRAPF's legal aid services for women and the elderly on land justice issues do not extend to Mityana, the local leaders in the area informed HRAPF that there was great need for the awareness on land rights in the area, a need HRAPF answered. The 5 sessions were attended by a total of 340 persons. They were held in Nampunge village, Jomba village, St Tereza Kabuule, Naggalabi and Masanafu. The participants were taught about laws governing land in Uganda, their respective land rights, child protection among other things. The unit received and handled 24 cases from the sessions.



HRAPF Legal Associate Betty Balisalamu facilitating at a session in Naggalabi

Holding radio talk shows on laws and human rights

As one of the avenues for creation of awareness and education on laws that affect our target groups, HRAPF carries out radio talk shows to discuss pertinent and topical issues. During the quarter, the Unit held 5 radio talk shows, which were aired on two radio stations that is Kingdom FM and Family radio. The talk shows were used to discuss the proposed constitutional amendment of Article 26 of the Constitution on the right to property and the likely impacts of the amendment if it were to be passed by Parliament. The talk shows were also used, to generally discuss land laws in Uganda, the rights of persons living with HIV/AIDS, laws on succession, and will making. During the talk shows, 23 persons called in and contributed to the discussions.



The Head of Unit, Ms. Farida Ikyimaana, HRAPF Project Officer, Mr. Julius Ssentamu and Mr. Enock Kayima of Kibuli Police during one of the talk shows at Kingdom FM

HRAPF trains Local Council leaders and health workers on laws and human rights

The head of Unit facilitating at one of the health workers' workshops in Mpigi



HRAPF engages duty bearers at different levels on the laws that affect its target groups and their duties in the enforcement of these laws and promotion of their human rights. To this end, two workshops were held with local council leaders and health workers. The workshop for health workers was organised at Mpigi hospital and was attended by 40 participants including the District Health Officer and the in-charge of the hospital. The participants were trained on the clients'

charter on patients' rights and responsibilities, the commitments, core values and principles of health workers, the feedback mechanism and resolution.

One more workshop was organized for local council leaders. Their fellow Local Council leaders who had been trained in the first and second quarters organized it and 34 leaders attended it from Kiteredde, Kakiri, Muzinda and Nsangi who were not earlier trained. In the workshop the leaders were taught about land laws and the jurisdiction of local council leaders and Local Council courts especially in land matters.

The training of these leaders has been very instrumental in enhancing access to justice and increasing awareness on rights and laws to people in their areas. For example, Local Council leaders in Jomba, Kimbejja, Sala, Maggwa, Nampunge, Gobero, Nakilagala and Naggalabi were engaged in mediations conducted in their villages and also in organizing of awareness sessions.

UPDATES FROM LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY AND NETWORKING PROGRAM

The Legislative Advocacy and Networking Program seeks to work with like-minded organisations and institutions to advocate and influence the adoption of policies and legislation that promote equality and non-discrimination in order to prevent discrimination of marginalised groups. It employs legal and policy analysis, legal research and documentation, strategic interest litigation and partnerships to achieve that aim. The program has one unit, the Research and Advocacy under which all activities are implemented.

THE RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY UNIT

HRAPF involvement in the making of the NGO Regulations

The new NGO Act was signed into law by the president on 30 January 2016, and came into force in April 2016. Currently there are efforts to draft Regulations to the Act and the NGO Forum has called on participation of civil society organisations. From when the law was a Bill in Parliament, HRAPF has been engaged in advocacy processes around it, with specific focus on how it is likely to affect organisations working with marginalized persons. HRAPF published an analysis of the Bill and the fact sheet thereto, held three consultative meetings with leaders of organisations working with LGBTI persons, Sex Workers and drug users to discuss the bill, had radio talk shows to discuss the Bill, attended Parliamentary sessions and engaged wider civil society on it. Even when it was passed, HRAPF steered debate on the likely implications of the passed law on organisations working with LGBTI persons.

Regulations to the Act are important as they guide how

the law is interpreted and consequently implemented. HRAPF hired a consultant, Prof. Christopher Mbaziira of Makerere Law School, who drafted mirror regulations pointing out issues important to organisations working with marginalized groups. The draft regulations were used by the Unit to hold consultative meetings with leaders and representatives of these organisations and their input was used to make a final copy of the mirror regulations. This copy was distributed to different stakeholders including the NGO Forum, development partners and the Ministry of Justice to inform the general process of developing regulations. The Unit also ensured that representatives of marginalized persons attended the regional consultations on the Regulations organized by the NGO Forum. All this is intended to ensure that the Regulations passed do not lead to the unfair implementation of the law against marginalised persons.

Two Research reports launched

During the quarter, HRAPF launched the research on idle and disorderly laws and the 2016 violations report.

The research on the idle and disorderly laws looked into the different laws in Uganda that criminalise 'idle and disorderly' behavior, how they are implemented, and how their implementation and continued presence on Uganda's law books impact on the rights of marginalised groups like LGBTI persons, sex workers, the urban poor, and drug users. The research found that indeed the laws are being used by law implementers discriminately against marginalised persons, especially through *en masse* and arbitrary arrests. The arrests are usually used to extort money from the victims by police officers. It was also found that while many persons fall prey to these arrests, very few of them are prosecuted in courts of law. Even those that are never fully prosecuted, they are either dismissed for want of prosecution, disposed off by a plea of guilt to get light sentences, or dismissed after the accused persons jump bail and disappear. The laws therefore do not seem to have any prosecutorial value as they are too vague, which makes their proof beyond reasonable doubt hard. Recommendations were made in the report to different stakeholders and duty bearers, which included repeal of these laws. The report was launched by the Director of the Legal and Complaints Directorate of the Uganda Human Rights Commission and the Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission.

On the same date, HRAPF launched the 2016 violations report, which documents the human rights violations suffered by LGBTI persons in Uganda in the year 2015. The report was a combined effort of different organisations working the LGBTI community: HRAPF, Sexual Minorities Uganda, Ice Breakers Uganda, Freedom and Roam Uganda and the National LGBTI Security Committee. The report confirmed that despite the annulment of the anti-Homosexuality act in 2014, LGBTI persons still suffered violations in 2015. The report documented 171 violations arising out of 91 verified cases. What was unique about this report was that for the first time, it was shown that non-state actors perpetrated more violations than state actors. Out of the 171 verified violations, 78 were perpetrated by state actors and 93 were perpetrated by non-state actors. Even then, the Uganda Police remained the top most individual perpetrator of human rights violations, having perpetrated 64 violations, followed by property owners, having perpetrated 40 violations. Arbitrary and unlawful arrests and evictions continue to contribute the highest numbers of violations suffered by LGBTI persons. The report also made recommendations to different stakeholders and duty bearers, and the recommendations included training of police officers on the rights of LGBTI persons.

The two reports increase the available information that can be used as advocacy tools to enhance the observance of the rights of marginalised groups.



Support to Strategic Litigation cases

The Unit gives support to HRAPF's strategic litigation cases by popularizing the cases and holding strategic legal meetings and analyzing and disseminating judgments in the cases. In the quarter, the Unit supported 3 cases of strategic litigation.

The Lokodo case: The case appeals the decision of the High Court in which it was held that the Minister of Ethics and Integrity, Fr. Simon Lokodo was justified in closing down a skills training workshop organised for LGBTI persons. The case is however yet to be heard and during the quarter, the Unit organised a meeting that was attended by 39 lawyers and activists to discuss a way forward on the case. In the meeting, the lead lawyer in the case pointed out that the case might not be heard until 2017. It was then suggested and decided in the meeting that a complaint on the police raid on LGBTI pride activities be filed with the Uganda Human Rights Commission, since both cases concern the same issues on freedoms of assembly, association and expression of LGBTI persons. Such a complaint would not only keep the issues alive on the human rights debate agenda, it would also likely expedite the hearing of the appeal, so that the Court of Appeal can provide guidance on the issues in dispute. The complaint was filed in the quarter. It was also agreed in the meeting that a press conference on the raid on the activities be held, which was done at fairway hotel and the story carried by different media houses like the investigator.

The EACJ case: The case was filed at the East African Court of Justice and it challenged certain provisions of the Anti-Homosexuality Act. Judgment in the case was received in the quarter and the Unit analysed it, looking at its implications on the rights of LGBTI persons in Uganda. The Unit also organised a press conference that was attended by various media houses to discuss the analysis of the judgment. In addition, a legal strategy meeting was organized and attended by 29 lawyers and activists to discuss the way forward in light of the judgment. The meeting discussed whether the judgment of the court should be appealed or not. While most of the activists felt that the judgment should be appealed, most of the lawyers felt that there was no need to, since it was based on a mere technicality. The Unit wrote a legal opinion on the possibility of an appeal of the judgment and this was distributed to the stakeholders.

The SMUG case: The case challenges the refusal to register Sexual Minorities Uganda as a company limited by guarantee by the Uganda Registration Services Bureau. The case came up for hearing in the quarter and the Unit mobilised partners to attend the hearing. When the hearing did not take place because the URSB was not represented, the Unit prepared updates on the case and shared them with the different stakeholders.



HRAPF Executive Director addressing participants in the meeting

Revival of the CSCHRCL

The Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Constitutional Law was established to fight against the Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2009 and when the Anti-Homosexuality Act was finally annulled in 2014, the coalition was taken to have done and completed the purpose for which it had been formed. However after the attacks on the LGBTI community during the celebration of pride, it was thought that there was need for a body like the coalition to respond to the attacks. A meeting was held with the different stakeholders and activists, and it was agreed that the coalition should be revived. The coalition was

very instrumental in galvanizing efforts on rights of LGBTI persons in Uganda and its campaigns against the Anti-Homosexuality law were very successful. The coalition was therefore resumed, and its steering and legal committees were re-constituted. The committees held a meeting each in the quarter, to discuss how the coalition would progress and to discuss the complaint that was filed with the Uganda Human Rights Commission. The coalition hopefully progresses and responds to the new wave of attacks against the rights of LGBTI persons.

Police raids Pride Activities 2016

During the quarter, in the month of August, the LGBTI community in Uganda organised celebrations of its annual pride. However during one of the pride activities, a beauty pageant, officers from Kabalagala Police Station, under the leadership of the officer in charge of the station raided the event. In the process, 16 people were arrested including the organisers of the event, activists and one HRAPF lawyer. The attendees of the event were then detained by police in the event venue, beaten, their hair pulled out and their photos forcefully taken. The persons detained at police were brutally arrested, their pictures forcefully taken, the transgender persons fondled, and some people beaten by inmates, under the police watch. All persons were later released without charge but they had

suffered various human rights violations.

The following day, the minister of Ethics and Integrity issued a statement, purporting it to be the government's position, banning all LGBTI activities in the country. HRAPF working under the CSCHRCL, analysed the events and their implications on the human rights of LGBTI persons and distributed this analysis. HRAPF also held a press conference on the events and shared the analysis. A complaint was also prepared and filed. The attacks on the LGBTI community come in the wake of systematic attacks on LGBTI persons' freedoms of association, assembly and expression. HRAPF hopes the complaint is heard fairly and expeditiously.



HRAPF Executive Director reading the press release during the press conference on the pride raid

HRAPF engages police on rights of LGBTI persons

The Uganda Police is one of the Institutions with the primary mandate of implementing laws in Uganda, especially criminal and penal laws. Same sex sexual conduct is criminalised in Uganda and therefore Police always interact with LGBTI persons in implementing these laws. Police have also been continuously documented as the top most violators of the LGBTI persons. One of the advocacy strategies HRAPF has adopted in seeking to improve the observance of the rights of LGBTI Persons is to engage the institutions with the duty to protect these rights, including police. HRAPF then set out to have meaningful and extensive engagements with police on the rights of LGBTI persons. This engagement substantively begun in the last quarter and it was done through meetings, police parade addresses and sharing of publications. The engagements were kicked off with two meetings held with the Directorate of Human Rights and Legal services of the Police, one of which was with the Director, AIGP Erasmus Twaruhukwa.

The meetings introduced HRAPF's work to the Directorate and discussed the different ways in which HRAPF intends to engage with police. The meetings also concretised a hitherto existing informal relationship between the organization

and the Directorate. In addition to these meetings with the Directorate, 8 other meetings were held with officers at Wandegeya, Kawempe, Katwe, Kasangati, Old Kampala, and Nabweru police stations and Lungujja and Kikajjo police posts. These meetings targeted Officers in Charge of Police Stations, Officers in Charge of investigations, Officers in charge of the gender desks, among others. In these meetings, HRAPF's work was introduced and a discussion would ensue on the rights of LGBTI persons and the role of police in their protection. From the meetings, it was evident that a large number of the police officers understood what their role was and agreed that regardless of one's perceived or actual sexual orientation, everyone has rights under the constitution and these rights should be respected. However, a few officers made it clear that LGBTI persons do not have any rights as they can not be thought to be Ugandans or even human beings. HRAPF also addressed 2 police parades at Katwe and Nabweru police stations on the same issues and shared its publications on Uganda's legal framework and rights of LGBTI persons. Hopefully these engagements change mindsets and improve the observance of the rights of LGBTI persons by police.

Awareness on legal and policy framework on abortion



HRAPF Legal Officer Joanne Nanyange facilitating on the Legal and Policy governing Abortion in Luweero

During the quarter HRAPF has engaged in creating awareness among sex worker, women living with HIV/AIDS and Health workers on the legal and policy framework affecting abortion in Uganda. Seven sessions were held among which three were for sex workers in Kawempe (31), Lugazi(31) and Makindye(41), three for women living with HIV/AIDS in Mityana(37), Luwero(32) and Mpigi(35) and one for Midwives in Kampala(17). They are used to discuss how the current legal and policy framework affects access to safe abortion services and discussing ways in which this could be changed. For most of the 224 persons that have been reached out to in these sessions, their opinion is that we should advocate for a change in the legal framework and also involve police officer in these sessions.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

HRAPF holds 7th Annual General Meeting

HRAPF held its 7th Annual General Meeting (AGM), as required under Article 12(1) of its Memorandum and Articles of Association, on 30th July 2016. The meeting was held at the HRAPF Secretariat and was attended by a total of 80 participants including HRAPF members, partners, the Board of Directors and staff.

The guest of honour of the meeting was Ms. Sylvia Ntambi, the chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission. During her address, Ms. Ntambi expressed that the EOC has a relationship with HRAPF because the organisation continues to fight for a broadened space for marginalised groups and keeps reaching out to discriminated people. She assured the meeting that the EOC receives any cases involving discrimination and marginalisation.

The chairperson of the Board of Directors Ms. Sheila Muwanga, in her remarks noted that as an organisation, which is eight years old, HRAPF is being held to increasingly high standards and expectations by its partners and the community at large. She explained that, in the year preceding the AGM, HRAPF had strengthened its security, asset management and Human Resources policies and that these policies are available to members for the formulation of their own policies.

HRAPF's key achievements during the period under review the midterm review of the Strategic Plan; stable and increasing funding; the fact that HRAPF has obtained observer status at the African Commission and the addition of an annex to the main office. He also made mention of the key challenges facing the organisation which are the hostile political environment and vandalisation of NGOs; and

HRAPF's high dependency on donor funding. He stated that HRAPF remained committed to the 2013-2017 Strategic Plan and said that the new strategic plan will soon be drafted.

On behalf of the Treasurer, the meeting was informed that a 30% increase in donor funding from 2014 indicated an increase in the trust which donors placed in HRAPF. A major challenge was however presented in the fact that 98% of the organisation's funding is still received from donors. The auditors report indicated that the fund was used in accordance to the donor agreements and proper accounting procedures had been followed in 2015.

The keynote speaker of the meeting was Mr. Chris Baguma, the Programmes Director of the Uganda Harm Reduction Network. Mr. Baguma addressed the meeting on the emerging human rights issue of drug users and the harm reduction model in Uganda and called upon all members to support the strategy. He thanked HRAPF for the providing legal support to the cause.

The meeting was also honoured with the presence of Mr. Jude Mbabaali, Chairperson of LC V, Masaka District. Mr Mbabaali addressed the meeting and expressed his enthusiasm at the intended expansion of HRAPF's legal aid services to the Masaka District.

Special tribute was paid to Mr. Emmanuel Arituha, the security guard who lost his life during a brutal raid of HRAPF's offices in May of 2016. The importance and necessity of the HRAPF Fund was emphasised in that this Fund could provide financial support for Mr. Arituha's funeral and his family's needs after his tragic passing.





Above: HRAPF members and staff in a group photo after the AGM and Chairperson BOD Ms. Shiela Muwanga addressing the AGM..

Below: the EOC Chairperson Mrs. Sylvia Ntambi Muwebwa and the GIZ representative Ms. Iris Dill giving their remarks at the AGM.



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